

Welcome to the Pacific Northwest

*Lush forests, a pristine coastline,
awesome food, frothy microbrews,
and music and art galore – Pacific
Northwesterners have it good and they
don't mind sharing.*

Outdoor Adventures

You can't escape nature here. Even the big cities are punctuated by looming, snowy peaks: Seattle's Mt Rainier, Portland's Mt Hood and Vancouver's North Shore Mountains. And that's not mentioning the raging rivers, rolling deserts, dense old-growth forests and glorious public beaches that are never far from any urban landscape.

The region offers endless outdoor opportunities: camping, hiking, cycling, skiing and mountaineering. And all that rain translates into a perfect storm of water sports; raft white water, kayak lake and sea, and kiteboard through ripping winds.

Foodies & Locavores

Seattle, Portland and Vancouver are all rich in gourmet restaurants, as well as a wide range of ethnic food options. Seattle boasts a long-established history of Northwest cuisine, while Portland's affordability and creativity have made it a magnet for hot chefs. Vancouver offers some of the best Chinese food outside, well, China.

There's an abundance of locally grown food, from berries and hazelnuts to wild mushrooms, seafood, cheese and grass-fed beef. Locavores abound, getting their fix in the many specialty groceries, farmers markets and community gardens.

Beer, Wine & Coffee Lovers

In these parts, beverages are big. The nation's gourmet-coffee scene may have started in Seattle, but dozens of artisan microroasters across the Northwest now produce some of the best espresso in the world. In some coffee shops, pouring a latte is practically an art form.

Microbrewing also became famous here, within a stone's throw of the nation's highest concentration of hop farms. Today, craft brewers pump out fragrant India Pale Ales (IPAs) and more. Grape vines cover many hills, producing a harvest of intriguing reds and whites.

Art & Culture

There's no shortage of urban entertainment and culture: indie garage bands, world-class symphonies, jazz bars and an abundance of public art. Offbeat film houses and art galleries are tucked into even the smallest towns.

Seattle, Portland and Vancouver all support symphonies, operas, dance troupes and theater companies. Galleries and museums display pieces by Native American artists, ceramicists and painters, and glassmakers inspired by Tacoma's Dale Chihuly. You'll always have more than enough to appreciate in this highly creative part of the world.



Why I Love the Pacific Northwest

By Becky Ohlsen, Writer

For a bookish girl who also enjoys a well-crafted beer in a dimly lit bar, the Pacific Northwest is just about perfect: for much of the year, the weather conspires to make you want to curl up around a pint of stout and catch up on your reading. (People read a lot here, and they like talking about what they're reading.) When you add in the unbelievable variety of outdoor fun – hiking trails through mossy forests, rugged beaches, pointy mountains, all those rivers – this part of the world is hard to beat.

For more about our writers, see p480