

# Destination Pacific Northwest

## FAST FACTS

Pacific Northwest population: 14.5 million  
Regional unemployment rate: 4.8%  
Height of Mt Rainier, the highest peak in the Cascades: 14410ft (4392m)  
Number of extinct volcanoes within city limits: two (in Bend, OR, and Portland, OR)  
Approximate number of breweries in the Pacific Northwest: 220

You hold in your hands a guide to one of the most glorious regions in the US. From the early European settlers who first began to trickle into the West 200 years ago to today's flow of modern-day explorers seeking that has-it-all haven, the Pacific Northwest has always exerted a strong pull on the adventurous of spirit. Mention the Northwest to folks outside this area and you'll start a conversation on the region's lush forests, snow-dusted volcanic mountains and amazing waterways and coastlines. Then you might gab about the vibrant economy, up-and-down unemployment rates and computer industry (that's the 'Silicon Forest' to the uninitiated). And certainly you'll discuss the rain (though it doesn't rain here as much as in Florida or Louisiana, believe it or not!). Locals don't mind, though, since it keeps everyone else from moving in, buying up cheap real estate and plopping down in their backyard. (Actually it might already a bit late for that.)

But grey skies, green forests, high-tech industries and cheap housing aside, there's so much more on offer in the Pacific Northwest. For metro lovers, there are the sophisticated cities of Seattle, Portland and Vancouver. We're talking top-notch museums, refined culture and upscale cuisine, all wrapped in dazzlingly beautiful skylines and surrounded by river, sound or strait. World-class attractions? There's Seattle's Pike Place Market, Portland's many picturesque gardens and Vancouver's Stanley Park. Good food? The long coast means a bounty of fresh seafood, and fertile inland soils mean local – and often organic – grains, meats and vegetables. And of course there's a wealth of exciting restaurants to prepare and serve it all. How about wine? Yes, there's wine, and it comes in spades. Washington and Oregon are in the top three wine-producing US states (after neighboring California). And it's first-class stuff, too – try the local superstar, pinot noir.

Did we mention the possibilities for outdoor recreation? There are *heaps* of them – and they're all so damn accessible! Seattle is a ferry-ride (or kayaking trip, of you fancy one) away from cycling on serene islands, and glacier-ridden Mt Rainier looms not far from the city. Portland is an hour or two from surfing on the coast, kiteboarding on the Columbia River Gorge and skiing on Mt Hood. In Bend, Oregon – probably the region's premier outdoor city – you can hike (or kayak) in the morning, ski (or rock climb) in the afternoon and golf (or mountain bike) into the evening. Not bad for a day's outing. Vancouver is surrounded by verdant forests, lofty mountains and deep-blue waterways, offering great hiking and water sports.

Perhaps the coolest thing about the Pacific Northwest, however, are the laid-back lifestyle, the casual vibe and the independent spirit that define this unique region. Sure, there's a certain stressful quality to the bigger cities, but they're hardly as frantic or taxing as places like New York or Los Angeles. People are generally friendly, progressive and open, especially if you buy them a microbrew at one of the numerous local brewpubs. There's

not much of a dress code; with the weather and outdoors so ‘in your face,’ you can wear Gore-Tex to a fancy restaurant or jeans to the opera and fit right in. Grungy hipsters, nerdy tech-heads, responsible dog-owners and organic gardeners all abound. Hanging out at a coffee shop for hours, drinking the Northwest’s premium java and accessing wi-fi on a laptop is so common that you’ll wonder if anyone around here has a *real* job. For most who settle in this region, quality of life matters more than a full bank account or a glamorous facelift.

But a laid-back outlook doesn’t mean Northwesterners don’t care what’s going on around them. Quite the opposite: they’re highly attuned to the economy and the political bubble of the region, and whatever is going on outside of it. People in the region’s major cities tend to lean towards the political left, boasting progressive views and perhaps being part of an activist group, while smaller towns are much more conservative (but still friendly). Almost everyone is quick to voice their own opinion, whether it’s the spotted owls versus ‘forest management’ controversy or personal rights – like Oregon’s famous ‘death with dignity’ act – versus conservative ethics. People are deeply concerned about their environment and what’s happening to affect their valued and independent lifestyle here in the Northwest.

This region is also vibrant place in terms of ethnicity. Seattle has attracted a large variety of peoples, and claims a varied palate that includes African American, Hispanic and folk from various Asian cultures. In Portland, while many locals lament the city’s white-bread status – at least compared to its sister cities in the Northwest – the city does actually have a fair share of the rainbow, with over 20% of the population possessing non-European blood. British Columbia is Canada’s quintessential melting pot of cultures, creeds and ethnicities, making the province as varied in terms of culture as it is in terms of ecology. Minorities here include a large percentage of Chinese and those from the subcontinent.

Dandy as things are in the Pacific Northwest, not everything is perfect. Urban sprawl is a major issue around Seattle, Portland and Vancouver, which have attracted so many transplants from other states (especially California) that they’ve grown like weeds in the past decade or two. Illegal drug problems do exist, especially methamphetamine abuse. Plenty of people smoke marijuana. And recent drought years, climate change-related or not, have affected the ski industry, broken record temperatures, intensified wildfires, affected coastal whale habitats and killed salmon in too-warm rivers. These are problems that affect many high-density areas, and unfortunately the Northwest hasn’t been able to escape all these metropolitan plagues.

Yet the Pacific Northwest’s highly livable reputation remains solid (and well deserved), and while the cost of living might be slowly increasing over time, what residents get in return is undeniably worth the trouble. On a clear day, the inspiring spectacle of the outdoors – such as that inspirational volcanic peak – is visible even from the biggest cities. That nature-loving, independent spirit is all around in this often quirky region that tends to shy from the traditional mainstream. Perhaps it’s a flashback to those resilient pioneers, fueled by the determination to push ever further into the unknown. Though today’s Northwest populations tend to be driven by espresso rather than the desire to chart new territory, there remains a culture founded on restless idealism and the sense that there’s still more prospecting to do. Indeed, you’re expected to delve into the outdoors

and scout on your own, so remember to pack some hiking boots and an adventurous attitude. And remember that no matter how long you're here and how much you end up doing, there will always be something left to explore the next time around – handy, since there's no doubt you'll soon want to come back to the Pacific Northwest.

# Getting Started

The Pacific Northwest is an easy, fun and scenic place to travel. Pick a theme if you want – camping, regional festivals, a microbrewery tour, waterfall hikes, crossing all the US–Canadian borders – or combine several. Having your own car makes life much, much easier, especially when exploring those off the beaten paths, of which there are many. Just keep in mind that summertime requires some planning ahead for long ferry lines, full hotels and busy destinations – everyone else wants in on the fun too.

## WHEN TO GO

What you want to do should determine when to visit the Pacific Northwest. Summer (generally Memorial Day to Labor Day) is high season, when masses of tourists descend on the beaches, mountains and waterways to camp, hike, swim and generally be outdoors wearing skimpy clothing. Accommodation prices tends to head north at this time as well, but you can't beat the clear skies and warm temperatures. There's a plethora of outdoor festivals, everything is lush and folks are happy to see the sun for long periods.

Spring and fall can be the best times for some places – the crowds disperse (especially after school starts), prices go down, there's less competition for campsites and hotels, and fall colors emerge or springtime wildflowers bloom. Some services (say, raft rentals or ferry schedules) might be more limited, but still available. Spring weather can be undependable, but Indian summer tends to last through October.

Winter tends to mean overcast days, cool temperatures and plenty of rain. It's a great time for indoor cultural activities in cities, such as music, theater and dance. Outdoors, ice-skating and fishing are possible, but the big draw is downhill skiing – there are some awesome slopes in the region, like Whistler in British Columbia, Crystal Mountain in Washington and Mt Bachelor in Oregon. And winter action doesn't get any bigger than Vancouver's 2010 Winter Olympics.

## COSTS & MONEY

Traveling costs in the Pacific Northwest depend on you, of course. Accommodations are the biggest cost, ranging from \$10 to \$18 for a comfortable campsite to \$60 for a cheap motel room, and \$120 or more for a nice hotel or B&B room. Avoid public holidays and summertime for the lowest rates (though some snow destinations may cost just as much in winter). Fix your own food (many hotel rooms have kitchenettes) to save on restaurant meals – a good choice for families. Many markets have cheap takeout also.

See Climate Charts (p410) for more information.

## HOW MUCH?

Cup of coffee \$1.50

Midrange motel room \$80

Dinner for two at a nice restaurant \$60

Movie ticket \$10

## DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT

- Ear plugs – useful in any hotel anywhere.
- Wet-weather gear – rain jackets, gum boots and umbrellas.
- Mosquito repellent – essential for summer camping.
- Swimsuit – hot springs, pools, beaches, rivers and lakes.
- Binoculars – spotted owls, humpback whales, the Seattle Mariners...
- Bottle openers – to get all those microbrews and wine bottles open.

Car rental rates start from about \$150 to \$175 per week, depending on the location, dates and vehicle. The best bus route choices are between bigger cities. Car ferries in Washington and British Columbia can be pricey, so check ahead of time if you plan on much island-hopping. See the Transportation chapter (p416) for more information. Parking can be costly in downtown areas, and parking at some hiking trailheads requires a day-use permit of about \$5.

Some museums have admission-free or donation days once a week or month, so check their websites or with local visitors centers.

## TRAVELING RESPONSIBLY

If anywhere in the USA can be called 'green' it's the Pacific Northwest. Recycling is big, composting is hot and cycling to work is cool. There are hybrid cars on practically every corner, solar-powered parking meters in Portland and biodiesel whale-watching tours in the San Juan Islands. As a visitor to the area, you can also make a difference.

While in Portland, don't miss the world's largest independent bookstore: Powell's Books ([www.powells.com](http://www.powells.com)).

### Getting to the Pacific Northwest

Airplanes are a major polluter. To avoid flying into the area, consider taking the train or bus. Seattle, Portland and Vancouver all have good networks; for details, check out [www.greyhoundbuses.com](http://www.greyhoundbuses.com) ([www.greyhound.ca](http://www.greyhound.ca) in Canada) and [www.amtrak.com](http://www.amtrak.com). International flights are pretty much unavoidable, so consider contributing to a carbon offset organization like [www.carbonfund.org](http://www.carbonfund.org), [www.terrapass.com](http://www.terrapass.com), [www.nativeenergy.com](http://www.nativeenergy.com) and [www.drivenatural.org](http://www.drivenatural.org), who transform your money into support for sustainable practices.

### Local travel

Long-distance buses and trains are the best sustainable choice. In big cities, local bus networks are good and biking is a great option (rentals abound). And if you do need a car, think about patronizing [www.flexcar.com](http://www.flexcar.com), a car-sharing program available in Portland and Seattle; try [www.zipcar.com](http://www.zipcar.com) for Vancouver. Some car-rental agencies offer hybrid vehicles, so ask.

If you can handle sharing a ride with strangers, check [www.craigslist.com](http://www.craigslist.com), a popular international online bulletin board offering regional rideshares (look under 'community'). Folks here are looking for people to carpool and share the cost of gas.

Go to [www.dailycandy.com/seattle](http://www.dailycandy.com/seattle) for a dose of everything Seattle has to offer in the worlds of fashion, lifestyle, art and beyond.

### Accommodations

Camping is both 'sustainable' and the quintessential summer experience. Yurts are awesome, and many Pacific Northwest campgrounds and resorts have rentals (see p298). Hostels are another green option since their high-density dormitories use less space and energy.

But staying at hotels often can't be helped, of course, but you still have options. Try asking for your linens and towels not be changed for a few days. Utilize only one trash bin in your room to reduce the amount of bin liners wasted. Turn off lights, TV and air con when you leave. Ask the managers if the hotel recycles and composts. Do they use compact fluorescent light bulbs? Less toxic cleaning products? Are they signed up for wind power? And consider not using those inefficient travel-sized sundries.

Portland boasts a couple of hotels with excellent sustainable practices:

**Ace Hotel** (Portland, OR; p232) Remodeled with eco-friendly materials like US Army jacket fabric couches and reclaimed timber furniture.

**Hawthorne Hostel** (Portland, OR; p233) Eco-roof, recycling program, bike rentals, use of eco-products and 100% renewable energy power. Discounts to those traveling by bicycle.

## FESTIVAL & EVENTS CALENDAR

### January–February

**Chinese New Year** (Vancouver, BC) Vancouver's large Chinese population has their say with parades, activities, prizes, dragon dances, traditional art and, of course, plenty of great Chinese food.

**Oregon Shakespeare Festival** (Ashland, OR; p319) Tens of thousands of theater fans party with the Bard at this nine-month-long festival (that's right), highlighted by world-class plays and Elizabethan drama.

### March–April

**Hood River Valley Blossom Festival** (Hood River, OR; p262) Celebrating the fertile Hood River Valley's amazing fruit bounty with food, wine, crafts and a 47-mile festival tour route also known as the Fruit Loop.

**Spring Whale-Watching Week** (Oregon coast, OR) Spot the gray whale spring migration anywhere along the Pacific Coast, but around Depoe Bay it's semi-organized with docents and special viewpoints.

### May

**Northwest Folklife Festival** (Seattle, WA; p93) This festival is rejoiced with hundreds of musicians, artists and performers from all over the world.

**Victoria Day** (Victoria, BC; p385) Originally in honor of Queen Victoria's birthday, this Canadian holiday now celebrates the current sovereign's birthday (and unofficial start of the summer season) with parades and fireworks.

### June

**Portland Rose Festival** (Portland, OR; p232) Music concerts, floral parades, children's events, carnival rides, tall sailing ships, dragon-boat races, the naval fleet, fireworks and a half-million spectators.

**Britt Festival** (Jacksonville, OR; p323) Outdoor summer music celebration featuring world-class jazz, folk, country, and classical music artists, including some mighty big names.

### July–August

**Oregon Brewers Festival** (Portland, OR; p232) Enjoy Portland's prime summer weather at this fun beer festival, where over 50,000 microbrew lovers eat, drink and generally whoop it up.

**Seafair** (Seattle, WA; p93) Three-week party that includes the arrival of the naval fleet, hydroplane races, a torchlight parade and plenty of music.

### September

**Pendleton Round-Up** (Pendleton, OR; p334) Country music, dances, art shows, a Native American powwow, bronco-breaking and western pageantry preside here, one of the country's most famous rodeos.

**Bumbershoot** (Seattle, WA; p93) Seattle's biggest arts and cultural event boasts two dozen stages and hundreds of musicians, artists, theater troupes and writers.

### October

**Oktoberfest** (Leavenworth, WA) Oktoberfest in Leavenworth, where men in boyish shorts and vests eat, drink and dance.

**Vancouver International Film Festival** (Vancouver, BC; p367) Highly regarded film festival screening some 300 international films and documentaries from over 50 countries.

### November–December

**Victorian Christmas** (Jacksonville, OR) A Christmas past; witness a community tree lighting, Victorian ball, Father Christmas parade, carollers and town criers.

**New Year's Eve** (Seattle, WA) Washington's ground zero for the new year is the Space Needle, where revelers dress up, countdown and drink champagne as fireworks go off.

## Restaurants

Plenty of restaurants in the Pacific Northwest use local, organic and seasonal produce, along with 'natural' meats. For a general guide, check [www.eatwellguide.org](http://www.eatwellguide.org). All three major cities in the region have at least a few eco-minded eateries:

**Tilth** (Seattle, WA; p100)

**Laughing Planet** (Portland, OR; p234)

**Raincity Grill** (Vancouver, BC; p370)

## Responsible Travel Links

There are various organizations that identify tourist facilities such as hotels, restaurants and tour operators by a series of sustainable-travel criteria – check [www.sustainabletravel.com](http://www.sustainabletravel.com). And finally, if you're looking to volunteer at an organic farm, see [www.organicvolunteers.com](http://www.organicvolunteers.com) and [www.woofusa.org](http://www.woofusa.org).

## TRAVEL LITERATURE

Rained out for a few days? Read an adventure before the sun comes out again.

Jack Kerouac's *Desolation Angels* was written during a two-month spell as a fire lookout on Desolation Peak in the North Cascade Mountains. An autobiographical novel dealing with psychological struggles and disenchantments with Buddhism.

*Echoes of Fury: The Eruption of Mount St Helens and the Lives it Changed Forever* by Frank Parchman is a captivating tale that follows the lives of eight people whose lives were changed by the eruption on May 18, 1980. Suspenseful, thrilling and heart breaking.

*The Forest Lover* by Susan Vreeland tells of ground-breaking Canadian painter Emily Carr's early 1900s travels through the Native American lands, seeking to paint indigenous art and traditions before they died out.

*The Good Rain: Across Time and Terrain in the Pacific Northwest*, by *New York Times* correspondent and Pulitzer Prize winner Timothy Egan, gives a fantastic insight into the Northwest and its people.

## INTERNET RESOURCES

**Lonely Planet** ([www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com)) The nexus of the world between planning and travel.

**Oregon.gov** ([www.oregon.gov](http://www.oregon.gov)) Oregon's official site, complete with welcome by the esteemed governor.

**Oregon Tourism Commission** ([www.traveloregon.com](http://www.traveloregon.com)) Dizzying number of suggestions about what to do in Oregon – this pretty much covers it all.

**Seattle Tourism** ([www.seattle.gov](http://www.seattle.gov)) The emerald city's official site, in 26 different languages! Click on the 'Visiting' tab.

**Tourism British Columbia** ([www.hellobc.com](http://www.hellobc.com)) Official tourism site of British Columbia, with its own little blog section.

**United States Forest Service** ([www.fs.fed.us/r6](http://www.fs.fed.us/r6)) Recreational possibilities, campsite descriptions, weather links, permit information, maps, volunteering . . .

**Washington State Tourism** ([www.experiencewa.com](http://www.experiencewa.com)) Look up information on any significant town or city in Washington.

Check out [www.portlandpicks.com](http://www.portlandpicks.com) for Portland-centric life and style articles.

# Itineraries

## CLASSIC ROUTES

### HIGHWAY 101 – LAND'S EDGE TOUR

Two Weeks

In British Columbia, a stretch of Hwy 101 forms the **Sunshine Coast** (p379), a getaway accessible only by ferry. Skip way south to **Olympia** (p132), where 101 circles the Olympic Peninsula before heading south.

**Port Townsend** (p145) makes a fun stop before reaching **Lake Crescent** (p140) and its great vistas. Nearby are the mineral waters of **Sol Duc Hot Springs** (p141). Just south (but a long drive around) is the **Hoh Rain Forest** (p142), with its short but magical Hall of Moss Trail. Back on 101, enjoy the wild ocean scenery before reaching **Kalaloch Lodge** (p145); stay here for an exceptional dining and overnight experience. Further south, beautiful **Lake Quinault** (p142) is a scenic glacial lake with more resorts.

Once you cross into Oregon, **Astoria** (p290) features historical attractions. Enjoy the awesome scenery of **Three Capes Drive** (p296), then take a whale-watching excursion at **Depoe Bay** (p299). Newport's first-rate **Oregon Coast Aquarium** (p299) is fantastic, and the **Oregon Dunes** (p305) are unique. **Cape Blanco** (p311) juts way westward and offers exhilarating views. **Gold Beach** (p312) is renowned for its Rogue River fishing, while south of here is Oregon's most magnificent coastal scenery.



Rimming the Pacific Northwest coast is picturesque Hwy 101, a link in the world's longest highway system (the Pan-American), and offering breathtaking ocean vistas, numerous state parks, whale-watching and endless camping and hiking possibilities. This trip is about 700 miles, not counting the gap between the Sunshine Coast and Washington.



## SUMMER WILDLIFE SAFARI – PNW STYLE

Two Weeks

Start by scanning for orcas and minke whales from **Lime Kiln Point State Park** (p123), on San Juan Island in Washington. If you're lucky, you might also spot them while on ferry rides around Puget Sound. A bit east, the **Upper Skagit River Valley** (p167) is the nesting site of up to 20 bald eagles – but you'll see many more in winter. Southwards is **Mt Rainier** (p179), home to endearing marmots and pikas, who like the high altitudes of the Cascade Range (as do black bears).

On the Oregon Coast, **Yaquina Head Outstanding Natural Area** (p300) has some of the region's best viewpoints for shorebirds and various pinnipeds, along with some prime tide pools. Grey whales migrate between Alaska and Mexico from December to June, though you can spot resident pods all year round in **Depoe Bay** (p299). For guaranteed sea lion sightings, stop at touristy **Sea Lion Caves** (p302). Roosevelt elk hang out a bit further south at **Dean Creek Elk Viewing Area** (p307).

Inland and to the east, bird-watchers shouldn't miss the **Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuges** (p332), which support up to two million waterfowl during peak spring and fall migrations. Hundreds of bald eagles come here from November to February, but you might spot a few outside winter too.

For pronghorn antelope, your best bet is near the southeastern corner of Oregon, at **Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge** (p352) – if you look hard enough, you might spot some bighorn sheep as well. Wild mustangs have inhabited the nearby **Steens Mountain** (p3510) area for hundreds of years. Finally, just a bit north is **Malheur National Wildlife Refuge** (p350), with more top-notch bird-watching; in spring, Sandhill cranes are a highlight.

Animal lovers have plenty to see in the Pacific Northwest, whose thick forests, alpine mountains and long shoreline offer sanctuary to countless birds, large mammals and marine life. Here's just a taste of what the region has to offer; this general itinerary covers about 1100 miles.



## PACIFIC NORTHWEST GRAND TOUR

Six Weeks

Just want to hit the highlights? Then here's where you should go. **Vancouver's** (p355) ethnic attractions and parks are a must, as are the **Southern Gulf Islands** (p404). For European charm there's no beating **Victoria** (p381). On Vancouver Island, **Tofino** (p399) has great surfing, and for rustic beaches there's **Cape Scott Provincial Park** (p403). Ski-hounds should head to **Whistler** (p376), while the **Sunshine Coast** (p379) makes a great getaway.

In Washington, you can't miss scenic and top-notch **Seattle** (p80). In the San Juans there's beautiful **Orcas Island** (p125), but for the definitive wilderness experience head to **North Cascades National Park** (p168). On the Olympic Peninsula the **Hoh Rain Forest** (p142) boasts a unique ecosystem. **Olympia** (p132) might possibly be the coolest town in Washington, with stunningly gorgeous **Mt Rainier National Park** (p179) not far away. For a vaguely surreal Bavarian experience be sure to hit **Leavenworth** (p191), and for an attractive, laid-back town with awesome wineries head way east to **Walla Walla** (p213).

There's no escaping the attractions in **Portland** (p220) – and you won't want to. Just east are the grand vistas of the **Columbia River Gorge** (p258), while nearby **Mt Hood** (p269) is a must for hiking and the historic Timberline Lodge. To the south, expanding **Bend** (p278) is the ultimate sports town, with nearly limitless outdoor recreational activities. For supreme scenery and geologic wonders there's **Crater Lake National Park** (p285). Shakespeare aficionados beeline to Ashland's famous **Oregon Shakespeare Festival** (p319). Nearby **Jacksonville** (p323) is quaintly historic and worth a visit. Dazzling mountain scenery is on tap at **Steens Mountain** (p351), while just east the **Alvord Desert** (p351) has an equally stunning landscape. Finally there's the grandeur (and seafood cuisine) of the **Oregon Coast** (p288).



The best of the Pacific Northwest means sophisticated cities nestled on pretty waterways, a spectacular volcanic mountain chain, fantastic hiking opportunities and grand scenery all around. From lush islands to eccentric small towns to stunning desert formations, this tour takes it all in – but doing everything might require driving some 2000 miles, so pick and choose.

## ISLAND HOPPING

### MERRY GO AROUND THE SAN JUANS

One Week

Washington's San Juans are an archipelago of hundreds of islands covering some 750 sq miles. Only about 40 are inhabited, and just four are accessible by public ferry. Three of these islands bring thousands of vacationers every year, but all have managed to keep a serene atmosphere and distinct character.

**San Juan Island** (p122) has the best tourist facilities of the islands, along with the archipelago's only sizeable town, Friday Harbor. **Lime Kiln Point State Park** (p123) has prime whale-watching shores; in June, keep a look out for killer or minke whales feasting on salmon runs. To the north is the English Camp of the **San Juan Island National Historical Park** (p123), with old British military facilities and earthwork fortifications and, on clear days, great mountain views.

The largest of the islands, **Orcas Island** (p125) is probably the most beautiful – and also the poshest. It's laced with fancy homes and resort communities, and the lack of a central town gives it an exclusive neighborhood feel. Stay, or just grab a mud bath, at the swanky **Rosario Resort & Spa** (p126). For less money, check out **Moran State Park** (p126), which offers camping, fishing, hiking and mountain biking. **Mt Constitution** (p126), the highest point in the archipelago, is also here, and features some of the finest views in Washington.

**Lopez Island** (p129) is the most peaceful island, with friendly locals and pastoral charm. Don't expect too many tourist services – agriculture and farming are the main focus here. The mostly flat island is made for cycling, and there's little vehicular traffic; bike rentals (or kayaks) are available at the marina.

Tropical they're not, but you can still have a blast on the San Juan Islands. Hiking, biking and whale-watching are a few possibilities, as is simply taking in some relaxed island rhythms. Expect to cover around 120 miles on this hop, including a loop around Lopez Island.



## VANCOUVER ISLAND ADVENTURE

10 Days

Start your adventure in lovely **Victoria** (p381), a cosmopolitan city with a variety of ethnic cultures – yet maintaining a touch of old Britain. You can wander through old-world streets and stroll through worthwhile museums, all the while enjoying the city’s nicely restored 19th-century architecture. Can’t-miss attractions include the world-famous **Butchart Gardens** (p392), a few miles north of town, and high tea at the grand **Empress Hotel** (p388).

Just south of Victoria is the little hamlet of **Sooke** (p393), at the western tip of Vancouver Island. All around are recreational highlights like beachcombing, swimming and hiking. Directly north about 50 miles is **Chemainus** (p394), a town boasting dozens of artsy outdoor murals painted on city buildings – a big tourist draw. Heading west you’ll eventually reach the spectacularly located town of **Tofino** (p399), where you can go kayaking, explore gorgeous islands and spot marine life like gray whales. Nearby is **Pacific Rim National Park Reserve** (p397), home to rain forests, crashing coastal surf, adventurous islands and amazing hiking opportunities.

At the heart of the island lies **Strathcona Provincial Park** (p402), Vancouver’s largest park and BC’s oldest protected area. It’s a paradise for fishing, hiking and camping fans, and boasts Canada’s highest waterfall. There’s more whale-watching toward the northern end of Victoria Island, at **Telegraph Cove** (p402), a village mostly built over the water on wooden pilings; spotting orcas is a highlight here. Finally, head to land’s end at **Cape Scott Provincial Park** (p403) and the surrounding area to explore the island’s most remote and pristine beaches. Self-sufficient outdoor lovers have miles of challenging trails and backcountry camping opportunities at this isolated park – and the chance to get away from it all.

Explore BC’s premiere island, boasting such gems as lovely Victoria, rich with history, architecture and gardens. Outdoor enthusiasts will love the exceptional hiking and wildlife-viewing opportunities, while natural beauty abounds around every corner. You’ll cover over 700 miles on this adventure, including some backtracking.



## TAILORED TRIPS

### MICROBREWERIES

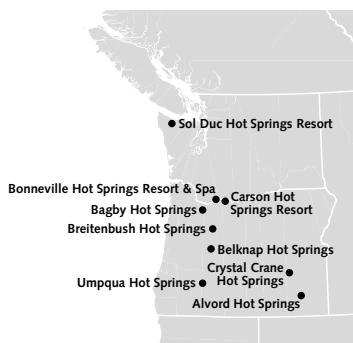
Beer-lovers have hit the jackpot in the Pacific Northwest, which boasts one of the world's highest density of microbreweries. Start quaffing in Vancouver at **Granville Island Brewing** (p364), Canada's first microbrewery – opened in 1984. Now head south to Seattle for a pint at **Hale's Ales Brewery, Pike Pub & Brewery** and **Elysian Brewing Co** (p101) – all with very tasty options. Outside the emerald city, try award-winning **Boundary Bay Brewery** (p112) in Bellingham, McMenamins **Olympic Club Hotel** (p156) in Centralia, small **Fishbowl BrewPub** (p134) in Olympia and worthwhile **Mill Creek Brewpub** (p216) in Walla Walla.



Portland has around 30 microbreweries, the most of any city in the world. Tried and true ones here include **Amnesia Brewing** (p237), **Bridge-Port Brewpub** (p237) and **New Old Lompoc** (p237) – all have good attached restaurants and outdoor patios. Eugene boasts several of its own, including first-rate **Steelhead Brewing** (p255); in Bend, **Deschutes Brewery** and **Bend Brewing** (p282) are worth a pint or three. And if you find yourself in Enterprise, don't miss **Terminal Gravity Brewing** (p339) – one of Eastern Oregon's finest yeasty delights.

### HOT SPRINGS

With its volcanic geography, you'd think the Pacific Northwest would have a good range of hot springs – and you'd be right. Washington has its therapeutic **Sol Duc Hot Springs Resort** (p141), a set of three-tiled pools popular with families. Oregon, however, has the region's treasure trove of soakers. Splash into the semi-developed but free wooden tubs of **Bagby Hot Springs** (p249). For a romantic getaway, there's lovely, spa-like **Breitenbush**



**Hot Springs** (p249). Popular Columbia Gorge weekend trips for Portlanders include uber-fancy **Bonneville Hot Springs Resort & Spa** (p262) and simple, old-fashioned **Carson Hot Springs Resort** (p262). Heading south, swimming-pool-like **Belknap Hot Springs** (p256) also offers lodgings, while free **Umpqua Hot Springs** (p329) overlooks the beautiful Umpqua River from a hillside. Eastern Oregon's deserts boast a serene pool and private bathhouses at **Crystal Crane Hot Springs** (p350) along with the very isolated and free **Alvord Hot Springs** (p352), in the Alvord Desert.

## TRAVEL WITH KIDS

Home to millipedes and tarantulas, what could be better than BC's **Victoria Bug Zoo** (p384)? In Vancouver, **Science World** (p363) and the **Vancouver Aquarium** (p362) are fun highlights.

Seattle has a plethora of offerings, from interactive museums to waterfront distractions; see p92. Tacoma's **Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium** (p106) is a wonderland boasting sharks *and* elephants. In Bellingham, the **Whatcom Children's Museum** (p110) offers imaginative activities and workshops. For warm weather fun, head to **Slidewaters** (p177), a water park at Lake Chelan. Meanwhile, Olympia's **Hands On Children's Museum** (p133) stimulates little brains.

Portland has several cool things for children, from frolicking fountains to a world-class zoo; see p231. Salem has interactive exhibits at the **AC Gilbert's Discovery Village** (p247), though the little squirts might prefer the nearby theme park **Enchanted Forest** (p248). Eugene's **Science Factory** (p251) has hands-on learning displays, while south in Winston there's a real **Wildlife Safari** (p328). Bend's excellent **High Desert Museum** (p278) boasts a sea otter exhibit, and Ashland's **Science Works** (p318) makes the kids think hard. Head to the coast for Newport's world-class **Oregon Coast Aquarium** (p299) and Port Orford's dinosaur-filled **Prehistoric Gardens** (p311).



## NATURAL WONDERS

Nature lovers rejoice; the Pacific Northwest holds gorgeous landscapes that will rejuvenate your spirit and stretch your hiker's legs. Here are the region's best places to commune with the outside world.

On the west coast of Vancouver Island in BC is the magnificent **Pacific Rim National Park Reserve** (p397), encompassing three geographically distinct regions. Not far away are the **Southern Gulf Islands** (p404), which have attracted artists with their mild climate and natural beauty.

Nearby, but in Washington, are the **San Juan Islands** (p119), a popular yet tranquil archipelago. To the east, the dramatic peaks of **North Cascades National Park** (p168) feature top-notch panoramas, while glorious **Olympic National Park** (p137) has a wide variety of ecosystems. Inland, **Mt Rainier National Park** (p179) boasts Washington's tallest mountain.

Oregon's **Columbia River Gorge** (p258) is strewn with waterfalls, awesome hikes and spectacular scenery. Way to the east, **Hells Canyon** (p342) is North America's deepest gorge. **Crater Lake** (p285), the state's only national park, offers exquisite scenery. Finally, way to the southeast is **Steens Mountain** (p351) and the **Alvord Desert** (p351) – both boasting unforgettable beauty and isolation.



## WINERIES

The Pacific Northwest is a top wine-growing region, with Washington and Oregon ranking second and third (after neighbor California) for state wine grape production. Washington's Columbia Valley and Oregon's Willamette Valley claim the lion's share of the region's wineries.

In Spokane, Washington, gurgle the cabernet at **Caterina Winery** or the Riesling at **Latah Creek Wine Cellars** (p206). For good chardonnay, head to

**Woodward Canyon Winery** or **Waterbrook Winery** (p214), both in Walla Walla. In Yakima Valley you can enjoy merlot with a view at **Sagelands Vineyard** (p203).

Oregon's Willamette Valley produces some of the world's best pinot noirs. Try a few sips at **Domaine Drouhin** (p244), a luxurious European-style spot with great views. **WillaKenzie Estate** (p244) is also impressive and slightly off the beaten path. **Erath** (p244) and **Ponzi Vineyards** (p244) are two of the oldest wineries in this region and helped pioneer wine-making in Oregon, while **Argyle Winery** (p244) is famous for sparkling wines.

For BC wineries you'll have to head east to the Okanagan Valley, covered in Lonely Planet's *British Columbia* guidebook.



## BEST HIKES

If there's one thing the Pacific Northwest has in spades, it's a bounty of great hiking. After all, the area is full of mountains, forests, rivers, coastline and deserts. Listed here are a few favorites – and it's just the very tip of the iceberg!

Vancouver Island has the highly challenging **West Coast Trail** (p398) in the Pacific Rim National Park Reserve; it features rock-face ladders, stream crossings and other adversities.

Washington offers the unforgettable **Wonderland Trail** (p183) – a classic 93-mile circumnavigation of Mt Rainier. Trudge up 6.8 miles to **Desolation Peak** (p171), where novelist Jack Kerouac spent a summer. To witness amazing glaciers, head up to the supremely scenic 3.5-mile **Cascade Pass** (p170). Finally, for a good leg-stretch there's the **Pacific Coastal hike** (p144), stretching 20 miles between Ozette and Rialto Beach.

Oregon's coast has the strenuous 4-mile hike up **Neahkahnie Mountain** (p295), with spectacular views. In the Columbia River Gorge, the 13-mile-long **Eagle Creek Trail** (p261) is a classic, boasting stunning waterfalls and sheer canyons. To the south, the **Timberline Trail** (p271) is a 40-mile loop around lovely Mt Hood. Meanwhile, the **McKenzie River National Recreation Trail** (p256) follows the wild and scenic McKenzie for 26.5 miles through lush forests.





# On the Road



## **SANDRA BAO** Coordinating Author

Smith Rock is one of my favorite places in Oregon. Its glorious 400ft formations make for some spectacular scenery and amazing rock climbing. I was here on my 40th birthday, leading my first outdoor 5.10b-ranked climb – very scary but also fun. My friends and I walked along the sinewy Crooked River, scrambling up rock faces and bouldering here and there. It's a magical spot, offering a piece of heaven for picnickers, day hikers and climbers. This time I came to research, and didn't have the time even to scamper down to the riverside. I had only enough of a break for this photo, a few memories and a promise to return in the future.



**JOHN LEE** It's early evening at Grouse Mountain and I'm combining a snowshoe trek with a feast-like dinner. After a 1½-hour uphill push through the crunchy snow, occasional bursts of pace flicking ice crumbs over my head like confetti, I reach the tree-lined summit overlooking the crags of Vancouver Island shimmering in the moonlight. Barreling back down the slope, I head inside the lodge for some fondue, tucking into pyramids of salmon, scallops, chicken and vegetables.



**BECKY OHLSEN** The Pacific Northwest coastline is almost never sunny, but when it is, you're morally obligated to stop and enjoy it. This shot was taken by my dad one afternoon at the coast, during a family visit graced by uncannily beautiful weather. No wonder the folks back home never believe me about how much it rains up here.



**BRENDAN SAINSBURY** Standing on Washington's Ruby Beach, I was caught in one of the region's innumerable spring downpours. In the background, sea stacks do battle with formidable Pacific breakers. The logs scattered all around are evidence of a recent West Coast storm. My son, Kieran, is keeping an eye out for swooping eagles and foraging raccoons. As an expat Brit, I love the 'evergreen' state for its expansive forests, pristine wilderness areas and miles of remote and untamed Pacific coastline.

*See full author bios page 429*



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