

Seaweed goes global. It's not just for sushi anymore.

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Grab your gumboots and forage the green way with BC's 'Seaweed Lady,' then dine on, or get wrapped up in, your bounty.

By [Margo Pfeiff](#)



"You are looking at one great, big, wild, exotic garden," says Diane Bernard. Actually, she's talking about southern Vancouver Island's coastline. This is where the "Seaweed Lady" and Outer Coast Seaweeds (her company) pickers hand-harvest some of British Columbia's 500 varieties of edible seaweed. From her overflowing bucket, she offers up neon-green sea lettuce that is crisp, fresh, slightly salty. Egregia, an underwater brown-feather-boa of a plant, evokes hints of citrus and caviar.

Seaweed isn't just about the Japanese *nori* wrapped around your sushi anymore. It's woven into your yogawear to soothe your skin, featured in the latest spa treatments and surfacing on top BC menus. Chefs are blanching, sautéing, pickling and roasting veggies fresh from the surf. Seaweed stars in everything from pesto and hummus to a stand-in for martini olives.

Outer Coast harvests seaweeds sustainably. And the green stuff is loaded with vitamins B to K, enzymes, plus anti-inflammatories to soothe what ails you. Europeans have been thalasso "sea" therapy-savvy for years. Bernard's seaweeds end up in spa products free of dyes, animal

by-products and artificial fragrances at Vancouver's Spruce Body Lab, Absolutely Fabulous and Whistler's Four Seasons Hotel.

Now you, too, can stomp along the beach and splash through tidal pools in colourful, hand-painted gumboots with the Seaweed Lady. On a beach 40 minutes west of Victoria, alongside Sooke Harbour House inn, Bernard leads small groups from May until mid-September. Afterwards, the inn's renowned chef, Edward Tuson - who's been slicing and dicing seaweed for decades - whips up a multi-course seaweed tasting menu. You can even get wrapped up in the stuff after dinner for an inner-outer, full-body experience.

Courtesy of the Canadian Tourism Commission

www.outercoastseaweeds.com

www.sea-flora.com

www.sookeharbourhouse.com