



Seattle

POP 634,535

Includes ➔

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Sitka & Spruce (p84)
- ➔ Cascina Spinasse (p84)
- ➔ Serious Pie (p82)
- ➔ Wild Ginger (p79)
- ➔ Top Pot Hand-Forged Doughnuts (p81)

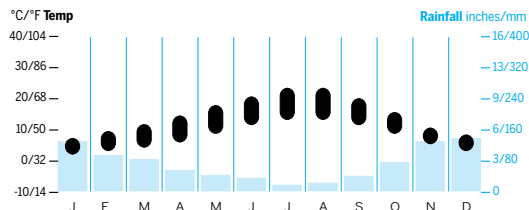
Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Hotel Five (p78)
- ➔ Maxwell Hotel (p78)
- ➔ Moore Hotel (p78)
- ➔ Edgewater (p78)
- ➔ Alexis Hotel (p77)

Why Go?

Combine the brains of Portland with the beauty of Vancouver and you'll get something approximating Seattle. It's hard to believe that the Pacific Northwest's largest metropolis was considered a 'secondary' US city until the 1980s, when a combination of bold innovation and unabashed individualism turned it into one of the dot-com era's biggest trendsetters, spearheaded by an unlikely alliance of coffee-sipping computer geeks and navel-gazing musicians. Reinvention is the buzzword these days in a city where alt-rock still resonates and grassroots microbusinesses compete with global brands. Surprisingly elegant in places and coolly edgy in others, Seattle is notable for its strong neighborhoods, locavore food, outlandish public art and proactive city mayors who harbor green credentials. Lording over it all is Mt Rainier, Seattle's unifying symbol, a 14,411ft mass of rock and ice that acts as a perennial reminder to the city's huddled masses that raw wilderness is never far away.

When to Go Seattle



Jun–Aug Perfect weather and some of Seattle's best festivals – book ahead.

Sep Bummer-shoot, the annual music, arts and culture festival, is a big draw.

Oct–May Seattle's long winter adds to the appeal of its many coffee shops and good pubs.

Advance Planning

One month before your trip, start looking at options for car rental, accommodations, tours and train tickets. If you're hoping to see a particular performance or game, whether it's the Mariners or the opera, it's wise to buy tickets a couple of weeks in advance. A day or two before you arrive, book popular restaurants and search the *Stranger* and the *Seattle Times* for upcoming art and entertainment listings.

TRANSPORTATION

Public transportation in Seattle has improved exponentially over the last five years with big investment in infrastructure. Light-rail and streetcar extensions are still in the works.

Light Rail

Link Light Rail is operated by **Sound Transit** (www.soundtransit.org). The first and, as yet, only Seattle line, 'Central Link,' runs from Sea-Tac Airport to Westlake station downtown and opened in 2009. There are 13 stations, including stops in SoDo, the International District and Pioneer Square. Fares within the city limits are \$2.25. From downtown to the airport costs \$2.75. Trains run between 5am and 12:30am.

Bus

Buses are a major form of public transportation; they are operated by **Metro Transit** (www.metro.kingcounty.gov). The website prints schedules and maps and has a trip planner. To make things simple all bus fares within Seattle city limits are a flat \$2.50 at peak hours (6am to 9am and 3pm to 6pm Monday to Friday). Off-peak rates are \$2.25. Those aged six to 18 pay \$1.25; kids under six are free; seniors and disabled travellers pay \$75¢.

Streetcar

The **Seattle Streetcar** (www.seattlestreetcar.org) opened in 2007 with the the 2.6-mile South Lake Union line that runs between the Westlake Center and Lake Union. There are 11 stops and fares are \$2.50/1.25 per adult/child. Streetcars breeze by every 15 minutes from 6am to 9pm (slightly later on Friday and Saturday). A second 10-stop line will open in 2014, running from Pioneer Square via the International District and First Hill to Capitol Hill.

FOR KIDS

Top picks are the Pacific Science Center (p72), the Children's Museum (p72) and the Aquarium (p69). Seattle boasts numerous parks; Gas Works (p74) is particularly good for flying kites. Also check out the Pinball Museum (p68), the zoo (p74) and Pike Place Market (p69).

Sports Teams

♦ **Seattle Storm** (☎ 206-217-9622; www.wnba.com/storm; single game tickets \$20-200; 🏟 Seattle Center) Basketball.

♦ **Seattle Seahawks** (www.seahawks.com; tickets \$42-95) Football.

♦ **Seattle Sounders** (☎ 206-622-3415; www.seattlesounders.net; tickets from \$37) Soccer.

Fast Facts

♦ **Nickname** Emerald City
♦ **Famous for** Grunge, Starbucks, *Frasier*, Amazon, Boeing

Resources

♦ **Stranger** (www.thestranger.com) Best entertainment listings; and it's free.

♦ **Not for Tourists** (www.notfortourists.com/seattle.aspx) Irreverent reviews.

♦ **Lonely Planet** (www.lonelyplanet.com/usa/seattle) Succinct summaries on traveling, and the Thorn Tree bulletin board.

What's New

- ♦ Chihuly Garden & Glass (p71)
- ♦ Seattle Great Wheel (p69)
- ♦ Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Visitor Center (p72)
- ♦ Pioneer Square-Capitol Hill streetcar