

Belltown & Seattle Center

BELLTOWN | SEATTLE CENTER

Neighborhood Top Five

1 Chihuly Garden & Glass (p82) Pondering the shimmering glass art that sprang from the creative mind of Dale Chihuly in Chihuly Garden & Glass underneath the Space Needle.

2 Olympic Sculpture Park (p85) Watching the sun slip behind faraway mountains from the grassy slopes of the Olympic Sculpture Park.

3 Space Needle (p80) Going to the top of the Space Needle in the footsteps of millions of others – just because it's there.

4 Bars of 2nd Ave (p91) Stringing together an elongated bar crawl in the dive-y and not-so-dive-y bars of 2nd Ave.

5 Museum of Pop Culture (p84) Plugging in a guitar at the Sound Lab and pretending you're Jimi Hendrix.



For more detail of this area see Map p238 ➔

Explore: Belltown & Seattle Center

Belltown's compact, walkable core is long on dining and entertainment but relatively short on daytime attractions. The exception is the Olympic Sculpture Park, an art garden that anchors the neighborhood and snares visitors strolling between Pike Place Market and the Seattle Center.

Capitol Hillers might disagree, but Belltown's main nightlife zone (1st and 2nd Aves between Blanchard and Battery Sts) is the best place in the city to string together a bar-hopping evening out. A few of the grunge-era landmarks are still in business, but these days distorted guitars compete with the chatter of the cocktail crowd. Whatever your fashion affiliations, Belltown's after-dark scene is hip and noisy and rarely stands still. Watch out for drunken hipsters and sidewalk vomit.

The Seattle Center, site of the highly successful 1962 World's Fair, is Belltown in reverse; sights and museums abound, but you'll struggle to find any memorable food. The solution: spend most of your sightseeing time in the Seattle Center (Museum of Pop Culture, Chihuly Garden and Glass, and the Space Needle merit a day between them) and escape to adjacent Belltown for food and drinks.

Entertainment-wise, the Seattle Center offers plenty of sit-down plays, concerts and films. The McCaw Hall is home of the Seattle Opera and the Pacific Northwest Ballet, plus there's a cinema, a children's theater and a regional theater in the complex. It's also a fun place to just hang out, especially in summer when alfresco events and street performers take over.

Local Life

- ➔ **Serious Pie** (p88) It's all communal tables at Tom Douglas' riotously popular pizza restaurant, where you can discuss weird pizza toppings, microbrews and where Seattle's culinary maestro might open up next.
- ➔ **2nd Ave bars** The tight cluster of bars and clubs on the stretch of 2nd Ave between Battery and Blanchard Sts is about all that's left of un-gentrified Belltown. Jump into the nocturnal melee before it's too late.

Getting There & Away

- ➔ **Bus** Nearly all Belltown buses go up and down 3rd Ave and originate in downtown.
- ➔ **Monorail** The famous train in the sky runs every 10 minutes between downtown's Westlake Center, at Pine St and 4th Ave, and the Seattle Center. Tickets cost \$2.25/1 per adult/child. The journey takes two minutes.
- ➔ **Walking** Lacking busy arterial roads, Belltown is a highly walkable neighborhood and easily reachable on foot from downtown, Pike Place Market, the Seattle Center and Lower Queen Anne.

Lonely Planet's Top Tip

Many people – including a lot of locals – consider the Space Needle to be an expensive tourist trap. If you're on a budget, you might be better off investing your money in tickets for the Museum of Pop Culture (p84) or Chihuly Garden and Glass (p82). You can get a *free* nearly-as-good view of Seattle from nearby Kerry Park (p99).

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Top Pot Hand-Forged Doughnuts (p86)
- ➔ Tavalàta (p88)
- ➔ Serious Pie (p88)
- ➔ Macrina (p86)

For reviews, see p86 ➔

Best Drinking & Nightlife

- ➔ Rendezvous (p91)
- ➔ Shorty's (p91)
- ➔ Five Point Café (p92)
- ➔ Bedlam (p91)

For reviews, see p91 ➔

Best Live Music

- ➔ Crocodile (p93)
- ➔ Dimitriou's Jazz Alley (p93)
- ➔ McCaw Hall (p93)
- ➔ Cinerama (p93)

For reviews, see p93 ➔