

Pacific Northwest

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Best Places to Eat

- Cascina Spinasse (p196)
- Saffron Mediterranean Kitchen (p213)
- Ox (p220)
- New Sammy's Cowboy Bistro (p234)

Best Places to Stay

- Sun Mountain Lodge (p208)
- Kennedy School (p219)
- Oxford Hotel (p231)
- Hotel Five (p193)

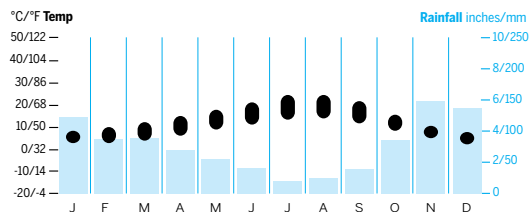
Why Go?

As much a state of mind as a geographical region, the US's northwest corner is a land of subcultures and new trends, where evergreen trees frame snow-dusted volcanoes, and inspired ideas scribbled on the back of napkins become tomorrow's business start-ups. You can't peel off the history in layers here, but you *can* gaze wistfully into the future in fast-moving, innovative cities such as Seattle and Portland, which are sprinkled with food carts, streetcars, microbreweries, green belts, coffee connoisseurs and weird urban sculpture.

Ever since the days of the Oregon Trail, the Northwest has had a hypnotic lure for risk takers and dreamers, and the metaphoric carrot still dangles. There's the air, so clean they ought to bottle it; the trees, older than many of Rome's Renaissance palaces; and the end-of-the-continent coastline, holding back the force of the world's largest ocean. Cowboys take note; it doesn't get much more 'wild' or 'west' than this.

When to Go

Seattle



Jan-Mar Most reliable snow cover for skiing in the Cascades and beyond.

May Festival season: Portland Rose, Seattle International Film Festival, Oregon Shakespeare.

Jul-Sep The best hiking months in between the spring snowmelt and the first fall flurries.

Grunge & Other Subcultures

Synthesizing Generation X angst with a questionable approach to personal hygiene, grunge first dive-bombed onto Seattle's music scene in the early 1990s like a clap of thunder on an otherwise dry and sunny afternoon. The anger had been fermenting for years. Hardcore punk originated in Portland in the late 1970s, led by resident contrarians the Wipers, whose antifashion followers congregated in legendary dive bars such as Satyricon. Another musical blossoming occurred in Olympia, where DIY-merchants Beat Happening invented 'lo-fi' and coyly mocked the corporate establishment. Scooping up the fallout of a disparate youth culture, Seattle quickly became grunge's pulpit, spawning bands such as Pearl Jam, Soundgarden and Alice in Chains. The genre went global in 1991 when Nirvana's *Nevermind* album knocked Michael Jackson off the number-one spot, but the movement was never meant to be successful and the kudos quickly killed it. Since the mid '90s the Pacific Northwest has kept its subcultures largely to itself, though the music's no less potent or relevant.

MICROBREWERIES

'Beer connoisseurship' is a nationwide phenomenon these days, but the campaign to put a dash of flavor into commercially brewed beer was first ignited in the Pacific Northwest in the 1980s.

One of America's first microbreweries was the mercurial Cartwright Brewing Company, set up in Portland in 1980. The nation's first official brewpub was the now defunct Grant's, which opened in the Washington city of Yakima in 1982. The trend went viral in 1984 with the inauguration of Bridgeport Brewing Company in Portland, followed a year later by Beervana's old-school brewing brothers Mike and Brian McMenamin, whose quirky beer empire still acts as a kind of personification of the craft-brewing business in the region.

Today, Washington and Oregon operate nearly 300 microbreweries (Portland alone has more than 50). These take classic, natural ingredients – malt, hops and yeast – to produce high-quality beer in small batches.

Best State Parks

- ➔ **Moran State Park** Orcas Island
- ➔ **Ecola State Park** Cannon Beach
- ➔ **Deception Pass State Park** Whidbey Island
- ➔ **Fort Worden State Park** Port Townsend
- ➔ **Lime Kiln Point State Park** San Juan Island
- ➔ **Cape Perpetua State Park** Near Yachats
- ➔ **Smith Rock State Park** Near Bend

DON'T MISS

Between them, the states of Washington and Oregon harbor four of the US's most spectacular national parks: Mt Rainier (established 1899), Crater Lake (1902), Olympic (1938) and North Cascades (1968).

Fast Facts

- ➔ **Hub cities** Seattle (621,000), Portland (594,000)
- ➔ **Distances from Seattle**
Portland (172 miles),
Vancouver BC (140 miles)
- ➔ **Time zone** Pacific Standard

Did You Know?

Over the winter of 1998–99, the Mt Baker ski resort in northwest Washington received 1140in of snow in a single season, the largest annual snowfall ever recorded.

Resources

- ➔ **Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission** (www.parks.wa.gov)
- ➔ **Oregon State Parks & Recreation Dept** (www.oregonstateparks.org)
- ➔ **Washington State Tourism Office** (www.tourism.wa.gov)
- ➔ **Oregon Tourism Commission** (www.traveloregon.com)