

# *Something* **WILD**

*the ultimate guide to* **TOFINO**



It's the end of the line, the West's West.  
Once you've seen the towering trees meet  
the thunderous surf, you'll be hooked  
on this, the last best place.



# *the*

first vacation I ever took was to Tofino. It must have taken forever for my family to drive from Edmonton to the far coast of Vancouver Island in those pre-fuel injection days, but I can recall nothing of any hardship or boredom during the trip—just the wild Pacific and the entire expanse of Chesterman Beach at my three-year-old disposal. When we left we took a keepsake—a five-foot-long gnarled twist of driftwood: it sat in our front garden atop a bed of those ubiquitous white landscaping rocks, 1,200 kilometres from the nearest ocean, and if you closed your eyes, you could picture it back in its native habitat. That log lasted through two decades of Alberta winters before succumbing and breaking down back to the earth, but it always stood as a reminder of the wild West Coast. The Tofino of today is a whole lot different than the one I first visited; the original Wickaninnish Inn, where we stayed, was amazing, but a far cry from the temple of understated luxury that now bears that name, and the town now has restaurants that a city a hundred times the size would be envious of. But some things haven't changed. It's still a task to get to and it still requires a thoughtful traveller to make the trip. And the surf, that expanse of sand, is unchanged—a wilderness captured for those who care enough to grab it.—*Neal McLennan*



**Wild Coast** The beach at Cox Bay (top) sums up Tofino in one uninterrupted swath of white-ish sand. There are towering trees on one side and the crashing Pacific on the other, and in between the two, scores of beach walkers and surfers enjoying both. For those who want their strolls to have a destination, there's the forest walk to Hot Springs Cove (below).

left: Courtesy of Rachel Weill/Wickaninnish Inn above: Courtesy of Hubert Kang/Pacific Sands Beach Resort

# FARE ENOUGH

## Andre McGillivray's

### 5 Essential Tofino Eats

There are few rooms in Vancouver that Andre McGillivray hasn't put his stamp on in the last decade: he was the first bartender at Cin Cin, the maître'd at Le Crocodile, the GM at Feenie's and Lumiere and, in 2007, he and his partners created the current Gastown mayhem with the landmark Boneta. Three and a half years ago he packed up and went way West until he landed at the famed Pointe restaurant in the Wickaninnish Inn, elevating a room that was already on top of its game. We asked him to choose five spots that made him love his adopted home. The gentleman that he is, he recused himself from naming either the superlative Pointe or his much-hyped new spot (see below).



#### OPENING SOON

### The Wolf in the Fog

140 4th St., Tofino, B.C.

Nick Nutting (who helmed the kitchen at the Pointe from 2007 to 2013) and Andre McGillivray are opening this new spot this summer. Expect simple preparations with bold flavours that capture everything that's great about this coast. Andre will ramp up a cocktail program that will immediately be the best in the area, and downstairs will feature a casual sandwich shop.



#### 1 A Quickie

Owners Jason Sussman and Kaeli Robinsong set up this original **Tacofino** truck in the summer of 2009. Everything is rock solid. You can throw a dart at the menu and you'll hit something awesome. The only problem is eating it too often. 1184 Pacific Rim Hwy., [tacofino.com](http://tacofino.com)

#### THE ORDER

*Pork gringas, you are my nemesis.*

#### 2 Reality Bites

Owners Artie and Lisa ran the original Tofino food truck over 10 years ago, but now have had comfortable indoor roots for some time at **Sobo**. These two are heroes to Tofino: they're community-driven, über-regional and cook what they want, how they want it. 311 Neill St., [sobo.ca](http://sobo.ca)

#### THE ORDER

*Duck confit pizza and crazy chocolate brownies are flavour dynamite.*

#### 3 Local Hero

The loss of his original restaurant to a major fire not too long ago didn't slow owner Francois Pilon down. **Hank's** has hit the ground running with renewed energy. It's a big barbecue, bourbon and beer temple done with care and focus. Ob-

scure artisanal craft beers are expertly chosen and not to be missed. 1576 Imperial Ln., Ucluelet

#### THE ORDER

*Anything with a rib.*

#### 4 An Original

Crazy Ron is a legend on the West Coast (search "Crazy Ron" on YouTube for video proof). His **Tough City Sushi Bar** rivals any found this side of Chicago. Get the real deal on Mondays when it's locals' night and the place goes off. 350 Main St., [toughcity.com](http://toughcity.com)

#### THE ORDER

*Whatever Ron tells you to eat.*

#### 5 The Double Whammy

The one-two punch of coffee at the **Tofitian** and ice cream at **Chocolate Tofino** is a staple experience. The covered patio at the Tofitian is a mishmash of colourful locals throughout the day and the coffee is amazing. Before or after, head to Chocolate Tofino. I have been hard pressed to find better ice cream anywhere in B.C.—watch the weekly nervous breakdowns when people arrive on Sunday (the only day they are closed). 1180 Pacific Rim Hwy., [toftitian.com](http://toftitian.com), [chocolatetofino.com](http://chocolatetofino.com)

**THE ORDER** *Hedgehog ice cream.*



# REST EASY

## The Ultimate Accommodation Finder

Wherein we take our three favourite lodging options and have some fun breaking them down for every traveller.

**WICK** Wickaninnish Inn  
**LBL** Long Beach Lodge  
**PS** Pacific Sands

	<i>Common Guest</i>	<i>Beach Attire</i>	<i>Guest Concern</i>	<i>Cocktail</i>	<i>Tofino Keepsake</i>	<i>Luggage</i>	<i>Michael Lewis Beach Read</i>
<b>WICK</b>	English duke with an adventurous streak	Ferragamo flip-flops/ Vilebrequin bathing suit	Exchanging gold krugerrands	Highland Park 25, neat	A house on Chesterman Beach	Matching Rimowas	<i>The Big Short</i>
<b>LBL</b>	Western Canadian real estate developer	Tory Burch cover-up	Monopoly strategy	Victoria gin and tonic	A bag of chanterelles bought roadside	Mismatched Tumis	<i>Moneyball</i>
<b>PS</b>	Dunbar/Kerrisdale family vacationer	J.Crew everything	Finding a full beef tenderloin to grill	A pitcher of Pimm's	Family surfboards	Lands End duffle bags	<i>The Blind Side</i>

Jeremy Koreski/Tourism Tofino



*Pacific Sands*

**ROLL THOSE SLEEVES**

**UP** There are two types of travellers—those who never want to see a kitchen on vacation and those who want to dive right into a place’s culinary scene with a whisk and two pots. For the latter, it’s tough to beat Pacific Sands’ full workspaces that are perfect for boiling just-dug clams, grilling a freshly caught greenling or, if the day’s activities were just too much, sneaking to the on-site grocery and snagging some pre-made gourmet fare like Smoked Wild Fish Chowder courtesy of Sobo—no one will be the wiser. [pacificsands.com](http://pacificsands.com)

**FOR THE FORAGER** Long Beach Lodge chef Ian Riddick—whose passion for harvesting what’s outside his restaurant’s door extends to extracting sea salt straight from Cox Bay—also happens to be the perfect hiking companion this coming fall: word has it he’ll be offering rainforest mushroom foraging trips for guests. Final details are still in the works (his beta tests last fall included a stop at an oyster farm on the trip home), so chat with the concierge for pre-booking. [longbeachlodgeresort.com](http://longbeachlodgeresort.com)



*Long Beach Lodge*



*Wickaninnish Inn*

**A LITTLE CENTRING TIME**

Long strolls on Chesterman Beach are just what a stay at the Wickaninnish was made for, but if you need an extra bump in your decompression strategy, the Wick offers yoga classes for guests each morning in the Ancient Cedar Spa. The gentle, hatha-style moves will get you properly set for a gruelling day of beach reading. (And you’ll likely recognize your yoga instructor as the server from yesterday’s Sobo lunch. This is Tofino, after all.) [wickinn.com](http://wickinn.com)

top: Hubert Kang/Pacific Sands Beach Resort, middle: Josh Lewis/Long Beach Lodge Resort, bottom: courtesy of Wickaninnish Inn

## BREAK TIME

### A surfing CEO's guide to Tofino's best breaks

When Cactus Club CEO Richard Jaffray isn't in Saskatoon or Toronto or Vancouver continuing his company's amazing march to national prominence, you'll most likely find him in three millimetres of neoprene, paddling out to his favourite spots around Tofino. Here are a few of his seasonal favourites.

- 1 My first choice is Cox Bay. It seems as though it's a magnet for waves on the West Coast. It literally almost always has waves.
- 2 When the big surf rolls in I head to North Chesterman Beach, which can be crazy. These can be some heavy waves with a serious ability to hold you down, so it's not a spot for newbies.
- 3 The surf mellows in the summer, so I usually go to Long Beach from June to early September. The waves here are generally Southern Hemisphere-originated swells, so they're rideable when other beaches are flat.

#### THE ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT



#### Surfing Survival

No shredding in a pair of board shorts here—even in the peak of summer the water hits only about 15°C, so a full wetsuit is in order. The brave go without a hood and booties.

You can get a workable model from Quiksilver for under \$200, but if you hate the cold but love to surf, you should source an Isurus (left), the ultra-light, quick-drying marvel that brings heat to the cold, dark Pacific. From \$500. [surfisurus.com](http://surfisurus.com)

#### A QUIET SPOT FOR A GREAT BEER

Tofino Brewing Company is a little bit of a big thing—not just in Tofino, which is expected, but throughout B.C., where their amazing creations (Hoppin' Cretin IPA, Kelp Stout, et al.)—attract frenzied devotion. We asked co-owner Bryan O'Malley to choose a perfect place to share a growler:

"With some friends, hop on your bike and ride out to North Chesterman, and ride along the beach until you find a nice piece of driftwood. Sit down, pop open your growler and enjoy the sunset."



Josh Lewis/Long Beach Lodge Resort, facing Raeff Miles./Pacific Sands Beach Resort



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