

With Adele as our guide, we followed a path from her cabin through fields of wild grass which opened up to an ocean beach full of driftwood and other evidence of ocean life. Looking out from the beach across the strait of Juan de Fuca, we could see the shores of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada situating us in our broader global intercultural space. For another afternoon excursion, we put on our hiking shoes to venture along the river which fed the fields downstream and picked blackberries which are abundant throughout the region. Yet another treat awaited our senses when we visited a lavender farm. Remembering that we were just a few miles away from a rainforest just on the other side of the mountains, it was quite miraculous to discover these fields of lavender which traditionally grow in warm, sunny climates.

As we drove through Sequim after our afternoon excursions, we tucked into the best bakery and butcher in town to gather ingredients for the meals we were cooking for each other. It was through this combination of experiences that we imagined together the concept of “meals of place.” One of the planned menus for this retreat was ratatouille. Each of us had chosen a meal from our culture of origin or one of the cultures with which we identified closely. It so happens that the Mediterranean vegetables and herbs that one would find in the south of France and are ingredients for ratatouille are also grown in Sequim -- the sunbelt of the Olympica peninsula. Going forward this idea of grounding ourselves with meals of place as we arrive to a new place has become a ritual for our retreats. This idea has also pointed us to thinking about other ways that we can become more grounded in a given local.