

Ivar's of Seattle.

During Christmas vacation, we took a trip to Seattle to see the Nutcracker ballet, and to enjoy some time in the city. You might not know a lot about Seattle, but if you Google it, you will see that it is a stunningly beautiful area, and a very cosmopolitan city. We stayed in a hotel, right downtown, and fortunately were on the thirtieth floor, so we had an impressive view of the city. After leaving our luggage in the hotel room, we decided to go for a walk around the center of town, and find a place to have lunch. We ended up choosing Ivar's restaurant, which is right on the water. It has been around for a long time, and is famous for its chowder. Chowder is a thick, creamy soup that has clams in it, though sometimes it can just have potatoes. Ivar's chowder is so popular, that it can be bought all over the Northwest in supermarkets. As Seattle is a prime spot* for seafood, we all had fish. While we were eating, our waiter gave the kids a mask each, called Ivar's diver. It goes with the sea theme, and has been Ivar's mascot since the 1960's. It was a sunny, Winter day, and we enjoyed sitting by the windows and watching the boats come and go. On such a day, this is the place to be. There is the view of the water, and also of the islands on the Puget sound, with ferries making their regular trips. We had over an hour before we had to be at the theater, so, when we finished our meal, we walked out onto the deck to have a look around. There were tables with people having lunch. They had company. There was a huge gathering of seagulls that were making a tremendous racket* begging for crumbs and leftovers. I was impressed at their size; they're much bigger than I realized. And they were quite aggressive as well. We had deliberately taken some leftover fries with us to feed them. My children threw them up into the air, over the water. These strong, hungry birds whipped* through the air, and ate most of the food before it even landed on the water. It was like watching an acrobatic display. And these birds are on to a good thing*. They are a permanent part of Ivar's because they know that there is a constant supply of food coming from the restaurant. Some people visit Ivar's just to feed the seagulls. Infact, I think that they would be a better mascot than Ivar's diver.

Related vocabulary: a prime spot/ location, a racket, to whip (through).

1. That place is a prime spot for a restaurant. It will be visible and accessible to pedestrians and drivers. We should get lots of business if we have it in that location.
2. What a racket! What a horrible noise! You don't call that music do you? It's awful!
3. The wind whipped through the building. It was so cold and uncomfortable. * Whip is both a noun and a verb. A whip is a nasty, long, leather device to control and subdue animal, and, in the past, slaves. So, here it describes the 'sting' of the wind, as if it is punishment.

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