

Understand the Pacific Northwest

PACIFIC NORTHWEST TODAY428

What are the hot-button issues in the Pacific Northwest?
Sustainability, politics, sports and more.

HISTORY430

From first inhabitants to explorers, settlers and later migrants,
the region has always attracted those in search of adventure.

LIFE AS A PACIFIC NORTHWESTERNER439

Nature-loving hippies, outdoors nuts, latte lovers, beer geeks...
all comers enjoy the Northwest's laid-back lifestyle.

MUSIC & THE ARTS442

There's creativity galore in this progressive and inspiring region,
home to right-brain thinkers and mind-blowing art.

BEERVANA & BEYOND447

Food-and-drink writer Lucy Burningham explores the region's
microbreweries, coffee culture and burgeoning wine industry.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST CUISINE.....450

Lucy Burningham eats from a bounty of local produce, and de-
tails the festivals and courses to enhance your food experience.

WILD THINGS454

The best places to spot bald eagles, orcas and the Northwest's
signature animal, the Roosevelt elk.

SUSTAINABLE PACIFIC NORTHWEST459

The region is a leader in recycling, bike friendliness, public
transportation, renewable-energy use and green architecture.

Pacific Northwest Today

The Pacific Northwest is full of cutting-edge ideas and technology but it's also true to its eco-green roots. The region's cuisine has become famous, while its politics remain liberal, and though the economy has seen its ups and downs over the last few decades, new pioneers arrive every single day.

Best on Film

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest

(1975) Oscar-winning movie about a mental institution and its inhabitants, filmed in Salem, OR (the novel was based in Oregon).

Sleepless in Seattle (1993) Romantic comedy that highlighted Seattle's Space Needle, Pike Place Market and houseboat communities.

Twilight (2008) Highly popular vampire saga that catapulted sleepy Forks, WA (as well as other Pacific Northwest locations) onto the world's center stage.

Best in Print

The Good Rain: Across Time and Terrain in the Pacific Northwest

(Timothy Egan). One man's narrative on the land he loves, with social, economic and political perspectives.

Faux Pas

Washington Flaunting that you moved here from California because real estate is cheaper.

Oregon Trying to pump your own gas at a service station.

British Columbia Mistaking a Canadian for an American.

Recent Times

Since the bursting of the high-tech bubble in 2000, the Pacific Northwest has had ups and downs trying to regain a foothold in this now-fickle field. And in recent years, many companies of all kinds have shut down, moved away or laid off workers. But, like the pioneers of so long ago, other companies continue to pop up or move to this popular region to fill in the empty spaces and help grow the population.

The real-estate market has also had its highs and lows, though in general the Pacific Northwest has done well, attracting those who seek to own a share of its bounty. Seattle, Portland and Vancouver had revitalized markets in mid-2013, with demand outstripping supply and causing a serious rise in values.

The Pacific Northwest keeps exerting a strong pull on the adventurous of spirit. And 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.

Small Talk

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 move on to the region's high unemployment rates, its computer industry (aka 'Silicon Forest') and, last but not least, those drizzly skies and all that rain!

For the locals, politics is always a good topic (generally left-leaning on the west coast and right-leaning on the eastern side). How could anyone resist commenting on Washington's new laws legalizing both gay marriage and recreational marijuana use? Or voicing an opinion on whether fluoride is beneficial or malignant (after a 2013 vote, Portland remains the largest US city without