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the goods dispatches

Salt of the Earth

With its organic farms and thoughtful chefs, Salt Spring is the Gulf Islands' locavore paradise. Here's where to gather the perfect epicurean hamper to tuck into your kayak.

BY TARANEH GHAJAR JERVEN

DAY ONE: By Land or By Sea

Score a select, micro-lot caffeine fix at **SALT SPRING ISLAND COFFEE** [1] (109 McPhillips Ave., Ganges, 250-537-0825, saltspringcoffee.com), the local success story that outgrew the island. Take it across the street to the legendary Saturday Market (*oceanside at Centennial Park, saltspringmarket.com*), where you can browse through a labyrinth of 140 vendors hawking locally produced goods. Look for **BRIGITTE** (250-537-8400, brigitteatthemarket.webs.com), who moved to the island from France and makes flawless canelés de Bordeaux. Prefer a savoury start? Dig into her tomato tarte Tatin or light-as-air soufflé au fromage.

Then visit **HASTINGS HOUSE** [2] (160 Upper Ganges Rd., 800-661-9255, hastingshouse.com). The resort has teamed up with Captain Gary Le Marchant, who welcomes guests aboard his boat for an afternoon of crabbing. Back on

shore, Swiss chef Marcel Kauer at Hastings House deftly shows you how to prep your catch.

DAY TWO: Mountaineer vs. Beach Bum

Channel your inner mountain goat at **MOUNT MAXWELL PROVINCIAL PARK** [8]. Hike six kilometres of trails through a rare Garry oak ecosystem to the vista at **BAYNES PEAK**, the Island's highest point. Then Take a private tour of award-winning **SALTSPRING ISLAND ALES** [3] (270 Furness Rd., 250-653-2383, gulfislandsbrewery.com). Brewmaster Murray Hunter shares his secrets while you taste beer made from the mountain spring water gushing behind the barn. Then, dinner at **ROCK SALT** [4] (2921 Fulford Ganges Rd., 250-653-4833, rocksaltrestaurant.com), where a bottle of Saltspring's citrusy Golden Ale cools down chef Jonathan Duquette's spicy local mussels in green banana curry.

STAY

Michael Ableman's **FOXGLOVE FARM** [8] (1200 Mount Maxwell Rd., 250-537-1989, foxglovefarmbc.ca) offers a set of rustic heritage guest cabins alongside a turn-of-

the-century log house and fully functioning organic farm. Order from a list of the farm's available produce—from Mediterranean vegetables to poultry and berries—and have them delivered to your doorstep.

The beachfront location and simple elegance at **HASTINGS HOUSE COUNTRY HOUSE HOTEL** [2] are impossible to beat. Book the original Hudson's Bay Post building, a luxe two-room cottage guarded by a heritage pear tree.



DAY THREE: Simple Things

This island is lousy with sheep, and David Wood at **SALT SPRING ISLAND CHEESE** [5] (285 Reynolds Rd., 250-653-2300, saltspringcheese.com) has made the most of them. His artisan rounds, made with goat and Friesian sheep's milk using traditional methods, draw international visitors to the farm shop. Watch the cheese makers at work; leave with a round of washed-rind romelia and jar of quince mostarda.

Detour by "Bread Lady" Heather Campbell at **SALT SPRING ISLAND BREAD CO.** [6] (251 Forest Ridge Rd., 250-653-4809) to meet a local celeb and grab a wood-fired loaf on your way to the organic-certified **MISTAKEN IDENTITY VINEYARDS** [7] (164 Norton Rd., 250-538-9463, mistakenidentityvineyards.com). The clear strawberry notes and dry finish of their 2009 Pinot Rosé pair well with the romelia, so buy a bottle and take it outside to the courtyard picnic tables that overlook the organic vines. Final step: imagine putting your house on the market. *wl*



PHOTO BY GARY MCWHIRTER

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