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ONBOARD MAGAZINE FOR CARNIVAL CRUISE LINES GUESTS

GATEWAYS

WHAT TO SEE, WHAT TO DO, & WHERE TO FIND THE BEST BUYS

GATEWAYS

SEAWEED SUPREME

Canada may be part of the Great White North, but if one trend continues, the Vancouver area may come to be called the Great Green North. Chalk it up to seaweed.

You may not realize it, but various types of seaweed are found in everything from toothpaste to ice cream. And in Vancouver, spa therapists are touting the ocean greens' healing benefits.

Like Popeye's spinach, seaweed is good for you. As far back as 1904, French biologist Renee Quinton noted that "one litre of seaweed contains the same concentration of elements found in 10,000 litres of sea water."

Seaweed is high in protein, rich in vitamins – notably A, B2, niacin, B12, C, and D – and virtually fat free. It also contains a number of important minerals, including potassium and iodine which may help to prevent thyroid disease, lower blood pressure, and relieve constipation. In addition, some researchers report that seaweed may counteract toxins known to cause some cancers. That may be one reason that the Japanese, who consume an average of 10 pound of seaweed per person annually, have the lowest rate of breast cancer.

AH, SPA

Many Vancouver spas have developed wraps, scrubs, oils and lotions from various species of the underwater plant. Therapists say the products can help to reduce cellulite, lower cholesterol and balance hormones.

"In layman's terms, seaweed possesses all of the vitamins, nutrients, amino acids, and trace elements our bodies need for healthy functioning at the cellular level," says Wendy Losgar-Cocchia, president, Absolute Spa Group.

Local seaweeds, moreover are particularly healthy, says **Diane Bernard, owner of Outer Coast Seaweeds**. Locally known as "The Seaweed Lady", she operates from Sooke on the southwest coast of Vancouver Island. "British Columbia has more than 800 species. In addition, our clean, fast-moving coastal waters contain numerous nutrients and seaweed acts like a sponge".

At **Outer Coast Seaweeds**, guests can choose from a smorgasbord of products and treatments, including an Iridaea Cream Facial Mask that blends rainbow seaweed with sea lettuce and cleanses and energizes skin.

Rockweed Exfoliant, made from wild seaweeds and ocean mud, also is said to provide a gentle, deep cleansing that may relieve stress, chronic fatigue and dermatological conditions.

In nearby Whistler, The Spa at Four Seasons Resort also uses Outer Coast Seaweeds. "By using wild seaweeds, rockweed, ocean mud, British Columbia marine salts, and Vancouver Island glacial clay, we are giving our clients a truly "Outer Coast experience," says Jennifer Simms, spa director.

Simms offers the Sea Kelp Soak as a treatment before a massage. Also popular, she says, is the Outer Coast Seaweed Nourishing Alaria Body Wrap, which combines glacial clay with a wild seaweed called Alaria.

Bernard says that scientists are only just beginning to fathom the far-reaching benefits provided by seaweed. "Some," she says, "see it as aiding diabetics patients and helping burn victims to heal."

Good-tasting, good-wearing and good for you. What more could you want? Popeye may stick to his spinach – but don't forget to ask for the Seaweed Lady's seaweed, especially if you're visiting Vancouver. **KR**

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