

Highway 9 Road Trip

We hit the road again, this time in search of Manitoba's hidden culinary gems en route to Gimli.

by Andrea Danelak

After our journey down Highway 59 yielded some truly impressive fare, we decided to take another trip, this time to the sandy beaches of Gimli in the heart of the Interlake. One crisp spring morning, we loaded up the car with sunscreen, a camera and our appetites, and hit Highway 9 in search of the places that make our province so special.

Just past the city in St. Andrews lies the **Captain Kennedy Museum** and **Maple Grove Tea Room**. Built in 1866 by explorer Captain William Kennedy, this must-see heritage point features a patio and glassed-in sunroom overlooking the river and manicured grounds, where you can enjoy a light lunch, tea and homemade desserts. Turn right off Highway 9 onto River Road. Continue for about eight minutes until you see a large house with a long white picket fence on your right-hand side.

A little further up Highway 9 is the **Garden Path Teahouse**, located right behind the Lower Fort Garden Centre. After browsing the adjacent store full of items for your home and garden, try a soothing cup of tea or a freshly made herbed scone in the delightfully cozy teahouse.

We couldn't resist veering onto Highway 44 to enjoy munchies at the oldest hot dog vendor in Manitoba, local Lockport landmark **Skinner's**. (You can also hit Skinner's by continuing down River Road after visiting the Maple Grove Tea Room.)

After our stop at Skinner's, we resumed our trek up Highway 9. Across the road from the mallard duck statue in Petersfield sits **Sadie's Diner and Lounge**, serving hearty meals and snacks like deep-fried spinach dip. About 11 km north of town is **Prairie Lane Saskatoons** (profiled in this issue's Local Flavours), where the Ritz family sells pre-picked saskatoons, as well as honey, fruit topping and baked goods made with the sweet berry. Call ahead at 204-738-2476 to find out when fresh saskatoons are available.

As you head up the highway, be sure to pay a visit to the **Whytefold Emporium**, situated just five minutes south of Winnipeg Beach on Gimli Road. Famous for its wood-fired pizza and handcrafted crêpes, the emporium stocks antiques, jewellery, locally made arts and crafts, and all things gardening.

Right in Winnipeg Beach near the Highway 229 junction, **Salty's Drive-Inn** offers an unusual twist to roadside snacking: deep-fried mushrooms. You can also try Salty's answer to the Bridge Drive-In's legendary Goog. A mixture of blueberries, bananas, hot fudge and other sugary treats, the Blob is sure to satisfy any sweet tooth.

Dotted along the highway are several places where you can pick up fresh fish. Father and son

From top: Salty's Drive-Inn, home of the Blob; Captain Kennedy Museum; the sign for Kris and Ed Isfeld's freshly-caught fish; deep-fried spinach dip at Sadie's Diner and Lounge; Christine at C.E.S. Sveinson Ltd.

Ed and Kris Isfeld sell pickerel, smoked goldeye and other Lake Winnipeg specialties they catch daily—when we visited around lunchtime, the fish had been caught earlier that morning. Look for the sign advertising fish for sale at the side of the highway in Sandy Hook. A few minutes south of Gimli is **C.E.S. Sveinson Ltd.**, another family-operated venture that distributes most kinds of freshwater fish as well as smoked fish.

When you reach Gimli, stop at the famous Viking statue on the south end of Second Avenue, which pays homage to the area's large Icelandic population, for a photo op. On nearby Centre Street, **Seagulls Restaurant & Lounge** in the Lakeview Resort and Conference Centre offers an unrivaled view of Lake Winnipeg. The hotel is home to charming little shops like **Sandstone Gift Essentials**, too.

Also in the harbour area is the **Gimli Farmers Market**, where local merchants and food producers sell their wares until mid-September.

At the corner of Centre Street and First Avenue, you'll find one of the oldest and most beloved buildings in Gimli, **H.P. Tergesen & Sons**. Continuously operated by the same family since 1899, the store sells everything from beachwear to books to candy. Fans of fair trade products can check out **Fishlips Hemp Shop** further down Centre. And if you need a caffeine fix, pop by the **Kaffe Haus Cappucino Bar**, also close by.

Make sure to bring your appetite to First Avenue, where you can indulge in local favourites like **Europa Restaurant & Deli** for gyros and souvlaki, the **Beach Boy Restaurant** for its famous pickerel burgers and **Brennivins Pizza Hus** for some 'za. Thwart hunger pangs with a visit to **Kris' Fish and Chips**, which boasts all-you-can-eat fish and chips for only \$9.95. Top it off with some deep-fried ice cream for dessert.

Right by the hospital, **Mask Restaurant's** chef Stephan Thierry serves up top-notch traditional breakfast fare—complete with homemade preserves—in the morning and fresh, international cuisine for dinner.

Before you head back to the city, a stop at **Amma's Tearoom and Gift Shop** is a must. With dozens of teas to choose from, all of which are available for purchase in the gift shop, this quaint tearoom is the perfect place to relax on a summer afternoon. Amma's also offers traditional Icelandic meals and desserts, including the delectable—and notoriously tricky-to-make—vinarterta.

These are just a few of our favourite spots in the area. Have any foodie finds on Highway 9 that we might have missed? Share them with us at www.itvwinnipeg.com/dish. ☒

