

Farm Fancy

The art of eating locally in Kelowna, B.C.

By Jill Foran • Illustration by Anne Smith

“To me, this is love on a plate,” says my friend Nicole as she gazes at the Sezmu Beef Tartare and Tomato Brioche that our waiter at Mission Hill Winery’s Terrace Restaurant has just set down before her.

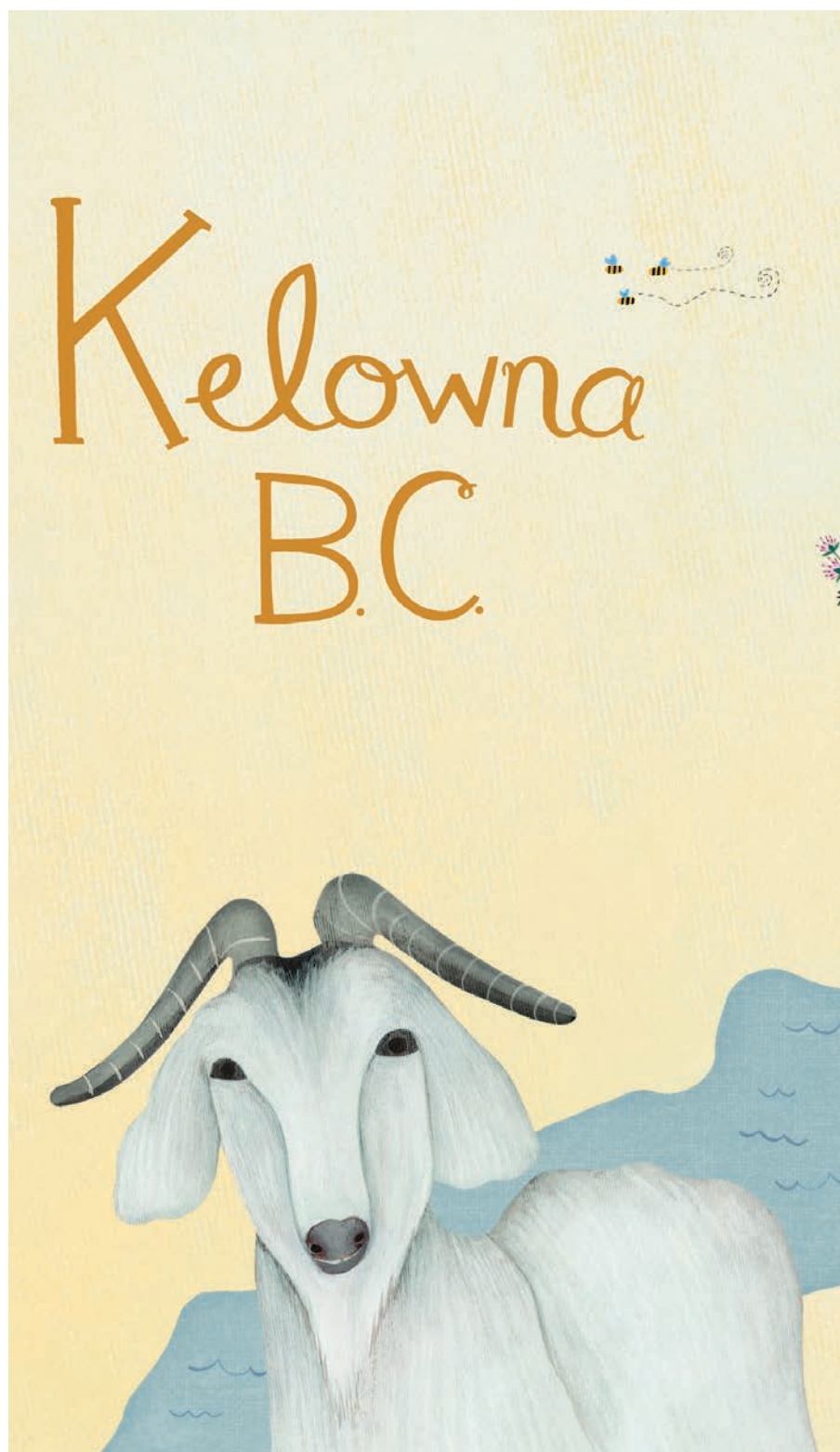
After clicking a photo with her iPhone, she leans forward for an even closer look. “It’s so pretty, I almost don’t want to eat it.”

But moments later, she’s glad she did, because if there’s one thing we’ve learned during our girls’ weekend getaway to Kelowna, B.C., it’s that the food here—in all its ripe, seasonal glory—tastes divine.

Blessed with long summers, mild winters and 2,000 hours of sunshine a year, Kelowna is a hotbed of artisan farms, family run orchards and neighbourhood gardens. And the resulting abundance of fresh, locally produced ingredients has drawn in talented chefs from near and far.

While Kelowna is home to 25 local wineries, 19 golf courses and a thriving cultural district, if you’re anything like Nicole and me, you’re going to want to spend most of your visit eating. But here’s a tip: you’ll discover an even deeper appreciation of every meal you taste if you visit some of the warm, welcoming places that supply the raw ingredients.

Here are some of the best spots to see, all within a bikeable radius of this Okanagan culinary hotbed.



TOP 5 Farm-to-Table Restaurants

Cabana Bar and Grille

With its casual vibe, friendly service and locally inspired menu, Cabana Grille is ideal for family dining. (cabanagrille.com)



Hotel Eldorado

A favourite for Sunday brunch, the hotel's lakeside restaurant is also an ideal spot for indulging in a cocktail and a fiery sunset. (hoteldoradokelowna.com)



Raudz Regional Table

Creative presentation and a cool, communal atmosphere are at the forefront of this popular eatery. Try something from the inventive drink menu. (raudz.com)





1 Kelowna Farmers' and Crafters' Market

With more than 165 vendors in the summer, this is the largest farmers' market in B.C. Stroll among the rows of produce and chat with local vendors selling wares that range from eco-friendly soaps and handmade jewelry to freshly picked veggies, homemade preserves and gourmet coffee. Open Saturdays and Wednesdays from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. (kelownafarmersandcraftersmarket.com)

2 Old Meadows Organic Farm

"We grow everything from apples to zucchini," says Lorena Wood, who runs this brimming organic farm with her husband, Jim. Tour the 20 acres of orchards and gardens, purchase some ultra-fresh produce at the on-site fruit stand or buy herbs and flowers. As one of the most diversified organic farms in Kelowna, Old Meadows is a popular summer haunt for chefs and foodies, alike.

3 Arlo's Honey Farm

Book ahead to tour this 14-acre farm and you'll get almost as close to a working hive (the farm has 150 hives with 60,000 bees apiece) as any apiarist. Meet beekeeper Helen Kennedy, dressed in her hooded suit, who will dazzle you with honey making facts and bee behaviour. Afterward, visit the gift gallery for a honey tasting. (arlshoneyfarm.com)

4 Okanagan Lavender & Herb Farm

Just a short buzz away from Arlo's is the Okanagan Lavender & Herb Farm where Kennedy's bees pollinate more than 60 types of aromatic lavender. Take a self-guided tour of the gardens, gather a bouquet from the U-pick area and browse the shop for made-in-house products, including lavender jelly and essential oil, which many local chefs use in their dishes. (okanaganlavender.com)

5 Carmelis Goat Cheese Artisan Inc.

It's hard to say what's more fun at this hilltop farm: sampling the rich, additive-free goat cheeses and gelatos or watching the 30-plus resident goats goof around. Visit the shop any time, but book ahead for a tour of the milking area (where the goats always line up in the same order) and the chilly aging room where massive rounds of pungent cheese wait to see the light of day. (carmelisgoatcheese.com)

Terrace Restaurant

The alfresco resto at Mission Hill Winery is renowned for its sweeping lake and vineyard views, as well as its seasonal menu and creative wine pairings. (missionhillwinery.com)



Waterfront Wines

This funky, award-winning downtown bistro serves up a variety of adventurous dishes, including sweetbreads and potted foie gras. (waterfrontrestaurant.ca)



✈ GETTING THERE

WestJet flies to Kelowna 14 times a day from five Canadian cities.