



(above) Davos, nestled in the Swiss Alps, is a playground for Europe's well-heeled travelers.

DRAMATIC DAVOS

SWISS ALPS SET THE STAGE FOR CULINARY THEATRICS

WRITTEN BY JENNIFER BRADLEY FRANKLIN

From any angle, the Alps are dramatic, and while my only firm knowledge of Swiss cuisine prior to visiting was limited to cheese, I had a feeling that the culinary offerings in Davos would feature delicious drama on almost every plate. What I discovered was a rich appreciation for leveraging the bounty of local—and unique—ingredients to create truly memorable meals.

FOR MY SWISS STAY, I settled in the city's newest and most striking hotel, InterContinental Davos. The brand's newest flagship property—"resort" would be most apt—has a glittering gold facade. Inside, the architects and designers have outdone themselves, creating a space that is, overall, sleek and modern. Yet it has thoughtfully added touches that bring the Alpine landscape in and make 241 rooms and suites, as well as the common areas, feel exceedingly cozy. With three restaurants and a lounge on-site, it's easy to see why worldly travelers with discriminating taste choose this hotel. I fully intended to explore them all.

I hit the ground running, traveling 20 minutes south to visit Europe's highest brewery, BierVision Monstein. The quaint beer outpost operates out of a former dairy, where brewmasters use a special kind of yeast that can ferment at such altitudes. After having a walk around to see beer in various stages of fermentation and tasting a few (the favorite was Monsteiner Capricorn, with its dark color and smoky caramel flavors), it was time for a meal at Matsui, InterContinental's Japanese restaurant (and the only place to get sushi for miles). I was astounded at the beautiful execution of all of the dishes, but the miso soup is the one that stands out.



(above) All rooms at InterContinental Davos boast a view of the Swiss Alps and comfortable furnishings.



The perfectly balanced dashi stock with pillow-soft tofu and deep green seaweed was the ultimate comfort on a cold mountain night.

Exploring the city and surrounding countryside was an adventure in and of itself, since the mountains gave us multiple seasons in just a few days in the Bündlerland region. One spring day it was warm enough to lunch al fresco on one of the hotel's wide sun porches. The next, a crystal clear morning, I skied Parsenn Mountain (both terrifying and exhilarating for my novice sensibilities) and that evening, what can only be described as a blizzard kicked up, dumping more than two feet of powdery snow in just 24 hours. It was like traveling through a dream: totally surreal. One highlight—literally and figuratively—was a mountaintop lunch at Restaurant Weissfluhgipfel. The 360-degree views of the Alps from 9,458 feet above sea level accentuated the flavors of the quintessential Swiss lunch: rösti (a cross between latkes and hash

(center left) BierVision Monstein produces a variety of brews, using a mix of old fashioned techniques and modern technology. (center right) Matsu's Japanese chef uses both imported and local seafood to create his robust sushi menu. (bottom) Capricorn's contemporary approach to Alpine cuisine suits the sleek the interior.



browns), crispy pork schnitzel and capuns, dumplings made from dried meat, wheat flour, eggs and herbs wrapped in Swiss chard and swimming in cream sauce.

On my second night, I tucked into dinner at Capricorn (where, incidentally, they also serve an astounding array of international breakfast dishes), the property's Alpine restaurant. I know it will sound like I have a serious soup obsession, but before being romanced by a dizzying array of fresh seafood, juicy steaks and a robust cheese course, I was drawn in by something truly unusual: hay soup. Served with a glass of Champagne, it was creamy and earthy and quite unlike anything I've ever encountered—in all the best ways.

On my last day in Davos, it felt remiss not to walk through the snow-covered downtown streets

and check out the Kirchner Museum, known for both Expressionist works of art and the quirky building, full of floor-to-ceiling windows and skylights. Gazing at oversized paintings left me thirsty, so I ducked into Kaffee Klatsch, right downtown, for a pool-sized coffee (complete with latte art in the foam) and a waffle drizzled with chocolate syrup and a giant cloud of whipped cream. After the artful morning, it felt only right to visit Schneider's, where one of their housemade chocolate truffles could easily pass for a work of art. At three or more dollars a pop, they are a delicious little splurge—in flavors like pistachio, peppermint and even a chocolate filled with Röteli, a local Swiss cherry liqueur. Insider tip: The friendly staff will happily let you taste one truffle of your choice, gratis.



Hay Soup

Recipe by Matthias Wollschon,
Sous-Chef, InterContinental Davos

Yield: 6 to 8 servings

- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 4 ounces white mushrooms, thinly sliced
- 4 ounces peeled and diced celeriac (celery root)
- 4 ounces chopped leek, white part only
- 4 ounces peeled and diced onions
- 1 clove garlic, halved
- 1 1/4 cups white wine
- 4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) unsalted butter
- 2 cups chicken stock
- 5 cups cream
- 1 scant cup milk
- salt and white pepper to taste
- 1 generous pinch sugar or to taste
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 sprig thyme
- 2 ounces clean, organic hay
- 1/4 cup Philadelphia Cream Cheese

Heat oil in a saucepan over medium heat. Add mushrooms, celeriac, leeks, and onions, and sauté until vegetables are translucent. Add garlic and briefly sauté. Deglaze with white wine and reduce over medium heat until about 2 tablespoons liquid remain. Once reduced, add butter and swirl until melted. Once butter has melted, add stock, bring to a boil and reduce by half. Once reduced add cream, milk, salt and pepper, sugar, bay leaf, thyme, and hay. Stirring constantly, bring mixture to a boil. Simmer mixture over low heat for about 30 minutes. Remove soup from heat and pass it through a fine sieve. Return strained soup to pot, add cream cheese, and blend well with immersion blender. Adjust seasoning and serve.



The Kirchner Museum is an internationally known destination for Expressionistic art.



The culinary crescendo of this visit was at Studio Grigio, on the hotel's top floor (at ten stories, it's considered a skyscraper in Davos). Eight dizzying courses, employing elements of molecular gastronomy but without straying too far from the approachable, were the embodiment of so much of what I loved about Davos in general, and this hotel in particular. A tiny dish of braised oxtail with egg yolk, potato and a wispy crouton was as beautiful as it was comforting; a delicately cooked fillet of pike perch, clay potato and pea purée leveraged ingredients found just nearby; and Iberico pork with a trio of corn in different preparations reminded me that this is a world-class destination where discriminating travelers feel right at home. It was the perfect ending to an astounding and, yes, dramatic experience.



(counter-clockwise from top left) Studio Grigio's captivating culinary style is enhanced by the moody décor. InterContinental Davos' wide porch affords jaw-dropping views, year-round. Lake Davos' pure, glacial water sparkles. Dining at Restaurant Weissfluhgipfel, on the top of Parsenn Mountain, is breathtaking.

Berghaus Gotschnagrat

Gotschnastrasse 19
7250 Klosters Platz
gotschnagrat.ch/

BierVision Monstein

Hauptstrasse 36
Davos Monstein
biervision-monstein.ch/

InterContinental Davos

Baslerstrasse 9
7260 Davos Dorf
ihg.com

Kaffee Klatsch

Promenade 72
7270 Davos Platz

Schneider's

Promenade 68
7270 Davos Platz
schneiders-davos.ch/

