

# 10 places to find authentic Canadian cuisine

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By ANITA STEWART / Special Contributor to The Dallas Morning News

## **Sooke Harbour House, Sooke, British Columbia**

No Canadian inn has played such an important role in spreading the message that "local food is fabulous." Co-owners Frederique and Sinclair Philip have mentored chefs and gardeners alike and nurtured an artistic island community that sets their inn apart from any other Canadian destination. If there is one place in Canada that passionate gourmands must visit, it's Sooke Harbour House. Although awards almost drip off the walls, it's a humble, gentle place where one can savor dishes as elegantly simple as wild mushroom broth with a Dungeness crab and purple potato dumpling or, my favorite, braised black cod with Gravenstein apples and Vietnamese coriander.

Contact: 1528 Whiffen Spit Road; 1-800-889-9688; [www.sookeharbourhouse.com](http://www.sookeharbourhouse.com).

## **Tojo's Restaurant, Vancouver, British Columbia**

When the government of the Northwest Territories wanted to promote its bison in Japan, they contacted Hidekazu Tojo. Reputed to have about 2,000 recipes in his head, he takes the very freshest British Columbia produce, adds a splash of his creativity and serves absolutely excellent food. If you're really lucky, he'll have cherry blossom scallops on the menu. But no matter what ends up between your chopsticks, it will rank as some of the finest Japanese-style food you'll ever eat.

Contact: 1133 W. Broadway; 604-872-8050; [www.tojos.com](http://www.tojos.com).

## **North Knife Lake Lodge, Thompson, Manitoba, Canada**

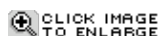
Why would I include a fly-in fishing lodge near the 58th parallel in my list? Because the Webber family has it right. Helen Webber and her close friend and companion at the stoves, Marie Woolsey, have written more than a half-dozen northern cookbooks. The food is honest and fresh. And when you tire of eating, you can fish for a trophy lake trout or a huge northern pike, then cook them as part of an unforgettable shore lunch.

Contact: 1-888-932-2377; [www.webberslodges.com](http://www.webberslodges.com).

## **River Café, Calgary, Alberta**

Long before Calgary became the booming oil city it is today, Sal Howell dreamed of creating a regional restaurant on Prince's Island downtown. From brick-pressed quail with spruce shoot-infused honey to wild hog prosciutto with pumpkin-seed flatbread, this is the place to taste Alberta. She harvests British Columbia to round out her menu with Cortes Island oysters, Dungeness crab and wild salmon and has received numerous Wine Spectator Awards of Excellence.

Contact: 200 Barklay Parade SW; 403-261-7670; [www.rivercafe.com](http://www.rivercafe.com).



**Treadwell, Old Port Dalhousie, Ontario**



Stephen Treadwell explores and cooks the orchard-dotted Niagara region. Menus change often, and the wine list is local. Treadwell provides the most innovative cuisine in this part of the province, from roasted Ontario quail with honeycomb and Dave Irish's radish salad to gnocchi made with cabernet grape seed flour and served with asparagus and blue cheese from the monks at St. Benoit du Lac in Quebec.

Treadwell, in Old Port Dalhousie, Ontario, has the most innovative cuisine in its region.

Contact: 61 Lakeport Road; 905-934-9797; [www.treadwellcuisine.com](http://www.treadwellcuisine.com).

### **Smoothwater Ecolodge, Temagami, Ontario**

Temagami is renowned for canoeing. Smoothwater lodge is a base for vacationers paddling the area's chains of small lakes. Co-owner Caryn Colman harvests the region for her dining room and for the expeditions she outfits and sometimes, leads. She's dedicated to showcasing her area of Ontario in food, from sweet fern tea and wild blueberry kuchen to local lamb and organic beef.

Contact: 1-888-569-4539; [www.smoothwater.com](http://www.smoothwater.com).

### **L'eau à la Bouche, Restaurant and Inn, Ste. Adèle, Québec**

Few people have been as influential in creating the new cuisine of Quebec as world-renowned chef Anne Desjardins. Her restaurant is one of a handful of Relais Gourmande around the continent. Her cuisine, and that of her chef and son, Emmanuel, who is taking over the stoves, is refined and thoughtful. Every dish on the menu is significant, from the tagliatelle with mushrooms, wild boar bacon and veal jus, to the frozen maple-laced meringue topped with rhubarb salsa and shards of Middle-Eastern brik. And each must (and does) taste spectacular.

Contact: 3003 Boul. Ste. Adèle; 450-229-2991; [www.leaualabouche.com](http://www.leaualabouche.com).

### **The Inn at Bay Fortune, Bay Fortune,**

#### **Prince Edward Island**

The Inn at Bay Fortune is a Canadian icon, a flower-ringed haven at what seems to be the end of the road. The dedicated owner-innkeeper is David Wilmer. Even after dusk, the kitchen staff, including the head chef, Warren Barr, can be seen bounding up to the huge garden to pick lovage or berries to finish a dish. The menu changes with what is fresh, seasonal and often wild-harvested. The kitchen is a young one and rule-breaking. This year, Mr. Barr and his talented team dreamed up a lobster carpaccio with lightly pickled carrot and a spiced carrot sorbet.



The Inn at Bay Fortune, on Prince Edward Island, specializes in fresh, seasonal and, often, wild-gathered food.

Contact: 902-687-3745 or 1-888-687-3745; [www.innatbayfortune.com](http://www.innatbayfortune.com).

### **Rossmount Inn, St. Andrews, New Brunswick**

Rossmount is a quintessential maritime inn with a sweeping vista of Passamoquoddy Bay and a fabulous dining room. Chef Chris Aerni and his wife, Graziella, both Swiss-born, opted out of corporate culinary life to live simply and locally. He hand-harvests seaweed, which he blanches so it's brilliant green, then sets fresh New Brunswick Beausoleil oysters atop. Then he spoons on a verjus-apple mignonette. Fabulous.

Contact: 4599 Route 127; 506-529-3351; [www.rossmountinn.com](http://www.rossmountinn.com).

### **The Red Shoe Pub, Mabou, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia**

On this island of song, it's appropriate that a restaurant owned and operated by musical recording stars, the Rankin sisters, was named after a Cape Breton composition. Throughout the summer, there's marvelous island music in the pub. Locals bring their lawn chairs to line up for an opportunity to join both the dining and tunes. The menu says Cape Breton with lobster, gingerbread and sticky rum-spiked pudding.

Contact: Route 19; 902-945-2326 or 902-945-2996 (pub); [www.redshoepub.com](http://www.redshoepub.com).