

top 5

places to assuage your sweet tooth

Sugar cravings are hard to resist. Every so often, it's best to forget about will power and succumb to the enticing world of cake, cookies, and chocolate. Here's a look at the top five spots to satisfy your sweet tooth:

GRANVILLE ISLAND PUBLIC MARKET

1689 Johnston St. This place is teeming with treats ready to go straight to your thighs. From plump blueberry tarts to handmade trifles, there's something to satisfy any type of dessert desire.

CHEESECAKE ETC.

2141 Granville St. You'll find one of the creamiest, richest cheesecakes in town here. Get extra indulgent and add the homemade chocolate sauce or strawberry topping.

DENMAN STREET

A paradise for sweets-lovers, this strip is bursting with sugary delights. Cupcakes (mmm ... that butter cream frosting!), Marble Slab Creamery (mmm ... mashed up ice cream), Beard Papa's (mmm ... cream puffs) and True Confection (mmm ... confections) are all within walking distance.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHOCOLATE FACTORY

Various locations It's all about those gigantic candied apples. Smothered in caramel and studded with everything from gummy bears to marshmallows, these suckers will get you extremely high ... on a sugar rush, that is.

MINK CHOCOLATES

863 W. Hastings St. Scrumptious chocolate bars, fabulous fondue and fluffy Belgian waffles are only some of the pleasures offered here.

- KRISTEN MCKENZIE

THE ROYAL TASTER

The fine art of beer

DHARM MAKWANA - Move over wine ladies, Colin Jack's just here for the beer.

Armed with a desire to explore the sociology of beer, Jack and his business partner launched Just Here For The Beer, Canada's first independent beer tasting and education company.

"When you drink a beer you don't actually absorb the flavour on your tongue," Jack says. "Tasting a beer is when you concentrate on heightening your senses and then you swallow the beer. It's a real process."

"You love people. You don't love beer."

Despite being a connoisseur of ales, lagers and pilsners, Jack stops short of confessing his love for beer.

"You love people," he says, "you don't love beer."

"But, it's the teaching side I

enjoy. Anytime you have that opportunity to introduce new things it's very rewarding."

Thousands of people can thank Jack for broadening their beer experience with the legitimate classes he teaches at UBC, and because he produces events

such as The Canada Cup of Beer and upcoming Oktoberfest Oct. 17 at Surrey's Compass Point Inn on King George Highway.

Jack will offer a weekly insight into beer starting here next week.



Colin Jack



THIRSTY BEAVER AMBER ALE:

It offers a caramel roasted finish with a smoky and woody taste. Colin Jack says this beer can be compared to a fine aged wine. There's a high flavour profile leaving drinkers with a great mouth feel accentuated by a low carbonation point. Serve Thirsty Beaver with red pastas and rich cheeses like smoked gouda.

OKANAGAN SPRING 1516:

Light, crisp, smooth with a nice clean finish is how Jack describes this beer. Okanagan Spring is a versatile beer that can be served with most meals. Jack says everyone should keep a few cans chilling in the fridge.

HOWE SOUND NUT BROWN RAIL ALE:

Don't mistake this beer for being watery, Jack says. Drinkers will experience a little bit of nuttiness and sweetness when drinking Rail Ale. Chefs can use this beer when cooking pancakes, chicken or brine for pork loin.

» Coffee to go

Coffee drinkers can take their Starbucks anywhere, literally. The titans of coffee released an instant blend, Starbucks VIA, made from all natural roasted arabica beans. The pouches are available now in stores. Starbucks executives say the instant product took 20 years of research and development to perfect.

» Dinner plans

Elixir Bistro executive chef Don Letendre won't mind if you take credit for his turkey dinner this Thanksgiving. Letendre and his team of chefs are offering a three-course meal for \$50 Oct. 11 and 12. For those looking for a Thanksgiving night out, Elixir Bistro will feature a traditional meal with two jazz bands for entertainment.

Bacon quest: Vancouver search is on

To those allowed to indulge, bacon is a splendid food.

Doug Larson is quoted as saying "life expectancy would grow by leaps and bounds if green vegetables smelled as good as bacon."

Who are we to argue? That guy was an Olympic medalist!

Over the next several weeks, we're in search of the city's best bacon.

So where to start?

Unlike fine purveyors of steak, the thought of a "bacon house" is only a dream.

Being thought of mostly as a breakfast food, the mind immediately shifts to Vancouver's myriad of breakfast places. There's omletteries, waffle shops and even an International House of Pancakes, but nothing that screams bacon.



DB's Stephane Istel does bacon, oh glorious bacon.

One place though, is what I'd call *the* place for brunch, DB Bistro Moderne in Kits.

Bumping into the chef de cuisine Stephane Istel must have been a sign.

The fact he was sporting at-shirt that stated 'lardons give me hardons,' sealed the deal, so I put him to the test and what I got was amazing.

Two types of bacon

sliced thick: the regular kind we're all familiar with prepared *sous-vide*, and a Chinese-inspired variety, roasted, spiced, dipped in brine and braised.

Both types made for a magical dining experience and a good start to the bacon quest.

RAJ TANEJA IS PART TECHNOLOGIST, PART ENTREPRENEUR, PART SOCIAL MEDIA GURU AND PART FOODIE. HE RUNS URBANMIXER.COM AND PUBLISHES A MISCELLANY OF HIS MUSINGS AT RAJ.J.P.

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