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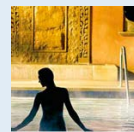
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Seattle: A Girls Getaway to the Emerald City

By: [Jan Ross](#)

Monday,
November 11th,
2013



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Seattle truly lives up to its nickname; surrounded by acres of dark green forests and the clear, bright green water of Puget Sound on the West and Lake Washington on the East which sprawl on both sides of the isthmus where the city is located, from the air it's a green paradise.

Staying Green in Seattle

But Seattle is also green in its awareness of the importance of coexisting with the environment and the city is the perfect place for a healthy girlfriends getaway. With hundreds of wonderful hotels in this city of over half a million people, it's difficult to choose the perfect place to stay but when you consider that the [Hyatt at Olive 8](#) was the first LEED certified hotel in Seattle, the choice becomes easier. LEED stand for Leadership in Energy and

Environmental Design and the Hyatt at Olive 8 is in the forefront of this design movement. With everything from a green, growing grass roof to switches in the rooms which turn the electricity off and on by plugging your room key, the hotel is truly making an effort to keep our world environmentally healthy.



This does not mean, however, that the Hyatt stints on luxury; in fact, we stayed in the most luxurious suite we have ever experienced on our visit. The Presidential Suite, with 1600 square feet of living space which includes a kitchen, two dining areas, a living room with gas fireplace, two bathrooms, and an expansive bedroom with a walk-in closet, is really more like a city apartment than a hotel room. The suite is graced with huge, floor to ceiling windows which overlook city views and Lake Union from which you can watch seaplanes take off and land.

Our Love Affair with Seattle Cuisine

“Good Food Depends on Good Ingredients” Executive Chef Greg Lopez

Be sure to plan one evening to have dinner at Urbane, Hyatt's gourmet restaurant, because it will be some of the best food you will have the entire time you are in Seattle. Specializing in delicious Northwest cuisine, Executive Chef Greg Lopez says “Good food depends on good ingredients.” He works with farmers across Washington and the Pacific Northwest who are dedicated to sustainable growing techniques and bringing the best possible product to market and this is definitely reflected in the menu, which changes seasonally. The crab cakes appetizer, rib eye steak and chocolate cake for dessert were truly decadent - and there were plenty of leftovers to take back to our suite for lunch the next day!

For another great meal, make a trip to the interesting and kitschy neighborhood of Fremont to sample some of the delicious food at [Agrodolce](#), a popular neighborhood restaurant. But before you devour the food at this lovely little restaurant featuring Italy's coastal cuisine as well as delicious handmade pasta, stroll down to Lake Union which is just about a block away. This is where there are dozens of houseboats moored, some incredibly luxurious, some just small and interesting. These houseboats were the inspiration for the movie “Sleepless in Seattle”.

The restaurant is owned by Maria Hines, winner of the James Beard Award for the best chef in the Northwest in 2009 and also the Iron Chef winner in 2010. Maria owns several restaurants in Seattle and was kind enough to meet us and welcome us to Agrodolce. The restaurant features organic and sustainable ingredients from the Pacific Northwest and the fresh flavor of everything we tried was truly incredible. They make their own fresh focaccia bread which is served with olive oil for dipping and it would be very easy to eat only the



bread! But don't even consider that because you will want to try the creamy onion soup, and the freshly made sandwiches and pasta. Be sure to order the unique rice pudding fritters for dessert. Served hot and crisp with a caramel dipping sauce, they are truly incomparable.

If you are ready to try even more wonderful food, sign up for one of the tours with [Savor Seattle Food Tours](#). "Gourmet Seattle" is a three hour walking tour where you will sample everything from freshly made cupcakes to locally produced truffle oils, ales from a microbrewery, and creamy gelato. The pancakes and bacon cupcakes from Yellow Leaf Cupcakes were my personal favorite.

Spa Day in Seattle

Now that you have stuffed yourself with some of the best food in Seattle, it's time to spend a day decompressing, relaxing, and enjoying a "green" experience at the [Ummelina International Day Spa](#). The spa is located just a short walk from the Hyatt down Fourth Avenue but a world away from busy downtown Seattle. Step through the door, go up the stairs and enter that fragrant spa environment which always makes me take a deep breath and begin relaxing.

The spa folks suggested that we experience the Equator as one of the Journey experiences and we were just fine with that as it sounded truly wonderful.

Journey Solo or Duo...On this odyssey, relax under a true waterfall and receive the natural healing and restorative properties of the flowing water. Move your body to receive the water's healing forces. The scents of nature surround you and the water washes away all stress.

Leaving the Waterfall behind, journey into the warm, moist environment of the steamy Rain Forest. While relaxing under a canopy of gentle rain, surrender to the pleasure of an exfoliating salt rub followed by a luxuriating water massage. Pause in a comfortable lounge for a brief rest before continuing your journey.



Arrive in the Desert, where dry heat enfolds you as warm oils and muds from around the world are applied to your body. You lie basking as if in the warmth of the meridian sun.

A visit to the Monsoon, to cool down your body and center before returning to the world anew, fresh and well-traveled. We didn't make time to visit their Tea Spa, which I regret because it is something truly unique and I was very interested. They offer a variety of events and ceremonies for different groups and they also offer specially blended teas for sale. You should make time for a cup of one of their interesting tea blends.

Seattle Shops Are Tops

A spa visit and great food are two of my favorite things on a girlfriends getaway but Seattle also easily satisfies the third love - shopping. Unlike many big cities, Seattle's downtown shopping area is busy and energetic with over 1,000 different retailers, both large and small. The brand new Westlake Center, complete with dozens of small shops and restaurants, is a short walk from the Hyatt and you can even hop on the monorail there that will take you directly to the Space Needle for an incredible view of the city. Check out Nordstrom, Macy's - we were surprised to even find a Target right in the middle of downtown!

Once you have shopped until you are ready to drop, pop into Pike Place Market where you can pick up an incredible variety of local produce, meats, fresh bakery items and gorgeous flowers. Head back to your sumptuous suite at the Hyatt at Olive 8 where you can spread out your purchases and nosh on the fresh food items you just bought, all locally sourced and all equally delicious.

Enjoy that view of the Emerald City as the lights come on downtown and you realize that a Seattle "green" girlfriends getaway can be pretty darn fabulous.

Jan Ross is a freelance travel writer who has been traveling the world since way back before she can even remember. Her dad was in the Marine Corps so she is used to packing up at a moment's notice! She loves writing hotel and restaurant reviews since it means she gets to stay in fabulous places and eat wonderful food. She especially loves writing spa reviews because that means she gets phenomenally pampered and, seriously, who does not like that? She has visited lots of places but still gets a thrill of excitement when she boards a plane, steps into a new hotel room, or sees a new location for the first time. And she hopes that thrill never, ever goes away.

For more information on Jan, visit her website at WanderlustWonder.com.

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