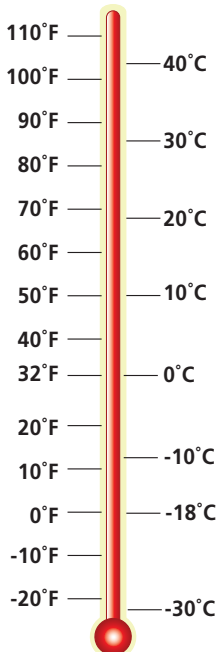


Frommer's Washington State



METRIC CONVERSIONS

TEMPERATURE



To convert F to C:
subtract 32 and multiply
by $\frac{5}{9}$ (.555)

To convert C to F:
multiply by 1.8
and add 32

32°F = 0°C

LIQUID VOLUME

To convert..... multiply by

U.S. gallons to liters.....	3.8
Liters to U.S. gallons.....	.26
U.S. gallons to imperial gallons.....	.83
Imperial gallons to U.S. gallons.....	1.20
Imperial gallons to liters.....	4.55
Liters to imperial gallons.....	.22

1 liter = .26 U.S. gallon

1 U.S. gallon = 3.8 liters

DISTANCE

To convert..... multiply by

inches to centimeters.....	2.54
centimeters to inches.....	.39
feet to meters.....	.30
meters to feet.....	3.28
yards to meters.....	.91
meters to yards.....	1.09
miles to kilometers.....	1.61
kilometers to miles.....	.62

1 ft. = .30m

1 mile = 1.6km

1m = 3.3 ft.

1km = .62 mile

WEIGHT

To convert..... multiply by

Ounces to grams.....	28.35
Grams to ounces.....	.035
Pounds to kilograms.....	.45
Kilograms to pounds.....	2.20

1 ounce = 28 grams

1 pound = .4555 kilogram

1 gram = .04 ounce

1 kilogram = 2.2 pounds



Frommer's®

Washington State

7th Edition

by Karl Samson



WILEY

Wiley Publishing, Inc.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Karl Samson lives in Oregon, where he spends his time juggling his obsessions with traveling, gardening, outdoor sports, and wine. Each winter, to dry out his webbed feet, he flees the soggy Northwest to update the *Frommer's Arizona* guide. Karl is also the author of *Frommer's Seattle* and *Frommer's Oregon*.

Published by:

WILEY PUBLISHING, INC.

111 River St.

Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774

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ISBN 978-0-470-60751-0 (paper); ISBN 978-0-470-93402-9 (ebk); ISBN 978-0-470-93403-6 (ebk); ISBN 978-0-470-93405-0 (ebk)

Editors: Elizabeth Heath and Anuja Madar

Production Editor: Katie Robinson

Cartographer: Andy Dolan

Photo Editor: Richard Fox

Production by Wiley Indianapolis Composition Services

Front Cover Photo: Washington State, San Juan Islands, Sucia Island State Park, sandstone shoreline

© Chris Cheadle / All Canada Photos / SuperStock, Inc.

Back Cover Photo: Washington State, Walla Walla: Falkenberg's Clock, Parade of Lights © Brent Bergherm / AGE Fotostock, Inc. / SuperStock, Inc.

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Manufactured in the United States of America

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HOW TO CONTACT US

In researching this book, we discovered many wonderful places—hotels, restaurants, shops, and more. We're sure you'll find others. Please tell us about them, so we can share the information with your fellow travelers in upcoming editions. If you were disappointed with a recommendation, we'd love to know that, too. Please write to:

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AN ADDITIONAL NOTE

Please be advised that travel information is subject to change at any time—and this is especially true of prices. We therefore suggest that you write or call ahead for confirmation when making your travel plans. The authors, editors, and publisher cannot be held responsible for the experiences of readers while traveling. Your safety is important to us, however, so we encourage you to stay alert and be aware of your surroundings. Keep a close eye on cameras, purses, and wallets, all favorite targets of thieves and pickpockets.

FROMMER'S STAR RATINGS, ICONS & ABBREVIATIONS

Every hotel, restaurant, and attraction listing in this guide has been ranked for quality, value, service, amenities, and special features using a **star-rating system**. In country, state, and regional guides, we also rate towns and regions to help you narrow down your choices and budget your time accordingly. Hotels and restaurants are rated on a scale of zero (recommended) to three stars (exceptional). Attractions, shopping, nightlife, towns, and regions are rated according to the following scale: zero stars (recommended), one star (highly recommended), two stars (very highly recommended), and three stars (must-see).

In addition to the star-rating system, we also use **seven feature icons** that point you to the great deals, in-the-know advice, and unique experiences that separate travelers from tourists. Throughout the book, look for:

-  **special finds**—those places only insiders know about
-  **fun facts**—details that make travelers more informed and their trips more fun
-  **kids**—best bets for kids and advice for the whole family
-  **special moments**—those experiences that memories are made of
-  **overrated**—places or experiences not worth your time or money
-  **insider tips**—great ways to save time and money
-  **great values**—where to get the best deals

The following abbreviations are used for credit cards:

AE	American Express	DISC	Discover	V	Visa
DC	Diners Club	MC	MasterCard		

TRAVEL RESOURCES AT FROMMERS.COM

Frommer's travel resources don't end with this guide. Frommer's website, **www.frommers.com**, has travel information on more than 4,000 destinations. We update features regularly, giving you access to the most current trip-planning information and the best airfare, lodging, and car-rental bargains. You can also listen to podcasts, connect with other Frommers.com members through our active-reader forums, share your travel photos, read blogs from guidebook editors and fellow travelers, and much more.

THE BEST OF WASHINGTON

1

Despite what you might have heard to the contrary, there is more to Washington state than lattes, rain, and Microsoft. Washington is actually such a diverse state that it could have served as a model for the song “America the Beautiful.” In the eastern high desert country, beautiful spacious skies are as big as Montana’s (part of the Rocky Mountains even reaches into Washington). In the western part of the state, the Cascade mountains turn majestically purple at sunset. In the Palouse country of the southeastern corner of the state, amber waves of grain stripe the steep hillsides. In the Yakima, Wenatchee, and Chelan valleys, the fruited plains produce the world’s most familiar apples (and some pretty good wine, too). With an inland sea across the Olympic Peninsula from the Pacific, the sun in Washington also shines from sea to shining sea. Washington is indeed beautiful country.

The diversity of this state goes far beyond mere song lyrics, however. There’s an island archipelago as beautiful as the coast of Maine (without the harsh winters). Beaches are long and sandy (though the waters are too cold for swimming). There are granite mountains as rugged as the Sierra Nevada (but with fewer hikers). Desert canyons are like those of the Southwest (though not as hot). Vineyard-covered hillsides resemble those of the Napa Valley (without the crowds). There’s even a bayfront city with dauntingly steep streets (but no cable cars).

With such a complex and diverse landscape to be explored, planning a trip can be a challenging task. Where should we go? Where should we stay? Where should we eat? Planning a visit to Washington involves a lot of decisions, and, if you only have a week or two for your entire trip, you’ll want to get the most from your time. To help you get a better grip on the state’s highlights, its not-to-be-missed attractions and activities, I’ve put

together this list of the best in the state. Keep in mind that most are written up in more detail elsewhere in this book, but this chapter will give you an overview and get you started.

THE best NATURAL ATTRACTIONS

- o **The San Juan Islands.** Forested islands rise from the cold waters north of Puget Sound to form the archipelago known as the San Juan Islands. Bald eagles circle overhead while orca whales dive for salmon below. Such natural beauty is a powerful magnet and despite hordes of tourists in summer, the San Juans are Washington's top summer vacation spot. See "The San Juan Islands" in chapter 6.
- o **Olympic National Park.** This park has some of the only rainforests in the contiguous United States, and they comprise a fascinating ecosystem. Living plants stake out every square inch of space, from towering Sitka spruce trees to lush mosses and giant ferns. The park preserves miles of pristine, fog-shrouded beaches, as well as beautiful alpine and subalpine scenery with lush meadows. See chapter 8.
- o **North Cascades National Park Complex.** Composed of one national park and two national recreation areas, this rugged and remote region is among the state's least explored. The North Cascades Scenic Highway has stupendous views on clear days, but is closed by snow for nearly half the year. See "Mount Baker & the North Cascades Scenic Highway" in chapter 10.
- o **Mount Rainier National Park.** With its glaciers and easily accessible alpine meadows, Mount Rainier is Washington's favorite mountain. Sunrise and Paradise are the two best vantage points for viewing the massive bulk of Mount Rainier, and in these two areas of the park, you'll also find some of the best hiking trails. See "Mount Rainier National Park & Environs" in chapter 10.
- o **Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument.** Mount St. Helens is slowly recovering from the 1980 volcanic blast that turned one of the Cascades' most beautiful peaks into a scarred landscape of fallen trees and fields of ash, but it remains the only active volcano in the contiguous U.S. Several visitor centers portray the events of the 1980 eruption and what has happened since. See "Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument" in chapter 10.
- o **Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area.** Carved by ice-age floods 1,200 feet deep, the Columbia Gorge is a unique feature of the Northwest landscape. Waterfalls by the dozen cascade from the basalt cliffs on the Oregon side of the gorge, but the best wide-angle views are from the Washington side, which is where you'll find Beacon Rock, one of the largest monoliths in the world. See "The Columbia Gorge & the Mount Adams Area" in chapter 10.
- o **Dry Falls.** It has been thousands of years since any water flowed over this central Washington waterfall (thus the name), but it is still a very impressive sight. Created by massive ice-age floods, Dry Falls was once 400 feet tall and more than 3½ miles wide. See "The Grand Coulee Dam Area" in chapter 11.

THE best OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

- **Sea Kayaking in the San Juan Islands.** Emerald islands, clear water, orca whales, bald eagles, and remote campsites that are only reached by boat lure sea kayakers to the San Juan Islands. Paddle the islands on your own (if you're experienced) or go out with a guide for a few hours or a few days. See "The San Juan Islands" in chapter 6.
- **Hiking the Olympic Coast.** Within the contiguous U.S., very few miles of wilderness coastline are left. Among the longest, and most spectacular, are those of Olympic National Park on the west side of the Olympic Peninsula. Whether you want to do a good daylong hike, or several days of backpacking along the beach, you've got several options along this coast. See chapter 8.
- **Cross-Country Skiing in the Methow Valley.** This valley on the east side of Washington's North Cascades has more than 100 miles of immaculately groomed trails, making it one of the premier cross-country ski destinations in the country. Ski from one lodge to the next down the valley, or use one of the luxurious lodges as a base. See "Winthrop & the Methow Valley" in chapter 10.
- **Hiking on Mount Rainier.** Fed by huge amounts of melting snow each summer, meadows of wildflowers on the flanks of Mount Rainier burst into bloom each year in July. Through these colorful hillsides meander miles of hiking trails that are among the most memorable in the state. Sure, you'll encounter crowds, but the wildflower displays and the picture-perfect Mount Rainier backdrop far outweigh the inconvenience of dealing with hordes of other hikers. See "Mount Rainier National Park & Environs" in chapter 10.
- **Climbing Mount St. Helens.** Though it isn't the highest peak in the Washington Cascades, Mount St. Helens is the most interesting mountain to climb. You don't need technical climbing skills, just lots of stamina and a tolerance for hiking in dusty conditions (if the snow has melted, you'll be hiking in volcanic ash). See "Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument" in chapter 10.
- **Windsurfing at Hood River.** Winds through the Columbia Gorge whip up white-capped standing waves, turning this area into the windsurfing capital of the U.S., attracting boardsailors from around the world. See "The Columbia Gorge & the Mount Adams Area" in chapter 10.

THE best BEACHES

- **Obstruction Pass State Park (Orcas Island)** Set at the end of a half-mile-long trail through the woods, this tiny cove is barely big enough for a dozen sea kayakers to beach their boats, but therein lies its charm. This is the quintessential little San Juan Islands cove beach, and you don't need a boat to get to it. See "The San Juan Islands" in chapter 6.
- **Deception Pass State Park Beaches (Whidbey Island)** This is one of the most popular state parks in Washington, and the miles of beaches along two sides of Deception Pass are among the prettiest in the Puget Sound area. See "Whidbey Island" in chapter 6.
- **Dungeness Spit (Dungeness).** With 6 miles of wind-swept sand stretching out to a lighthouse in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, Dungeness Spit is a beach for hikers,

who are often rewarded by the sight of the area's resident harbor seals. See "Sequim & Dungeness Valley" in chapter 8.

- Rialto Beach (Olympic National Park outside Forks).** Located on the north side of the Quillayute River, this beach is the southern terminus of a 29-mile-long stretch of wilderness beach. However, most visitors simply walk a mile up the beach to Hole in the Wall, a huge monolith through which the ocean's waves have bored a tunnel. See "Olympic National Park West" in chapter 8.
- Second Beach & Third Beach (Olympic National Park outside Forks).** It's difficult to pick the best beach in the national park, since almost all are ruggedly beautiful, but these two beaches just outside the community of La Push are my personal favorites. Here you can hear the calls of eagles and gulls and contemplate the sheer vastness of the Pacific. See "Olympic National Park West" in chapter 8.

THE best HIKES

- Turtleback Mountain Preserve (Orcas Island).** Turtleback Mountain runs the length of much of Orcas Island's west side and offers the best hike in the San Juans. The views from the top of the mountain take in everything that makes the San Juans memorable. See "The San Juan Islands" in chapter 6.
- Trails out of Hurricane Ridge (Olympic National Park).** Hurricane Ridge is the most easily accessible alpine region of Olympic National Park. From here and nearby Obstruction Peak, several hikes will give you a glimpse of a breathtaking part of the Olympic wilderness. See "Olympic National Park North & the Northern Olympic Peninsula" in chapter 8.
- Hall of Mosses Trail/Hoh River Trail (Hoh River Valley).** Whether you're up for a short walk in the woods or a multi-day backpacking trip, this is the best place to experience the Olympic Peninsula's famed rainforests. Don't forget your rain gear. See "Olympic National Park West" in chapter 8.
- Chain Lakes Loop Trail (Mount Baker).** This 9-mile trail circling Table Mountain is one of the state's most awe-inspiring and rewarding hikes. With streams, lakes, cliffs, meadows, huckleberries, and plenty of views, this trail packs in everything that makes the Mount Baker area special. See "Mount Baker & the North Cascades Scenic Highway" in chapter 10.
- Maple Pass Loop Trail (North Cascades Scenic Hwy.).** Along the North Cascades Scenic Highway, you won't find a more rewarding hike. The trail climbs nearly 2,000 feet from Rainy Pass to a ridge with an astounding view of mountains both near and far. See "Mount Baker & the North Cascades Scenic Highway" in chapter 10.
- Trails out of Sunrise (Mount Rainier National Park).** The Sunrise area, on the northeast flanks of Mount Rainier, has fabulous, unobstructed views of both the mountain and Emmons Glacier, the largest glacier in the contiguous 48 states. From Sunrise, pick from more than a dozen trails of different lengths heading to viewpoints and lakes. See "Mount Rainier National Park & Environs" in chapter 10.
- Beacon Rock Trail (Columbia Gorge).** Although this hike is less than 2 miles long, it makes up for the short length with its steep pitch. In fact, much of the trail is on metal stairs bolted to the sheer cliff face of Beacon Rock, a massive monolith. The view from the top stretches for miles up and down the Columbia River. See "The Columbia Gorge & the Mount Adams Area" in chapter 10.

THE best SCENIC DRIVES

- **Chuckanut Drive.** This road winds south from Bellingham through the Chuckanut Mountains that rise straight up from the waters of Chuckanut and Samish bays. Across the water lie the San Juan Islands, and sunsets are spectacular. Larabee State Park provides a chance to get out of your car and walk down to a pretty little beach. See “Bellingham & Environs” in chapter 6.
- **Hood Canal.** Despite the name, this is not a canal but, rather, a long, narrow bay up the west side of which runs U.S. 101. The highway hugs the water for much of the route and the views are exquisitely tranquil, especially in the early morning and late afternoon. See “Olympic National Park East & Hood Canal” in chapter 8.
- **North Cascades Scenic Highway.** Passing through the most rugged and spectacular mountains in the Northwest, this highway did not open until 1972 due to the difficulty of building any road through Washington’s glacier-carved North Cascades. Heavy snows and avalanches keep the highway closed for half the year. See “Mount Baker & the North Cascades Scenic Highway” in chapter 10.
- **Columbia River Gorge Scenic Byway.** Wash. 14 parallels the Columbia River from Vancouver, Washington, eastward through the Columbia Gorge, and it has some of the most awe-inspiring vistas in the Northwest. Visible across the river in Oregon are not only waterfalls and basalt cliffs but also the snow-clad summit of Mount Hood. See “The Columbia Gorge & the Mount Adams Area” in chapter 10.
- **The Palouse.** This wheat-farming region in southeastern Washington is a convoluted landscape of steep hills and narrow valleys. A meandering drive through the region is a trip back in time. Small towns and boldly striped hillsides make it the most fascinating farm country in the state. See “The Palouse: A Slice of Small-Town Rural Washington” in chapter 11.
- **Soap Lake to the Grand Coulee Dam.** The natural landscape of central Washington is today dominated by high-desert sagebrush scrublands, but at the end of the last ice age, vast floodwaters once poured across this region. A drive through this water-carved landscape provides a glimpse into one of the most fascinating events in Northwest geologic history. See “The Grand Coulee Dam Area” in chapter 11.

THE best MUSEUMS & HISTORIC SITES

- **Seattle Art Museum (Seattle).** This sprawling museum is the finest art museum north of San Francisco. As such, it is often home to major traveling exhibitions. The museum also has an outstanding collection of Northwest Native American art and artifacts. See p. 114.
- **The Whale Museum (San Juan Islands).** This small museum in the town of Friday Harbor is devoted exclusively to whales and focuses primarily on the orca whales that are a symbol of the San Juan Islands. See p. 165.
- **American Museum of Radio & Electricity (Bellingham).** With hundreds of old radios and all kinds of other fascinating old electrical appliances and instruments, this is one of the most unusual museums in the state. See p. 190.

- Museum of Glass (Tacoma).** Celebrated glass artist Dale Chihuly is originally from Tacoma, and consequently this city south of Seattle has become a center for art glass. This large museum mounts exhibits that feature the latest in contemporary art glass. See p. 210.
- Makah Cultural and Research Center (Neah Bay).** Although this museum, in a remote Native American town on the northern Olympic Peninsula, is not very big, it showcases artifacts unearthed from a Native American village that was buried beneath a mudslide 500 years ago. See p. 238.
- Fort Vancouver National Historic Site (Vancouver).** This reconstruction of the Hudson Bay Company's early-19th-century fur-trading fort is reason enough to visit the small city of Vancouver, Washington. See p. 268.
- Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center Museum (Columbia Gorge).** With walls of glass facing out to the cliffs of the Columbia River Gorge, this modern museum is an excellent and informative introduction to this region. See p. 315.
- Maryhill Museum (Columbia Gorge).** Set on a bluff high above the Columbia River, this museum boasts an absolutely breathtaking location. Inside the historic mansion, built in the early 20th century, you'll find everything from Rodins to a collection of chess sets. See p. 317.
- Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture (Spokane).** Combining a modern museum with an adjacent historic mansion that is open for tours, this museum reflects both the art and history of the inland Northwest. See p. 350.

THE best SMALL TOWNS

- La Conner.** Surrounded by tulip fields and filled with art galleries and interesting shops, this former fishing and farming town gets jammed on weekends, but stop by on a weekday or in the off season, and you'll easily be seduced by its vintage charm. See "La Conner & the Skagit Valley" in chapter 6.
- Langley.** Near the south end of Whidbey Island, this former fishing village is now something of an upscale arts community. Art galleries, antiques shops, fashion boutiques, and several good restaurants are all right on the shore of Saratoga Passage. Some buildings even rise straight out of the water. See "Whidbey Island" in chapter 6.
- Port Townsend.** Late in the 19th century, this town on the Olympic Peninsula was poised to become the region's most important city, but when the railroad passed it by, it slipped into obscurity. Today, Port Townsend is obscure no more. With block after block of Victorian homes and a waterfront setting, it is now a favorite weekend destination for Seattleites. See "Port Townsend: A Restored Victorian Seaport" in chapter 8.
- Winthrop.** If you saw an 1890s photo of Winthrop and then visited this remote community in north central Washington, you would think the town was caught in a time warp. It just doesn't look much different than it did back then. See "Winthrop & the Methow Valley" in chapter 10.
- Leavenworth.** Lederhosen? Dirndls? Polka parties? Sounds like someplace to avoid, but actually, the Bavarian theme town of Leavenworth works. Maybe there are too many cuckoo clocks and nutcrackers for sale, but those mountains on the edge of town sure look like the Alps. See "Bavarian Leavenworth and the Wenatchee Valley" in chapter 10.

- **Walla Walla.** All right, Walla Walla isn't nearly as small as the other bergs mentioned here, but, with its many wineries and its great restaurants and lodgings, it is by far Washington's best small town. You won't find a closer approximation to the Napa Valley experience anywhere else in the state. See "Walla Walla" in chapter 11.

THE best FAMILY ATTRACTIONS & ACTIVITIES

- **Seattle Aquarium (Seattle).** Western Washington state is defined as much by its waters as by its land, so this aquarium on the Seattle waterfront is a great place to familiarize yourself with the sea life of the region. See p. 112.
- **Experience Music Project/Science Fiction Museum (Seattle).** A double-barreled blast of entertainment for teens and adults alike, these two associated museums are Seattle's shrines to rock music and science fiction. See p. 114.
- **Seattle Center (Seattle).** As the site of the Space Needle, Seattle Center is one of Seattle's required stops. However, families will also find here a children's museum, a children's theater, and an interactive science museum. See p. 124.
- **Museum of Flight (Seattle).** Airplanes may not be quite as fascinating to kids as fire engines and trains, but this museum has so many cool airplanes and things to do that kids usually don't want to leave. See p. 120.
- **Whale-Watching Tours in the San Juan Islands.** Sure, you can see orca whales perform at marine parks, but in the San Juan Islands during the summer, you can see genuinely free Willies, and lots of them. During whale-watching tours, minke whales, harbor seals, and bald eagles may also be spotted. See "The San Juan Islands" in chapter 6.
- **Fort Worden State Park (Port Townsend).** With a beach, old gun batteries, hiking trails, and a science center with tidepool touch tanks, this park is a big entertainment center for kids. See p. 226.
- **Pont Defiance Park (Tacoma).** This gigantic city park at the north end of Tacoma packs in more fun stuff for kids than they could hope to do in a day. It has a zoo, a replica of a historic trading fort, and an old-time logging camp complete with full-size train. See p. 211.
- **Long Beach.** With minigolf, horseback riding, miles of wide beaches, and perfect winds for kite flying, this beach community on the southern Washington coast is the state's best family beach. See "The Long Beach Peninsula" in chapter 9.

THE best HOTELS FOR FAMILIES

- **Seattle Marriott Sea-Tac Airport** (Seattle; ☎ 800/314-0925 or 206/241-2000): I wouldn't normally recommend an airport hotel too highly, but this hotel has such a fabulous atrium pool area that it's a great bet for families visiting Seattle. See p. 86.
- **Roche Harbor** (San Juan Island; ☎ 800/451-8910 or 360/378-2155): Wide lawns, a playground and a pool, woods to explore, kayak tours, whale-watching trips. There's so much to do at Roche Harbor that your kids may not let you leave. See p. 172.
- **Lakedale Resort** (San Juan Island; ☎ 800/617-2267 or 360/378-2350): Set on several small lakes on 82 acres in the middle of San Juan Island, this little resort

offers swimming, boating, fishing, and hiking. Accommodations are in a modern log lodge, and there are also cabins and luxury tents. See p. 171.

- **Great Wolf Lodge** (Grand Mound; ☎ 800/640-WOLF [9653]): Basically an indoor water park with rooms to rent, this resort roughly midway between Seattle and Portland, Oregon, is totally geared toward children, though parents are welcome, too. No matter what time of year you visit, it's always nice and warm inside the resort's sprawling water playground. See p. 218.
- **Alderbrook Resort & Spa** (Union; ☎ 360/898-2200): Set on the shores of Hood Canal, which is actually a fiord and not a canal, this luxurious resort on the east side of the Olympic Peninsula has the feel of summer camps of the past. While there's a lot to keep the kids busy, the resort is also luxurious enough to keep grown-ups happy. See p. 254.
- **Red Lion Hotel at the Park** (Spokane; ☎ 800/733-5466 or 509/326-8000): This downtown Spokane hotel may ostensibly be a conference hotel, but it is right on Riverfront Park, which has lots of kid-friendly attractions. Add a lagoon-style pool with a waterslide, and you have great place to stay at the end of a long day in the car. See p. 353.

THE best B&BS & INNS

- **Gaslight Inn** (Seattle; ☎ 206/325-3654): Beautifully decorated with lots of original Stickley furniture, this Craftsman bungalow is in the Capitol Hill neighborhood. The inn is a must for fans of the Arts and Crafts style. To top things off, there's also a swimming pool. See p. 84.
- **Inn on Orcas Island** (☎ 888/886-1661 or 360/376-5227): On the edge of a small bay and looking as if it were brought here from Martha's Vineyard or Nantucket, this luxurious inn is in a detail-rich modern building that looks to have been built 100 years ago. See p. 178.
- **Willcox House Country Inn** (Kitsap Peninsula; ☎ 800/725-9477 or 360/830-4492): This 1930s Art Deco mansion on the shore of Hood Canal is straight from an old Hollywood movie (movie stars even stayed here back in the '30s and '40s). See p. 205.
- **Chinaberry Hill** (Tacoma; ☎ 253/272-1282): Located in Tacoma's Stadium Historic District, this grand Victorian is as impressive as any of the historic B&Bs in Port Townsend. The inn is steeped in classic Northwest elegance and abounds in beautiful woodwork. See p. 213.
- **Thornewood Castle Inn** (Lakewood; ☎ 253/584-4393): Few B&Bs in America can claim to be castles, but Thornewood, built in 1909, certainly can. With 28 bedrooms and 22 bathrooms, this sprawling mansion is as close as you'll come to a European manor home in the U.S. See p. 214.
- **Old Consulate Inn** (Port Townsend; ☎ 800/300-6753 or 360/385-6753) Port Townsend is known for its many Victorian homes, and this ornately designed and decorated grande dame is your best choice for savoring the town's well-preserved history. See p. 228.
- **Abendblume Inn** (Leavenworth; ☎ 800/669-7634 or 509/548-4059): Of the many alpine chalet accommodations in Leavenworth, this is the most luxurious. The attention to detail in the construction of this chalet makes the inn an especially enjoyable place to spend a romantic weekend. See p. 298.

- **Run of the River Inn & Refuge** (Leavenworth; ☎ 800/288-6491 or 509/548-7171): Set amid beautiful rock gardens on a side channel of Icicle Creek, this contemporary log inn is just about the most luxurious mountain retreat in the state and is a blissfully tranquil place to get away from it all. See p. 298.
- **Inn at Abeja** (Walla Walla; ☎ 509/522-1234): Set on a picture-perfect farm, this inn outside of Walla Walla makes an ideal base for a wine tour of this region. Guest accommodations are in a variety of outbuildings, including a carriage house and even a converted chicken coop. See p. 342.
- **E.J. Roberts' Mansion** (Spokane; ☎ 866/456-8839): This elegant Victorian mansion, built in 1889, is in one of Spokane's most attractive historic residential neighborhoods and is surrounded by other gorgeous old homes. Large antique-filled suites reflect the mansion's historic heritage. See p. 353.

THE best MOUNTAIN LODGES & RESORTS

- **Sun Mountain Lodge** (Winthrop; ☎ 800/572-0493 or 509/996-2211): Perched atop a mountain and overlooking the remote Methow Valley, this is Washington's premier mountain resort. It makes a luxurious and very comfortable base for cross-country skiing in winter and hiking and mountain biking in summer. See p. 282.
- **Freestone Inn** (Mazama; ☎ 800/639-3809 or 509/996-3906): This impressive log lodge beside a small trout lake at the west end of the Methow Valley is not as extensive a place as nearby Sun Mountain Lodge, but the guest rooms are among the most luxurious in the state. See p. 282.
- **Mountain Home Lodge** (Leavenworth; ☎ 800/414-2378 or 509/548-7077): Set in the middle of a large pasture high on the slopes above the town of Leavenworth, this lodge enjoys a breathtaking view of the Stuart Range, and in winter it's only accessible by snow coach (complimentary transport provided by the lodge). See p. 297.
- **Sleeping Lady** (Leavenworth; ☎ 800/574-2123 or 509/548-6344): This place on the outskirts of Bavarian Leavenworth has the feel of an upscale summer camp for grown-ups. The lodge and its many cabins are tucked amid granite boulders and ponderosa pines. See p. 298.
- **Salish Lodge & Spa** (Snoqualmie Falls; ☎ 800/272-5474 or 425/888-2556): Perched on the brink of Snoqualmie Falls near the town of North Bend, this elegant country lodge is a favorite weekend getaway for Seattleites who come to be pampered at the spa and to enjoy the nearby farm country, mountain trails, and ski slopes. See p. 302.
- **The Lodge at Suncadia** (Cle Elum; ☎ 866/904-6301): Although this luxury lodge on the east side of Snoqualmie Pass is primarily the overnight lodging for the surrounding golf resort community, it is set amid the pine trees not far from some of the most rugged peaks in Washington. See p. 303.
- **Paradise Inn** (Mount Rainier National Park; ☎ 360/569-2275): Perched high on the slopes of Washington's Mount Rainier, this classic mountain lodge was built in 1917 and underwent a major renovation in 2008. Because the lodge is only open May through October, it books up early in the year and stays packed throughout the summer. You just can't beat the location. See p. 308.

- **Skamania Lodge** (Stevenson; ☎ 800/221-7117 or 509/427-7700): Set amid the grandeur of the Columbia Gorge, this modern mountain/golf resort makes the ideal base for exploring the gorge. The resort's golf course has a very distracting view of the Columbia Gorge. See p. 318.
- **Cave B Inn at Sagecliffe** (Ellensburg; ☎ 888/785-2283 or 509/785-2283): Although not actually in the mountains, this oddly named luxury inn is surrounded by vineyards and set atop 900-foot cliffs overlooking the Columbia River in central Washington. Well worth the drive. See p. 322.

THE best WATERFRONT RESORTS & LODGES

- **The Edgewater** (Seattle; ☎ 800/624-0670 or 206/728-7000): Built atop a pier on the Seattle waterfront, this hotel has the feel of a remote fishing lodge. The views across Elliott Bay to the Olympic Mountains are sublime. See p. 70.
- **Woodmark Hotel, Yacht Club & Spa on Lake Washington** (Kirkland; ☎ 800/822-3700 or 425/822-3700): Set on spacious grounds on the eastern shore of Lake Washington, this luxurious hotel is the Seattle area's finest waterfront hotel and has the feel of a resort. See p. 87.
- **The Inn at Langley** (Whidbey Island; ☎ 360/221-3033): The setting alone, overlooking Saratoga Passage, may be enough to rank this place firmly among the best small inns in the region. However, Japanese-influenced styling, soaking tubs with water-views, and fireplaces are all welcome luxuries at this romantic retreat. See p. 156.
- **Friday Harbor House** (San Juan Island; ☎ 866/722-7356 or 360/378-8455): This one isn't right on the water, but it still has some of the most luxurious accommodations on San Juan Island, and guest rooms have views of the water and distant island peaks. See p. 171.
- **Roche Harbor** (San Juan Island; ☎ 800/451-8910 or 360/378-2155): Slowly but surely, this historic property on the north shore of San Juan Island is transforming itself into the most luxurious getaway in the islands. The various suites and town houses are gorgeous. See p. 172.
- **Semiahmoo Resort** (Blaine; ☎ 800/770-7992 or 360/318-2000): On a spit of land across the water from Canada, this is Washington's premier golf and beach resort. Its long stretch of beachfront makes it a great place to escape, whether you want to play golf or tennis or just take a walk on the sand. See p. 194.
- **The Resort at Port Ludlow** (Port Ludlow; ☎ 877/805-0868 or 360/437-7000): Located a few miles south of Port Townsend, this small, luxury inn offers all the best aspects of the San Juan Islands without the hassles of the ferries. An adjacent golf course adds to the resort's appeal. See p. 229.
- **Lake Crescent Lodge** (Olympic National Park west of Port Angeles; ☎ 866/297-7367): On the shore of Lake Crescent, a landlocked fiord in Olympic National Park, this lodge is the best base for exploring the park's north side. It has simple rooms in the old lodge building, larger rooms in newer buildings, and rustic cottages. See p. 243.
- **Lake Quinault Lodge** (Lake Quinault; ☎ 800/562-6672 or 360/288-2900): This gracefully aging lodge on the shore of Lake Quinault has the most character

of any of the lodges scattered around the perimeter of Olympic National Park. It's a cross between a mountain lodge and a classic lake resort. See p. 251.

- **Alderbrook Resort & Spa** (Union; ☎ 360/898-2200): Although it's way off the main tourist routes, this waterfront resort on Hood Canal is the most luxurious lodge in the Olympic Peninsula area. See p. 254.

THE best OFF-THE-BEATEN-PATH RESTAURANTS

- **The Herbfarm Restaurant** (Woodinville; ☎ 425/485-5300): This restaurant northeast of Seattle is adjacent to several wineries. Once little more than a roadside farmstand specializing in herbs, over the years it has become the most highly acclaimed (and most expensive) restaurant in the state. See p. 104.
- **Inn at Langley's Restaurant** (Langley; ☎ 360/221-3033): Set in a quintessentially Northwestern inn on Whidbey Island, this is one of the state's most memorable restaurants. It serves some of the best (and most expensive) multi-course gourmet dinners in Washington. See p. 156.
- **Duck Soup Inn** (San Juan Island; ☎ 360/378-4878): This rustic restaurant beside a little duck pond in the middle of San Juan Island for decades has been the best restaurant on the island and is a must for any foodie visiting the San Juans. See p. 175.
- **Bay Café** (Lopez Island; ☎ 360/468-3700): Classy and casual, the Bay Café epitomizes the Lopez Island experience—quiet, comfortable, and unpretentious. Even if you aren't staying on Lopez, meals are so good that it's worth catching the ferry to dine here. See p. 184.
- **Molly Ward Gardens** (Poulsbo; ☎ 360/779-4471): Housed in an old barn in a small rural valley outside the Scandinavian theme town of Poulsbo, this restaurant sums up Northwest lifestyles with its country gardens, eclectic decor, and creative cuisine. See p. 205.
- **The Ajax Cafe** (Port Hadlock; ☎ 360/385-3450): With excellent food, live old-time music on the weekends, and silly hats hanging from the ceiling (and frequently worn by dinner guests), this hidden gem of a restaurant is south of Port Townsend. Housed in an old wooden waterfront building, it's a favorite for those with something to celebrate. See p. 231.
- **The Dining Room at Sun Mountain Lodge** (Winthrop; ☎ 509/996-4707): If you get vertigo easily, you may want to forego meals at this precipitously perched dining room overlooking the Methow Valley. However, if you relish creative cooking accompanied by dizzying mountain views, this restaurant should not be missed. See p. 283.
- **Whitehouse-Crawford Restaurant** (Walla Walla; ☎ 509/525-2222): In downtown Walla Walla, at the heart of Washington's most enjoyable wine-touring region, this restaurant in a former mill building shares space with a winery. The scene and menu have a decidedly Seattle feel. See p. 344.
- **Whoopemup Hollow Café** (Waitsburg; ☎ 509/337-9000): Talk about an unlikely location. This casual, hip bistro in a rural farming community 20 minutes east of Walla Walla serves genuine New Orleans-style meals and is well worth the drive. See p. 346.

WASHINGTON IN DEPTH

2

Does it really rain all the time in Washington and why would anyone ever want to live someplace where it rains 12 *feet* a year? Was there any music in Seattle before Kurt Cobain and the grunge scene? Does Seattle really have a Starbucks on every corner? Is it true that Washington has an active volcano? Isn't it too cold and rainy in Washington to grow wine grapes? Are there really vampires and werewolves on the Olympic Peninsula? Can Seattle really claim to be home to the original Skid Row? Are killer whales really killers?

You might already be pondering questions such as these, and if you spend a bit of time perusing this chapter, you'll find the answers to these and other questions you might have about this state in the upper left corner of the nation. Washington is a very diverse state, and this chapter will give you a better feel for the state, both past and present.

Oh, yes, and one other thing, in case you're wondering. George Washington did *not* sleep here. The first British ships didn't even visit Northwest shores until about the time the Revolutionary War was in full swing, but when Washington became a state in 1889, it took the name of the nation's first president, becoming the only state named for a U.S. president.

WASHINGTON TODAY

While Washington is a large and diverse state, encompassing not only rainforests and glaciers but also volcanoes and arid sagebrush landscapes, the vast majority of the population lives between the Cascades and Puget Sound in places where it is only necessary to lift one's eyes to understand why Washington is such a popular vacation destination. From Olympia to Bellingham, a quick glance toward the horizon (on a sunny day, that is) will present a mesmerizing view over the shimmering waters of Puget Sound to the snow-covered peaks of the Olympic Mountains, the massive mound of Mount Rainier, the glacier-clad slopes of Mount Baker, or the forested shores of the San Juan Islands. With horizons like these, it's easy to see why people would want to live here.

While the weather in Washington is notoriously drizzly, Washingtonians for the most part don't let a little rain stand between them and the outdoors. The temptation is too great to head for the hills, the river, the beach, the sound, or the islands. Consequently, life in Washington's cities tends to revolve as much around parks, gardens, waterfronts, and other outdoor spaces as it does around such traditional urban pastimes as shopping, the performing arts, and dining. Parks, both small and large, are where people find tranquillity, where summer festivals are held, and where locals take their visiting friends and relatives. And when such green spaces as Seattle's Discovery and Green Lake parks, Tacoma's Point Defiance Park, and Spokane's Riverfront and Minto parks aren't wild enough to satisfy the craving for an outdoor experience, there is something wilder close at hand. Most of the state's population can be in a national park, national forest, or state park within an hour or two.

The region's outdoors aesthetic does not, however, preclude a strong support of the arts. The Seattle Opera is one of the finest companies in the country (well known for its stagings of Wagner's *Ring* series), as is the Seattle Symphony, which performs in Benaroya Hall, adjacent to the Seattle Art Museum. Seattle is also a center for live theater, including a very lively fringe theater scene. Tacoma, Olympia, and Spokane all have large, modern, and active performing arts centers as well.

Just as bad weather doesn't stop Washingtonians from enjoying the outdoors, good weather doesn't stop them from supporting the performing arts. During the summer months, countless festivals around the state take music, theater, and dance outdoors. These festivals feature everything from chamber music to polka bands to alternative rock.

Neither are the visual arts overlooked. In the city of Tacoma, south of Seattle, the Museum of Glass and the Tacoma Art Museum have turned this once much-maligned city into an art center to rival Seattle. The city even has an art-glass-themed hotel now. Not to be upstaged by its neighbor to the south, Seattle expanded its

Local Wisdom

Every part of this country is sacred to my people. Every hillside, every valley, every plain and grove has been hallowed by some fond memory or some sad experience of my tribe.

**—Chief Sealth, for whom
Seattle is named**

own Seattle Art Museum back in 2007 and in 2008 got a luxurious new Four Seasons hotel across from the museum. Even Bellingham, the prettiest little city on Puget Sound, got a new architectural gem of a museum when the Whatcom Museum's Lightcatcher opened in late 2009.

Despite the collapse of the over-inflated real estate market, Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen's Vulcan company has continued with its ambitious development of Seattle's South Lake Union neighborhood, which is to be, among other things, home to the world headquarters of online bookseller and retailer Amazon. Many other real estate projects in Seattle and elsewhere have, however, ground to a halt. Take a trip out to eastern Washington's wine country, however, and you get a sunnier picture. Sure, some wineries with excess inventories have had to cut prices for their wine, but a surprising number of new and often quite impressive wineries have opened in recent years in wine-country towns such as Walla Walla and Prosser.

Despite its reputation for foot dragging when it comes to public transit, Seattle finally got a light-rail system up and running in 2009, and in 2010, service began

between Seattle Tacoma International Airport and downtown Seattle. Seattle and Tacoma both now also have streetcar lines. However, Seattle still can't seem to decide what to do about the Alaskan Way Viaduct, which was damaged by the 2001 Nisqually earthquake. The most likely solution is a tunnel similar to Boston's Big Dig. However, a proposed citywide monorail project in years past never got off the ground, so it remains to be seen whether ground will ever be broken for a viable viaduct replacement. If your vacation plans involve travel by ferry, be sure to pay close attention to sailing schedules for the ferries of the Washington State Ferries system. Due to budget cuts, there have been reductions in the frequency of ferry sailings. The news has been a bit brighter for aerospace giant Boeing, which, though it is no longer headquartered in Seattle, is still one of the region's biggest employers. In late 2009, the first of its new 787 Dreamliners finally took to the air.

Back in 1971, when Boeing was the Seattle area's biggest employer and pretty much drove the local economy, massive layoffs led people in the region to joke that the last person leaving Seattle should turn out the lights. Well it's twilight time in Washington again, but this time the dusky gloom is good for business. I am referring, of course, to the *Twilight* series of teen-romance vampire novels and subsequent films the books have spawned. Set in Forks, a small timber town on the Olympic Peninsula, the immensely popular stories have been a boon for the state's wettest region, which for nearly 2 decades has been economically depressed. So, if you find yourself exploring the drizzly wilds of the Olympic Peninsula, be sure keep an eye out for vampires and werewolves.

Economic ups and downs aside, Washingtonians continue to share a common interest in the outdoors, and it is this interest that tends to dominate the character of the region. Nowhere else in the country is such a diverse natural beauty so close at hand, even for those who live in the cities. And if winters are long, gray, and rainy, well, you just put on a colorful rain jacket, fill the travel mug with a double tall raspberry latte, and head for the hills regardless of the rain.

LOOKING BACK AT WASHINGTON

While the Euro-American history of Washington extends back only to the late 18th century and settlers did not begin arriving until the middle of the 19th century, this region has been home to Native American cultures for thousands of years.

EARLY HISTORY From the bays and rivers of Puget Sound to the rolling grasslands of southeastern Washington's Palouse region, what is today the state of Washington has been populated by numerous Native American tribes for thousands of years. Exactly how long humans have resided here is still open to debate. Human remains more than 12,000 years old have been found at a mastodon kill site on the Olympic Peninsula (the tusks of this ancient pachyderm can be seen in Sequim's Museum & Arts Center). The bones of the controversial Kennewick Man, discovered in 1996 on the banks of the Columbia River in eastern Washington, have been dated at more than 9,000 years of age.

It is estimated that before the arrival of Euro-Americans in this region, there were 125 distinct Northwest tribes speaking 50 languages. However, between the 1780s, when white explorers and traders began frequenting the Northwest coast, and the

1830s, when the first settlers began arriving, the Native American population of the Northwest was reduced to perhaps a 10th of its historic numbers. It was not war that wiped out these people, but diseases such as smallpox, measles, malaria, and influenza. Native Americans had no resistance to these diseases and entire tribes were soon decimated by fast-spreading epidemics.

Throughout the Puget Sound region, there were numerous small tribes that subsisted primarily on salmon, halibut, shellfish, and whales. While seafood was a mainstay of the native diet, cedar trees were the most important building material. Cedar was used by these tribes to build both longhouses and large canoes. Even clothing was made from the bark of cedar trees. The natural abundance of the region allowed many of these tribes to develop complex cultures, though it was farther north, in present-day British Columbia and Alaska, that wealth was displayed in the shape of huge totem poles.

It was the Columbia River tribes, however, that became the richest of the Washington tribes. These tribes controlled the Celilo Falls fishing grounds, which were historically the richest salmon fishing grounds in the Northwest. These massive falls on the Columbia River east of present-day The Dalles, Oregon, witnessed the annual passage of millions of salmon, which were speared and dip-netted by Native Americans who then smoked the fish to preserve it for the winter. Some Native Americans still fish for Columbia River salmon as they once did, perched on precarious wooden platforms and with dip net in hand. However, Celilo Falls are now gone, inundated beneath the reservoir created by The Dalles Dam, which was completed in 1957. You can learn more about the history of Columbia River tribes at the Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center in Stevenson, Washington. You can also see a superb collection of Native American baskets at the Columbia Gorge's Maryhill Museum of Art, which is on the Washington side of the Columbia east of The Dalles.

Today there are numerous reservations across the state, and at several of these, including the Yakama, Makah, Suquamish, and Colville reservations, you can learn about the respective tribes at museums and cultural centers. You can also do a bit of gambling at quite a few Indian casinos all across the state.

THE AGE OF EXPLORATION Though a Spanish ship reached what is now southern Oregon in 1542, the Spanish had no interest in the gray and rainy coast. Nor did famed British buccaneer Sir Francis Drake, who in 1579 sailed his ship the *Golden Hind* as far north as the mouth of Oregon's Rogue River. Drake called off his explorations in the face of what he described as "thicke and stinking foggies."

Though the Spanish laid claim to all of North America's west coast, they had little interest in the lands north of Mexico. However, when the Spanish found out that Russian fur traders were establishing themselves in Alaska and along the North Pacific coast, Spain took a new interest in the Northwest. Several Spanish expeditions sailed north from Mexico to reassert the Spanish claim to the region. In 1775, Spanish explorers Bruno de Heceta and Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra charted much of the Northwest coast, and though they found the mouth of the Columbia River, they did not enter it.

Within a few years the Spanish found their claims to the region also being challenged by English traders. Capt. James Cook, on a voyage of discovery that began in 1776, spent time at Nootka Sound on Vancouver Island, where the native peoples were eager to trade furs. Though Cook was killed in Hawaii later in the same voyage,

his crew discovered en route back to England that the Chinese would pay astronomical prices for Northwest furs, especially sea otter pelts.

By 1785, the fur trade between the Northwest and China was well underway, with the British now asserting a claim to the Pacific Northwest. The Spanish and English teetered on the brink of war, but a compromise was worked out and the Spanish agreed to allow continued English trade in the area.

The negotiations of this settlement took place in 1792 at Nootka Sound (in present-day British Columbia), with Capt. George Vancouver serving as English envoy. Before reaching Nootka Sound, Vancouver spent time exploring and mapping much of the Northwest. Though he passed the Columbia River off as unimportant, he sailed up the Strait of Juan de Fuca and discovered a large inland sea that he named Puget Sound, after one of his lieutenants. Vancouver's negotiations at Nootka failed to establish a firm British claim to the land, but with sea otter populations decimated by several intense years of trading, interest in the Northwest was waning in both England and Spain.

Now a new player entered the Northwest arena of trade and exploration in the person of American trader Robert Gray. Risking a passage through treacherous sandbars, Gray sailed his ship, *Columbia Rediviva*, into the mouth of the long-speculated-upon Great River of the West, which he named the Columbia River after his ship. This discovery established the first American claim to the region. When news of Gray's discovery reached the United States and England, both countries began speculating on a northern water route across North America. Such a route, if it existed, would facilitate trade with the Northwest.

In 1793, Scotsman Alexander MacKenzie made the first overland trip across North America north of New Spain. Crossing British Canada on foot, MacKenzie arrived somewhere north of Vancouver Island. After reading MacKenzie's account of his journey, Thomas Jefferson decided that the United States needed to find a better

Seattle's Really Not That Bad

I grew up in Seattle, but I always knew I wanted to leave.

—David Guterson, author of
Snow Falling on Cedars and The Other

route overland to the Northwest. To this end he commissioned Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to lead an expedition up the Missouri River in hopes of finding a single easy portage that would lead to the Columbia River. Beginning in 1804, the members of the Lewis and Clark expedition paddled up the Missouri, crossed the Rocky Mountains on foot,

and then paddled down the Columbia River to its mouth. A French-Canadian trapper and his Native American wife, Sacagawea, were enlisted as interpreters, and it was the presence of Sacagawea that helped the expedition gain acceptance among Western tribes. After spending the very dismal, wet winter of 1805 to 1806 at the mouth of the Columbia, the expedition headed back east. Discoveries made by the expedition added greatly to the scientific and geographical knowledge of the continent. In Fort Canby State Park, at the mouth of the Columbia River, you'll find the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center.

In 1819, the Spanish relinquished all claims north of the present California-Oregon state line, and the Russians gave up their claims to all lands south of Alaska. This left only the British and Americans dickering for control of the Northwest.

SETTLEMENT Only 6 years after Lewis and Clark spent the winter at the mouth of the Columbia, employees of John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company managed to establish themselves at the mouth of the Columbia River on the Oregon side at a site they called Fort Astoria. However, during the War of 1812, they handed over the fort to the British. In the wake of this war, the British still dominated the region, but American trade was tolerated. No firm decision was arrived at concerning possession of the Northwest.

With the decline of the sea otter population, British fur traders turned to the beaver and headed inland up the Columbia River. For the next 30 years or so, fur-trading companies would be the sole authority in the Northwest. Fur-trading posts (including Spokane House, which was established in 1810 near present-day Spokane) were established throughout the region, though most were on the eastern edge of the territory in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. The powerful Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) eventually became the single fur-trading company in the Northwest.

In 1824, the HBC established its Northwest headquarters at Fort Vancouver, 100 miles up the Columbia near the mouth of the Willamette River. Between 1824 and 1846, when the 49th parallel was established as the boundary between British and American northwestern lands, Fort Vancouver was the most important settlement in the region. Today, a replica of the fort has been built and is part of the Vancouver National Historic Reserve.

By the 1830s, the future of the Northwest had arrived in the form of American missionaries. In 1836, Marcus and Narcissa Whitman, along with Henry and Eliza Spaulding, made the overland trek to Fort Vancouver, then backtracked into what is now eastern Washington and Idaho, to establish two missions. This journey soon inspired other settlers to make the difficult overland crossing.

In 1840, a slow trickle of American settlers began making the 2,000-mile journey across the continent. Their destination was the Oregon country, which had been promoted as a veritable Eden with wide expanses of land just waiting to be claimed. In 1843, Marcus Whitman, after traveling east to plead with his superiors not to shut down his mission, headed back west, leading 900 settlers along the Oregon Trail. Before these settlers arrived, the small population of retired trappers, missionaries, and HBC employees who were living at Fort Vancouver and in nearby Oregon City had formed a provisional government in anticipation of the land-claim problems that would arise with the influx of settlers to the region.

In 1844, Oregon City became the first incorporated town west of the Rocky Mountains. This outpost in the wilderness, a gateway to the fertile lands of the Willamette Valley, was the destination of the wagon trains that began traveling the Oregon Trail, and which each year brought more and more settlers to the region. As the land in the Willamette Valley was claimed, settlers began fanning out to different regions of the Northwest, and during the late 1840s and early 1850s many new towns, including Seattle and Portland, were founded.

Many wagon trains stopped at the Whitman mission near present-day Walla Walla, and it was one of these groups of pioneers that brought the measles to the region. Native Americans of the Cayuse tribe, many of whom lived at the Whitman mission, had no resistance to the disease, and soon their population was decimated. Whitman, who was looked upon as a doctor, was unable to stop the spread of the

disease. In retribution for his inability to cure the Native Americans at the mission, several Cayuse attacked the remote outpost and killed the Whitmans and several other whites who were staying there. At Walla Walla's Whitman Mission National Historic Site you can learn more about this sad chapter in Northwest history.

It was the Whitman massacre and the subsequent demand for territorial status and U.S. military protection that brought about the establishment of the first U.S. territory west of the Rockies. Although the line between American and British land in the Northwest had been established in 1846 at the 49th parallel (the current U.S.-Canada border), it was not until 1848, in the wake of the Whitman massacre, that Oregon was finally given U.S. territorial status. Washington, however, would have to wait another 5 years, until 1853, to officially become a territory.

The establishment of the 49th parallel as the boundary between U.S. and British territories extended only as far as the main channel between the mainland and Vancouver Island, which was firmly in the hands of the British. However, because there was disagreement over where the main channel was, American and British troops jointly occupied San Juan Island. When, in 1859, a British pig rooting in an American soldier's potato patch was shot and killed, the two nations came to the brink of war. It took international arbitration to settle the disagreement, which was finally resolved by turning San Juan Island over to U.S. control. Both the American Camp and the English Camp are preserved as part of the San Juan National Historic Park.

In 1881, the first transcontinental railroad reached Spokane, in eastern Washington, and finally linked the Northwest with the eastern United States. In 1883, Tacoma became the end of the line for the Northern Pacific Railroad tracks that originated in St. Paul, Minnesota. With the arrival of the railroads, Washington took a great leap forward in its development. No longer a remote wilderness, the region began to attract industry, and in 1889 Washington gained statehood.

One curious footnote to the state's early railroad history was the boom and bust of Port Townsend. This seaport town on the Olympic Peninsula was convinced that it would become the end of the line for the railroad and experienced a wave of real estate speculation in anticipation of the railroad's arrival. Victorian mansions were built and sturdy brick commercial buildings were constructed along the town's waterfront. The railroad never arrived, and Port Townsend never became the metropolis it had hoped it would become. Today the town is one of the most perfectly preserved Victorian communities in the West.

INDUSTRIALIZATION & THE 20TH CENTURY From the very beginning of Euro-American settlement in the Northwest, the region based its growth on an extractive economy. The early fur traders completely wiped out Washington's sea otter population (which has since been reestablished, with otters from Alaska, off the Olympic Peninsula). Lumber and salmon, the two natural resources that Washington had in the greatest concentrations, were both exploited relentlessly, and the history of the timber and salmon-fishing industries ran parallel to one another for more than a century. At the close of the 20th century, both industries had arrived at similar situations—severely depleted wild resources and government intervention to preserve the remaining old-growth forests and wild salmon populations.

Resource extraction in the Northwest took off in 1848, when gold was discovered in California. Washington benefited immensely from the sudden demand for lumber, and even oysters were shipped from the Washington waters to the tables of San

Francisco restaurants. In fact, so many oysters were shipped south from Willapa Bay that the entire native oyster population was wiped out, and seed oysters had to be imported from Japan to reestablish the oyster beds. Today, Willapa Bay is still one of the nation's largest producers of oysters.

It would, however, take a second gold rush, this time the 1897 gold rush in Alaska and the Klondike, to bring real prosperity to the state. With the vast majority of miners passing through Seattle on both their northward and southward journeys, the merchants of the city enjoyed a thriving business. Seattle merchants supplied hopeful northbound miners with the tools of the trade and also helped miners divest themselves of their hard-earned money when they returned from the gold fields. You can learn about this latter gold rush at Seattle's Klondike Gold Rush National Historic Park.

However, trees were still the foundation of the state's economy. Nurtured on steady rains, Douglas fir, Sitka spruce, western red cedar, and hemlock grew as much as 300 feet tall. Washington's first sawmill began operation near present-day Vancouver, Washington, in 1828, and between the 1850s and 1870s, Washington sawmills supplied the growing California market as well as a limited foreign market. When the transcontinental railroads arrived in the 1880s, mills began shipping to the eastern states.

In the early years, sawmills and logging companies would cut all the trees in one area and then move on to greener forests. By the turn of the 20th century the government had gained more control over public forests in an attempt to slow the cutting of the region's trees, and sawmill owners began buying up huge tracts of land. At the outbreak of World War I, more than 20% of the forestlands in the Northwest were owned by three companies—Weyerhaeuser, the Northern Pacific Railroad, and the Southern Pacific Railroad—and more than 50% of the workforce labored in the timber industry.

The timber industry has always been extremely susceptible to fluctuations in the economy and experienced a roller-coaster ride of boom and bust throughout the 20th century. Boom times in the 1970s brought on record-breaking production that came to a screeching halt in the 1980s and 1990s, first with a nationwide recession, and then with the listing of the northern spotted owl as a threatened species. By the latter half of the 20th century, big lumber companies had realized that the forests were dwindling. Tree farms had been planted, but large old trees continued to be cut. By the 1980s, environmentalists, shocked by vast clear-cuts on public lands, began trying to save the last old-growth trees. Today the battle between the timber industry and environmentalists continues.

Just as trees in the Northwest were huge and plentiful, so too were the salmon. These fish, which spend their adult lives in the ocean before returning to fresh water to spawn, were the dietary mainstay of Northwest Native Americans for thousands of years before the first whites arrived in the region. However, within 10 years of the opening of the first salmon cannery in the Northwest, the fish population was severely depleted. In 1877, the first fish hatchery was developed to replenish dwindling runs of salmon. Salmon canning reached a peak on the Columbia River in 1895 and on Puget Sound in 1913. Later in the 20th century, salmon runs would be further reduced by the construction of numerous dams on the Columbia and Snake rivers. Although fish ladders help adult salmon make their journeys upstream, the young salmon heading downstream have no such help and a large percentage are

killed by the turbines of hydroelectric dams. One solution to this problem has been the barging and trucking of young salmon downriver. Today the salmon populations of the Northwest are so diminished that entire runs of salmon have been listed as threatened or endangered.

In 1916, William Boeing launched a small seaplane from the waters of Seattle's Lake Union and laid down the foundation for what would become the Seattle area's single largest employer: Boeing. The company became a major employer in Seattle when it began manufacturing B-17s and B-29s during World War II and today continues to be one of the largest employers in the state. However, this has had its drawbacks for Seattle. The city's fortunes were for many years so closely linked to the aircraft manufacturer that any cutback in production at Boeing had a devastating ripple effect on the local economy. However, with the global ascendancy of Bill Gates's software giant Microsoft (based just outside Seattle), the Seattle economy has begun to diversify.

THE LAY OF THE LAND

The state of Washington encompasses a vast area that contains within its boundaries an amazing diversity of natural environments—not only lush forests, but glacier-covered peaks, alpine meadows, grasslands, and sagebrush-covered hills. Together these diverse environments support a surprisingly wide variety of natural life that has evolved to fill the many niches created by Northwest geography.

Washington's Pacific Ocean coastline stretches for roughly 150 miles, from the Columbia River to the tip of the Olympic Peninsula, and inland waters including Puget Sound, the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and the many channels through the San Juan Islands add hundreds of more miles of coastline. This extensive shoreline provides habitat for numerous species of marine mammals, as well as large populations of seabirds such as cormorants, tufted puffins, and pigeon guillemots. Of the marine mammals that frequent Washington waters, the largest and most impressive are the more than 20,000 Pacific gray whales that pass by the state each year between December and April as they make their annual migration south to their breeding grounds off Baja California. These whales can often be seen from shore, and whale-watching tours operate out of Grays Harbor. More frequently spotted, however, are harbor seals and Steller's and California sea lions, which are often seen lounging on rocks, especially in the San Juan Islands. Off the remote beaches of the Olympic Peninsula, there's even a small population of sea otters, and river otters can sometimes be spotted in the San Juan Islands and Puget Sound.

Washington's Pacific coastline is roughly divided into a wild and rugged northern coast, at the base of the Olympic Mountains, and a more developed southern coast characterized by long, sandy beaches backed by low dunes. Rain, however, is this coastline's single most defining character, especially along the northern shoreline. As moist winds from the Pacific Ocean rise up and over the Olympic Mountains, the winds drop their moisture as rain and snow. In the northwest corner of Washington state, on the western slopes of the Olympic Mountains, rain is measured not by the inch but by the foot; and annual rainfall can exceed 12 feet! This tremendous amount of rain has produced the country's only temperate rainforests and some of the largest trees on earth. Although the Sitka spruce is the most characteristic tree of these rainforests, it is the Douglas fir, common throughout the Northwest and

second only to the coast redwood of Northern California in overall size, that's the most impressive, sometimes reaching 300 feet in height. Other common trees of the rainforest include western hemlocks, Alaska cedars, western red cedars, and big-leaf maples. These latter trees are often draped with thick mats of moss.

More than a century of intensive logging has, however, left the region's forests of centuries-old trees shrunken to remnant groves scattered in often remote and inaccessible areas. How much exactly is still left is a matter of hot debate between the timber industry and environmentalists, and the battle to save the remaining old-growth forests continues, with both sides claiming victories and losses with each passing year. Among this region's most celebrated and controversial wild residents is the northern spotted owl, which, because of its large requirements for undisturbed old-growth forest and its listing as a federally threatened species, brought logging of old-growth forests to a virtual halt in the early 1990s. Today concern is also focused on the marbled murrelet, a small bird that feeds on the open ocean but nests in old-growth forests.

The Olympic Mountains, which rise to 7,965 feet at the top of Mount Olympus, are a rugged range capped with alpine meadows, glaciers, and ice fields. Although black-tailed deer are the most common large mammals of these mountains, there is also a population of mountain goats in Olympic National Park. However, these goats are not native to this area and, because of the damage they cause the fragile high-elevation meadows, attempts have been made to remove them. The Roosevelt elk, the largest commonly encountered land mammal in the state, can be found here and

Look on the Sunny Side

Are you absolutely sure you want to vacation in Washington? This state can claim two dubious records. The Olympic Peninsula's Hoh River Valley is the rainiest place in the continental U.S. (140 in. on average), and Mount Baker is the snowiest place in the country (1,140 in. in the winter of 1998–99).

throughout the western regions of the state. It was to protect these animals that the land now known as Olympic National Park was originally set aside.

To the east of the Olympic Peninsula lie the lowlands of the Puget Sound region. Because of the mild climate of this area, this is the most densely populated region of the state. Puget Sound is a maze of waterways that were formed by glacial activity during the last Ice Age, when the polar ice sheets that stretched south-

ward into the region carved out long, narrow valleys that later flooded as the glaciers retreated. As sea level rose after the end of the Ice Age, mountains in this region became islands. Today, the best known of these are the San Juan Islands.

The waters surrounding the San Juan Islands, which lie to the north of Puget Sound, are home to some of the Northwest's best known wildlife—orca whales, which are also known as killer whales and are the largest members of the porpoise family. Once maligned as the wolves of the sea, orcas have become a symbol of the region. During the summer, numerous tour companies in the San Juan Islands offer whale-watching tours. On these tours, you're also likely to see some of the many bald eagles that flock to this region. Although bald eagles can be seen throughout the year around Puget Sound and in the San Juan Islands, they gather in largest numbers each winter on the Skagit River, north of Seattle.

To the east of Puget Sound rise the mountains of the 700-mile-long Cascade Range, which stretches from Northern California to southern British Columbia. The most prominent features of the Cascades are its volcanic peaks: Mount Baker, Glacier Peak, Mount Rainier, Mount St. Helens, and Mount Adams. The eruption of Mount St. Helens on May 18, 1980, vividly reminded Washingtonians that this is still a volcanically active region, and geologists warn that, based on past eruption cycles, Mount Rainier might be next.

The same rainfall that gives the Olympic Peninsula its rainforests leaves the Cascades with frequent heavy snows and dozens of glaciers, among which are the largest glacier and the lowest-elevation glacier. In 1972, Mount Rainier set a world record when 94 feet of snow fell in one winter. However, that record was broken during the winter of 1998 to 1999, when 1,140 inches (95 ft.) of snow fell on Mount Baker.

Among the wild residents of the Cascades are mountain goats that can sometimes be seen in the North Cascades, along the shores of Lake Chelan, and in Mount Rainier National Park. Picas and marmots are some of the high country's smaller but more visible and audible residents. The former is a mouse-size relative of the rabbit, while the latter is the largest member of the squirrel family. Both live in high meadows and rocky slopes and both can be recognized by their distinctive whistles. The pica's is small and squeaky, while the marmot's is high, loud, and shrill. In the remote northern section of North Cascades National Park there are even wolves and grizzly bears, though these large predators are almost never encountered by humans. Cougars also roam the forests throughout the Northwest and are as elusive as the grizzly and the wolf.

East of the Cascades, less than 200 miles from the rainforest valleys of the Olympic Peninsula, so little rain falls that only sagebrush, grasses, and a few other hardy plants can survive. This arid landscape, known as the Columbia Plateau, is a vast, dry, shrub-steppe region that stretches eastward to the Rockies, a side range of which actually reaches into the northeast corner of the state. The Columbia Plateau was formed 10 million to 15 million years ago by sheets of lava flowing over the land and covering more than 100,000 square miles. Through this desolate landscape flows the Columbia River, which, together with its tributary the Snake, forms the second-largest river drainage in the United States.

During the last Ice Age, roughly 12,000 to 15,000 years ago, a glacial ice dam blocked the flow of a tributary of the Columbia, forming a huge lake behind the dam. This vast prehistoric lake repeatedly burst the ice dam, sending massive and devastating walls of water flooding down the Columbia. These floodwaters were sometimes 1,000 feet high and carried with them ice and rocks, which scoured out the Columbia Gorge in much the same way that glaciers scoured out California's Yosemite Valley. In both places the results were similar—tall, narrow waterfalls. These same floodwaters also scoured the landscape of eastern Washington, leaving in their wake abandoned river channels known as coulees and channeled scablands. The most famous of these coulees is Grand Coulee, site of one of the largest dams on earth.

This and the dozens of other dams on the Columbia and Snake rivers have become the focus of one of the region's current environmental battles. Though many of these dams have fish ladders to allow salmon to return upriver to spawn, salmon populations have been steadily dwindling for more than a century. Overfishing for

I'm Dreaming of . . .

Until Elton John's "Candle in the Wind 1997" booted it out of top position, the top-selling single of all time was by one of Washington's native sons (and it isn't Kurt Cobain). Bing Crosby's single of "White Christmas" has reportedly sold more than 50 million copies (100 million copies if you include all the albums it has been on).

salmon canneries in the late 19th century struck the first major blow to salmon populations, and the large dams, mostly built during the middle part of the 20th century, created further barriers both to returning adults and to young salmon headed downstream to the Pacific. Among the obstacles faced by these young salmon are slower river flow in the reservoirs behind the dams, turbines that kill fish by the thousands, and irrigation canals that often confuse salmon into swimming out of the river and into farm fields. Compounding the problem has been the use of fish hatcheries to supplement wild salmon populations (hatchery fish tend to be less vigorous than wild salmon). A salmon recovery plan adopted to save threatened runs of native salmon has yet to be fully implemented, as farmers, electricity producers, shipping companies, and major users of hydroelectric power continue to fight its requirements.

With new listings of salmon runs under the Endangered Species Act, more restrictions on development near salmon streams have begun to be instituted throughout the Puget Sound region. Out in the southeastern corner of the state, however, the battle rages over removal of dams on the Snake River. Even the seeming wild and untamed Olympic Peninsula has been the focus of a heated debate over the removal of two small dams on the Elwha River.

EATING & DRINKING IN WASHINGTON

Although it is mere coincidence that the words *Seattle* and *seafood* both start with the same three letters of the alphabet, it takes only a stroll through Pike Place Market or dinner at a local seafood restaurant to see for yourself that Seattle and the rest of western Washington is a seafood-lover's nirvana. Silvery salmon, hefty Dungeness crabs, clams, mussels, and dozens of varieties of oysters are the seafood stars on the shores of Puget Sound. Salmon, although not always local, is a Northwest icon that shows up both fresh and smoked on Washington menus. Wish you could take some salmon home with you? Not a problem. In Seattle, Pike Place Market fishmongers will pack fresh salmon for you to take home on the plane, and some vacuum-packed smoked salmon doesn't even need to be refrigerated. Oysters are such an obsession here in Washington that one of my favorite Seattle restaurants, Elliott's Oyster House, even has an oyster new-year celebration each year in early November. Those oysters might come from Willapa Bay (on the Washington coast), Quilcene Bay (on the Olympic Peninsula), the San Juan Islands, or the shores north of the Skagit River delta. Restaurant menus also often feature mussels from Whidbey Island's Penn Cove. Crab cakes are ubiquitous in Washington restaurants, and more often than not they're made with Dungeness crab, a crab that takes its name from a small community on the northern Olympic Peninsula. Razor clams, which are found on Pacific

Ocean beaches, are another local favorite, as are the giant geoduck (pronounced gooey-duck) clams, which are rarely seen in Washington restaurants because they are such a delicacy in Asia that most get sold on the overseas market.

Washington's bounty doesn't end where the surf meets the turf. The cool, rainy days of fall and spring produce a bounty of wild mushrooms and other foraged foods that can often be found in markets and on restaurant menus. The state's temperate climate is also ideal for growing everything from apples to zucchinis. Small farms grow such a wide variety of fresh produce throughout the year that the locavore movement (eating locally as much as possible) is rapidly gaining proponents among chefs at Seattle's top restaurants and at other high-end restaurants around the state. *Fresh, organic, local, and sustainable* are the watchwords at an ever-increasing number of restaurants. Even many coffeehouses and espresso stands now offer organic, fair-trade, and shade-grown coffees. Seattle's Theo Chocolate, a company that gives tours of its chocolate factory, roasts its own organic and fair-trade cocoa beans. Finally, guilt-free chocolate!

Of course, as nearly everyone on the planet knows, coffee leviathan Starbucks got its start here in Seattle, and espresso in Washington has been raised to an art form. However, from dawn to dark, the state's cups and glasses stay filled with more than just double-tall skinny lattes. Washington is one of the nation's top wine producers, and many of the state's best and biggest wineries are within a 30-minute drive of Seattle in the town of Woodinville. Many more are to be found in eastern Washington's Yakima Valley, in and around the city of Walla Walla, in the Columbia River Valley, on the shore of Lake Chelan, and in just about every other corner of the state. Washington wineries are best known for their cabernet sauvignon and merlot, but you should also keep an eye out for excellent syrahs and semillons. Many of the state's top restaurants emphasize Washington wines on their wine lists.

Washington is also home to quite a few craft breweries; some are tiny brewpubs, but others are major brewers that craft distinctive beers. While Pyramid Breweries and the Red Hook Ale Brewery are the two major players in the state, some of my favorite brewpubs include Big Time Brewery & Alehouse and the Elysian Brewing Company in Seattle, Walking Man Brewing in the Columbia River Gorge town of Stevenson, Boundary Bay Brewery & Bistro in Bellingham, and La Conner Brewing Company in La Conner.

PLANNING YOUR TRIP TO WASHINGTON

3

Can I really go kayaking with killer whales in Washington? If I plan a family vacation to the Olympic Peninsula in June, will it be sunny and warm and should we bring our bathing suits? Is there really a festival in Seattle named after an English umbrella? These are just some of the questions that I'll answer in this chapter, and I'm sure you'll find answers to lots of other questions you've been pondering as you've begun planning your Washington vacation. If you're one of those travelers for whom planning the trip is half the fun, then you already know that this book is jam-packed with helpful hints and useful information. If, on the other hand, you're the type who dread vacations because they are so hard to plan, don't despair; this chapter has loads of basic planning information that will help you answer the sorts of questions that can keep you up at night. When should I go? What will it cost? Do I need to rent a car? What airport do I fly in to? So, spend a little time thumbing through this chapter, and you'll likely turn up the answers to many of your pressing questions.

For additional help in planning your trip and for more on-the-ground resources in Washington state, please see "Fast Facts," on p. 358.

WHEN TO GO

If you're reading this section, there's probably one question on your mind: When can I visit and not get rained on? The answer is, of course, never. Although the Northwest's infamous rains fall primarily between October

and early July, it can rain any month of the year, so be sure to bring an umbrella or rain gear of some sort with you. This is especially important if you plan to visit the Olympic Peninsula, parts of which receive more than 150 inches of rain each year. In fact, if you visit any part of the coast, expect grayer, wetter weather than in the Seattle area. From the coast to the Cascade Range, moist winds off the Pacific Ocean keep temperatures mild year-round, so you'll likely need a sweater or light jacket at night, even if you visit in August.

July and August are the most reliably rainless months, and consequently, this is the most popular time to visit. It is during these months that the sun is seen most often and rain is almost unheard of (though not unknown). During these dry summer months, Washington families flock to the San Juan Islands to, among other things, watch the region's famous orca whales feeding in the waters off San Juan Island. July and August are also the state's main festival months, and several of the big festivals in the Seattle area can make finding a hotel room on a festival weekend difficult.

Labor Day weekend aside, September is one of the best months to visit. Skies are often still cloudless, kids are back in school, and the crowds at popular destinations, including the San Juan Islands and Mount Rainier, are really bad only on weekends. In the mountains, wildflowers often still bloom (though peak bloom in the Cascade Range and Olympic Mountains is July–Aug).

With the coming of the rains, Washingtonians begin spending far more time indoors and consequently, performing arts companies in Seattle and other major cities begin their annual seasons. So, if you're keen on catching the Seattle Opera or some of Seattle's fringe theater, plan a rainy season visit. This may not be as bad as it sounds, as hotels in Seattle offer substantial discounts during the dreary winter months. Keep in mind, though, that winters usually include one or two blasts of arctic air that bring snow and freezing weather to the Seattle area.

Winter also brings the ski season and sometimes record-setting snowfalls, such as that of the winter of 1998 to 1999, which dumped close to 100 feet of snow on Mount Baker. While the snow in Washington can be heavy, rains often fall in the mountains in the middle of winter. Despite the unpredictable winter weather, there are several very popular ski areas in the Cascades, as well as some smaller ski areas in eastern Washington and on the Olympic Peninsula.

Note that the preceding discussion applies to the west side of the Cascades. East of the Cascades, the climate is very different, and some regions, sometimes referred to as the high desert, are characterized by temperature extremes and a lack of rain. These areas can be very cold in the winter and can get moderate amounts of snow in the foothill regions. In summer, the weather can be blazing hot, though nights are often cool enough to require a sweater or light jacket. The dry lands of eastern Washington are primarily agricultural regions, and it is here that most of the state's wine grapes are grown. In winter, most wineries that are open to the public cut their hours or close down completely.

Seattle's Average Temperature & Days of Rain

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
Temp. (°F)	46	50	53	58	65	69	75	74	69	60	52	47
Temp. (°C)	8	10	12	14	18	21	24	23	21	16	11	8
Rain (days)	19	16	17	14	10	9	5	7	9	14	18	20

Washington Calendar of Events

For an exhaustive list of events beyond those listed here, check <http://events.frommers.com>, where you'll find a searchable, up-to-the-minute roster of what's happening in cities all over the world.

FEBRUARY

Northwest Flower & Garden Show (📞 253/756-2121; www.gardenshow.com), Seattle. This massive 5-day show for avid gardeners has astonishing floral displays. Early February.

Red Wine and Chocolate (📞 509/965-5201; www.wineyakimavalley.org), Yakima Valley. Sample Yakima Valley reds, accompanied by tastings of decadent chocolate desserts. Presidents' Day weekend.

Langley Mystery Weekend (📞 360/221-6765; www.visitlangley.com), Langley. Who-dunnit? That's the big question each year in late February when the adorably cute Whidbey Island town of Langley becomes the scene of the crime. Late February.

MARCH

Othello Sandhill Crane Festival (📞 509/488-2802; www.othellosandhillcranefestival.org), Othello. Held in a remote part of central Washington, this festival is a celebration of the thousands of sandhill cranes that stop here each spring on their northward migration. Late March.

APRIL

Skagit Valley Tulip Festival (📞 360/428-5959; www.tulipfestival.org), La Conner. An hour north of Seattle, acres and acres of tulips and daffodils cover the Skagit Valley with broad swaths of color each spring, creating an enchanting landscape. Lots of festivities. All month.

Spring Barrel Tasting (📞 509/965-5201; www.wineyakimavalley.org), Yakima Valley. Straight-from-the-barrel wine tasting and spring-release wines at Yakima Valley wineries. Last full weekend in April.

Procession of Species (📞 360/705-1087; www.procession.org), Olympia. Celebrating nature, culture, and community, this eco-friendly parade through the streets of downtown Olympia features lots of wild costumes. Late April.

Washington State Apple Blossom Festival (📞 509/662-3616; www.appleblossom.org), Wenatchee. Many different events, including a parade and activities for families. End of April to early May.

MAY

Opening Day of Boating Season (📞 206/325-1000; www.seattleyachtclub.org), Lake Union and Lake Washington. A parade of boats and much fanfare take place as Seattle boaters bring out everything from kayaks to yachts. First Saturday in May.

Sequim Irrigation Festival (📞 800/737-8462 or 360/683-6197; www.irrigationfestival.com), Sequim. More than 110 years old, this is the oldest continuously held festival in Washington, and it has a grand parade, dancing, and arts and crafts. Early May.

Seattle Maritime Festival (📞 206/728-3163; www.portseattle.org). Tugboat races are the highlight of this annual Port of Seattle event. Festivities are centered on the Bell Street Pier (Pier 66) on the Seattle waterfront. Early May.

Viking Fest (📞 360/697-7450; www.vikingfest.org), Poulsbo. Norwegian heritage on display in picturesque Poulsbo, with a parade and entertainment. Mid-May.

Spokane Lilac Festival (📞 509/535-4554; www.lilacfestival.org), Spokane. For more than 70 years, this event has celebrated the blooming of the lilacs. Don't miss the lilac gardens at Manito Park. Third weekend in May.

Seattle International Film Festival (📞 206/324-9996; www.seattlefilm.com), at theaters around town. New foreign and independent films are screened over several weeks during this highly regarded film festival. Late May to mid-June.

Northwest Folklife Festival (📞 206/684-7300; www.nwfolklife.org), Seattle Center. This is one of the largest folklife festivals in

the country, with dozens of national and regional folk musicians performing on numerous stages. In addition, you'll find crafts vendors from all over the Northwest, lots of good food, and dancing. Memorial Day weekend.

JUNE

Edmonds Art Festival (📞 425/771-6412; www.edmondsartsfestival.com), Edmonds. This is the first big art festival of the year in the Puget Sound area, and many of the region's top artists and craftspeople attend. Third weekend in June.

JULY

Family Fourth at Lake Union (📞 206/281-8111; www.familyfourth.org). Seattle's main Fourth of July fireworks display. July 4th.

Lake Union Wooden Boat Festival (📞 206/382-2628; www.cwb.org), Center for Wooden Boats. Wooden boats, both old and new, from all over the Northwest are displayed. Demonstrations, food, and entertainment. July 4th weekend.

Seafair (📞 206/728-0123; www.seafair.com). This is the biggest Seattle event of the year, with daily festivities—parades, hydroplane boat races, an air show with the Navy's Blue Angels, the Torchlight Parade, ethnic festivals, sporting events, and tours of naval ships. Events take place all over Seattle. Early July to early August.

Camlann Medieval Faire (📞 425/788-8624; www.camlann.org), Carnation. Come all ye lords and ladies and enjoy knightly combat, demonstrations of longbows, wandering minstrels, and medieval banquets. Weekends late July to late August.

Sequim Lavender Festival (📞 877/681-3035 or 360/681-3035; www.lavenderfestival.com). The town of Sequim, on the north side of the Olympic Peninsula, is a 30-minute ferry ride and an hour's drive from Seattle. Each summer the purple haze of lavender farms adds splashes of color to the landscape. This festival features farm visits and vendors selling lavender-themed art, crafts, cosmetics, and foods. Third weekend in July.

Walla Walla Sweet Onion Festival (📞 509/525-1031; www.sweetonions.org), Walla Walla. Onion-themed entertainment and food booths feature the delicious local onion. Mid-July.

Bellevue Arts Museum arts/fair (📞 415/519-0770; www.bellevuearts.org), Bellevue Square, Bellevue. This is the largest arts-and-fine-crafts fair in the Northwest. Last weekend in July.

AUGUST

Anacortes Arts Festival (📞 360/293-6211; www.anacortesartsfestival.com), Anacortes. With 250 regional artists and craftspeople selling their work, this is one of the oldest and largest arts festivals in Washington. First weekend in August.

Chief Seattle Days (📞 360/598-3311; www.suquamish.nsn.us), at Suquamish tribal headquarters. A celebration of Northwest Native American culture across Puget Sound from Seattle. Third weekend in August.

Washington State International Kite Festival (📞 360/642-4020; www.kitefestival.com), Long Beach. World-class kite-flying competition. Third week in August.

Makah Days (📞 360/645-2201; www.makah.com), Neah Bay. Canoe races, Native American arts, and salmon bake presented by the Makah tribe in the northwest corner of the Olympic Peninsula. End of August.

SEPTEMBER

Bumbershoot (📞 206/281-7788; www.bumbershoot.org). Seattle's second-most-popular festival derives its peculiar name from a British term for an umbrella—an obvious reference to the rainy weather. Rock music and other events pack Seattle's youthful set into Seattle Center and other venues. You'll find plenty of arts and crafts on display, too. Labor Day weekend.

Ellensburg Rodeo (📞 800/637-2444 or 509/962-7831; www.ellensburgrodeo.com), Ellensburg. The state's biggest rodeo, with a county fair, carnival, and live music. Labor Day weekend.

Wooden Boat Festival (☎ 360/385-3628; www.woodenboat.org), Port Townsend. Historic and modern wooden boats on display, with demonstrations. Early September.

OCTOBER

Issaquah Salmon Days Festival (☎ 425/392-0661; www.salmondays.org). This festival in Issaquah, 15 miles east of Seattle, celebrates the annual return of salmon that spawn within the city limits. First full weekend in October.

Great Port Townsend Bay Kinetic Sculpture Race (☎ 888/365-6978; www.ptkineticrace.org), Port Townsend. The two rules of this race are (1) the vehicle must be people-powered, and (2) the wackier the contraption, the better. First weekend in October.

Oktoberfest (☎ 509/548-7021; www.leavenworthoktoberfest.com), Leavenworth. A traditional Oktoberfest in this Bavarian town comes complete with kegs of beer shipped in from Munich and traditional German dancing. First, second, and third weekend in October.

NOVEMBER

Thanksgiving in the Wine Country (☎ 509/965-5201; www.wineyakimavalley.org), Yakima Valley. Foods and the wines that complement them are offered

for tasting by Yakima area wineries. Thanksgiving weekend.

Zoolights (☎ 253/591-5337; www.pdza.org), Tacoma. The Point Defiance Zoo is decorated with more than half a million sparkling lights, creating colorful fantasy scenes. Day after Thanksgiving to early January.

Christmas Lighting (☎ 509/548-5807; www.leavenworth.org), Leavenworth. This Bavarian village was practically made for Christmas, and looks most photogenic when surrounded by snow and decorated with twinkling lights. Sleigh rides, roasted chestnuts, and all the traditional Bavarian trimmings. Day after Thanksgiving through the first 3 weekends of December.

DECEMBER

Argosy Cruises Christmas Ships Festival (☎ 888/623-1445 or 206/622-8687; www.argosycruises.com), various locations. Boats decked out with imaginative Christmas lights parade past various waterfront locations. Argosy Cruises offers tours; see p. 127 for details. Throughout December.

New Year's at the Needle (☎ 800/937-9582 or 206/905-2100; www.spaceneedle.com), Seattle. The Space Needle ushers in the new year with a big fireworks show when midnight strikes. December 31.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Passports

Virtually every air traveler entering the U.S. is required to show a passport. All persons, including U.S. citizens, traveling by air between the United States and Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Bermuda are required to present a valid passport. **Note:** U.S. and Canadian citizens entering the U. S. at land and sea ports of entry from within the Western Hemisphere must now also present a passport or other documents compliant with the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI; see www.getyouhome.gov for details). Children 15 and under may continue entering with only a U.S. birth certificate, or other proof of U.S. citizenship.

It is advised to always have at least one or two consecutive blank pages in your passport to allow space for visas and stamps that need to appear together. It is also important to note when your passport expires. Many countries require your passport to have at least 6 months left before its expiration in order to allow you into the destination.

Visas

For information on obtaining a visa, please see “Fast Facts,” on p. 358.

The U.S. State Department has a **Visa Waiver Program (VWP)** allowing citizens of the following countries to enter the United States without a visa for stays of up to 90 days: Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brunei, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. (**Note:** This list was accurate at press time; for the most up-to-date list of countries in the VWP, consult <http://travel.state.gov/visa>.) Even though a visa isn’t necessary, in an effort to help U.S. officials check travelers against terror watch lists before they arrive at U.S. borders, visitors from VWP countries must register online through the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) before boarding a plane or a boat to the U.S. Travelers must complete an electronic application providing basic personal and travel eligibility information. The Department of Homeland Security recommends filling out the form at least 3 days before traveling. Authorizations will be valid for up to 2 years or until the traveler’s passport expires, whichever comes first. Currently, there is no fee for the online application. **Note:** Any passport issued on or after October 26, 2006, by a VWP country must be an **e-Passport** for VWP travelers to be eligible to enter the U.S. without a visa. Citizens of these nations also need to present a round-trip air or cruise ticket upon arrival. E-Passports contain computer chips capable of storing biometric information, such as the required digital photograph of the holder. If your passport doesn’t have this feature, you can still travel without a visa if the valid passport was issued before October 26, 2005, and includes a machine-readable zone; or if the valid passport was issued between October 26, 2005, and October 25, 2006, and includes a digital photograph. For more information, go to <http://travel.state.gov/visa>. Canadian citizens may enter the United States without visas, but will need to show passports and proof of residence.

Citizens of all other countries must have (1) a valid passport that expires at least 6 months later than the scheduled end of their visit to the U.S.; and (2) a tourist visa.

Customs

WHAT YOU CAN BRING INTO THE U.S.

Every visitor 21 years of age or older may bring in, free of duty, the following: (1) 1 U.S. quart of alcohol; (2) 200 cigarettes, 50 cigars (but not from Cuba), or 3 pounds of smoking tobacco; and (3) \$100 worth of gifts. These exemptions are offered to travelers who spend at least 72 hours in the United States and who have not claimed them within the preceding 6 months. It is forbidden to bring into the country almost any meat products (including canned, fresh, and dried meat products such as bouillon, soup mixes, and so on). Generally, condiments including vinegars, oils, pickled goods, spices, coffee, tea, and some cheeses and baked goods are permitted. Avoid rice products, as rice can often harbor insects. Bringing fruit and vegetables is prohibited since they may harbor pests or disease. International visitors may carry in or out up to \$10,000 in U.S. or foreign currency with no formalities; larger sums must be declared to U.S. Customs on entering or leaving, which includes filing form CM 4790. For details regarding U.S. Customs and Border Protection, consult your nearest U.S. embassy or consulate, or **U.S. Customs** (www.customs.gov).

WHAT YOU CAN TAKE HOME FROM THE U.S.

For information on what you're allowed to bring home, contact one of the following agencies:

U.S. CITIZENS **U.S. Customs & Border Protection (CBP)**, 1300 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20229 (☎ 877/287-8667; www.cbp.gov).

CANADIAN CITIZENS **Canada Border Services Agency**, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0L8 (☎ 800/461-9999 in Canada, or 204/983-3500; www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca).

U.K. CITIZENS **HM Customs & Excise**, Crownhill Court, Tailyour Road, Plymouth, PL6 5BZ (☎ 0845/010-9000; from outside the U.K., 020/8929-0152; www.hmce.gov.uk).

AUSTRALIAN CITIZENS **Australian Customs Service**, Customs House, 5 Constitution Ave., Canberra City, ACT 2601 (☎ 1300/363-263; from outside Australia, 612/6275-6666; www.customs.gov.au).

NEW ZEALAND CITIZENS **New Zealand Customs**, The Customhouse, 17–21 Whitmore St., Box 2218, Wellington, 6140 (☎ 04/473-6099 or 0800/428-786; www.customs.govt.nz).

Medical Requirements

Unless you're arriving from an area known to be suffering from an epidemic (particularly cholera or yellow fever), inoculations or vaccinations are not required for entry into the United States.

GETTING THERE & AROUND

Getting to Washington

Seattle is the main gateway to Washington state, and driving directions throughout this book often use Seattle as a reference point, assuming that the traveler will be flying into Seattle and then driving to other destinations around the state.

BY PLANE

Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA), commonly called "Sea-Tac," is Washington's main airport and is served by about two dozen airlines. If your travel plans have you visiting eastern Washington, you may want to fly into **Spokane International Airport** (GEG), which is served by about a half-dozen airlines.

To find out which airlines travel to Washington, please see "Airline Websites," p. 362.

BY CAR

Seattle is 110 miles from Vancouver, British Columbia; 175 miles from Portland; 810 miles from San Francisco; 1,190 miles from Los Angeles; and 285 miles from Spokane.

I-5 is the main north-south artery through Washington, running south to Portland and north to the Canadian border. I-405 is Seattle's east-side bypass and accesses the cities of Bellevue, Redmond, and Kirkland on the east side of Lake Washington. I-90 connects Seattle to Spokane in eastern Washington. Wash. 520 connects I-405 with Seattle just north of downtown and also ends at I-5.

All the major car-rental agencies have offices in Seattle and at or near Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, including:

Advantage (☎ 800/777-5500; www.advantage.com)

Alamo (☎ 877/222-9075; www.alamo.com)

Avis (☎ 800/331-1212; www.avis.com)

Budget (☎ 800/527-0700; www.budget.com)

Dollar (☎ 800/800-3665; www.dollar.com)

Enterprise (☎ 800/261-7331; www.enterprise.com)

Fox Rent A Car (☎ 800/225-4369; www.foxrentacar.com)

Hertz (☎ 800/654-3131; www.hertz.com)

National (☎ 877/222-9058; www.nationalcar.com)

Thrifty (☎ 800/847-4389; www.thrifty.com)

If you are under 25, you usually have to pay a higher rate for a rental car, if the company will rent to you at all. International visitors should note that insurance and taxes are almost never included in quoted rental car rates in the U.S. Be sure to ask your rental agency about additional fees for these. They can add a significant cost to your car rental.

BY TRAIN

Amtrak (☎ 800/872-7245; www.amtrak.com) service runs from Vancouver, British Columbia, to Seattle and from Portland and as far south as Eugene, Oregon on the *Cascades* (a high-speed, European-style Talgo train). The train takes about 4 hours from Vancouver to Seattle and 3½ to 4 hours from Portland to Seattle. One-way fares from Vancouver to Seattle or from Portland to Seattle are usually between \$35 and \$43. Booking earlier will get you a less-expensive ticket.

There is also Amtrak service to Seattle from San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Portland on the *Coast Starlight*, and from Spokane and points east on the *Empire Builder*. Amtrak also operates a bus between Vancouver and Seattle, so be careful when making a reservation as you might be on a bus, rather than a train.

Like the airlines, Amtrak offers several discounted fares; although they're not all based on advance purchase, you'll have more discount options by reserving early. The discount fares can be used only on certain days and during certain hours; be sure to find out exactly what restrictions apply. Tickets for children 2 to 15 cost half the price of a regular coach fare when the children are accompanied by a fare-paying adult.

Also inquire about money-saving packages that include hotel accommodations, car rentals, tours, and so on with your train fare.

BY BOAT

Several small ferries operate between Port Angeles and Victoria, British Columbia, including **Black Ball Transport** (☎ 360/457-4491, or 250/386-2202 in Victoria; www.cohoferry.com) and **Victoria Express** (☎ 360/452-8088 or 250/361-9144; www.victoriaexpress.com). **Victoria Clipper** (☎ 800/888-2535, 206/448-5000, or 250/382-8100; www.clippervacations.com) has passenger-ferry service between Seattle and Victoria, British Columbia, and between Seattle and the San Juans (summer only).

Getting Around

BY PLANE

Some large non-U.S. airlines offer transatlantic or transpacific passengers special discount tickets under the name **Visit USA**, which allows mostly one-way travel from one U.S. destination to another at very low prices. Unavailable in the U.S.,

these discount tickets must be purchased abroad in conjunction with your international fare. This system is the easiest, fastest, cheapest way to see the country.

Washington is a large state, and if you're trying to see every corner of it in a short time, you may want to consider flying. In addition to Sea-Tac, there are airports with regularly scheduled commercial flights in the San Juan Islands, Bellingham, Port Angeles, Wenatchee, Yakima, Pasco (Tri-Cities), Walla Walla, and Spokane. Fares vary, but at press time, a one-way flight between Seattle and Spokane on Horizon Airlines started at around \$50 for an advance booking and went as high as \$150 for a day-of-departure purchase. **Alaska Airlines/Horizon Air** (☎ 800/252-7522; www.alaskaair.com) services many of the airports in the state and offers the most short-hop flights.

Kenmore Air (☎ 866/435-9524 or 425/486-1257; www.kenmoreair.com) offers seaplane service between Seattle and the San Juan Islands and Victoria, British Columbia. Its Seattle terminals are at the south end of Lake Union and at the north end of Lake Washington. **San Juan Airlines** (☎ 800/874-4434; www.sanjuanairlines.com) flies to the San Juans from Seattle, Bellingham, and Anacortes.

BY CAR

A car is by far the best way to see the state of Washington. There is no other way to get to the more remote natural attractions or to fully appreciate such regions as the Olympic Peninsula. See "Getting to Washington" above for information on car rentals in Seattle.

If you're visiting from abroad and plan to rent a car in the United States, keep in mind that foreign driver's licenses are usually recognized in the U.S., but you may want to consider obtaining an international driver's license.

GASOLINE Washington is a big state, so keep your gas tank as full as possible when traveling in the mountains or on the sparsely populated east side of the Cascades.

MAPS For a free map of Washington, contact the **Washington State Tourism Office** (☎ 800/544-1800; www.experiencewa.com).

DRIVING RULES A right turn on red is permitted after first coming to a complete stop. You may also turn left on a red light if you're in the far left lane of a one-way street and are turning into another one-way street. Seat belts are required, as are car seats for children.

BREAKDOWNS/ASSISTANCE In the event of a breakdown, stay with your car, lift the hood, turn on your emergency flashers, and wait for a police patrol car.

BY BOAT

Washington State Ferries (☎ 800/843-3779 or 888/808-7977 within Washington, or 206/464-6400; www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries) is the most extensive ferry system in the United States. See specific destinations in chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8 for information on routes and fares.

BY TRAIN

International visitors can buy a **USA Rail Pass**, good for 15, 30, or 45 days of unlimited travel on **Amtrak** (☎ 800/USA-RAIL [872-7245]; www.amtrak.com). The pass is available online or through many overseas travel agents. See Amtrak's website for the cost of travel within the western, eastern, or northwestern United

States. Reservations are generally required and should be made as early as possible. Regional rail passes are also available.

There is **Amtrak** service from Seattle to Spokane and points east, and service between Vancouver, British Columbia; Seattle; Portland; and points south, but otherwise, the train isn't a viable way of getting around Washington state. If you do decide to take the train, booking early will save you money.

BY BUS

Greyhound (☎ 800/231-2222; www.greyhound.com) is the sole nationwide bus line. International visitors can obtain information about the **Greyhound North American Discovery Pass**. The pass, which offers unlimited travel and stopovers in the U.S. and Canada, can be obtained from foreign travel agents or through www.discoverypass.com.

BY RECREATIONAL VEHICLE (RV)

If you're planning on visiting Olympic National Park, Mount Rainier National Park, or other parts of the Cascade Range, renting an RV can be an economical way to tour state. RVs can be rented for a weekend, a week, or longer. In the Seattle area, contact **Cruise America**, 7014 Sixth Ave., Tacoma (☎ 800/671-8042 or 253/566-4373; www.cruiseamerica.com).

MONEY & COSTS

THE VALUE OF THE U.S. DOLLAR VS. OTHER POPULAR CURRENCIES

US\$	C\$	£	€	A\$	NZ\$
1.00	1.00	0.65	0.74	1.07	1.40

Frommer's lists exact prices in the local currency. The currency conversions quoted above were correct at press time. However, rates fluctuate, so before departing consult a currency exchange website such as www.oanda.com/convert/classic to check up-to-the-minute rates.

The most common U.S. bills are the \$1 (a "buck"), \$5, \$10, and \$20 denominations. There are also \$2 bills (seldom encountered), \$50 bills, and \$100 bills (the last two are usually not welcome as payment for small purchases).

Coins come in seven denominations: 1¢ (1 cent, or a penny); 5¢ (5 cents, or a nickel); 10¢ (10 cents, or a dime); 25¢ (25 cents, or a quarter); 50¢ (50 cents, or a half dollar); and the gold-colored Sacagawea coin, the new release of Presidential coins, and the rare silver dollar, all worth \$1.

What will a vacation in Washington cost? Of course that depends on your tastes and the time of year. If you come in the summer, expect to pay the highest rates of the year for a hotel room. Visit in the rainy season, and you'll spend considerably less, though in some parts of the state, your options will be limited. Any time of year, you can usually find a chain motel room for between \$50 and \$100 a night. If you prefer luxury hotels, expect to pay as much as \$300 per night in Seattle for a room on a summer night. For one of the state's top bed-and-breakfast inns, expect to pay \$150 to \$200 per night in the summer. In the rainy season, room rates are often reduced by 30% or more.

WHAT THINGS COST IN WASHINGTON

\$

Weekly high-season car rental (with taxes) in Seattle	250.00–400.00
Taxi from the airport to downtown Seattle	35.00
Double room, expensive	200.00 and up
Double room, moderate	150.00–200.00
Double room, inexpensive	50.00–150.00
Three-course dinner for one without wine, expensive	40.00–50.00
Three-course dinner for one without wine, moderate	30.00–35.00
Pint of microbrew beer in a restaurant	4.50
A double latte	3.50
1 gallon of regular gas	3.10
Admission to most museums	10.00–15.00
Admission to Mount Rainier or Olympic National Park	15.00

While there are a handful of restaurants around the state where you will spend \$100 or more for dinner, for the most part, Washington's best restaurants serve entrees in the \$25 to \$35 range, but of course, you can eat at a fast-food chain restaurant for under \$10. When I travel around the state, I usually spend around \$15 to \$20 on lunch (with a glass of wine or beer), and \$40 to \$60 for dinner (with wine).

ATMs

Nationwide, the easiest and best way to get cash away from home is from an ATM (automated teller machine), sometimes referred to as a "cash machine" or "cash-point." The **Cirrus** (☎ 800/424-7787; www.mastercard.com) and **PLUS** (www.visa.com) networks span the country; you can find them even in remote regions. Go to your bank card's website to find ATM locations at your destination. Be sure you know your daily withdrawal limit before you depart. Four-digit PINs work fine in Washington.

Note: Many banks impose a fee every time you use a card at another bank's ATM, and that fee is often higher for international transactions (up to \$5 or more) than for domestic ones (where they're rarely more than \$3). In addition, the bank from which you withdraw cash may charge its own fee. Visitors from outside the U.S. should also find out whether their bank assesses a fee on charges incurred abroad.

In Washington, you'll find ATMs at banks in even the smallest towns. You can also usually find them at gas station minimarts, although these machines usually charge a slightly higher fee than banks. You can sometimes avoid a fee by searching out a small community bank, a savings and loan, or a credit union ATM. To avoid fees, you can also go into a grocery store, make a purchase, and ask for cash back on your debit card.

Credit Cards & Debit Cards

Credit cards are the most widely used form of payment in the U.S. It's highly recommended that you travel with at least one major credit card; options include **Visa** (Barclaycard in Britain), **MasterCard** (Eurocard in Europe), **American Express**, **Diners Club**, and **Discover**. MasterCard and Visa are the two most commonly

accepted credit cards. You must have a credit card to rent a car, and hotels and airlines usually require a credit card imprint as a deposit against expenses.

You can withdraw cash advances from your credit cards at banks or ATMs, but high fees make credit card cash advances a pricey way to get cash. Keep in mind that you'll pay interest from the moment of your withdrawal, even if you pay your monthly bills on time. Also, note that many banks now assess a 1% to 3% "transaction fee" on **all** charges you incur abroad (whether you're using the local currency or your native currency).

STAYING HEALTHY

If You Get Sick

If you get sick, consider asking your hotel concierge to recommend a local doctor—even his or her own. You can also try an urgent-care facility or a local hospital, many of which have walk-in clinics for emergency cases that are not life-threatening. You may not get immediate attention, but you won't pay the high price of an emergency room visit.

If you suffer from a chronic illness, consult your doctor before leaving. Pack **prescription medications** in your carry-on, and carry them in their original containers, with pharmacy labels—otherwise they won't make it through airport security. Visitors from outside the U.S. should carry generic names of prescription drugs. For U.S. travelers, most reliable healthcare plans provide coverage if you get sick away from home. Foreign visitors may have to pay medical costs upfront and be reimbursed later.

CRIME & SAFETY

Washington state is for the most part a very safe place to visit. Car break-ins are the only crime you really need to worry about, and you should keep this in mind whether you are in the city or the country. Car break-ins happen both in Seattle and in such seemingly safe places as national parks and national forests. Never leave valuables visible in your car. This includes not just purses and wallets, but also cellphones, cameras, MP3 players, iPods, portable navigation systems, laptops, or bags that look like they might hold a laptop. You get the picture. Stash it out of view or take it with you.

SPECIALIZED TRAVEL RESOURCES

In addition to the destination-specific resources listed below, please visit Frommers.com for other specialized travel resources.

LGBT Travelers

As elsewhere in the U.S., Washington's major cities are home to active gay and lesbian communities, and Seattle is one of the most gay-friendly cities in the country. The city's large gay and lesbian community is centered around Capitol Hill, and in this neighborhood you'll find numerous bars, nightclubs, stores, and bed-and-breakfasts catering to the gay community. Broadway, Capitol Hill's main drag, is the site of the annual Seattle Pride march (www.seattlepride.org), held each year in late June.

The first place to look for Seattle information is on the **Seattle Convention and Visitors Bureau's** LGBT Web pages (www.visitseattle.org/visitors/lgbt). Once

you're in Seattle, pick up a copy of the **Seattle Gay News** (☎ 206/324-4297; www.sgn.org), available at area bookstores and gay bars and nightclubs.

The **Lesbian Resource Center**, 227 S. Orcas St., Seattle (☎ 206/322-3953; www.lrc.net), provides community and business resource information as well as a calendar of upcoming events and activities.

The **Gaslight Inn** is a gay-friendly bed-and-breakfast in the Capitol Hill area; see p. 84 for a full review. For information on gay and lesbian bars and nightclubs, see p. 146.

Travelers with Disabilities

Most disabilities shouldn't stop anyone from traveling in the U.S. There are more options and resources out there than ever before. Most hotels in Washington provide wheelchair-accessible rooms, and some of the larger and more expensive hotels have TDD telephones and other amenities for the hearing- and sight-impaired.

Mount Rainier National Park (p. 304), Olympic National Park (p. 235), and the remote Stehekin area of the Lake Chelan National Recreation Area unit of North Cascades National Park Complex (p. 272) all have wheelchair-accessible trails. Before exploring any of these national parks, be sure to get an **America the Beautiful—National Park and Federal Recreational Lands Pass—Access Pass** which gives visually impaired or permanently disabled persons free lifetime entrance to federal recreation sites administered by the National Park Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Bureau of Reclamation. This pass can only be obtained in person at a National Park Service facility that charges an entrance fee. You will need to show proof of medically determined disability. Besides free entry, the pass also offers a 50% discount on some federal-use fees charged for such facilities as camping, swimming, parking, boat launching, and tours. For more information, go to www.nps.gov/fees_passes.htm or call the United States Geological Survey/USGS (☎ 888/275-8747), which issues the passes.

Family Travel

Families traveling in Washington should be sure to take note of family admission fees at many museums and other attractions. These admission prices are often less than what it would cost for individual tickets for the whole family. At hotels and motels, children usually stay free in their parent's room and no extra bed or crib is required, and sometimes they also get to eat for free in the hotel dining room. Be sure to ask.

Note: If you plan to travel on to Canada during your Seattle vacation, be sure to bring your children's passports.

To locate accommodations, restaurants, and attractions that are particularly kid-friendly, look for the "Kids" icon throughout this guide.

Senior Travel

Don't be shy about asking for discounts, but always carry identification, such as a driver's license, that shows your date of birth—especially if you've kept your youthful glow. In Washington, tour companies, the Washington State Ferries, and most museums and attractions offer senior discounts. These can add up to substantial savings, but you have to remember to ask.

The U.S. National Park Service offers an **America the Beautiful—National Park and Federal Recreational Lands Pass—Senior Pass**, which gives seniors

62 years or older lifetime entrance to all properties administered by the National Park Service—national parks, monuments, historic sites, recreation areas, and national wildlife refuges—for a one-time processing fee of \$10. Besides free entry, the America the Beautiful Senior Pass also offers a 50% discount on some federal-use fees charged for such facilities as camping, swimming, parking, boat launching, and tours. For more information, see the “Travelers with Disabilities” section above.

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

While Washington may already be called the Evergreen state, it's also growing “greener” with each passing year, which is making it easier for visitors to this state to travel more responsibly. With many restaurants promoting fresh, local, and organic ingredients, Washington wineries growing organic grapes, and even coffeehouses pouring organic, fair-trade coffee, it is fairly easy to be a responsible traveler.

If you will be starting your Washington vacation with a stay in Seattle, you can do your part for the environment by taking the Central Link light-rail line (p. 60) from the airport into downtown Seattle. Also keep in mind, that there is really no reason to rent a car if you will be confining your visit to Seattle itself. There are also quite a few destinations that can be reached from Seattle by train or ferry. If you must rent a car, you can get a hybrid car from Enterprise.

If you don't want to be sleepless in Seattle worrying about the environmental impact of your vacation, book a room at the **Hyatt at Olive 8** (p. 74). In 2009, this hotel became the first Seattle hotel certified by Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), an organization that certifies environmentally sustainable construction practices. Although this is primarily a business and convention hotel, it is conveniently located and offers some great amenities, including a spa and a pool. The Kimpton Hotels chain (www.kimptonhotels.com), which operates the Alexis Hotel, Hotel Vintage Park, and Hotel Monaco, also goes out of its way to be environmentally friendly and socially responsible. See chapter 5 for information on all of these hotels.

When it comes time to eat out in Seattle, you've got loads of eco-friendly options. At many of the restaurants listed in this book, you'll find that the chefs rely on local and organic produce as much as possible. The locavore movement (eating foods grown or raised nearby) has been wholeheartedly embraced here in Seattle. Restaurants emphasizing organic and sustainably produced ingredients include **Tilth** (p. 102), **Portage Bay Café** (p. 99), **Spinasse** (p. 100), and **Agua Verde Café** (p. 103).

In the San Juan Islands, you can be sure you're getting local produce wherever you see the “**Island Certified Local**” sticker, which is certification program operated by the Agricultural Resources Committee of San Juan County (www.sjarc.org). Of course, at coffeehouses across the state, you can buy organic and fair-trade coffee, and in Seattle, **Theo Chocolate** (p. 137), makes chocolate bars and other confections using fair-trade cocoa beans. You can even be environmentally responsible when drinking wine. Keep an eye out for the “**Salmon Safe**” logo on Washington wine labels. This logo certifies that the vineyards that grew the grapes for that bottle of wine are doing their part to keep Washington waters safe for salmon. For more information visit the Salmon Safe website (www.salmonsafe.org).

For a variety of reasons, many people now feel that it is better to eat wild salmon instead of farm-raised salmon. Throughout Washington, restaurants will usually

mention on their menu that they serve wild salmon. If the menu doesn't specifically state that the salmon is wild, be sure to ask.

If you plan on heading out of town on an adventurous outing, consider booking your tour with **EverGreen Escapes** (see below), which uses biodiesel tour vehicles.

SPECIAL INTEREST & ESCORTED TRIPS

Educational Trips

The **North Cascades Institute**, 810 State Rte. 20, Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284 (☎ 360/854-2599; www.ncascades.org), is a nonprofit organization that offers field seminars focusing on natural and cultural history in the North Cascades. The institute has a beautiful campus on the shore of Diablo Lake in the North Cascades.

The Nature Conservancy is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the global preservation of natural diversity. It sponsors work parties to its own nature preserves. For information about trips in Washington, contact **The Nature Conservancy**, 1917 First Ave., Seattle, WA 98101 (☎ 206/343-4344; www.nature.org).

Adventure Trips

The abundance of outdoor recreational activities is one reason why people choose to live in Washington. With mountains and beaches within an hour's drive of major metropolitan areas, there are many choices for active vacationers.

BICYCLING/MOUNTAIN BIKING The San Juan Islands, with their winding country roads and Puget Sound vistas, are the most popular bicycling locales in the state. Of the four main San Juan Islands (San Juan, Orcas, Lopez, and Shaw), Lopez has the easiest and Orcas the most challenging terrain for bikers. Here you can pedal for as few or as many days as you like, stopping at parks, inns, and quaint villages.

Other popular road-biking spots include Bainbridge and Vashon islands, with easy access to Seattle; the Olympic Peninsula, with scenic vistas and campgrounds; and the Long Beach Peninsula, with miles of flat roads. Seattle, Tacoma, Spokane, and Yakima also have easy paths for bicycle riding.

The state's premier mountain-biking destination is the Methow Valley, where, in summer, cross-country ski trails are opened to bicycles. The region's national forests also have lots of logging roads and single-track trails for mountain biking.

If you're interested in participating in an organized bicycle tour, **Backroads**, 801 Cedar St., Berkeley, CA 94710-1800 (☎ 800/462-2848 or 510/527-1555; www.backroads.com), offers 6-day road bike trips in the San Juan Islands. Tour prices range from \$2,698 to \$2,898. More economical family-oriented multi-sport trips are also offered. **Bicycle Adventures**, P.O. Box 11219, Olympia, WA 98508 (☎ 800/443-6060 or 360/786-0989; www.bicycleadventures.com) also offers San Juan Islands multi-sport trips that include plenty of cycling. Tour prices range from \$1,665 to \$3,285. Tours in the Cascades are also offered (\$3,125–\$3,225).

BIRD-WATCHING With a wide variety of habitats, Washington has many excellent bird-watching spots. Each winter in January, bald eagles flock to the Skagit River, north of Seattle, to feast on salmon. Birders can observe from shore or on a guided raft trip. Outside the town of Hoquiam, migratory shorebirds make an annual

spring stop at Gray's Harbor Wildlife Refuge in the Bowerman Basin area. Out in central Washington, near the town of Othello, thousands of sandhill cranes gather each spring, and in late March, the town of Othello stages the **Othello Sandhill Crane Festival** (www.othellosandhillcranefestival.org). One of Washington's best birding excursions is a ride through the San Juan Islands on one of the state-run ferries. From these floating observation platforms, birders can spot bald eagles and numerous pelagic birds.

CAMPING Public and private campgrounds abound all across Washington, with those in Mount Rainier National Park and Olympic National Park being the most popular. North Cascades National Park also has campgrounds. North Cascades National Park Complex and Olympic National Park each have one campground that accepts reservations; at Mount Rainier National Park, two campgrounds take reservations. To get information on outdoor recreation in Washington's national parks and forests, contact the **Outdoor Recreation Information Center**, Seattle REI Building, 222 Yale Ave. N., Seattle, WA 98109 (☎ **206/470-4060**; www.nps.gov/ccso/oric.htm). The Forest Service's regional website (www.fs.fed.us/r6) is a good source, too.

Washington also has more than 80 state parks with campgrounds. Moran State Park on Orcas Island and Deception Pass State Park have two of the most enjoyable campgrounds. For information on Washington state parks, contact **Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission**, 1111 Israel Rd. SW, Olympia, WA 98504-2650 (☎ **360/902-8844**; www.parks.wa.gov).

For state campsite reservations, contact **Washington State Parks Reservations Center** (☎ **888/226-7688**; www.parks.wa.gov). To make campsite reservations at national forest and national park campgrounds, contact the **National Recreation Reservation Service** (☎ **877/444-6777** or 518/885-3639; www.recreation.gov).

One economical way to tour the Northwest is with a recreational vehicle. You can rent one for a weekend, a week, or longer. In Washington, you can rent RVs from **Western Motorcoach**, 19303 Hwy. 99, Lynnwood, WA 98036 (☎ **425/775-1181**; www.westernrv.com).

FISHING For information on freshwater fishing in Washington, contact the **Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife**, Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington St. SE, Olympia, WA 98501 (☎ **360/902-2200**; <http://wdfw.wa.gov>); mailing address: 600 Capitol Way N., Olympia, WA 98501-1091.

HIKING & BACKPACKING Washington has an abundance of hiking trails, including a section of the Pacific Crest Trail, which runs along the spine of the Cascades from Canada to the Oregon state line (and onward through Oregon and California to Mexico). In the Olympic National Park, you'll find hikes along the beach, through rainforest valleys, and through alpine meadows. At Mount Rainier National Park, you can hike through forests and the state's most beautiful meadows (hikes from Sunrise and Paradise are the most spectacular). In North Cascades National Park, there are hiking trails through the state's most rugged scenery. The Alpine Lakes region outside Leavenworth is breathtakingly beautiful, but so popular that advance-reservation permits are required. The hike to the summit of Mount St. Helens is another popular, though challenging, hike. Lesser known are the hiking trails on Mount Adams in Washington's southern Cascades. In the Columbia Gorge, the hike up Dog Mountain is strenuous, but rewarding. For general information on

hiking in the Northwest and for information on the National Forest Recreation Pass, which is required at most national forest trailheads in Washington, contact **Nature of the Northwest**, 800 NE Oregon St., Ste. 965, Portland, OR 97232 (☎ 971/673-2331; www.naturenw.org).

If you'd like to hike the wild country of Washington state with a knowledgeable guide, check out the course offerings at **North Cascades Institute**, 810 State Rte. 20, Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284 (☎ 360/854-2599; www.ncascades.org). You can also join guided trips offered by the Sierra Club. For information, contact the **Sierra Club Outings Department**, 85 Second St., Second Floor, San Francisco, CA 94105 (☎ 415/977-5522; www.sierraclub.org).

SEA KAYAKING Sea kayaks differ from river kayaks in that they are much longer, more stable, and able to carry gear, as well as a paddler or two. Few places in the country have better sea kayaking than Puget Sound and the San Juan Islands, and, consequently, this sport is especially popular in the Seattle area. The protected waters of Puget Sound offer numerous spots for a paddle of anywhere from a few hours to a few days. A water trail called the **Cascadia Marine Trail** even links camping spots throughout the sound. For more information about this trail, contact the **Washington Water Trails Association** (☎ 206/545-9161; www.wwta.org).

The San Juan Islands are the most popular sea-kayaking spot in the region, and several tiny islands, accessible only by boat, are designated state campsites. In the Seattle area, Lake Union and Lake Washington are both popular kayaking spots. Willapa Bay, on the Washington coast, is another popular paddling spot.

If you'd like to explore Puget Sound or Seattle's Lake Union in a sea kayak, contact the **Northwest Outdoor Center**, 2100 Westlake Ave. N., Ste. 1, Seattle, WA 98109 (☎ 800/683-0637 or 206/281-9694; www.nwoc.com). This center rents kayaks and also offers various classes and guided day trips (\$80).

In the San Juan Islands, **San Juan Kayak Expeditions** (☎ 360/378-4436; www.sanjuankayak.com) offers multi-day kayak trips, charging \$520 for a 3-day trip and \$620 for a 4-day trip. **Orcas Outdoors** (☎ 360/376-4611; www.orcasoutdoors.com) offers multi-day trips for \$429 to \$550. **Crystal Seas Kayaking** (☎ 877/732-7877 or 360/378-4223; www.crystalseas.com) runs kayak camping trips ranging from 2 days (\$349) to 6 days (\$979), and inn-to-inn trips ranging from 2 days (\$880) to 6 days (\$2,380). **Sea Quest Expeditions** (☎ 888/589-4253 or 360/378-5767; www.sea-quest-kayak.com) offers a variety of sea-kayak trips through the San Juans. The 2-day trips are \$349, 3-day trips are \$529, and 5-day trips are \$799. And to answer the question I asked at the start of this chapter, yes, in the San Juan Islands, you can kayak with killer whales, although you'll sound more like a local if you call them orcas.

SKIING & SNOWBOARDING Washington has about a half-dozen major ski areas and about the same number of lesser areas. The major ski areas are located in the Cascade Range and include Mount Baker, a snowboarding mecca near Bellingham; Mission Ridge, located near Wenatchee and known for its powder snow; Stevens Pass, near the Bavarian-theme town of Leavenworth; the Summit at Snoqualmie, less than an hour from Seattle; Crystal Mountain near the northeast corner of Mount Rainier National Park; and White Pass, southeast of Mount Rainier National Park. For information on these ski areas, see chapter 10. Tiny ski areas with only a handful of runs include Hurricane Ridge, in Olympic National Park (see chapter 8); Loup

Loup, near Winthrop (see chapter 10); and Echo Valley, near Lake Chelan (see chapter 10). Heli-skiing is available in the Methow Valley (see chapter 10).

Many downhill ski areas also offer groomed cross-country ski trails. The best cross-country areas in Washington include the Methow Valley (one of the largest trail systems in the country), Leavenworth, the Summit at Snoqualmie, White Pass, and Stevens Pass.

WHALE-WATCHING Orca whales, commonly called killer whales, are a symbol of the Northwest and are often seen in Puget Sound and around the San Juan Islands, especially during the summer. Dozens of companies offer whale-watching trips from the San Juans. You can also spot orcas from San Juan Island's Lime Kiln State Park. For information on orca-watching opportunities, see chapter 6. On the Washington coast, migrating gray whales can be seen from March through May. In the town of Westport, there are both viewing areas and companies operating whale-watching excursions. For more information, see chapter 9.

WHITEWATER RAFTING Plenty of rain and snowmelt and lots of mountains combine to produce dozens of good whitewater-rafting rivers, depending on the time of year and water levels. In the Washington Cascades, some of the popular rafting rivers include the Wenatchee outside Leavenworth, the Methow near Winthrop, the Skagit and Skykomish rivers north of Seattle, and the White Salmon and Klickitat rivers near the Columbia Gorge. On the Olympic Peninsula, the Queets, Hoh, and Elwha rivers are the main rafting rivers. Rates generally range from about \$55 to \$85 for a half-day of rafting.

Many companies offer trips on several different rivers. Among these companies are Alpine Adventures (☎ 800/723-8386; www.alpineadventures.com), Down-Stream River Runners (☎ 206/906-9227; www.riverpeople.com), North Cascades River Expeditions (☎ 800/634-8433; www.riverexpeditions.com), River Riders (☎ 800/448-7238; www.riverrider.com), and Wildwater River Tours (☎ 800/522-9453; www.wildwater-river.com).

Food & Wine Trips

You'll find vineyards and wineries all over the state of Washington, which can make planning a wine tour somewhat challenging. If you want to let someone else lead a wine tour for you, contact **Bon Vivant Wine Tours** (☎ 206/524-8687; www.bonvivanttours.com), which offers day trips to a wide range of Washington wine regions.

Volunteer & Working Trips

If you'd like to transform a vacation into a service trip, consider voluntourism, a new travel trend that lets you give back to the destination you are visiting. Hikers and backpackers who want to get more involved in preserving wilderness should consider a Sierra Club Service Trip. These trips are for the purpose of building, restoring, and maintaining hiking trails in wilderness areas. It's a lot of work, but it's also a lot of fun. For more information on Service Trips, contact **Sierra Club Outings Department**, 85 Second St., Second Floor, San Francisco, CA 94105 (☎ 415/977-5522; www.sierraclub.org). Alternatively, contact your local chapter of the Sierra Club or Washington's Cascade Chapter (☎ 206/378-0114; <http://cascade.sierraclub.org>). Voluntourism trips are also offered by **Evergreen Escapes** (☎ 866/203-7603 or 206/650-5795; www.evergreenescapes.com).

STAYING CONNECTED

Mobile Phones

Just because your cellphone works at home doesn't mean it'll work everywhere in the U.S. (thanks to our nation's fragmented cellphone system). It's a good bet that your phone will work in Seattle and other major Washington cities, but take a look at your wireless company's coverage map on its website before heading out; T-Mobile, Sprint, and Nextel are particularly weak in rural areas. (To see where GSM phones work in the U.S., check out www.t-mobile.com/coverage.)

If you need to rent a mobile phone, contact **Ken's Baggage & Frozen Food Storage** (☎ 206/433-5333; www.kensbaggage.com), which is at the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport and rents phone through **PhonerentalUSA** (☎ 800/335-3705; <http://phonerentalusa.com>).

Internet & E-Mail

WITHOUT YOUR OWN COMPUTER

Most major airports have **Internet kiosks** that provide basic Web access for a per-minute fee that's usually higher than cybercafe prices. Also check out copy shops like **FedEx Office**, which offers computer stations with fully loaded software (as well as Wi-Fi).

For help locating cybercafes and other establishments where you can go for Internet access, visit www.cybercaptive.com and www.cybercafe.com.

WITH YOUR OWN COMPUTER

More and more hotels, resorts, airports, cafes, and retailers are going Wi-Fi (wireless fidelity), becoming "hotspots" that offer free high-speed Wi-Fi access or charge a small fee for usage. Wi-Fi is even found in campgrounds, RV parks, highway rest stops, and even entire towns. Most laptops sold today have built-in wireless capability. To find public Wi-Fi hotspots at your destination, go to www.jiwire.com; its Hotspot Finder holds the world's largest directory of public wireless hotspots.

Most hotels now offer free high-speed Internet access. However, a few still have only hard-wired Internet access in guest rooms. If you need to stay connected, be sure to ask when making a reservation.

Wherever you go, bring a **connection kit** of the right power and phone adapters, a spare phone cord, and a spare Ethernet network cable—or find out whether your hotel supplies them to guests.

For information on electrical currency conversions, see "Electricity" in the "Fast Facts: Washington State" section of chapter 12.

Newspapers & Magazines

The *Seattle Times* is Seattle's daily newspaper and is available throughout much of the state. *Seattle Weekly* is the city's free arts-and-entertainment weekly.

Telephones

Many convenience groceries and packaging services sell **prepaid calling cards** in denominations up to \$50. Many public pay phones at airports now accept American Express, MasterCard, and Visa. **Local calls** made from most pay phones cost either 25¢ or 35¢. Most long-distance and international calls can be dialed directly from

any phone. **To make calls within the United States and to Canada**, dial 1 followed by the area code and the seven-digit number. **For other international calls**, dial 011 followed by the country code, city code, and the number you are calling.

Calls to area codes **800, 888, 877, and 866** are toll-free. However, calls to area codes **700** and **900** (chat lines, bulletin boards, “dating” services, and so on) can be expensive—charges of 95¢ to \$3 or more per minute. Some numbers have minimum charges that can run \$15 or more.

For **reversed-charge or collect calls**, and for person-to-person calls, dial the number 0 then the area code and number; an operator will come on the line, and you should specify whether you are calling collect, person-to-person, or both. If your operator-assisted call is international, ask for the overseas operator.

For **directory assistance** (“Information”), dial 411 for local numbers and national numbers in the U.S. and Canada. For dedicated long-distance information, dial 1, then the appropriate area code plus 555-1212.

SUGGESTED WASHINGTON ITINERARIES

4

Where should I go? What should I see? What's the best route? How do I maximize my time? I know all these questions well, having asked them myself when planning vacation itineraries, and I've been asked them by other people planning trips to Washington state. This chapter should help with those questions. You won't find the nitty-gritty details like where to get gas, but you will find an occasional not-to-be-missed or out-of-the-way restaurant or mountain lodge.

If you read through all these itineraries, you'll notice a bit of overlap. There are some destinations and attractions that just should not be missed on any visit to the state. Almost any visit to Washington should include at least a day in Seattle, and to really get a feel for what the state is all about, you have to get out amid the big trees. There's a good reason why they call this the Evergreen State.

THE REGIONS IN BRIEF

The state of Washington covers 68,139 square miles—roughly the same area as all of New England or half the size of Germany. Within this large area can be found surprising geographical diversity, including an inland sea dotted with hundreds of islands, temperate rainforests where rainfall is measured in feet, an arid land of sagebrush and junipers, several distinct mountain ranges, an active volcano, the West's most important river, and, of course, hundreds of thousands of acres of coniferous forests (hence the state's nickname—the Evergreen State).

PUGET SOUND Puget Sound, a convoluted maze of waterways, is a vast inland sea that stretches for more than 80 miles, from north of Seattle south to Olympia. Created when glaciers receded at the end of the last ice age, Puget Sound is characterized by deep waterways surrounded by hilly, forested terrain. Because the sound's protected waters make such good harbors and are so full of fish and shellfish, this area has

been the most densely populated region of the state since long before the first Europeans sailed into these waters. Today, the eastern shore of the sound has become the largest metropolitan area in the state—one huge Pugetopolis that includes Seattle, Tacoma, Olympia, and dozens of smaller cities and bedroom communities. The western and southernmost reaches of the sound are much less developed.

THE SAN JUAN ISLANDS Lying just to the north of Puget Sound, the San Juan Islands are a lush, mountainous archipelago, home to orca whales, harbor seals, and bald eagles. Of the 170 or so named San Juan Islands, only four are accessible by public ferry, and, of these, only three—San Juan, Orcas, and Lopez—have accommodations (although the fourth, Shaw, has a campground). The mild climate, watery vistas, and quiet, rural character of these islands have made the San Juans the state's favorite summer vacation destination. As such, the islands are packed to overflowing throughout the summer and it can be impossible to get a hotel reservation at the last minute. A summer trip to the San Juans definitely requires plenty of advance planning. It also requires a great deal of patience, as waits for ferries can stretch into hours. To avoid the crowds, visit in spring or fall, when the weather is often just as good as in the summer. Because the San Juans lie within the rain shadow of the Olympic Mountains, they get far less rain than Seattle.

THE OLYMPIC PENINSULA Aside from a thin necklace of private land around its perimeter, this huge peninsula, wedged between Puget Sound and the Pacific Ocean, is almost entirely public land. At the heart of the peninsula is Olympic National Park, which encompasses almost the entirety of the Olympic Mountains. Surrounding the park is Olympic National Forest, which is distinguishable from the park by its many clear-cut areas. Due primarily to the immensity of the forests and the size of the trees here, the forests of the Olympic Peninsula have, over the past century, seen some of the most intensive logging in the nation. The gigantic size of the trees is due to the astounding amount of rain that falls on parts of the peninsula. The western slopes of the Olympic Mountains contain some of the only temperate rainforests in the contiguous United States, and in these forests, the annual rainfall often exceeds 150 inches. Rugged, remote beaches separated by rocky headlands characterize the Pacific shore of the peninsula, while along the north coast, there are a number of large towns, including the historic Victorian seaport of Port Townsend.

SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON The southwest corner of the state is, for the most part, a sparsely populated region of huge tree farms. However, along the southern coast, there are long sandy beaches and numerous beach resorts and towns, which, though popular with Portlanders and the residents of Puget Sound, lack a distinctly Northwest character. Inland, up the Columbia River, lies the city of Vancouver (not to be confused with Vancouver, British Columbia), which is rich in regional history, but overshadowed by Portland, Oregon, across the Columbia River.

THE CASCADE RANGE Dividing the state into eastern and western regions, the Washington Cascades are actually two very distinct mountain ranges. The North Cascades are jagged, glaciated granite peaks, while the central and southern Washington Cascades are primarily volcanic in origin. Mount St. Helens, which erupted with awe-inspiring force in 1980, is the only one of these volcanoes to be active in recent years, but even Mount Rainier, the highest mountain in the state, is merely dormant and is expected to erupt again sometime in the next few hundred years

(probably with devastating effect, considering the large population that now resides at the foot of the mountain). Within these two mountain ranges are North Cascades National Park, Mount Rainier National Park, Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument, the third-deepest lake in the country (Lake Chelan), a half-dozen ski areas, and a couple of interesting little theme towns. If you're thinking about a summer vacation in these mountains, keep in mind that the snow at higher elevations often doesn't melt until well into July.

EASTERN WASHINGTON While to the west of the Cascade Range, all is gray skies and green forests, to the east the sun shines 300 days a year and the annual rainfall is often less than 10 inches. However, irrigation waters from the Columbia River have allowed the region to become an agricultural powerhouse. This sun-drenched and sparsely populated shrub steppe is highly valued by waterlogged residents of western Washington, but it is, with the exception of its wine country, of little interest to out-of-state visitors. Wine lovers should know, however, that from the Yakima Valley to the Walla Walla area, large areas of vineyards have helped make Washington the second-largest producer of wine in the country. Also, in the Yakima, Wenatchee, and Chelan valleys, apple orchards produce the bulk of the nation's apple crop. Out in the southeast corner of the state lie the rolling Palouse Hills, where rich soils sustain the most productive wheat fields in the nation. Spokane is the region's largest metropolitan area.

WASHINGTON IN 1 WEEK

Washington is a big state, so don't expect to see it all in a week. However, for most people who don't live in the Northwest, Washington is that rainy region of towering evergreens, sparkling waters, and free-flowing espresso. This 1-week itinerary will allow you to explore the Washington that you may have conjured up in your mind.

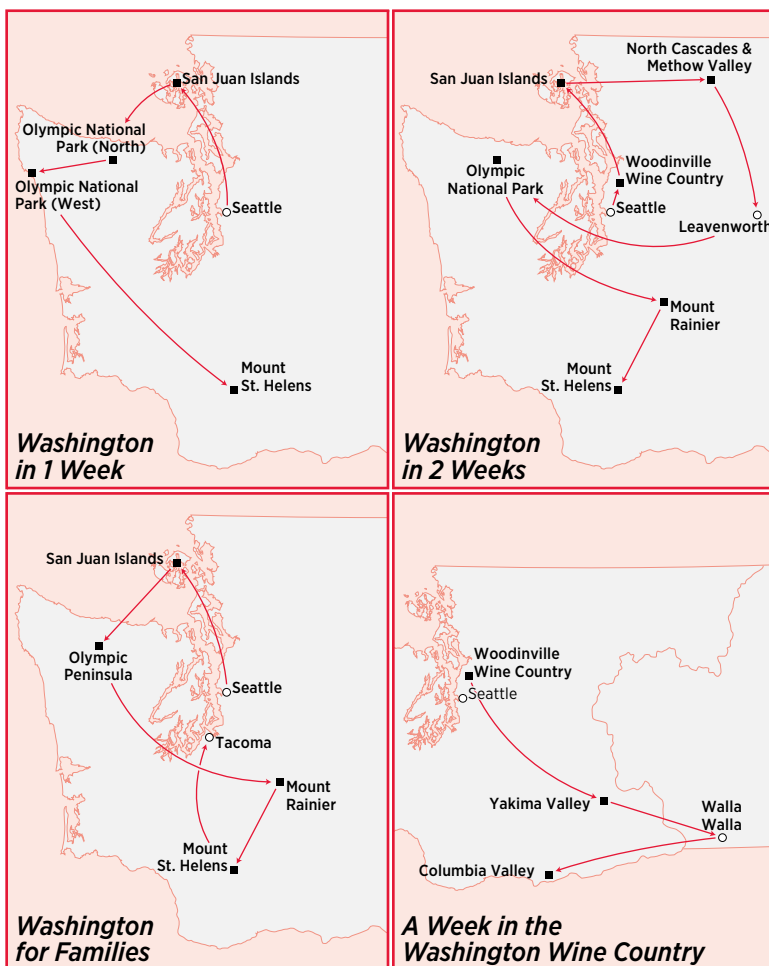
Days 1 & 2: Seattle ★★

Spend your first 2 days exploring Seattle. Start at the bustling **Pike Place Market** (p. 112). On the waterfront, visit the **Seattle Aquarium** (p. 112) and the **Olympic Sculpture Park** (p. 110) and take a short boat tour. My favorite boat tours are the sailboat excursions offered by **Emerald City Charters** (p. 127). Don't miss the fun **Underground Tour** (p. 113) in the Pioneer Square neighborhood. At Seattle Center, catch the view from atop the Space Needle and, if rock music and science fiction appeal to you, spend time at the **Experience Music Project** (p. 114) and the **Science Fiction Museum** (p. 115). For world-class art, don't miss the **Seattle Art Museum** (p. 114), and for the chance to see migrating salmon, visit the **Hiram M. Chittenden Locks** (p. 119).

Days 3 & 4: The San Juan Islands ★★

Depending on the time of year, take a passenger ferry or a floatplane to Friday Harbor in the San Juan Islands. Either way, you'll be in for quite an adventure. If it happens to be summer, be sure to do a whale-watching tour. Visit the **Whale Museum** (p. 165) to learn more about the region's orca whales. To learn about the island's forgotten Pig War, visit the two units of San Juan Island's **San Juan Island National Historical Park** (p. 166). If you're a

Suggested Washington Itineraries



4

SUGGESTED WASHINGTON ITINERARIES

Washington in 1 Week

cyclist, rent a bike 1 day and explore San Juan Island or catch a ferry to **Lopez Island** (p. 181), the best of the ferry-serviced San Juans, for cycling.

Day 5: Olympic National Park North ★★★

From the San Juans, fly back to Seattle, rent a car, and catch a ferry across Puget Sound to begin a journey out to **Olympic National Park** (p. 235). This sprawling park preserves not only glacier-carved peaks and alpine meadows, but also wild beaches and rainforests. Spend the night near Port Angeles, perhaps at **Lake Crescent Lodge** (p. 243). If you have time, be sure to visit the Victorian port town of **Port Townsend** (p. 224). In July and August, you can see lavender fields near the town of Sequim.

Day 6: Olympic National Park West ★★★

Drive out to the wilderness beaches near La Push. After a stroll or hike on **Rialto**, **Second**, or **Third Beach** (p. 247), head to the mossy rainforest of the Hoh River Valley. Hike the **Hall of Mosses Trail** (p. 248), and if you have time and have planned ahead, go for a short **raft trip** (p. 240) on the Hoh River. Spend the night at a lodge on **Lake Quinault** (p. 251).

Day 7: Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument ★★★

This day requires the most driving of any day in this itinerary, so get an early start. Continue around the Olympic Peninsula and then head southeast to **Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument** (p. 310), which preserves the only active volcano in the contiguous United States. After visiting the monument, head north to Tacoma, which has good lodging options and several excellent museums, including the **Museum of Glass** (p. 210) and the **Tacoma Art Museum** (p. 210).

WASHINGTON IN 2 WEEKS

Plan on spending 2 weeks in Washington and you'll get a good sense of this state's diverse landscapes. Not only will you be able to spend more time relaxing in the San Juan Islands, but you'll also get to explore the rugged North Cascades and wildflower meadows of Mount Rainier National Park.

Days 1 & 2: Seattle ★★

See Days 1 & 2 of "Washington in 1 Week," above.

Day 3: Woodinville Wine Country ★

Washington is second only to California in wine production, and no visit here is complete without sampling a little fruit of the vine. The most convenient place to do some wine tasting is 30 minutes north of Seattle near the town of Woodinville. Here you should be sure to visit **Chateau Ste. Michelle** (p. 148) and **Columbia Winery** (p. 148), the area's two biggest producers. Afterward, check out some of the smaller wineries in the area.

Days 4, 5, 6 & 7: San Juan Islands ★★★

Head north to the emerald islands known as the San Juans. These idyllic islands are way out of the mainstream and home to quaint villages, delightful bed-and-breakfast inns, and excellent restaurants. Plan to stay on Orcas Island and San Juan Island, or, if you're a cyclist, quiet Lopez Island. While you're in the islands, be sure to try **sea kayaking** (p. 156, 169, 178, and 183), and, if it's summer, be sure to go **whale-watching** (p. 169 and 178). The mountaintop views and hiking trails at **Moran State Park** (p. 176) and **Turtleback Mountain Preserve** (p. 177) also should not be missed.

Day 8: The North Cascades and the Methow Valley ★★★

Drive east over the North Cascades Scenic Highway, which passes through the grandest and ruggedest landscape in the state. Jagged snowcapped peaks rise all around, and tucked amid the mountain slopes are lakes of astonishing colors. Much of the region is preserved in the various units of **North Cascades National Park Complex** (ch. 10). En route, stop at **Diablo Lake Overlook** (p. 276), **Rainy Pass** (p. 276), and **Washington Pass** (p. 277). Spend the night in the Methow Valley, home to two of the state's finest mountain lodges.

Day 9: Leavenworth ★★

From the Methow Valley, get an early start and take a **boat tour** (p. 286) on glacier-carved **Lake Chelan** (p. 284), the third-deepest lake in the country. Boat tours go more than 50 miles up this lake to the remote community of Stehekin, which is so isolated that it has no roads leading to it. From Lake Chelan, continue to the self-consciously quaint Bavarian theme town of **Leavenworth** (p. 291). Sure, this town can be tacky, but the natural setting is breathtaking in its ruggedness, and residents have done an impressive job of reproducing an alpine village in the mountains of Washington.

Days 10, 11 & 12: Olympic National Park ★★★

From Leavenworth, drive back over the Cascade Range, and first take the ferry from Mukilteo to Whidbey Island and then the ferry from Whidbey Island to **Port Townsend** (p. 224). With its many B&Bs and historic commercial district full of galleries and eclectic shops, Port Townsend is a good place to spend your first night on the Olympic Peninsula. The next day, begin your explorations of **Olympic National Park** (p. 235) with a hike through the alpine meadows at **Hurricane Ridge** (p. 237). In the Forks area, you can walk on the Olympic coast's wilderness beaches. South of Forks, head up the **Hoh River Valley** (ch. 8) to explore one of the national park's rainforest valleys.

Day 13: Mount Rainier National Park ★★★

Today, get an early start, since it is a long drive to **Mount Rainier National Park** (p. 304). Mount Rainier is a dormant volcano, and its massive bulk dominates the horizon from all over the state. Popular with mountain climbers, the mountain is also known for its gorgeous displays of alpine wildflowers in July and August. The best place to see these wildflowers is in **Paradise** (p. 305).

Day 14: Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument ★★★

While Mount Rainier is a dormant volcano, not far away you can visit **Mount St. Helens** (p. 310), the only active volcano in the contiguous United States. Mount St. Helens erupted with unimaginable force in May 1980, and for a few years beginning in 2004 was actively creating a new lava dome within the massive crater left after the 1980 eruption. Several interpretive centers provide loads of information about the first big blast and the current state of things within this fascinating national volcanic monument.

WASHINGTON FOR FAMILIES

While Washington doesn't have a major amusement park to attract families, it does have lots of great, child-oriented museums in Seattle, a park full of fun attractions in Tacoma, national parks, and an active volcano. (How cool is that?)

Days 1 & 2: Seattle ★★

Spend the first 2 days of your trip exploring the kid-friendly attractions of Seattle. On the waterfront, visit the **Seattle Aquarium** (p. 112) and go for a boat tour. At Seattle Center, originally built for the 1962 World's Fair, you'll find enough cool attractions to keep kids of all ages busy for a day or more. Depending on their ages, kids' favorites include the **Space Needle** (p. 116), the **Children's Museum** (p. 124), the **Pacific Science Center** (p. 115), the **Experience Music Project** (p. 114), the **Science Fiction Museum** (p. 115), and the **Seattle Children's Theatre** (p. 124).

Days 3, 4 & 5: The San Juan Islands ★★★

From Seattle, head north to the San Juan Islands, home to orca whales and bald eagles. With their beaches, state parks, scooter rentals, and summertime whale-watching tours, the San Juans have long been a favorite summer destination of Washington families. Visit the **Whale Museum** (p. 165) and the **San Juan Island National Historical Park** (p. 166) on San Juan Island, and **Moran State Park** (p. 176) on Orcas Island. If it's summer, go out on a **whale-watching cruise** (p. 170). The San Juans are also a great place to introduce the kids to sea kayaking; many tour companies here will take the whole family out on the water.

Days 6, 7 & 8: Olympic Peninsula ★★★

If you've brought along passports, you could travel from the San Juans to the Olympic Peninsula by way of Victoria, British Columbia. Otherwise, head back to Anacortes, drive south to the Keystone ferry landing on Whidbey Island, and cross over to **Port Townsend** (p. 224) on the Olympic Peninsula. In Olympic National Park, visit **Hurricane Ridge** (p. 237), **Sol Duc Hot Springs** (p. 238), the **beaches near La Push** (p. 247), and the **Hoh River Valley rainforest** (ch. 8). At Hurricane Ridge, you're likely to see nearly tame deer. In the Hoh River Valley, keep an eye out for elk. Spend your last night on the peninsula at a lodge on Lake Quinalt.

Days 9 & 10: Mount Rainier National Park ★★★

From Lake Quinalt, drive to Mount Rainier National Park. En route, stop at **Northwest Trek Wildlife Park** (p. 217), a drive-through zoo filled with wild animals from around North America. At Mount Rainier National Park, wander the wildflower meadows at **Paradise** (p. 305), visit the 1,000-year-old western red cedars at **Grove of the Patriarchs** (p. 306), and look for mountain goats on the trails at **Sunrise** (p. 306).

Day 11: Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument ★★★

You may not see lava pouring down the side of the volcano, but at **Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument** (p. 310), you'll see plenty of evidence of the volcano's massive 1980 eruption. Although operated as a sort of promotional facility for the logging industry, the **Mount St. Helens Forest Learning Center** (p. 311) has a playground and hands-on exhibits. At the end of the day, drive north to Tacoma to spend the night.

Day 12: Tacoma ★★

Tacoma's Point Defiance Park is one of the best places in the state to bring the family. Start at **Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium** (p. 212) and then visit the **Fort Nisqually Living History Museum** (p. 212), where interpreters dress up in 19th-century fur-traders' attire. At the **Camp 6 Logging Museum** (p. 211), you can hop aboard an old logging train. The park also has lots of hiking trails and good waterfront restaurants nearby.

A WEEK IN THE WASHINGTON WINE COUNTRY

Washington state is the second-largest producer of wine in the United States, after California, and as in California, wineries are all over the state. However, the biggest concentrations are in eastern Washington's Yakima Valley and Walla Walla areas. Spend a week driving through the state's various wine regions and you'll get a good feel for the diversity of wines produced.

Day 1: Seattle & the Woodinville Wine Country ★★

Start your wine tour in Seattle, and head north of the city 30 minutes to the Woodinville area. Here you'll find a couple of the state's largest wine producers—**Chateau Ste. Michelle** (p. 148) and **Columbia Winery** (p. 148)—as well as some of its smallest. For the ultimate wine country experience, stay at the **Willows Lodge** (p. 87) and have dinner at **The Herbfarm** (p. 104).

Days 2 & 3: Yakima Valley ★

From the Seattle area, head 140 miles east on I-90 and I-82 to **Yakima** (see "Yakima & the Wine Country" in ch. 11), which marks the start of the state's main wine-grape-growing region. The Yakima Valley wine region stretches for 70 miles between Yakima and the Tri-Cities area (Richland, Kennewick, and Pasco). So many wineries are in the area that you can easily spend 2 days tasting and still leave plenty of wineries for a return visit. The biggest concentrations of wineries are near Zillah, at the west end of the valley, and near Prosser, at the east end. Spend the first night in Yakima and the next night in the Tri-Cities area.

Days 4, 5 & 6: Walla Walla ★★

Walla Walla (see “Walla Walla” in ch. 11) is one of Washington’s hottest wine regions, and I’m not talking about the climate. This little college town is packed with great wineries, excellent restaurants, and good places to stay. All in all, Walla Walla is the best place in the state to taste wine. Keep an eye out for memorable syrahs and viogniers. Many of the best little wineries are only open to the public on Saturdays, so be sure to plan your schedule accordingly. You won’t want to miss these gems, many of which are tiny operations near the airport.

Day 7: The Columbia Valley ★★

From Walla Walla, head west by way of the Columbia River Gorge. This hot, windy region produces some fine wines. **Maryhill Winery** (p. 317) has one of the most spectacular settings of any winery in the state and also produces a wide range of decent wines. Plan to picnic on the winery’s terrace overlooking the Columbia River. Continuing west, you’ll pass several more small wineries. Spend the night at a B&B or luxury lodge in the Columbia Gorge and then continue on to Portland or back to Seattle to fly home.

THE CASCADE LOOP

Although this itinerary doesn’t take in the San Juan Islands, Mount Rainier, or Olympic National Park, it visits some of the most beautiful places in western Washington. The route stretches from Puget Sound to the Cascade Range and takes in a little bit of everything: quaint old fishing villages, waterfront walks, rugged mountains, a Wild West theme town, a Bavarian theme town, the third-deepest lake in the United States, and, of course, the Seattle urban experience.

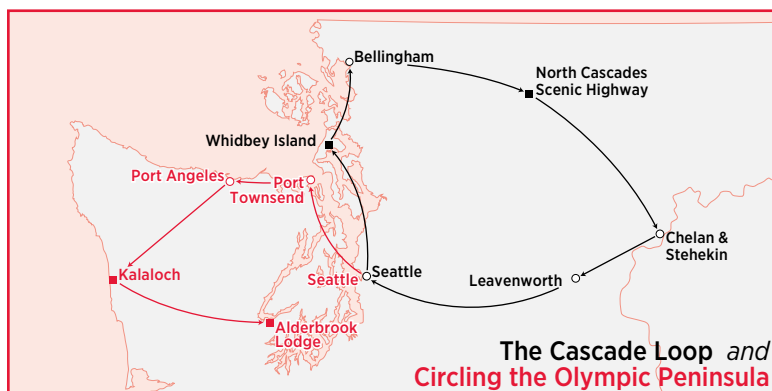
Day 1: Seattle ★★

Spend your first day getting a quick feel for this city on the shores of Puget Sound. Walk the **waterfront** (p. 109), visit the **Olympic Sculpture Park** (p. 110), and take a short **boat tour** (p. 126). Poke around the stalls at **Pike Place Market** (p. 112), take the **Underground Tour** (p. 113), and survey the city from atop the **Space Needle** (p. 116). If this seems like a lot to do in a day, there are plenty of espresso bars to keep you on your feet.

Day 2: Whidbey Island ★★

From Seattle, it’s fewer than 30 miles to the town of Mukilteo and the ferry to Whidbey Island. While this island is bigger than any of the San Juans, it offers similar island vistas, beaches, and quaint small towns. Plus, it is easier to get on and off, which makes it a convenient island experience for anyone short on time. Spend time strolling around the old fishing village of **Langley** (p. 154) and then head north to **Greenbank Farm** (p. 155), **Ebey’s Landing National Historic Reserve** (p. 155) near **Coupeville** (p. 155), and **Deception Pass State Park** (p. 156).

More Suggested Washington Itineraries



4

SUGGESTED WASHINGTON ITINERARIES

The Cascade Loop

Days 3 & 4: Bellingham ★★

Leaving Whidbey Island by bridge at the north end of the island, visit **La Conner** (p. 185), the cutest little restored fishing village in the state. Be sure to visit the town's **Museum of Northwest Art** (p. 187). In spring, tulips and daffodils blanket the farm fields around La Conner. From there, drive north to Bellingham by way of scenic **Chuckanut Drive** (p. 191) and stop at **Larrabee State Park** (p. 192). Bellingham is one of my favorite cities in Washington. It's small but has lots to offer. Stroll around the historic **Fairhaven Historic District** (p. 191), walk along the waterfront, and visit the downtown museums. Take a day trip to **Mount Baker** (p. 272) and do some hiking in alpine meadows.

Day 5: The North Cascades Scenic Highway ★★★

From Bellingham, drive east over the North Cascades Scenic Highway, which passes through the state's most grandly rugged landscape. Jagged, snowcapped peaks rise all around, and tucked amid the mountain slopes are lakes of stunning colors. Much of the region is preserved in the various units of **North Cascades National Park** (ch. 10). En route, stop at the **Diablo Lake Overlook** (p. 276), **Rainy Pass** (p. 276), and **Washington Pass** (p. 277). Spend the night in the Methow Valley, home to two of the state's finest mountain lodges.

Days 6 & 7: Chelan & Stehekin ★★★

From the Methow Valley, get an early start, drive to Chelan, and head up 55-mile-long glacier-carved **Lake Chelan** (p. 284) on one of the **Lady of the Lake** (p. 287) boat tours. This is the third-deepest lake in the country and is basically a landlocked fiord with rugged mountains rising straight up from the lake's waters. For an unforgettable experience, spend 2 nights in Stehekin, a community so isolated that no roads lead to it. You can hike, bicycle, and swim or fish. Alternatively, spend a night or two in Chelan and do some wine tasting at area wineries.

Days 8 & 9: Leavenworth ★★

From Lake Chelan, continue to the self-consciously quaint, Bavarian theme town of **Leavenworth** (p. 291). Sure, this town can be tacky, but the natural setting is breathtaking, and residents have done an impressive job of reproducing an alpine village in the mountains of Washington. In summer, there is good hiking in the area, and in winter, there is downhill and cross-country skiing. In town, you'll find tasting rooms for numerous Washington state wineries.

Day 10: Seattle ★★

On your last day, head back to Seattle for one more night. En route, you can do some hiking at Stevens Pass or in the Lake Wenatchee area. If you're interested in wine, detour to the **Woodinville** (p. 147) area north of Seattle and stop in at some wineries.

CIRCLING THE OLYMPIC PENINSULA

There may not be another drive in Washington that so aptly captures all this state offers in a single journey. Starting in Seattle, this loop drive takes in Puget Sound, the Olympic Mountains, and the wild Washington coast. Along the way, you'll enjoy ferry rides, a Victorian port town, lavender fields, wilderness beaches, mountain meadows, rainforests, glacier-carved lakes, and rustic lodges.

Day 1: Seattle ★★

Spend your first day getting a quick feel for this city on the shores of Puget Sound. Walk the **waterfront** (p. 109) and take a short **boat tour** (p. 126), poke around the stalls at **Pike Place Market** (p. 112), take the **Underground Tour** (p. 113), and survey the city from atop the **Space Needle** (p. 116). If this seems like a lot to do in 1 day, there are plenty of espresso bars to keep you on your feet.

Day 2: Port Townsend ★★

From Seattle, catch the Bainbridge Island ferry and head northwest to the Victorian port town of **Port Townsend** (p. 224). This is one of the prettiest little towns in the state and is full of good restaurants and interesting shops. Stay in one of the town's Victorian B&Bs or hotels for the full experience. Visit **Fort Worden State Park** (p. 226), with its beaches, trails, and **Port Townsend Marine Science Center** (p. 226).

Days 3, 4 & 5: Port Angeles & Northern Olympic National Park ★★★

Head around the north side of the Olympic Peninsula toward Port Angeles. In July and August, be sure to explore the **lavender fields** (p. 233) surrounding the town of Sequim. From Port Angeles, drive up to **Hurricane Ridge** (p. 237), the most easily accessible area of alpine meadows in **Olympic National Park** (p. 235). The next day, if you've brought your passport, you can take a ferry to Victoria, British Columbia, which preserves a bit of jolly old England. Alternatively, visit **Dungeness Spit** (p. 232), where you can hike for

miles along the beach. West of Port Angeles, rent a boat on **Lake Crescent** (p. 237) and have a soak at **Sol Duc Hot Springs Resort** (p. 244). Stay either in Port Angeles or at nearby **Lake Crescent Lodge** (p. 243).

Days 6 & 7: Kalaloch ★

For your next 2 nights, use the cabins at Kalaloch Lodge as a base. En route from the Port Angeles area, be sure to make the long drive out to Neah Bay and hike the short trail to Cape Flattery. This is by far the most scenic viewpoint on the coast. From here you can visit the **beaches** (p. 239) that stretch for miles north and south of the Native American community of La Push, which is due west of Forks, a town now famous around the world as the setting of the immensely popular *Twilight* series of vampire books and movies. For short hikes, I like Rialto Beach and Third Beach. Spend your second day exploring the rainforests of the Hoh River Valley. Hike the **Hall of Mosses Trail** (p. 248) and go for a short rafting trip with **Rainforest Paddlers** (p. 248). There are also many more miles of easily accessible national park beaches stretching north from Kalaloch Lodge.

Day 8: Alderbrook Lodge ★★

For your last night on the Olympic Peninsula, stay at the luxurious **Alderbrook Resort & Spa** (p. 254), and be sure to arrive early enough to do some relaxing. The resort is built on the shore of Hood Canal, a long, fishhook-shaped bay off Puget Sound. If you aren't already hiked out, there are some strenuous but very rewarding hikes along the eastern edge of Olympic National Park. Check with the park to make sure your chosen trail is open. Winter storms in the area tend to do a lot of damage to trails and forest-service roads.

4

SUGGESTED WASHINGTON ITINERARIES

Circling the Olympic Peninsula

SEATTLE

Imagine yourself sitting in a park on the Seattle waterfront, a double-tall latte and a marionberry scone close at hand. The snowy peaks of the Olympic Mountains shimmer on the far side of Puget Sound, while ferryboats come and go across Elliott Bay. It's a summer day, and the sun is shining. (Hey, as long as we're dreaming, why not dream big?) It just doesn't get much better than this, unless, of course, you swap the latte for a microbrew and catch a 9:30pm summer sunset. No wonder people love this town.

5

Okay, so the waterfront is as touristy as San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf, but what a view! Seattle is a city of views, and for many visitors, the must-see vista is the panorama from the top of the Space Needle. With the 21st century in full swing, this 1960s-vintage image of the future may look decidedly 20th-century retro, but still, it's hard to resist an expensive elevator ride in any city. You can even take a monorail straight out of *The Jetsons* to get there (and, en route, pass right through the Frank Gehry–designed Experience Music Project).

EMP, as the Experience Music Project is known, is yet another of Seattle's architectural oddities. Its swooping, multicolored, metal-skinned bulk rises at the foot of the Space Needle, proof that real 21st-century architecture looks nothing like the vision of the future dreamed of when the Space Needle was built for the 1962 World's Fair. EMP was the brainchild of Microsoft cofounder Paul Allen, who built this rock-'n'-roll cathedral to house his vast collection of Northwest rock memorabilia. Housed inside the bizarre building, you'll also find Allen's Science Fiction Museum and Hall of Fame. (Is this town a computer nerd's dream come true, or what?)

Allen's money has also been hard at work changing the architectural face of both the north and the south ends of downtown Seattle. At the south end, you'll find the state-of-the-art Qwest Field—home to Allen's Seattle Seahawks NFL football team. Together with the Seattle Mariners' Safeco Field, Qwest Field has created a massive sports-arena district at the south end of downtown. At the other end of downtown, near the south shore of Lake Union, Allen is busily creating the South Lake Union district of condominiums, offices, and retail spaces that are transforming what for years was one of the city's most overlooked and underutilized close-in neighborhoods. There's even a streetcar line connecting downtown Seattle with this new neighborhood.

In addition to the South Lake Union streetcar, Seattle also now has a light-rail line that connects Sea-Tac Airport with downtown Seattle. Combine the light-rail line with the streetcar, free downtown buses, the monorail, and a water taxi to West Seattle, and you have a city that is slowly becoming easier to navigate if you don't have a car.

While the local economy has certainly been in the doldrums for the past few years, it's clear that Seattle has not grown complacent despite the ups and downs of the fickle high-tech industry from which the city now derives so much of its wealth. Sure, it has traffic congestion to rival that of L.A. And, yes, the weather really is lousy for most of the year. But Seattleites manage to overcome these minor inconveniences, in large part by spilling out into the streets and parks whenever the sun shines. To visit Seattle in the summer is to witness an exodus; follow the lead of the locals and head for the great outdoors. Should you brave a visit in the rainy season, don't despair: There are compensations for such misfortune, including a roof on Pike Place Market and an espresso bar on every block.

ORIENTATION

Arriving

BY PLANE

Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (☎ 800/544-1965 or 206/787-5388; www.portseattle.org/seatac), most commonly referred to simply as Sea-Tac, is about 14 miles south of Seattle.

Travellex (☎ 206/248-0401, 248-7848, or 248-4995; www.travellex.com) currency-exchange desks are in the baggage-claim area, the ticketing area, and the Main Terminal's Concourse A.

Also at the airport are branches of all the major car-rental companies (for further details, see p. 32).

GETTING INTO THE CITY BY CAR To get to downtown from the airport, take the Wash. 518 exit from the airport. Driving east on Wash. 518 will connect you to I-5, where you'll then follow the signs north to Seattle. Generally, allow 30 minutes for the drive between the airport and downtown—45 minutes to an hour during rush hour.

During rush hour, it's sometimes quicker to take Wash. 518 west to Wash. 509 north to Wash. 99 to Wash. 519 (which becomes the Alaskan Way Viaduct along the Seattle waterfront).

GETTING INTO THE CITY BY TAXI, SHUTTLE, LIGHT RAIL, OR BUS A **taxi** into downtown Seattle will cost you around \$35 (\$32 for the return ride to the airport). There are usually plenty of taxis around, but if not, call **Yellow Cab** (☎ 206/622-6500; www.yellowtaxi.net) or **Farwest Taxi** (☎ 206/622-1717; www.farwesttaxi.net). The flag-drop charge is \$2.50; after that, it's \$2.50 per mile.

Gray Line Downtown Airporter (☎ 800/426-7532 or 206/626-5200; www.graylineofseattle.com) is your best bet for getting downtown. These shuttle vans provide service between the airport and downtown Seattle daily, every 30 minutes from 8:15am to 9pm (shuttles depart Seattle for airport from 5am–9:30pm). Passengers are picked up outside the baggage-claim area, at Door 00 just past baggage

carousel 1. Shuttles stop at the following downtown hotels: Renaissance Seattle, Crowne Plaza, Fairmont Olympic, Seattle Hilton, Sheraton Seattle, Grand Hyatt, Westin, and Warwick. Fares are \$11 one-way and \$18 round-trip for adults and \$8.25 one-way and \$13 round-trip for children 2 to 12. The biggest drawback of this shuttle service is that you may have to stop at several hotels before getting dropped off, so it could take you 45 minutes or more to get from the airport to your hotel. However, if you're traveling by yourself or with just one other person, this is your most economical choice other than a public bus.

Shuttle Express (☎ 800/487-7433 or 425/981-7000; www.shuttleexpress.com) provides 24-hour service between Sea-Tac and the Seattle, North Seattle, and Bellevue areas. Rates for scheduled shuttles to University District hotels are \$37 for one adult, \$45 for two adults, \$53 for three, and \$69 for four. Rates to downtown Seattle are \$32 for one or two adults, \$40 for three, and \$52 for four. Children 12 and under ride free. You need to make a reservation to get to the airport, and reservations are recommended for going from the airport into town. To find the shuttle, simply head to the Ground Transportation Center on the third floor of the parking garage. If there are three or more of you traveling together, this will be your cheapest option for getting into town other than a public bus.

Sound Transit (☎ 800/201-4900 or 206/398-5000; www.soundtransit.org) operates the **Central Link** light-rail line between the airport and downtown Seattle. Monday to Friday trains operate every 7½ to 15 minutes between 5:19am and 12:10am; Saturday they run every 10 to 15 minutes between 5:19am and 12:10am; and Sunday they run every 10 to 15 minutes from 6:20am to 11:05pm. The light-rail station is outside the airport's parking garage (follow signs), and the fare is \$2.50 for adults, \$1.25 for seniors, and \$2 for youths ages 6 to 18.

BY TRAIN OR BUS

Amtrak (☎ 800/872-7245; www.amtrak.com) trains stop at King Street Station, 303 S. Jackson St., within a few blocks of the historic Pioneer Square neighborhood. Any bus or light-rail train running north through the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel will take you to within a few blocks of most downtown hotels. The Waterfront Streetcar Bus also stops within a block of King Street Station and can take you to The Edgewater hotel.

Greyhound (☎ 800/231-2222 or 206/628-5561; www.greyhound.com) buses arrive at 811 Stewart St., a few blocks northeast of downtown Seattle, not far from Lake Union and Seattle Center. Several budget chain motels are located only a few blocks from the bus station.

BY CAR

See “Getting There & Around” in chapter 3 and “Getting Around” below.

Visitor Information

Visitor information on Seattle and the surrounding area is available by contacting **Seattle's Convention and Visitors Bureau Seattle Visitor Center & Concierge Services**, Washington State Convention and Trade Center, Seventh Avenue and Pike Street, main level (☎ 206/461-5888; www.visitseattle.org). To find it, walk up Pike Street to the convention center (the street is covered by a huge arched glass ceiling in front of the convention center).

City Layout

Although downtown Seattle is fairly compact and can easily be navigated on foot, finding your way by car can be frustrating. Traffic, especially during rush hour, can be a nightmare. Drawbridges, one-way streets, I-5 cutting right through downtown, and steep hills all add up to challenging and confusing driving conditions. Here are some guidelines to help you find your way around.

MAIN ARTERIES & STREETS Three interstate highways serve Seattle. Seattle's main artery is I-5, which runs through the middle of the city. Take the James Street exit west if you're heading for the Pioneer Square area, take the Seneca Street exit for Pike Place Market, or take the Olive Way exit for Capitol Hill. I-405 is the city's north-south bypass and travels up the east shore of Lake Washington through Bellevue and Kirkland (Seattle's high-tech corridor). I-90 comes in from the east, crossing one of the city's two floating bridges, and ends at the south end of downtown.

Downtown is roughly defined as extending from the stadium district (just south of the Pioneer Square neighborhood) on the south to Denny Way on the north, and from Elliott Bay on the west to I-5 on the east. Within this area, most avenues are numbered, whereas streets have names. Exceptions to this rule are the first two roads parallel to the waterfront (Alaskan Way and Western Ave.) and avenues east of Ninth Avenue.

Many downtown streets and avenues are one-way. Spring, Pike, and Marion streets are all one-way eastbound, while Seneca, Pine, and Madison streets are all one-way westbound. Second and Fifth avenues are both one-way southbound, while Fourth and Sixth avenues are one-way northbound. First and Third avenues are both two-way streets.

To get from downtown to Capitol Hill, take Pike Street or Olive Way. Madison Street, Yesler Way, or South Jackson Street will get you over to Lake Washington on the east side of Seattle. If you're heading north across town, Westlake Avenue will take you to the Fremont neighborhood, while Eastlake Avenue will take you to the University District. These two roads diverge at the south end of Lake Union. To get to the arboretum from downtown, take Madison Street.

FINDING AN ADDRESS After you become familiar with the streets and neighborhoods of Seattle, there is really only one important thing to remember: Pay attention to the compass point of an address. Most downtown streets have no directional designation attached to them, but once you cross I-5 going east, most streets and avenues are designated "East." South of Yesler Way, which runs through Pioneer Square, streets are designated "South." West of Queen Anne Avenue, streets are designated "West." The University District is designated "NE" (Northeast), and the Ballard neighborhood "NW" (Northwest). So if you're looking for an address on First Avenue South, head south of Yesler Way.

Another helpful hint is that odd-numbered addresses are likely to be on the west and south sides of streets, whereas even-numbered addresses will be on the east and north. Also, in the downtown area, address numbers jump by 100 with each block as you move away from Yesler Way going north or south and as you go east from the waterfront.

STREET MAPS If the streets of Seattle seem totally unfathomable to you, rest assured that even longtime residents sometimes have a hard time finding their way

Remembering Seattle's Streets

Locals use an irreverent little mnemonic device for remembering the names of Seattle's downtown streets, and since most visitors spend much of their time downtown, this phrase could be useful to you as well. It goes like this: "Jesus Christ made Seattle under protest."

This stands for all the downtown east-west streets between Yesler Way and Olive Way/Stewart Street—Jefferson, James, Cherry, Columbia, Marion, Madison, Spring, Seneca, University, Union, Pike, Pine.

around. Don't be afraid to ask directions. You can obtain a free map of the city from Seattle's Convention and Visitors Bureau Seattle Visitor Center & Concierge Services (see above).

You can buy a decent map of Seattle at most convenience stores and gas stations. For a greater selection, stop in at **Metsker Maps**, 1511 First Ave. (☎ 800/727-4430 or 206/623-8747; www.metskers.com).

If you're a member of AAA, you can get free maps of Seattle and Washington state either at your local AAA office or at the Seattle branch in the University District at 4554 Ninth Ave. NE (☎ 206/633-4222; www.aaawa.com).

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The Neighborhoods in Brief

Downtown This is Seattle's main business district and can roughly be defined as the area from Pioneer Square in the south to around Pike Place Market in the north, and from First Avenue to Eighth Avenue. It's characterized by steep streets, high-rise office buildings, luxury hotels, and a high density of retail shops (primarily national chains). This is also where you'll find the Seattle Art Museum and Benaroya Hall, which is home to the Seattle Symphony. Because hotels in this area are convenient to both Pioneer Square and Pike Place Market, this is a good neighborhood in which to stay. Unfortunately, the hotels here are the most expensive in the city.

First Hill Because it is home to several large hospitals, this hilly neighborhood just east of downtown and across I-5 is called "Pill Hill" by Seattleites. First Hill is home to the Frye Art Museum and a couple of good hotels.

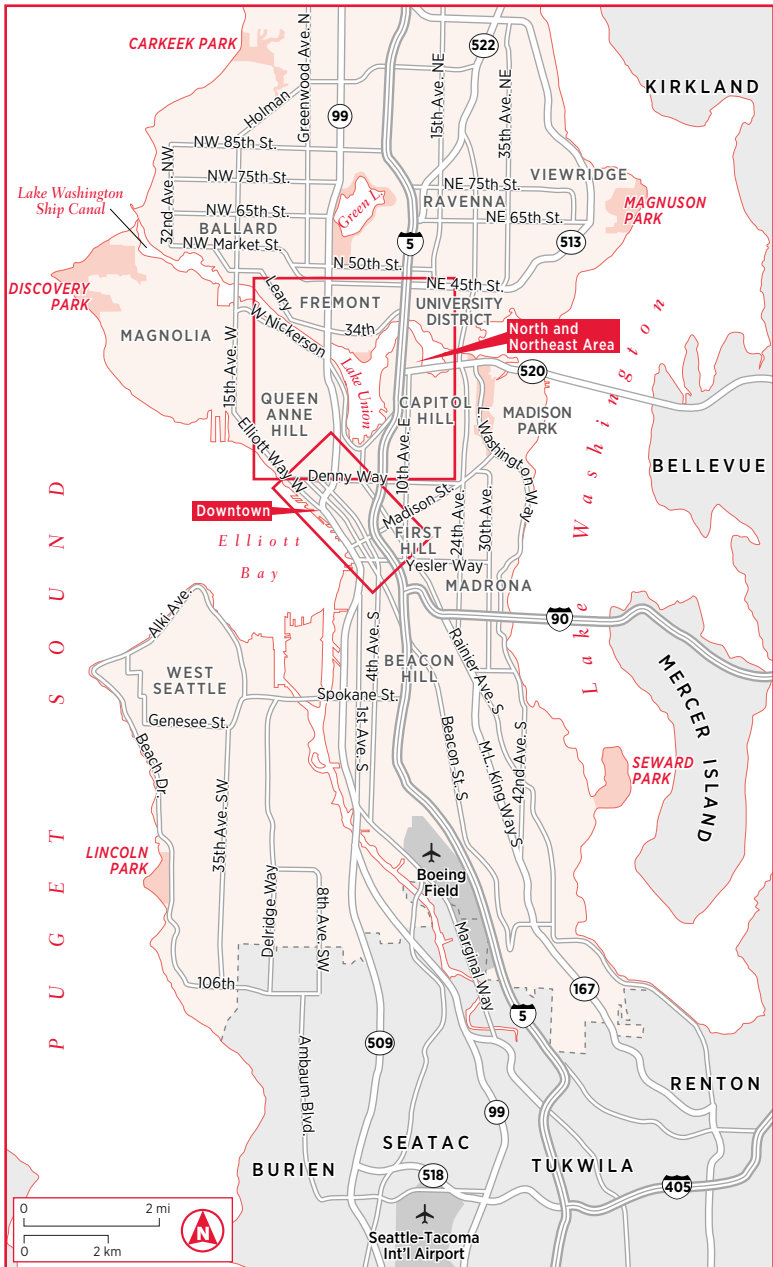
The Waterfront The Seattle waterfront, which stretches along Alaskan Way from roughly Washington Street in the south to Broad Street and Myrtle Edwards Park in

the north, is the most touristy neighborhood in Seattle. In addition to the many tacky gift shops, greasy fish-and-chips windows, and tour-boat docks, you'll also find the city's only waterfront hotel (The Edgewater), the Seattle Aquarium, and a few excellent seafood restaurants. The waterfront is also a residential neighborhood. At the north end of Alaskan Way are water-view condominiums.

Pioneer Square The Pioneer Square Historic District, known for its restored 1890s buildings, is centered on the corner of First Avenue and Yesler Way. The tree-lined streets and cobblestone plazas make this one of the prettiest downtown neighborhoods. Pioneer Square (which refers to the neighborhood, not a specific square) is full of antiques shops, art galleries, restaurants, bars, and nightclubs. Because of the number of bars in this neighborhood, late nights are not a good time to wander here—plus, the number of street people in this area is off-putting to many visitors.

The Chinatown/International District Known to locals as the I.D., this is the most

Greater Seattle Orientation



5

SEATTLE

The Neighborhoods in Brief

distinctive of Seattle's neighborhoods, and home to a large Asian population. Here you'll find the Wing Luke Asian Museum, Hing Hay Park (a small park with an ornate pagoda), Uwajimaya (an Asian supermarket), and many small shops and restaurants. The Chinatown/International District begins around Fifth Avenue South and South Jackson Street. This neighborhood is interesting for a stroll, but doesn't have a lot to do.

Belltown A decade ago, this neighborhood stretching north from Pike Place Market to Seattle Center was home to the city's liveliest restaurant scene. However, in recent years, most of these restaurants either moved (some to the new South Lake Union area) or went out of business. The neighborhood is still home to numerous nightclubs and bars that attract crowds of the young, the hip, and the stylish—who, in turn, attract a lot of nighttime panhandlers. By day the area still offers good shopping opportunities.

Queen Anne Hill Queen Anne is just northwest of Seattle Center and offers great views of the city. This affluent neighborhood, one of the most prestigious in Seattle proper, is where you find some of Seattle's oldest homes. Today the neighborhood is divided into the Upper Queen Anne and Lower Queen Anne neighborhoods. Upper Queen Anne is very peaceful and abounds in moderately priced restaurants. Lower Queen Anne, adjacent to theaters and Marion Oliver McCaw Hall at Seattle Center, is something of a theater district and has a more urban character.

Capitol Hill To the northeast of downtown, centered along Broadway near Volunteer Park, Capitol Hill is Seattle's main gay neighborhood and has long been a popular youth-culture shopping district. Broadway sidewalks are always crowded, and it is nearly impossible to find a parking space here. However, in recent years, the area has been undergoing a renaissance. New condominiums are being built on Broadway, and along 12th Avenue, near the intersection

with Pike Street, there are now more than half a dozen good restaurants. Capitol Hill is also where you'll find many bed-and-breakfasts, housed in some of the neighborhood's impressive old homes and mansions. Unfortunately, this neighborhood is Seattle's main hangout for run-aways and street kids, many of whom are involved in the city's drug scene.

University District As the name implies, this neighborhood in the northeast section of the city surrounds the University of Washington. The U District, as it's known to locals, provides all the amenities of a college neighborhood: cheap ethnic restaurants, pubs, clubs, espresso bars, and music stores. Several good hotels here offer substantial savings over comparable downtown accommodations.

Fremont If you have time to visit only one neighborhood outside of downtown, make it Fremont. North of the Lake Washington Ship Canal between Wallingford and Ballard, Fremont is home to Seattle's best-loved piece of public art—*Waiting for the Interurban*—as well as the famous *Fremont Troll* sculpture. This is Seattle's wackiest neighborhood, filled with eclectic shops and ethnic restaurants. During the summer, there's a Sunday flea market, and outdoor movies are screened on Saturday nights.

Ballard If you have time to visit only one neighborhood outside of downtown, make it Ballard. In northwest Seattle, bordering the Lake Washington Ship Canal and Puget Sound, Ballard is a former Scandinavian community that retains visible remnants of its past. Known for its busy nightlife scene, Ballard, one of Seattle's most enjoyable neighborhoods, is also a great place to discover off-the-beaten-path gems. Art galleries and interesting boutiques and shops are set along the tree-shaded streets of the neighborhood's old commercial center. The neighborhood's Nordic Heritage Museum often has excellent art exhibits.

The Eastside Home to Bill Gates, Microsoft, countless high-tech spinoff companies, and seemingly endless suburbs, the

Eastside lies across Lake Washington from Seattle proper and comprises the cities of Kirkland, Bellevue, Redmond, and a few other smaller communities. As the presence of Bill Gates's mansion attests, there are some pretty wealthy neighborhoods here; but wealth doesn't necessarily equal respect, and the Eastside is still much derided by Seattle citizens, who perceive it as an uncultured bedroom community.

West Seattle West Seattle, across the wasteland of the port facility from downtown, is not just the site of the terminal for ferries to Vashon Island and the Kitsap Peninsula. It's also the site of Seattle's favorite beach, Alki, which is as close to a Southern California beach experience as you'll find in the Northwest. Here, too, is the waterfront restaurant with the best view of Seattle: Salty's on Alki Beach.

GETTING AROUND

By Public Transportation

BY BUS The best thing about Seattle's **Metro** (☎ 800/542-7876 in Washington or 206/553-3000; <http://metro.kingcounty.gov>) bus system is that as long as you stay within the downtown area, you can ride for free between 6am and 7pm. The **Ride Free Area** is between Alaskan Way (the waterfront) to the west, Sixth Avenue and I-5 to the east, Battery Street to the north, and South Jackson Street to the south. Within this area are Pioneer Square, the waterfront attractions, Pike Place Market, the Seattle Art Museum, and almost all of the city's major hotels. Two blocks from South Jackson Street is Qwest Field (where the Seahawks play), 3 long blocks from South Jackson Street is Safeco Field (where the Mariners play), and 6 blocks from Battery Street is Seattle Center. Keeping this in mind, you can see a lot of Seattle without having to spend a dime on transportation.

If you travel outside the Ride Free Area, fares range from \$2 to \$2.75, depending on distance and time of day. (The higher fares are incurred during commuter hours.)

Note: When traveling out of the Ride Free Area between 6am and 7pm, you pay when you get off the bus; when traveling into the Ride Free Area, you pay when you get on the bus. Exact change is required; dollar bills are accepted.

BY STREETCAR Paul Allen's rapidly evolving South Lake Union development district, stretching from the north end of downtown Seattle to the south shore of Lake Union, is served by the **Seattle Streetcar** (☎ 206/553-3000; www.seattlestreetcar.org). There are 11 stops along the 2½-mile route, including Lake Union Park, which is home to several historic ships, and the adjacent Center for Wooden Boats. Downtown, you can catch the streetcar at the corner of Westlake Avenue and Olive Way. Streetcars run every 15 minutes and operate Monday through Thursday from 6am to 9pm, Friday and Saturday from 6am to 11pm, and Sundays and holidays from 10am to 7pm. The fare is \$2.25 for adults and 75¢ for seniors and students (children 5 and under are free). Metro passes and bus transfers are valid on the streetcar.

BY MONORAIL If you are planning a visit to Seattle Center, there is no better way to get there from downtown than on the **Seattle Monorail** (☎ 206/905-2620; www.seattlemonorail.com), which leaves from Westlake Center shopping mall (Fifth Ave. and Pine St.). The elevated train covers the 1¼ miles in 2 minutes and passes right through the middle of the Experience Music Project, the Frank Gehry-designed rock-music museum. The monorail operates daily from 9am to

11pm (in winter, Sun–Thurs 8am–8pm, Fri and Sat 9am–11pm). Departures are every 10 minutes. The one-way fare is \$2 for adults, \$1 for seniors, and 75¢ for children 5 to 12.

BY WATER TAXI A water taxi runs between the downtown Seattle waterfront (Pier 55) and Seacrest Park in West Seattle, providing access to West Seattle's popular Alki Beach and adjacent paved path. For a service schedule, check with the **King County Ferry District** (☎ 206/205-3866; www.kingcountyferries.org). The one-way fare is \$3.50 for adults, \$1.50 for seniors, and \$2.25 for children ages 6 to 18 (free for children 5 and under). By 2011, this ferry will likely be operating year-round.

BY FERRY **Washington State Ferries** (☎ 800/843-3779 or 888/808-7977 in Washington or 206/464-6400; www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries) is the most extensive ferry system in the United States, and while these ferries won't help you get around Seattle itself, they do offer scenic options for getting out of town (and cheap "cruises," too). From downtown Seattle, car ferries sail to Bremerton (1-hr. crossing) and Bainbridge Island (35-min. crossing). From West Seattle, car ferries go to Vashon Island (15-min. crossing) and Southworth (35-min. crossing), which is on the Kitsap Peninsula. The Kitsap Peninsula can also be reached by ferry from the city of Edmonds, north of Seattle. One-way fares between Seattle and Bainbridge Island or Bremerton, or between Edmonds and Kingston via car ferry, are \$12 (\$15 from May 1 to the second Sat in Oct) for a car and driver, \$6.90 for adult car passengers or walk-ons, \$3.45 for seniors, and \$5.55 for children 6 to 18. Car passengers and walk-ons only pay fares on westbound car ferries. One-way fares between Fauntleroy (West Seattle) and Vashon Island, or between Southworth and Vashon Island, are \$15 (\$19 from May 1 to the second Sat in Oct) for a car and driver, \$4.45 for car passengers or walk-ons, \$2.20 for seniors, and \$3.60 for children 6 to 18.

By Car

Before you drive into downtown Seattle, keep in mind that traffic congestion is bad, parking is limited (and expensive), and streets are almost all one-way. You'll avoid a lot of frustration by leaving your car in your hotel parking garage or by not bringing a car downtown.

Depending on what your plans are for your visit, you might not need a car at all. If you plan to spend your time in downtown Seattle, a car is a liability. The Link light-rail line connects Sea-Tac Airport with downtown, and the city center is well served by public transportation, with free buses in the downtown area and the monorail from downtown to Seattle Center. You can even take the ferries over to Bainbridge Island or Bremerton. Most Seattle neighborhoods that interest visitors are well served by public buses. But if your plans include any excursions out of the city, say to Mount Rainier or the Olympic Peninsula, you'll definitely need a car.

CAR RENTALS Car-rental rates vary as widely and as wildly as airfares, so it pays to comparison shop. In Seattle, daily rates for a compact car currently range anywhere from \$70 to \$100 during the summer, with weekly rates ranging from \$250 to \$400. Rates are highest in the summer and lowest in the winter, but you'll almost always get lower rates the farther ahead you reserve. Be sure to budget for the 18.6% car-rental tax. (If you rent at the airport, additional airport concession fees and various other charges will increase your total cost by around 45%!)

All the major car-rental agencies have offices in Seattle and at or near Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. For a list of these companies, see p. 32 in chapter 3.

PARKING On-street parking in downtown Seattle is expensive, extremely limited, and, worst of all, rarely available near your destination. Most downtown parking lots (either above or below ground) charge from \$18 to \$25 per day, though many lots offer early-bird specials that allow you to park all day for around \$12 or \$14 if you arrive before a certain time in the morning (usually around 9am).

You can save money by leaving your car near the Space Needle, where parking lots often charge only \$7 per day (but up to \$15–\$20 during special events). Some Pike Place Market merchants validate parking permits.

DRIVING RULES & TIPS A right turn at a red light is permitted after coming to a full stop. A left turn at a red light is permissible from a one-way street onto another one-way street after coming to a full stop.

If you park your car on a sloping street, be sure to turn your wheels to the curb. When parking on the street, check the time limit on your parking meter; some allow as little as 15 minutes of parking, while others are good for up to 4 hours. Also, during rush hour, be sure to check whether or not your parking space is restricted.

Stoplights in the Pioneer Square area are particularly hard to see, so be alert at all intersections.

By Taxi

If you decide not to use the public transit system, call **Yellow Cab** (☎ 206/622-6500; <http://yellowtaxi.net>) or **Farwest Taxi** (☎ 206/622-1717; www.farwesttaxi.net). Taxis can be difficult to hail on the street in Seattle, so it's best to call or wait at the taxi stands at major hotels. The flag-drop charge is \$2.50; after that, it's \$2.50 per mile. A maximum of four passengers can share a cab; the third and fourth passengers will each incur a surcharge of 50¢.

On Foot

Seattle is a surprisingly compact city. You can easily walk from Pioneer Square to Pike Place Market and take in most of downtown. However, the city is very hilly and when you head in from the waterfront, you will be climbing a very steep hill. If you get tired while strolling downtown, remember that between 6am and 7pm, you can always catch a bus for free as long as you stay within the Ride Free Area. Cross the street only at corners and only with the lights in your favor. Jaywalking, especially in the downtown area, is a ticketable offense.

WHERE TO STAY

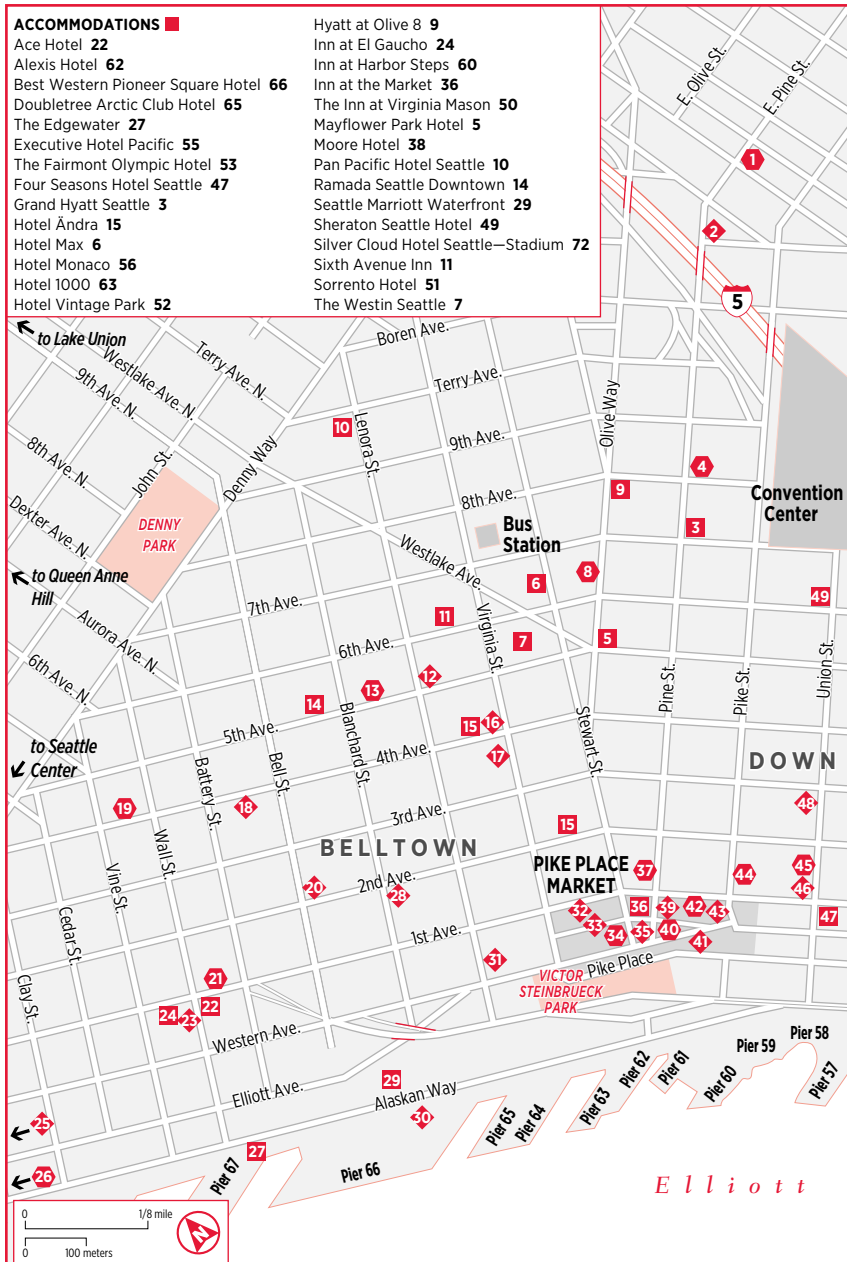
Seattle is close on the heels of San Francisco as a West Coast summer-in-the-city destination, so its hotels stay pretty much booked solid for July and August. Keep in mind that if you aren't on an expense account, you may be faced with sticker shock when you see what these places are charging. But if you're willing to head out a bit from downtown, you'll find prices a little easier to swallow.

Be sure to make reservations as far in advance as possible, especially if you plan to visit during Seafair or another major festival. See "Washington Calendar of Events" (p. 28) for the dates of the big festivals.

Seattle Accommodations & Dining—Downtown Including First Hill

ACCOMMODATIONS

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In the following listings, price categories are based on rates for a double room in high season (most hotels charge the same for a single or double room). The rates listed do not include taxes, which add up to around 16% in Seattle.

Note: For comparison, I list what hotels call “rack rates” or walk-in rates—but you should rarely have to pay these highly inflated prices. Various discounts and specials are often available, so make it a point to ask if any are being offered during your stay (and be sure to check the hotel’s website for Internet specials). At inexpensive chain motels, discounted rates are almost always available for AAA members and seniors.

Room rates can be considerably lower from October through April (the rainy season), and downtown hotels often have substantially reduced prices on weekends throughout the year (while budget hotels generally charge more on weekends).

A few hotels include breakfast in their rates; others provide complimentary breakfast only on certain deluxe floors. Most Seattle hotels offer nonsmoking rooms, while most bed-and-breakfast inns are exclusively nonsmoking. The majority of hotels, but few inns, offer wheelchair-accessible rooms.

If you want to get a great deal on a great hotel (don’t we all?), get in touch with Sheri Doyle at **Pacific Northwest Journeys** (☎ 800/935-9730 or 206/935-9730; www.pnwjourneys.com). This company specializes in itinerary planning, and also offers a reservations service. The charge is \$45 per reservation, but you can usually make that up in savings on just a 2-night stay. If you’re going to be in town for longer than that, you’ll definitely save money. Last-minute reservations are often possible, too. A consultation service is also available for people who would like a little assistance with an itinerary.

When planning your trip, you might also want to check with **Seattle Super Saver** (☎ 800/535-7071 or 206/461-5882; www.seattlesupersaver.com), a reservation service operated by Seattle’s Convention and Visitors Bureau. Rates are comparable to what you might find at online booking sites.

Seattle is a city of diverse neighborhoods, many of which have fine B&Bs. Often less expensive than downtown hotels, B&Bs provide an opportunity to see what life is like for the locals. I’ve listed some of my favorites in the pages that follow, but to find other good options, contact the **Seattle Bed & Breakfast Association** (☎ 800/348-5630; www.lodginginseattle.com). A **Pacific Reservation Service** (☎ 800/684-2932 or 206/439-7677; www.seattlebedandbreakfast.com) books rooms at dozens of accommodations in the Seattle area. A wide range of rates is available.

The Waterfront

Seattle’s most touristy neighborhood, the waterfront has the city’s finest views and is home to several worthwhile attractions and activities. The Edgewater (see below) is the city’s only true waterfront hotel, and it should be the top choice of anyone wanting to spend a Seattle vacation in the thick of things.

VERY EXPENSIVE

The Edgewater ★★ On a pier at the north end of the waterfront, The Edgewater is Seattle’s only true waterfront hotel, and despite the urban setting, The Edgewater manages to capture the feel of a classic Northwest wilderness retreat. The views out the windows are among the best in Seattle, and sunsets can be mesmerizing. On a clear day, you can see the Olympic Mountains across Puget Sound. The mountain-lodge theme continues in the rooms, which feature fireplaces and lodge-pole pine furniture. The least expensive units overlook the city (and the parking lot),

so it's worth it to spring for a water-view. The rooms with balconies are a bit smaller than other rooms, although the premium water-view rooms, with claw-foot tubs and walls that open out to those great views, are hard to beat.

Pier 67, 2411 Alaskan Way, Seattle, WA 98121. ☎ **800/624-0670** or 206/728-7000. Fax 206/441-4119. www.edgewaterhotel.com. 223 units. \$179–\$749 double; \$379–\$2,500 suite. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DISC, MC, V. Valet parking \$33. Pets accepted (free). **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge; babysitting; concierge; exercise room and access to nearby health club; room service. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, minibar, Wi-Fi (\$10/day).

Seattle Marriott Waterfront ★★ Across Alaskan Way from Elliott Bay, this sleek hotel doesn't have superb views like the nearby Edgewater, but it's the only other option if you want to stay on the waterfront. The hotel does a brisk business putting up people heading out on cruises (some cruise ships dock right across the street). If there isn't a cruise ship berthed across the street, the best views are from the large junior suites at the northwest corner of the property. Because of the way the hotel is designed, many standard rooms have only limited views, but they do have little balconies where you can stand and breathe in the salt air.

2100 Alaskan Way, Seattle, WA 98121. ☎ **800/455-8254** or 206/443-5000. Fax 206/256-1100. www.seattlemarriottwaterfront.com. 358 units. \$229–\$734 double. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Valet parking \$40. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 2 lounges; concierge; executive-level rooms; exercise room and access to nearby health club; Jacuzzi; indoor/outdoor pool; room service; free Wi-Fi. *In room:* A/C, TV, CD player, fridge, hair dryer, Internet (\$13/day).

Downtown

Downtown Seattle is the heart of the city's business community and home to numerous business hotels. Although these properties are among the most conveniently located Seattle hotels, they are also the most expensive choices and are designed primarily for business travelers on expense accounts, not vacationers. Many of these hotels do offer discounted weekend and winter rates, however. The area has plenty of good restaurants, but they tend to fall into one of two categories—cheap lunch spots or expense-account dinner places.

VERY EXPENSIVE

The Fairmont Olympic Hotel ★★ If you're looking for classically elegant surroundings, excellent service, and great amenities, then book a room at this gorgeous facsimile of an Italian Renaissance palace. Without a doubt, this hotel has the grandest lobby in Seattle. Gilt-and-crystal chandeliers hang from the arched ceiling, while ornate moldings grace the glowing hand-burnished oak walls and pillars. Although many of the guest rooms tend to be rather small (with either two twin beds or one king-size bed), all are very elegant. If you crave extra space, opt for one of the suites, of which there are more than 200 (however, be aware that the executive suites aren't much bigger than deluxe rooms). **The Georgian** is the most elegant restaurant in Seattle, with a menu that combines Northwest and Continental cuisines. Of all Seattle's luxury hotels, The Fairmont Olympic works the hardest at being eco-friendly.

411 University St., Seattle, WA 98101. ☎ **800/223-8772**, 800/821-8106 (in Washington), 800/268-6282 (in Canada), or 206/621-1700. Fax 206/682-9633. www.fairmont.com/seattle. 450 units. \$259–\$429 double; \$279–\$3,500 suite. Children 18 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Valet parking \$36; self-parking \$26. Pets accepted (\$40 fee). **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; lounge; concierge; executive-level rooms; health club; Jacuzzi; indoor pool; room service. *In room:* A/C, TV/VCR, CD player, hair dryer, minibar, Wi-Fi (\$14/day).

Four Seasons Hotel Seattle ★★ This is one of the newest luxury hotels in Seattle, and it boasts a superb location adjacent to Pike Place Market and across the street from the Seattle Art Museum. The small lobby blends contemporary lines with natural stone and wood for a modern Northwest aesthetic. Guest rooms, which are wired to the max and have artworks by regional artists, have walls of glass, and many of the rooms look out to Elliott Bay. An infinity-edge, heated pool with a water-view may sound like it belongs in Hawaii or Mexico, but that's exactly what you'll find here on the terrace just outside the hotel's huge exercise room. The hotel even has a long outdoor stairway that leads down to the waterfront.

99 Union St., Seattle, WA 98101. ☎ **206/749-7000**. Fax 206/749-7099. www.fourseasons.com/seattle. 147 units. \$275–\$545 double; \$745–\$5,000 suite. Children 18 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Valet parking \$37. Pets accepted (free). **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge; babysitting; concierge; exercise room; Jacuzzi; year-round outdoor pool; room service; full-service spa. *In room:* A/C, TV/DVD, CD player, hair dryer, minibar, MP3 docking station, Wi-Fi (\$11–\$15/day).

EXPENSIVE

Alexis Hotel ★★ This century-old building is a sparkling gem in an enviable location: halfway between Pike Place Market and Pioneer Square and 3 blocks from the waterfront and the Seattle Art Museum. The Alexis is dedicated to the arts, and throughout the hotel, both in guest rooms and in public spaces, are numerous original works of art. The cheerful, personalized service and the pleasant mix of contemporary and antique furnishings give the Alexis a very special atmosphere. In the guest rooms, classic styling with a European flavor prevails. About a quarter of the rooms are suites, and the spa suites are real winners, offering whirlpool tubs in exceedingly luxurious bathrooms. Other suites have ties to the local arts community. The hotel also has complimentary evening wine tastings. As part of the Kimpton chain, the Alexis participates in the eco-friendly EarthCare program and does what it can to be green.

1007 First Ave. (at Madison St.), Seattle, WA 98104. ☎ **888/850-1155** or 206/624-4844. Fax 206/621-9009. www.alexishotel.com. 121 units. \$169–\$319 double; \$355–\$579 suite. Rates include evening wine reception. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Valet parking \$36. Pets accepted (free). **Amenities:** Restaurant; 2 lounges; concierge; executive-level rooms; exercise room and access to nearby health club; room service; Aveda day spa. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, minibar, Wi-Fi (\$10/day).

Grand Hyatt Seattle ★★ If you're accustomed to staying in only the very finest hotels, book a room here. For luxury, contemporary styling, modern amenities, and attentive service, this hotel is first-rate. A spacious lobby full of regionally inspired glass art sets the tone the moment you arrive. There is, however, one catch: Unless you spring for something pricier than the basic "deluxe guest room," you're going to be a bit cramped; the least expensive units here are definitely designed for solo business travelers. The health club is well outfitted, but doesn't have a swimming pool; families searching for deluxe accommodations should probably opt for the Fairmont instead.

721 Pine St., Seattle, WA 98101. ☎ **800/233-1234** or 206/774-1234. Fax 206/774-6120. www.grandseattle.hyatt.com. 425 units. \$199–\$369 double; \$299–\$469 suite. Children 12 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Valet parking \$39; self-parking \$20. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 2 lounges; babysitting; concierge; executive-level rooms; health club; room service; day spa. *In room:* A/C, TV, CD player, hair dryer, minibar, MP3 docking station, Wi-Fi (\$10/day).

Hotel Monaco ★★ The Monaco is one of downtown Seattle's most stylish hotels, attracting a young and affluent clientele. If you appreciate cutting-edge style, you'll go for the eclectic, over-the-top, retro-contemporary design. The lobby has reproductions of ancient Greek murals, while in the guest rooms, you'll find wild color schemes, bold-striped wallpaper, flat-panel LCD TVs, DVD and CD players, and animal-print terry-cloth robes. Miss your pet back home? Call the front desk, and a staff member will send up a pet goldfish for the night. **Sazerac**, the hotel's Southern-inspired restaurant, is as boldly designed as the rest of the place. Be sure to order the restaurant's namesake cocktail at the adjacent bar. Among packages offered by this hotel are adventure tours with the eco-friendly EverGreen Escapes.

1101 Fourth Ave., Seattle, WA 98101. ☎ **888/454-8397** or 206/621-1770. Fax 206/621-7779. www.monaco-seattle.com. 189 units. \$179–\$319 double; \$229–\$399 suite. Rates include evening wine tasting. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Valet parking \$36–\$39. Pets accepted (free). **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge; concierge; exercise room and access to nearby health club; room service. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, minibar, Wi-Fi (\$11/day).

Hotel 1000 ★★ Geared toward techie business travelers, Hotel 1000 is the most luxurious and technologically advanced hotel in Seattle. However, what should really matter to you is that the rooms are bigger than those at most downtown hotels, and all have floor-to-ceiling walls of glass to let in lots of light and, if you're high enough up, display views of Elliott Bay. Bathrooms in deluxe rooms are works of art, with free-standing bathtubs that fill dramatically from the ceiling. Beautiful artwork, often in muted tones, fills the hotel and lends a tranquil feel to both public spaces and guest rooms. There's even changeable art on the 40-inch wall-hung HDTVs. Golfers take note: This is the only downtown Seattle hotel with its own golf course. In fact, the hotel's virtual-reality "golf club" has more than 50 golf courses on offer, including St. Andrews, Pinehurst No. 2, and Pebble Beach.

1000 First Ave., Seattle, WA 98104. ☎ **877/315-1088** or 206/957-1000. www.hotel1000seattle.com. 120 units. \$225–\$500 double; \$350–\$5,000 suite. Children 18 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DISC, MC, V. Valet parking \$32. Pets accepted (\$40 fee). **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge; babysitting; concierge; exercise room and access to nearby health club; room service; full-service spa. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, minibar, free Wi-Fi.

Hotel Vintage Park ★★ Small, classically elegant, and exceedingly romantic, the Vintage Park is a must for both lovers and wine lovers. The guest rooms, which are named for Washington wineries, are perfect for romantic getaways, and each evening in the lobby, the hotel hosts a wine tasting featuring Washington wines. Throughout the hotel are numerous references to grapes and wine. Rooms vary quite a bit and boast bold colors and opulent furnishings that may convince you to forget your vacation plans and instead spend your days luxuriating amid the sumptuous surroundings. Deluxe rooms have the best views (including views of Mount Rainier), and although the bathrooms are small, they do have granite counters. Standard rooms, though smaller and less lavishly appointed, are still very comfortable, and, surprisingly, the bathrooms are larger than those in the deluxe rooms. Through its EarthCare program, this Kimpton hotel does its part to be eco-friendly.

1100 Fifth Ave., Seattle, WA 98101. ☎ **800/853-3914** or 206/624-8000. Fax 206/623-0568. www.hotelvintagepark.com. 124 units. \$139–\$394 double; \$475–\$595 suite. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Valet parking \$34. Pets accepted (free). **Amenities:** Restaurant (Italian); lounge; concierge; exercise room; room service. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, minibar, Wi-Fi (\$10–\$15/day).

Hyatt at Olive 8 ★★ This downtown hotel near the convention center is Seattle's first LEED-certified hotel. LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certifies environmentally sound buildings. To that end, this hotel has such green features as a living roof, lights that turn off when you leave your room, dual-flush toilets, water-reducing shower heads, and lots of natural light. The hotel's restaurant uses primarily ingredients sourced in the Northwest, and even the spa features organic and environmentally aware products. On top of all that, the hotel is very stylish, boldly contemporary, and features relatively large guest rooms with all the electronic features you would expect in a modern business hotel.

1635 Eighth Ave., Seattle, WA 98101. ☎ **888/591-1234** or 206/695-1234. Fax 206/676-4400. www.olyve8.hyatt.com. 346 units. \$179–\$319 double; \$379–\$519 suite. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Valet parking \$39. **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge; babysitting; concierge; executive-level rooms; health club; room service; sauna; full-service spa w/lap pool and Jacuzzi. *In room:* A/C, TV/DVD, fridge, hair dryer, MP3 docking station, Wi-Fi (\$10/day).

Inn at Harbor Steps ★ This excellent location on the lower floors of a modern apartment building across the street from the Seattle Art Museum makes this inn convenient to all of downtown Seattle's major attractions. The guest rooms, which overlook a courtyard garden, feel spacious enough to be apartments. The surprisingly classical furnishings lend a comfortable, homey feel. Every unit has a gas fireplace, and the largest rooms have whirlpool tubs. The only real drawback is the lack of views.

1221 First Ave., Seattle, WA 98101. ☎ **888/728-8910** or 206/748-0973. Fax 206/748-0533. www.innatharborsteps.com. 28 units. \$195–\$295 double. Rates include full breakfast and afternoon tea and appetizers. Children 4 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Parking \$18. **Amenities:** Concierge; health club; Jacuzzi; indoor pool; sauna; free Wi-Fi. *In room:* A/C, TV/VCR/DVD, CD player, hair dryer.

Pan Pacific Hotel Seattle ★★ This hotel, 4 long blocks north of the downtown shopping district and feeling entirely removed from the streets of Seattle, is a stylish, contemporary hotel that opens onto a central courtyard surrounded by condominium towers. Although primarily a business hotel, the Pan Pacific's rooms are such plush retreats that they rightfully belong at some luxury resort, not at a business hotel. Rooms here are larger than at most Seattle downtown hotels, and even standard rooms have soaking tubs with pocket doors that open onto the bedroom area. Decor is minimalist and sleek, though with a soft edge, and walls of glass flood the rooms with light. Be sure to ask for a room with a view of the Space Needle.

2125 Terry Ave., Seattle, WA 98121. ☎ **877/324-4856** or 206/264-8111. Fax 206/654-5049. www.panpacific.com/seattle. 160 units. \$200–\$259 double; \$1,500 suite. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. Valet parking \$35. Pets accepted (\$50 fee). **Amenities:** Restaurant; 2 lounges; concierge; health club and access to nearby health club; Jacuzzi; room service; full-service spa. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, minibar, MP3 docking station, free Wi-Fi.

Sheraton Seattle Hotel ★ This hotel, with 1,258 rooms, is the largest hotel in Seattle, and it is evident as soon as you arrive that big conventions are big business here. As an individual traveler, you're likely to feel a bit overlooked. However, despite the impersonal nature of this hotel, I still recommend it, especially for families. Kids (and many adults) will love the 35th-floor swimming pool with great city views. There's an exercise room on the same floor. You also get good views from guest rooms on the higher floors. All units are fairly large, but if you are not traveling with the kids and want the maximum space, book one of the king rooms, which are designed

for business travelers. Throughout the hotel, you'll find artworks that are part of a \$6-million collection.

1400 Sixth Ave., Seattle, WA 98101. ☎ **800/325-3535** or 206/621-9000. Fax 206/621-8441. www.sheraton.com/seattle. 1,258 units. \$169–\$385 double; \$300–\$5,000 suite. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Valet parking \$40. Pets accepted (free). **Amenities:** Restaurant; 2 lounges; concierge; executive-level rooms; health club; Jacuzzi; indoor pool; room service, free Wi-Fi. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, Internet (\$11/day), minibar.

The Westin Seattle ★ 😊 With its distinctive cylindrical towers, the 47-story Westin is the tallest hotel in Seattle and consequently has the best views of any accommodations in the city. From rooms on the upper floors of the north tower's northwest side, you get breathtaking vistas of the Space Needle, Puget Sound, and the Olympic Mountains. Guest rooms here are also some of the nicest in town. Couple those great views (seen through unusual curved walls of glass) with the Westin's plush "Heavenly Beds," and you'll be sleeping—both literally and figuratively—on clouds. Although the pool here doesn't have the great views that the Sheraton's has, keep in mind that few downtown hotels have pools at all—which makes the Westin a good choice for families.

1900 Fifth Ave., Seattle, WA 98101. ☎ **800/937-8461** or 206/728-1000. Fax 206/728-2259. www.westin.com/seattle. 891 units. \$169–\$399 double; from \$495 suite. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Valet parking \$38; self-parking \$35. Pets accepted (free). **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 2 lounges; concierge; health club; Jacuzzi; large indoor pool; room service. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, minibar, Wi-Fi (\$10/day).

MODERATE

Hotel Max ★ If you crave Philippe Starck–inspired furnishings but have an IKEA budget, this is the place for you. Before you even step through the door of your room, you'll know this place is different; every guest room door is covered with a black-and-white photo mural. In fact, art is the main design theme here, and throughout the hotel there are works by dozens of regional artists. Flatscreen LCD TVs, stainless-steel sinks, and bold color schemes all make it clear that this place is designed to appeal to travelers with an artistic aesthetic. Rooms here can be tiny to the point of inducing claustrophobia, so the Max is best for solo travelers.

620 Stewart St., Seattle, WA 98101. ☎ **866/833-6299** or 206/728-6299. Fax 206/443-5754. www.hotelmaxseattle.com. 163 units. \$129–\$299 double. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Valet parking \$30. Pets accepted (\$45 fee). **Amenities:** Restaurant; exercise room and access to nearby health club; room service. *In room:* A/C, TV, CD player, hair dryer, minibar, Wi-Fi (\$12/day).

Mayflower Park Hotel ★ If your favorite recreational activities include shopping or sipping martinis, the Mayflower Park is for you. Built in 1927, this historic hotel is connected to the upscale Westlake Center shopping plaza and is within a block of both Nordstrom and Macy's. Most rooms here are furnished with an eclectic blend of contemporary Italian and traditional European pieces. Some units still have small, old-fashioned bathrooms, but these have been renovated. The smallest guest rooms are cramped, but these standard rooms have also been renovated. If you crave space, ask for one of the larger corner rooms or a suite. Martini drinkers will want to spend time at **Oliver's** lounge (p. 145), which serves the best martinis in Seattle and has free hors d'oeuvres in the evening. The hotel's **Andaluca** restaurant is a plush, contemporary spot serving a highly creative cuisine.

405 Olive Way, Seattle, WA 98101. ☎ **800/426-5100**, 206/382-6990, or 623-8700. Fax 206/382-6997. www.mayflowerpark.com. 161 units. \$149–\$249 double; \$169–\$365 suite. Children 18 and under stay free

in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Valet parking \$20. **Amenities:** Restaurant (Mediterranean/North-west); lounge; concierge; exercise room and access to nearby health club; Jacuzzi; room service. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

INEXPENSIVE

Executive Hotel Pacific ★ There aren't too many reasonably priced choices left in downtown Seattle, but this renovated and updated hotel built in 1928 offers not only moderately priced rooms but also a prime location—halfway between Pike Place Market and Pioneer Square, and just about the same distance from the waterfront. Rooms have been updated and the lobby has a very stylish and contemporary look. However, the rooms are small (verging on tiny) and sometimes quite cramped. Consequently, I recommend this place primarily for solo travelers. Bathrooms, although very small, have all been completely upgraded.

400 Spring St., Seattle, WA 98104. ☎ **888/388-3932** or 206/623-3900. Fax 206/623-2059. www.executivehotels.net. 152 units. \$89–\$179 double. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Valet parking \$27; self-parking \$21. Pets accepted (free). **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge; concierge; exercise room. *In room:* A/C, TV, CD player, hair dryer, MP3 docking station, free Wi-Fi.

The Inn at Virginia Mason You may think I've sent you to a hospital rather than a hotel when you first arrive at this older establishment on Pill Hill—but don't worry. This is definitely a hotel, though it is adjacent to and managed by the Virginia Mason Hospital. Despite the fact that most guests are here because of the hospital, the hotel is a good choice for vacationers as well. Rates are economical, the location is quiet, and you're close to downtown. There's a rooftop deck and a shady little courtyard just off the lobby. Although the carpets and furniture here are in need of replacement, the rooms are still serviceable. Because this is an old building, room sizes vary. Deluxe rooms and suites can be quite large, and some have whirlpool baths and fireplaces.

1006 Spring St., Seattle, WA 98104. ☎ **800/283-6453** or 206/583-6453. www.innatvirginiamason.com. 79 units. \$99–\$109 double; \$119–\$189 suite. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DISC, MC, V. Parking \$13. **Amenities:** Restaurant; concierge; room service. *In room:* TV, free Wi-Fi.

Ramada Seattle Downtown Located right on the monorail route and only a few blocks from downtown Seattle's main shopping district, this hotel may not look like much from the outside, but it has a very pretty lobby that belies the hotel's age. Guest rooms, though not as attractive as the lobby might suggest, were all completely renovated in 2007 and are comfortable and functional. You just won't find a more reliable budget hotel in downtown Seattle. Ask for a room with a view of the Space Needle; you just might get lucky.

2200 Fifth Ave., Seattle, WA 98121. ☎ **800/272-6232** or 206/441-9785. Fax 206/448-0924. www.ramada.com. 120 units. \$99–\$128 double. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Parking \$12. **Amenities:** Restaurant; exercise room. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

Sixth Avenue Inn ★ It's never easy finding a decent budget hotel in a major city, but to find one within blocks of the main shopping district and almost as close to one of the city's top attractions is a real find. This older low-rise hotel has been around for years, but recent renovations have made it worth a stay once again. Pike Place Market is 6 blocks away, and Nordstrom and two other shopping centers are even closer. Rooms aren't fancy, but they're comfortable and functional.

2000 Sixth Ave., Seattle, WA 98121. 📞 **206/441-8300**. Fax 206/441-9903. www.sixthavenueinn.com. 167 units. \$80–\$130 double. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Parking \$15. **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge; concierge; exercise room; room service. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

Pioneer Square & the International District

The historic Pioneer Square area is Seattle's main nightlife district and can be a pretty rowdy place on a Saturday night. By day, however, the area's many art galleries and antiques stores attract a very different clientele. Still, even in the daylight, be prepared to encounter a lot of street people. Warnings aside, this is one of the prettiest corners of Seattle and the only downtown neighborhood with historical flavor. The International District lies but a few blocks away from Pioneer Square—again, a good place to explore by day but less appealing at night.

EXPENSIVE

Doubletree Arctic Club Hotel ★★ With distinctive ceramic walrus heads decorating the facade, this hotel was originally built in 1917 as an exclusive club for men who had struck it rich in the Alaska gold rush. Today, the Doubletree Arctic Club Hotel is one of the prettiest historic buildings in Seattle and should be your first choice in Seattle if you enjoy historic hotels. The lobby, with its bar, billiard table, and travel-themed Art Deco furnishings, feels like it could be in Singapore or Nairobi; you half expect Humphrey Bogart to be sipping a gin and tonic in the corner. Guest rooms are decorated in keeping with the historical, adventure-travel theme. Be sure to sneak a peek inside the Northern Lights Dome Room, a grand hall with original frescoes, a stained-glass ceiling, and lots of ornate plasterwork and gilding.

700 Third Ave., Seattle, WA 98104. 📞 **800/222-8733** or 206/340-0340. Fax 206/340-0349. www.arcticclubhotel.com. 120 units. \$139–\$319 double. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Valet parking \$32. Pets accepted (free). **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge; concierge; exercise room; room service. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, minibar, MP3 docking station, Wi-Fi (\$10/day).

MODERATE

Best Western Pioneer Square Hotel ★ This hotel, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is right in the heart of the Pioneer Square historic district, Seattle's historic art gallery and nightlife neighborhood. As such, things get especially raucous on weekend nights, and this hotel is only recommended for urban dwellers accustomed to dealing with street people and noise. However, if you're in town to party (or to attend a Mariners or Seahawks game), this hotel is a good option. Guest rooms are fairly small (some are positively cramped), but are furnished in an attractive classic style. Be sure to stay aware of your surroundings on neighborhood streets late at night.

77 Yesler Way, Seattle, WA 98104. 📞 **800/800-5514** or 206/340-1234. Fax 206/467-0707. www.pioneersquare.com. 75 units. \$99–\$210 double. Rates include continental breakfast. Children 12 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Parking \$20. **Amenities:** Concierge; access to nearby health club; room service. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

Silver Cloud Hotel Seattle—Stadium ★ If you're a sports fan, there is no better place in town to stay than here; this hotel is directly across the street from Safeco Field (where the Seattle Mariners play) and adjacent to Qwest Field (home of the Seattle Seahawks). Even if you're not a sports fan, this hotel is a great choice for its beautiful, modern rooms, which are almost as impressive as those at the Pan Pacific

Hotel on the other side of downtown. Families, take note: This is one of the few hotels in the area that has a swimming pool, and best of all, it's outside on a rooftop deck.

1046 First Ave. S., Seattle, WA 98134. ☎ **800/497-1261** or 206/204-9800. Fax 206/381-0751. www.silvercloud.com/16home.htm. 211 units. \$119–\$259 double; \$189–\$319 suite. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DISC, MC, V. Valet parking \$20. **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge; concierge; exercise room and access to nearby health club; Jacuzzi; outdoor pool; room service. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge, hair dryer, MP3 docking station, free Wi-Fi.

Belltown & Pike Place Market

Belltown, which extends north from Pike Place Market, is Seattle's fastest-growing urban neighborhood, and has dozens of restaurants, an equal number of nightclubs, and several good hotels. If your Seattle travel plans include lots of eating out at hip restaurants or late-night partying, then Belltown is the place to stay. Pike Place Market is one of Seattle's top attractions and a fascinating place to explore. In addition to the small shops, produce stalls, and fishmongers, the market has lots of great restaurants and the Inn at the Market, one of my favorite Seattle hotels. If you aren't going to stay on the waterfront, this area makes an excellent alternative.

EXPENSIVE

Hotel Ändra ★★ Located on the edge of the Belltown neighborhood and only a few blocks from both downtown shopping and Pike Place Market, this hotel melds a vintage building with bold, contemporary styling and manages to succeed even better than the local W hotel. Rooms feature contemporary furnishings and decor, with plush beds and ergonomic desk chairs. Just off the sophisticated little library-like lobby is **Lola** (p. 94), a Greek restaurant operated by Tom Douglas, one of my favorite Seattle chefs. Don't miss it. The hotel location, close to restaurants, bars, and nightclubs, makes this a great place to stay if you're in Seattle to check out the nightlife.

2000 Fourth Ave., Seattle, WA 98121. ☎ **877/448-8600** or 206/448-8600. Fax 206/441-7140. www.hotelandra.com. 119 units. \$229–\$299 double; \$309–\$2,500 suite. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DISC, MC, V. Valet parking \$35. Pets accepted (free). **Amenities:** 2 restaurants (Greek, Italian); lounge; babysitting; concierge; exercise room and access to nearby health club; room service; free Wi-Fi. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, minibar, MP3 docking station, Wi-Fi (\$10/day).

Inn at the Market ★★ For romance, convenience, and the chance to immerse yourself in the Seattle aesthetic, it's hard to beat this hotel in Pike Place Market. A rooftop deck overlooking Elliott Bay provides a great spot to soak up the sun on summer afternoons. Don't look for a grand entrance or large sign; there's only a small plaque on the wall to indicate that the building houses a tasteful and understated luxury hotel. Be sure to ask for one of the water-view rooms, which have large windows overlooking the bay. Even if you don't get a water-view room, you'll still find spacious accommodations, with mold-to-your-body Tempur-Pedic beds, large bathrooms, and elegant decor that gives the feel of an upscale European beach resort. **Campagne**, the formal main dining room, serves French cuisine, while **Café Campagne** (p. 93) offers country-style French food amid casual surroundings.

86 Pine St., Seattle, WA 98101. ☎ **800/446-4484** or 206/443-3600. Fax 206/728-1955. www.innathemarket.com. 70 units. \$245–\$490 double; \$625 suite. Children 18 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Parking \$32. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; 2 lounges; concierge; access to nearby health club; room service. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, minibar, MP3 docking station, free Wi-Fi.

MODERATE

Inn at El Gaucho ★ While low-budget hipsters have the Ace hotel, those who are more flush can opt to stay at this plush little Belltown inn. It's located directly above, and affiliated with, the retro-swanky El Gaucho steakhouse. The nondescript street-level front door does nothing to prepare you for the luxurious little second-story lobby, which makes this place feel like a real find. After a night on the town, have breakfast in the luxurious feather bed. Leather chairs and sofas, plasma-screen TVs, and Bose radio/CD players all make rooms here well worth lingering in. Throw in fresh flowers and you have a great place for a romantic weekend on the town. One caveat: Be aware that the inn is up a flight of stairs.

2505 First Ave., Seattle, WA 98121. ☎ **866/354-2824** or 206/728-1133. <http://inn.elgaucho.com/inn.elgaucho>. 18 units. \$125–\$245 suite. AE, MC, V. Valet parking \$25. **Amenities:** Restaurant; 2 lounges; concierge; access to nearby health club; room service; spa services. *In room:* A/C, TV, CD player, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

INEXPENSIVE

Ace Hotel The Ace, in the heart of Belltown, is the city's hippest economy hotel. White-on-white and stainless steel are the hallmarks of the minimalist decor. Even the brick walls and wood floors have been painted white. Wall decorations are minimal, except in those rooms with 1970s photomurals of the great outdoors. Platform beds and wool blankets salvaged from foreign hotels add to the chic feel, as do the tiny stainless-steel sinks and shelves in the rooms with shared bathrooms. Basically, aside from the eight large rooms with private bathrooms (ask about the room with the shower behind the bed), this place is a step above a hostel; it's aimed at the 20- and 30-something crowd. Be aware that some walls are paper-thin and the clientele here tends to keep late hours. Don't plan on going to sleep early.

2423 First Ave., Seattle, WA 98121. ☎ **206/448-4721**. Fax 206/374-0745. www.acehotel.com. 28 units, 14 with shared bathroom. \$99 double with shared bathroom; \$165–\$195 double with private bathroom. Rates include continental breakfast. Children 12 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Parking \$19. Pets accepted (free). *In room:* TV, free Wi-Fi.

Moore Hotel In a historic building 2 blocks from both Pike Place Market and the Belltown restaurant and nightlife district, the Moore is a decent downtown choice for young and adventurous travelers on a tight budget. If you've ever traveled through Europe on the cheap, you'll know what to expect from this place. It's not fancy, and if you aren't in a renovated room, the place can seem a bit dreary. But if you request one of the updated suites, you'll be pleasantly surprised by the stylishly modern large rooms with hardwood floors, full kitchens, and big windows. Ask for a room with a view of Puget Sound. The lobby, with its marble, tiles, and decorative moldings, hints at the Moore's historical character, but this is more budget accommodations than historic hotel. There's a hip restaurant/lounge, and an adjacent theater stages rock concerts.

1926 Second Ave., Seattle, WA 98101. ☎ **800/421-5508** or 206/448-4851. www.moorehotel.com. 120 units (45 with shared bathroom). \$71 double with shared bathroom; \$86–\$97 double with private bathroom; \$118–\$185 suite. Children 10 and under stay free in parent's room. MC, V. Parking \$21. **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge; free Wi-Fi. *In room:* TV.

Queen Anne & Seattle Center

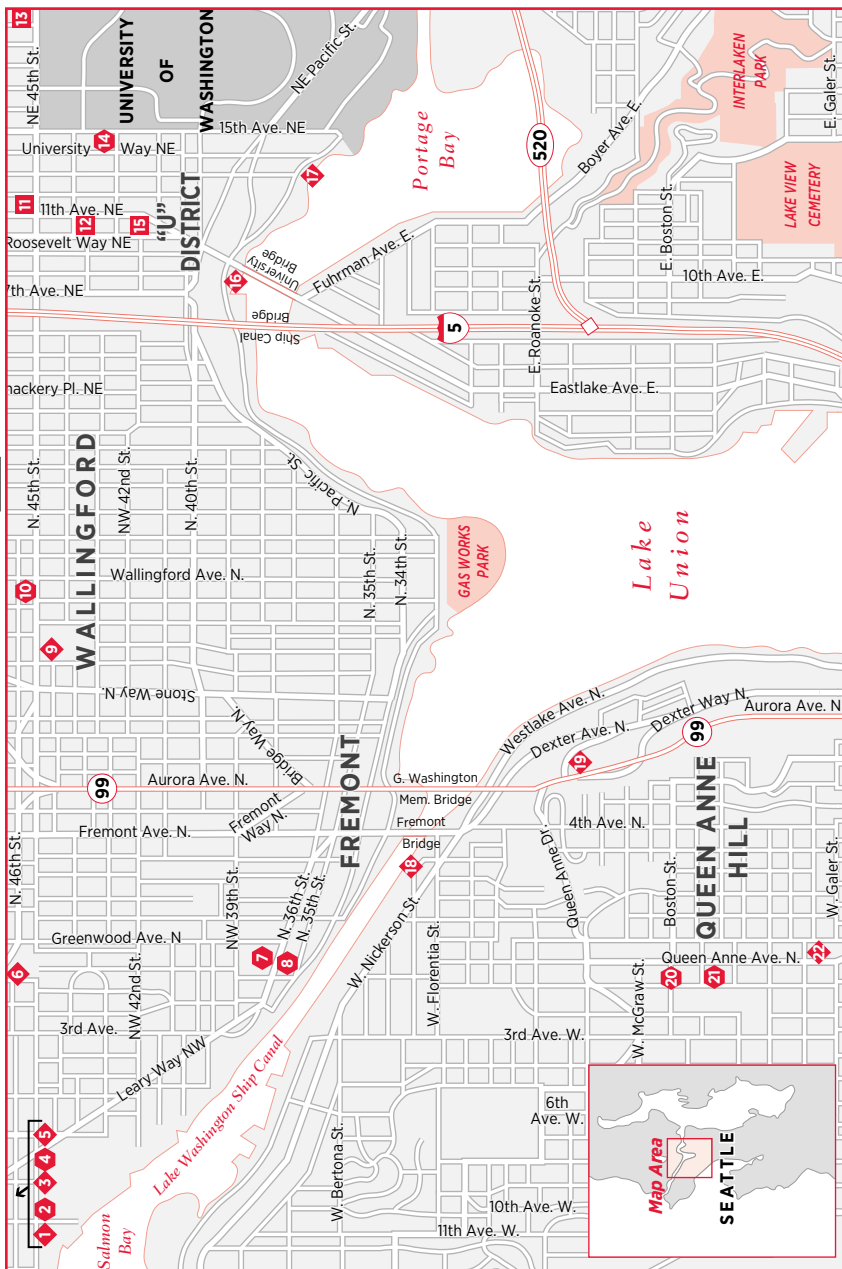
The Queen Anne neighborhood is divided into Upper Queen Anne and Lower Queen Anne. The former is an upscale residential area with an attractive shopping

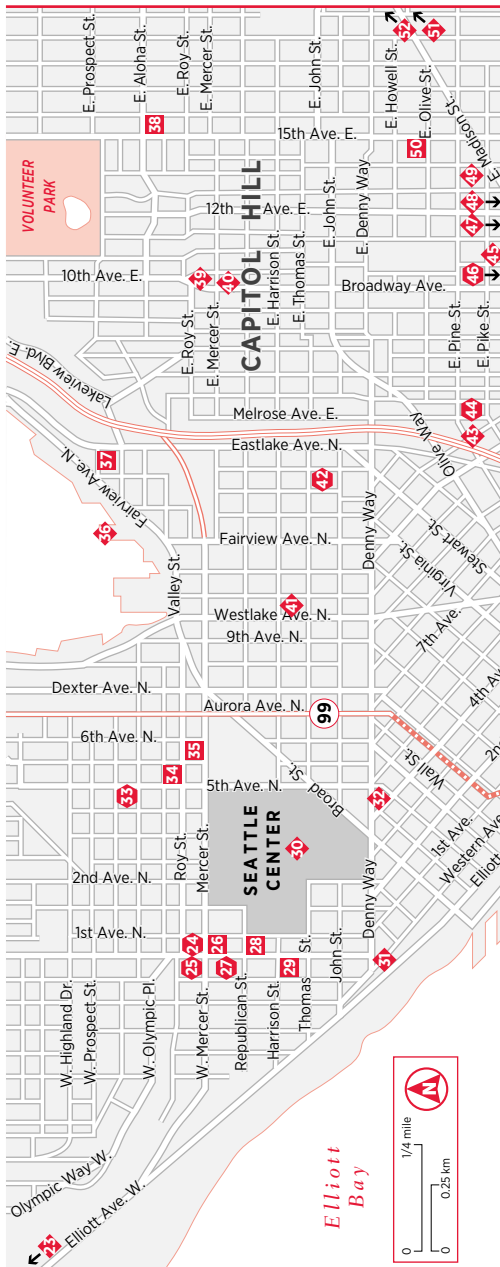
Seattle Accommodations & Dining—Capitol Hill, Lake Union, Queen Anne & North Seattle

5

Where to Stay

SEATTLE





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district. The hotels listed here are in the lower neighborhood, which conveniently flanks Seattle Center and also offers lots of inexpensive restaurants for the budget-minded.

EXPENSIVE

MarQueen Hotel ★ This Lower Queen Anne hotel is in a renovated 1918 brick building that will appeal to travelers who enjoy lodgings with historical character. Seattle Center, with its many performance venues and family-oriented attractions, is only 3 blocks away, and from there you can take the monorail into downtown. Although the MarQueen's many high-tech amenities are geared toward business travelers, it's a good choice for vacationers as well. Guest rooms are spacious, although furnished very traditionally and a bit oddly laid out due to the hotel's previous incarnation as an apartment building. Lots of dark-wood trim and hardwood floors give an old-fashioned feel. Many units have separate little seating areas and full kitchens. The hotel is adjacent to both an excellent espresso bar and several good restaurants.

600 Queen Anne Ave. N., Seattle, WA 98109. ☎ **888/445-3076** or 206/282-7407. Fax 206/283-1499. www.marqueen.com. 59 units. \$159–\$220 double; \$200–\$360 suite. Rates include continental breakfast. Children 12 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Valet parking \$20. **Amenities:** Exercise room and access to nearby health club; room service; spa. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, kitchen, free Wi-Fi.

5

MODERATE

Comfort Suites Downtown/Seattle Center ★ ☺ Although it's none too easy to find this place (call and get specific directions), the bargain rates and spacious rooms make the Comfort Suites worth searching out. Since it's only 3 blocks from Seattle Center, you could feasibly leave your car parked at the hotel for most of your stay and walk or use public transit to get around. If you've brought the family, the suites are a good deal, and the proximity to Seattle Center will help moms and dads keep the kids entertained. Ask for a room away from the busy highway that runs past the hotel.

601 Roy St., Seattle, WA 98109. ☎ **877/424-6423** or 206/282-2600. Fax 206/286-7607. www.comfortsuites.com. 158 units. \$100–\$150 double; \$110–\$200 suite. Rates include continental breakfast. Children 18 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** Exercise room. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge, hair dryer, free Internet.

Hampton Inn & Suites Downtown/Seattle Center Step out the front door of this hotel and you're staring straight at the Space Needle, which is only about 5 blocks away. That view and the convenient location within blocks of Seattle Center are the main reasons to stay here, and numerous good restaurants and cafes are also nearby. The standard rooms are comfortable enough, but if you plan to stay for more than a few days, consider one of the suites, which have fireplaces and balconies.

700 Fifth Ave. N., Seattle, WA 98109. ☎ **800/426-7866** or 206/282-7700. Fax 206/282-0899. www.hamptoninnseattle.com. 198 units. Summer \$169–\$189 double, \$189–\$229 suite; other months \$99–\$149 double, \$109–\$199 suite. Rates include full breakfast. Children 18 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Parking \$13. **Amenities:** Exercise room. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge, hair dryer, free Internet.

Inn at Queen Anne In the Lower Queen Anne neighborhood close to Seattle Center and numerous restaurants and espresso bars, this hotel is housed in a converted older apartment building. Though the rooms here aren't as nice as those at

the nearby MarQueen, they're comfortable enough, albeit sometimes a bit cramped and not entirely modern. Deluxe units have window air conditioners. The convenient location and economical rates are the big pluses here, but there's also a pleasant garden surrounding the hotel. In summer, you should opt for a deluxe room with air-conditioning.

505 First Ave. N., Seattle, WA 98109. ☎ **800/952-5043** or 206/282-7357. Fax 206/217-9719. www.innatqueenanne.com. 68 units. \$69–\$149 double. Rates include continental breakfast. Children 16 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Parking \$20. **Amenities:** Exercise room and access to nearby health club. *In room:* TV, hair dryer, kitchenette, free Wi-Fi.

Mediterranean Inn Don't be fooled by the name: This is not a bed-and-breakfast-type inn. But this modern apartment-hotel, in the Lower Queen Anne neighborhood, is just a couple of blocks from Seattle Center and is an ideal choice for extended stays. Because the Mediterranean Inn was designed with longer stays in mind, its rooms are much more comfortable than those at the nearby Inn at Queen Anne. With the exception of the least expensive rooms, you'll get plenty of space and a kitchenette. In summer, be sure to opt for a unit with air-conditioning.

425 Queen Anne Ave. N., Seattle, WA 98109. ☎ **866/525-4700** or 206/428-4700. Fax 206/428-4699. www.mediterranean-inn.com. 180 units. \$99–\$199 double. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Parking \$15. **Amenities:** Exercise room. *In room:* TV/VCR, hair dryer, Internet (\$5/day), kitchenette.

Lake Union

Less than a mile from downtown, and lined with houseboats, marinas, and waterfront restaurants, Lake Union has a quintessentially Seattle character. Floatplanes use the lake as a runway, and you can rent a kayak, canoe, or rowboat from several places around the lake. If you are happiest when you're close to the water but want to avoid the crowds of the Seattle waterfront, this area is an excellent alternative.

MODERATE

Silver Cloud Inn—Lake Union ★ 😊 🍷 Across the street from Lake Union, this hotel offers good views (some of which take in the Space Needle). The rooms are big and filled with lots of amenities, which make them convenient for long stays and family vacations. Although the hotel doesn't have a restaurant of its own, plenty of waterfront options are within walking distance. The indoor swimming pool appeals to kids, and floatplane tours leave from right across the street. This is a good value for such a great location.

1150 Fairview Ave. N., Seattle, WA 98109. ☎ **800/330-5812** or 206/447-9500. Fax 206/812-4900. www.silvercloud.com. 184 units. June–Sept \$139–\$269 double; Oct–May \$109–\$229 double. Rates include continental breakfast. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** Exercise room; Jacuzzi; indoor pool. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

Capitol Hill, First Hill & Madison Valley

A mile or so uphill and to the east of downtown Seattle, Capitol Hill has a split personality. It's a hangout for the 20-something crowd and contains the city's main gay neighborhood, yet it's also home to numerous large restored homes, many of which have been converted into bed-and-breakfast inns. If you prefer B&Bs to corporate hotels, this is the best neighborhood in which to base yourself. Although Capitol Hill is a bit of a walk from downtown, the neighborhood has good public bus connections to the city center.

EXPENSIVE

Sorrento Hotel ★★ With its wrought-iron gates, courtyard of palm trees, and plush seating in the octagonal Fireside Room, the Sorrento, which first opened in 1909, has a classic elegance. The guest rooms here are among the finest in the city: No two are alike, and while most are set up for business travelers, this hotel also makes a great choice for vacationers. Although more than half the units are suites, many provide little more space than you get in a standard room, so you may not want to splurge on an upgrade here. The hotel is set high on First Hill, yet downtown is only a few (steep) blocks away. If you'd rather not walk, there's a complimentary shuttle service. The hotel's dining room has the feel of a 1950s supper club, and in the Fireside Room, you can get afternoon tea and catch live jazz at night.

900 Madison St., Seattle, WA 98104. ☎ **800/426-1265** or 206/622-6400. Fax 206/343-6155. www.hotelsorrento.com. 76 units. \$169-\$249 double; \$219-\$664 suite. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Valet parking \$32. Pets accepted (\$60 fee). **Amenities:** Restaurant; 2 lounges; concierge; executive-level rooms; exercise room and access to nearby health club; room service; spa. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge, hair dryer, minibar, free Wi-Fi.

MODERATE

Salisbury House On tree-lined 16th Avenue East, this grand old house has a wide wraparound porch from which you can enjoy one of Seattle's prettiest residential streets. Inside, there's plenty to admire as well. Two living rooms (one with a wood-burning fireplace) and a second-floor sun porch provide great spots for relaxing and meeting other guests. Four guest rooms have queen-size beds with down comforters, and a fifth one has a fireplace, whirlpool tub, and a king-size bed. Another room has an old claw-foot tub. Breakfasts here are deliciously filling and might include fresh fruit, juice, quiche, fresh-baked muffins or bread, and oatmeal pancakes.

750 16th Ave. E., Seattle, WA 98112. ☎ **206/328-8682**. Fax 206/720-1019. www.salisburyhouse.com. 5 units. \$139-\$198 double. Rates include full breakfast. 2-night minimum in summer; 3-night minimum on holiday weekends. AE, MC, V. Children 13 and over are welcome. **Amenities:** Concierge. *In room:* Hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

INEXPENSIVE

Gaslight Inn ★ Anyone enamored of Craftsman bungalows and the Arts and Crafts movement of the early 20th century should enjoy a stay in this 1906 home. Throughout the inn are numerous pieces of Stickley furniture, and everywhere you turn you'll see oak trim framing the doors and windows. The common rooms are decorated with a combination of Western and Northwestern flair, and throughout the inn are lots of art-glass pieces. In summer, guests can swim in the backyard pool or lounge on the deck. Guest rooms continue the design themes of the common areas, with lots of oak furnishings and peeled-log beds in some units. The innkeepers can provide a wealth of information about the surrounding Capitol Hill neighborhood, the center of Seattle's gay community.

1727 15th Ave., Seattle, WA 98122. ☎ **206/325-3654**. Fax 206/328-4803. www.gaslight-inn.com. 8 units, 3 with shared bathroom. \$98-\$118 double with shared bathroom; \$118-\$168 double with private bathroom. Rates include continental breakfast. AE, MC, V. No children allowed. **Amenities:** Concierge; seasonal Jacuzzi; small seasonal heated outdoor pool. *In room:* A/C (some rooms), TV, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

North Seattle (the University District)

About 10 to 15 minutes north of downtown Seattle, the University District (more commonly known as the U District) appeals primarily to younger travelers, but it does offer less expensive accommodations than downtown and is still fairly convenient to Seattle's major attractions. Also nearby are the Burke Museum, Henry Art Gallery, Museum of History and Industry, Woodland Park Zoo, and, of course, the University of Washington. As you would expect in a university neighborhood, there are lots of cheap restaurants, making this an all-around good choice for anyone on a budget.

MODERATE

Chambered Nautilus Bed & Breakfast Inn ★ This Georgian colonial inn sits high above an apartment-lined street atop an ivy-covered embankment, out of view of the sidewalk. Because the surrounding shady forest gives it a very secluded feel, you'll hardly realize you're in the middle of the city. The antiques-filled B&B, which dates from 1915, has a homey feel, and innkeeper Joyce Schulte makes sure guests are comfortable and well fed. Four of the rooms have porches; some have mountain views. Third-floor units have fireplaces and the best views. Be advised that this inn is not recommended for anyone who has trouble climbing stairs. Four suites, with DVD players, kitchens, and porches, are in an adjacent house, where children are welcome.

5005 22nd Ave. NE, Seattle, WA 98105. ☎ **800/545-8459** or 206/522-2536. Fax 206/528-0898. www.chamberednautilus.com. 10 units. \$124–\$179 double; \$149–\$204 suite. Rates include full breakfast. AE, MC, V. Pets accepted in suites (\$20/day). Children 8 and over welcome in main house; children of all ages welcome in suites. **Amenities:** Concierge; access to nearby health club. *In room:* TV, CD player, hair dryer, MP3 docking station, free Wi-Fi.

Hotel Deca ★★ The 16-story Hotel Deca is one of Seattle's hippest hotels, and it offers excellent value. Consequently, it's one of my favorite hotels in the city. You'll be surrounded by modern Art Deco style as soon as you arrive, and the retro look is elegant, playful, and reminiscent of the 1930s. You'll also enjoy views of downtown Seattle, distant mountains, and various lakes and waterways. Every room is a corner unit, which means plenty of space to spread out. Small bathrooms are the biggest drawback. Hotel Deca is considerably cheaper than comparable downtown options, and if you need to be near the university, it's definitely the top choice in the neighborhood.

4507 Brooklyn Ave. NE, Seattle, WA 98105. ☎ **800/899-0251** or 206/634-2000. Fax 206/547-6029. www.hoteldeca.com. 158 units. June–Sept \$149–\$249 double; Oct–May \$119–\$189 double. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Parking \$8. **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge; coffee shop; concierge; exercise room; room service. *In room:* A/C, TV/DVD, CD player station, hair dryer, MP3 docking station, free Wi-Fi.

University Inn ★ Within easy walking distance of the university, this hotel offers surprisingly attractive rooms. Although the least expensive units (called “traditional rooms”) have bathrooms with showers but no tubs, small balconies and attractive furnishings make up for this shortcoming. The deluxe rooms, which have refrigerators and microwaves, are more spacious. For even more space and the best views, opt for one of the “premier rooms,” which have large windows and extra-comfy beds

(ask for room no. 331, which has a view of Mount Rainier). The upgraded rooms are definitely worth the extra money.

4140 Roosevelt Way NE, Seattle, WA 98105. ☎ **800/733-3855** or 206/632-5055. Fax 206/547-4937. www.universityinnseattle.com. 102 units. \$119–\$169 double. Rates include full breakfast. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DISC, MC, V. Free parking. Pets accepted (\$20/day). **Amenities:** Restaurant; concierge; access to exercise room at nearby sister hotel; small outdoor pool. *In room:* A/C, TV, CD player, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

Watertown ★★ Watertown is one of Seattle's U District entries in the hip boutique hotel market. Only blocks from the University of Washington, this beautifully designed hotel is definitely well placed for a trendy clientele. If you're into contemporary styling, you'll love it, even if you aren't in town on university business. Platform beds, streamlined built-ins, desks with frosted-glass tops and ergonomic chairs, and huge full-length mirrors are just a few of the interesting features in the guest rooms. Bathrooms are large and have granite countertops; when you see the frosted-glass portal on the door, you might imagine you're on a cruise ship.

4242 Roosevelt Way NE, Seattle, WA 98105. ☎ **866/944-4242** or 206/826-4242. Fax 206/315-4242. www.watertownseattle.com. 100 units. \$149–\$209 double; \$195–\$265 suite. Rates include full breakfast. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DISC, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** Bikes; concierge; exercise room. *In room:* A/C, TV, CD player, fridge, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

Near Sea-Tac Airport

The airport is 30 to 45 minutes south of downtown Seattle (depending on the traffic). There's little to recommend this area as a place to stay—besides its proximity to the airport, of course.

EXPENSIVE

Seattle Marriott Sea-Tac Airport ★ 😊 With a steamy atrium garden in which you'll find plenty of tropical plants, a swimming pool, and two whirlpool tubs, this resortlike hotel is an excellent choice if you're visiting during the rainy season. There are even waterfalls and totem poles for that Northwest outdoorsy feeling; best of all, it's always sunny and warm in here (which is more than you can say for the real Northwest outdoors). Guest rooms are attractively furnished and comfortable, with good beds and great pillows. Ask for one of the rooms with a view of Mount Rainier.

3201 S. 176th St., Seattle, WA 98188. ☎ **800/314-0925** or 206/241-2000. Fax 206/248-0789. www.seattleairportmarriott.com. 459 units. \$129–\$219 double. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Valet parking \$22; self-parking \$18. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; lounge; free airport transfers; concierge; executive-level rooms; exercise room and access to nearby health club; Jacuzzi; indoor atrium pool; room service; sauna. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, MP3 docking station, Wi-Fi (\$13/day).

The Eastside

The Eastside (a reference to this area's location on the east side of Lake Washington) is Seattle's main high-tech suburb and comprises the cities of Bellevue, Kirkland, Issaquah, and Redmond. Should you be out this way on business, you may find that an Eastside hotel is more convenient than one in downtown Seattle. Two of the most luxurious hotels in the metropolitan area are here on this side of the lake. If it isn't rush hour, you can usually get from the Eastside to downtown in about 20 minutes via the I-90 or Wash. 520 floating bridge. During rush hour, however, it can take much longer.

VERY EXPENSIVE

Willows Lodge ★★★🏡 In the heart of the Woodinville wine country, about 30 minutes north of Seattle, and adjacent to the much-celebrated The Herbfarm Restaurant (p. 104), this lodge is a beautiful blend of rustic and contemporary. From the moment you turn into the lodge's parking lot, you'll recognize it as someplace special. A huge fire-darkened tree stump is set like a sculpture outside the front door, and the landscaping has a distinctly Northwest feel. Inside, the abundance of polished woods (some salvaged from a Portland, Oregon, port facility) gives the place something of a Japanese aesthetic. It's all very soothing and tranquil, an ideal retreat from which to visit the nearby wineries. In the guest rooms, you'll find beds with down duvets, slate tables made from salvaged pool tables, and all kinds of high-tech amenities.

14580 NE 145th St., Woodinville, WA 98072. ☎ **877/424-3930** or 425/424-3900. Fax 425/424-2585. www.willowslodge.com. 84 units. \$249–\$349 double; \$599–\$699 suite. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Valet parking \$5–\$10. Pets accepted (\$25 fee). **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 2 lounges; bikes; concierge; exercise room; Jacuzzi; room service; full-service spa. *In room:* A/C, TV/DVD, CD player, hair dryer, minibar, MP3 docking station, free Wi-Fi.

EXPENSIVE

Hotel Bellevue ★★★ In its gardens, architecture, and interior design, this hotel epitomizes contemporary Northwest style. Beautiful landscaping surrounds the entrance, and works of contemporary art are found throughout the public areas. The hotel is affiliated with a state-of-the-art health club that has everything from an indoor running track and three pools to indoor squash and outdoor tennis courts (there's also a full-service spa). But even if you aren't into aerobic workouts, this hotel has much to offer. You won't find more elegant rooms anywhere in the Seattle area. Accommodations are extremely plush, with the high-ceilinged club rooms among my favorites. These have floor-to-ceiling walls of glass, massive draperies, and private patios facing a beautiful garden. Luxurious European fabrics are everywhere, giving rooms a romantic feel. Bathrooms are resplendent in granite and glass, and most have whirlpool tubs.

11200 SE Sixth St., Bellevue, WA 98004. ☎ **800/579-1110** or 425/454-4424. Fax 425/688-3197. <http://stayhb.com>. 67 units. \$169–\$335 double (from \$129 on weekends); \$450–\$1,500 suite. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Valet parking \$12. Pets accepted (\$30 fee). **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; lounge; babysitting; children's programs; concierge; expansive health club w/ Jacuzzis, saunas, steam rooms; 2 indoor pools and 1 outdoor pool; room service; full-service spa; 10 tennis courts. *In room:* A/C, TV, CD player, hair dryer, minibar, free Wi-Fi.

Woodmark Hotel, Yacht Club & Spa on Lake Washington ★★★🏡 This resortlike hotel is so luxurious and in such a beautiful setting that it is the metro area's premier waterfront lodging—and well worth the 20-minute drive from downtown Seattle. Surrounded by a luxury residential community, the Woodmark has the feel of a beach resort and looks out over the very same waters that Bill Gates sees from his nearby Xanadu. There are plenty of lake-view rooms here, although you will pay a premium for them. For less expensive lodging, try the marina-view rooms. In addition to the hotel's dining room, several other restaurants are in the area. With advance reservations, guests can go out for a 2-hour cruise on the hotel's restored 1956 ChrisCraft boat. Beautiful surroundings, luxurious rooms, and boat tours all add up to one of Seattle's best hotel values.

1200 Carillon Point, Kirkland, WA 98033. ☎ **800/822-3700** or 425/822-3700. Fax 425/822-3699. www.thewoodmark.com. 100 units. \$245–\$355 double; \$385–\$2,000 suite. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. Valet parking \$15; self-parking \$12. Pets accepted. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 2 lounges; babysitting; concierge; exercise room and access to nearby health club; full-service spa; room service; watersports equipment rentals. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, minibar, MP3 docking station, free Wi-Fi.

MODERATE

Red Lion Hotel Bellevue ★ The Red Lion Hotel Bellevue is one of the few hotels in the Seattle area that captures the feel of the Northwest in its design and landscaping. The sprawling two-story property is roofed with cedar-shake shingles, while the grounds are lushly planted with rhododendrons, ferns, azaleas, and fir trees. Guest rooms here are quite sophisticated and upscale, with elegant country French furnishings and decor, and bathrooms offer plenty of counter space. Parents take note: Kids 10 and under eat free in this hotel's restaurant.

11211 Main St., Bellevue, WA 98004. ☎ **800/733-5466** or 425/455-5240. Fax 425/455-0654. www.redlion.com. 181 units. \$90–\$180 double. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Free parking. Pets accepted (\$20 fee). **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge; exercise room and access to nearby health club; seasonal outdoor pool; room service. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

INEXPENSIVE

Extended StayAmerica-Bellevue Just off I-405 near downtown Bellevue, this modern off-ramp motel caters primarily to long-term guests. To this end, the rooms are all large and have kitchenettes. However, you won't get daily maid service unless you are staying only a few days and pay extra for it. If you stay for a week, rates drop considerably.

11400 Main St., Bellevue, WA 98004. ☎ **800/804-3724** or 425/453-8186. Fax 425/453-8178. www.extendedstay.com. 148 units. \$65–\$105 double. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Free parking. Pets accepted (\$25/day, \$150 maximum). *In room:* A/C, TV, kitchen, Wi-Fi (\$5/day).

La Quinta Inn Bellevue/Kirkland This budget chain hotel is located just across the Wash. 520 floating bridge (Evergreen Point Bridge), and while traffic across this bridge is heavy during rush hour, the location is surprisingly convenient. If traffic is light, you're only 15 minutes from downtown or the Seattle Center area. Guest rooms are basic but serviceable. Pluses include an outdoor pool, an exercise room, and a couple of casual restaurants right next door.

10530 NE Northrup Way, Kirkland, WA 98033. ☎ **800/753-3757** or 425/828-6585. Fax 425/822-8722. www.lq.com. 120 units. \$69–\$132 double; \$109–\$142 suite. Rates include continental breakfast. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DISC, MC, V. Free parking. Pets accepted (free). **Amenities:** Exercise room; seasonal outdoor pool. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, free Internet.

WHERE TO DINE

The fact that **Pike Place Market**, a public market filled with food stalls and restaurants in all price ranges, is one of Seattle's top attractions should clue you in to the fact that this city takes food seriously. Throughout the summer, and other times of year as well, the market overflows with a marvelous bounty of fresh salmon, Dungeness crabs, artisanal cheeses, Northwest berries, locally grown organic vegetables, wild mushrooms, and a wide variety of other produce. Best of all, this bounty makes it onto the tables of lots of great Seattle restaurants, and plenty are right in the Pike Place Market neighborhood.

Of course, as everyone on earth seems to know by now, Seattle also takes coffee very seriously. This is where **Starbucks** got its start, and though the stylish espresso bars are now ubiquitous all across the country and around the world, there was a time when there was only one Starbucks—and, of course, it was (and still is) located in the Pike Place Market.

While the market neighborhood gets my vote for best dining district in the city, nearby **Belltown**, which begins just a few blocks from Pike Place Market, also abounds in great restaurants. Be aware that most of these places are not cheap: Entree prices at most restaurants in these two neighborhoods average around \$20 or more, and there are a few places where you'll pay quite a bit more. In recent years, Capitol Hill has become the city's hottest restaurant neighborhood, and with lots of great restaurants within a few blocks of one another, this is a good place to go trolling for a place to eat.

If you happen to visit in March or November, keep an eye out for restaurants participating in "Dine Around Seattle." During this seasonal promotion, more than two dozen Seattle area restaurants offer three-course dinners for \$30 and many also offer \$15 lunches. These discounts are offered Sunday through Thursday (excluding Sun brunch). For more information, visit www.dinearoundseattle.org.

The Waterfront

MODERATE

Anthony's Pier 66 & Bell Street Diner ★ SEAFOOD The Anthony's chain has several outposts around the Seattle area, but this complex is the most convenient and versatile. It has not only an upper-end, stylish seafood restaurant with good waterfront views, but also a moderately priced casual restaurant and a walk-up counter. The bold contemporary styling and abundance of art glass set Anthony's apart from most waterfront restaurants. The upscale crowd heads upstairs for steaks and creative seafood dishes, while the more cost-conscious stay downstairs at the Bell Street Diner, where meals are much easier on the wallet. For the higher prices, you get better views. In summer the decks are the place to be. You can save money with the \$19 sunset dinners that are served Monday through Friday between 3 and 6pm.

2201 Alaskan Way. ☎ **206/448-6688**. www.anthonys.com. Reservations recommended at Pier 66, not taken at Bell Street Diner. Pier 66 main courses \$8-\$40; Bell Street Diner main courses \$7-\$19. AE, DISC, MC, V. Pier 66 Mon-Thurs 5-9:30pm; Fri-Sat 5-10pm; Sun 5-9pm. Bell Street Diner Mon-Thurs 11am-10pm; Fri-Sat 11am-10:30pm; Sun 11am-9pm.

Elliott's ★★ SEAFOOD While most of its neighbors are content to coast along on tourist business, Elliott's actually aims to keep the locals happy by serving some of the best seafood in Seattle. Although the restaurant is right on the waterfront, the view isn't that great, which, I think, is partly why the food is good. Elliott's tries a little harder. Salmon and Dungeness crab are usually prepared several different ways, and are always a good bet here. However, the oyster bar, which can have more than 25 varieties, is the real reason to eat here. This is definitely the place to get to know your Northwest oysters. Monday through Friday, from 3 to 6pm, they have an "oyster happy hour" here; arrive early to get the best price.

Pier 56, 1201 Alaskan Way. ☎ **206/623-4340**. www.elliottsoysterhouse.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$11-\$19 lunch, \$15-\$50 dinner. AE, DISC, MC, V. Sun-Thurs 11am-10pm; Fri-Sat 11am-11pm.

Downtown

VERY EXPENSIVE

Metropolitan Grill ★ STEAK Fronted by massive granite columns that make it look more like a bank than a restaurant, the Metropolitan Grill is a traditional steakhouse that attracts a well-heeled clientele, primarily men in suits. When you walk in the front door, you'll immediately encounter a case full of *wagyu* (Kobe-style) beef. Perfectly cooked dry-aged steaks are the primary attraction; a baked potato and a pile of thick-cut onion rings complete the ultimate carnivore's dinner. Financial matters are a frequent topic of discussion here, and the bar even has a "Guess the Dow" contest. I hope you sold high, since it'll take some capital gains to finance a dinner for two here.

820 Second Ave. ☎ **206/624-3287**. www.themetropolitangrill.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$11-\$59 lunch, \$20-\$70 dinner. AE, DISC, MC, V. Mon-Thurs 11am-3pm and 5-10pm; Fri 11am-3pm and 5-10:30pm; Sat 4-11pm; Sun 4-9pm.

EXPENSIVE

Brooklyn Seafood, Steak & Oyster House ★ SEAFOOD This classic seafood restaurant in the middle of the financial district looks as if it's been here since the Great Seattle Fire and is, in fact, housed in one of the city's oldest buildings. The specialty is oysters, with close to a dozen different types piled up at the oyster bar on any given night. Other tempting appetizers range from a cilantro-battered calamari steak to Dungeness crab cakes with wasabi aioli. The alder-planked wild salmon (roasted on a slab of alder wood) is an absolute Northwest classic and is your best bet if you aren't having oysters.

1212 Second Ave. ☎ **206/224-7000**. www.thebrooklyn.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$11-\$15 lunch, \$24-\$44 dinner. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon-Thurs 11am-3pm and 5-10pm; Fri 11am-3pm and 5-10:30pm; Sat 4:30-10:30pm; Sun 4-10pm.

Union ★★ NEW AMERICAN Across the street from the Seattle Art Museum's new wing, this beautiful, minimalist space is a don't-miss spot on any foodie's visit to Seattle. Chef Ethan Stowell has assembled a kitchen crew with impeccable credentials, and it shows on the highly creative menu. The quality of the ingredients is incomparable, and the presentation is gorgeous. Because the menu changes with the seasons and relies on whatever ingredients are freshest that day, you never know what might be available. Perhaps chilled asparagus soup with Dungeness crab and mint; squid salad with fennel, beans, and black olives; skate wing with fava beans and baby artichokes; or scallops with sunchoke, porcini mushrooms, pine nuts, and garlic spears. A light menu is offered in the bar from 5 to 7pm and from 10 to 11pm.

1400 First Ave. ☎ **206/838-8000**. www.unionseattle.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$25-\$29. AE, DISC, MC, V. Mon-Sat 5-10pm (bar open until 11pm).

MODERATE

Purple Café and Wine Bar ★ REGIONAL AMERICAN Seattleites love this big, loud wine bar near Benaroya Hall and the Seattle Art Museum. The space, with tall walls of glass, was formerly the University Bookstore, but has now been transformed into a beautiful bi-level dining room. The menu is almost intimidatingly long, and everything sounds so good that you won't know where to start or finish. If you have a hard time making decisions, just start ordering little bites off the tapas-style tasting menu. Portions are tiny, so you can sample lots of different flavors—maybe

some beef carpaccio with a quail egg or house-made sausage with braised red cabbage or Gorgonzola-stuffed dates or country-style pâté.

1225 Fourth Ave. (C) **206/829-2280**. www.thepurplecafe.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$10–\$33. AE, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11am–11pm; Fri 11am–midnight; Sat noon–midnight; Sun noon–11pm.

Wild Ginger Asian Restaurant & Satay Bar ★★ PAN-ASIAN This Pan-Asian restaurant has long been a Seattle favorite. It's across the street from Benaroya Hall, which makes it perfect for dinner before a symphony performance. I like to pull up a stool at the large satay bar and watch the cooks grill little skewers of everything from chicken to scallops to prawns to lamb. Each skewer is served with a small cube of sticky rice and pickled cucumber; order three or four satay sticks and you have yourself a meal. If you prefer to sit at a table and have a more traditional dinner, Wild Ginger can also accommodate you. Try the Panang beef curry (prime rib-eye steak in pungent curry sauce of cardamom, coconut milk, Thai basil, and peanuts). The restaurant is upstairs from the **Triple Door**, a classy live-music club, so be sure to check the performance schedule. There's a second Wild Ginger in Bellevue at 11020 NE Sixth St., Ste. 90 (C) **425/495-8889**.

1401 Third Ave. (C) **206/623-4450**. www.wildginger.net. Reservations recommended. Satay sticks \$3.25–\$6.50; main courses \$8.50–\$17 lunch, \$10–\$30 dinner. AE, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11:30am–3pm and 5–11pm; Fri 11:30am–3pm and 5pm–midnight; Sat 11:30am–3pm and 4:30pm–midnight; Sun 4–11pm.

INEXPENSIVE

The Old Spaghetti Factory ☺ ITALIAN The Old Spaghetti Factory is a chain restaurant, which I don't normally recommend, but kids wandering the waterfront with their parents may be relieved to know that here at this palace of pasta they won't have to force down raw oysters, clam chowder, or any of that other icky stuff grown-ups eat at seafood restaurants. Anyone who's been to an Old Spaghetti Factory knows what to expect. If you haven't dined at one of the antiques-filled restaurants, I have two words for you—cheap pasta—and two other words for the kids—yummy noodles. Enough said? You'll find this place across from Pier 70 at the north end of the waterfront.

2801 Elliott Ave. (C) **206/441-7724**. www.osf.com. Reservations not accepted. Main courses \$9–\$13. AE, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11:30am–2pm and 4:30–9:30pm; Fri 11:30am–2pm and 4:30–10:30pm; Sat noon–10:30pm; Sun noon–9:30pm (1st Mon in July to Labor Day Mon–Thurs 11:30am–10pm; Fri 11:30am–11pm; Sat noon–11pm; Sun noon–10pm).

Pioneer Square & the International District

In addition to the International District restaurants listed below, you'll find a large food court at **Uwajimaya**, 600 Fifth Ave. S. (C) **206/624-6248**; www.uwajimaya.com), a huge Asian supermarket. Its stalls serve foods from various Asian countries. It all smells great, and everything is inexpensive, which makes it a great place for a quick meal.

MODERATE

Elysian Fields AMERICAN This outpost of my favorite Seattle brewpub chain is across the street from Qwest Field and 3 blocks from both Safeco Field and the heart of the Pioneer Square historic neighborhood. Not only can you get great beers here, but they also do decent pub fare (shepherd's pie, bangers and mash) and pasta

dishes. For starters, they have steamed clams and steamed mussels, as well as smoked salmon and seasonal cured meats.

542 First Ave. S. ☎ **206/382-4498**. www.elysianbrewing.com. Reservations not accepted on game nights. Main courses \$8–\$18. AE, DISC, MC, V. Daily 11:30am–11pm.

Tamarind Tree ★★🎁 VIETNAMESE This restaurant is a bit hard to find but is well worth searching out. You'll find it in the back corner of the dingy Asian Plaza strip mall at the northwest corner of South Jackson Street and 12th Avenue South. Step through the door and glance around at the packed tables, and you'll immediately get the idea that lots of Seattleites are in the know. Now take a deep breath and let the aromas of Vietnam fill your nose. Immediately order the fresh spring rolls, which are packed with great flavors and textures. The ultimate dinner here is the "seven courses of beef," and each course is packed with the zesty flavors that imbue all the dishes here with such exotic character. By the way, this place is way more stylish than the location would suggest.

1036 S. Jackson St. ☎ **206/860-1404**. www.tamarindtreerestaurant.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$9–\$19. MC, V. Sun–Thurs 10am–10pm; Fri–Sat 10am–midnight.

INEXPENSIVE

Jade Garden Restaurant CHINESE It doesn't look like much from the outside (or from the inside for that matter), but the Jade Garden is considered by many to have the best dim sum in Seattle. Dim sum, if you aren't familiar, is a Chinese fast food that features little plates of steamed or fried dishes served from carts that are wheeled around the restaurant. Pick a few plates and eat your fill. See something you like? Order some more. Pace yourself; it all looks so tempting, it's easy to order too many plates.

424 Seventh Ave. S. ☎ **206/622-8181**. Reservations not necessary. Main courses \$4.50–\$33; dim sum \$2.50–\$4. MC, V. Mon–Sat 9am–2:30am; Sun 9am–1am.

Salumi ★★🎁 ITALIAN Raise the bar on salami, and you have the artisan-cured meats of this closet-size eatery. The owner, Armandino Batali, who happens to be the father of New York's famous chef Mario Batali, makes all his own salami (as well as traditional Italian-cured beef tongue and other meaty delicacies). Order up a meat plate with a side of cheese, some roasted red bell peppers, and a glass of wine, and you have a perfect lunchtime repast in the classic Italian style. Did I mention the great breads and tapenades? Wow! If you're down in the Pioneer Square area at lunch, don't miss Salumi (even if there's a long line).

309 Third Ave. S. ☎ **206/621-8772**. www.salumicuredmeats.com. Reservations not accepted. Main courses \$7–\$11. MC, V. Tues–Fri 11am–4pm.

Belltown & Pike Place Market

VERY EXPENSIVE

El Gaucho ★★ STEAK Conjuring up the ghosts of dinner clubs of the 1930s and 1940s, this high-end Belltown steakhouse looks as though it could be a Fred Astaire film set. Okay, you may find a better steak at one of the other high-end steakhouses in town, but you just can't duplicate the purely theatrical experience of dining at El Gaucho. Stage-set decor aside, the real stars of the show here are the 28-day dry-aged Angus steaks, definitely some of the best in town—but know that the perfect steak doesn't come cheap. All the classics are here, too, including Caesar

salad tossed tableside and chateaubriand carved before your eyes. Not a steak eater? How about venison chops, an ostrich filet, or Australian lobster tail? There's also a classy bar off to one side and a separate cigar lounge.

2505 First Ave. 📍 **206/728-1337**. www.elgaucho.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$17-\$68 (steaks \$37-\$62). AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Sun-Thurs 5-11pm; Fri-Sat 5pm-1am.

EXPENSIVE

Dahlia Lounge ★★★ PAN-ASIAN/NORTHWEST Out front, the neon chef holding a flapping fish may suggest that the Dahlia is little more than a roadside diner. However, a glimpse of the stylish interior will quickly convince you otherwise, and a single bite of any dish will assure you that this is one of Seattle's finest restaurants. Mouthwatering Dungeness crab cakes, a bow to Chef Tom Douglas's Delaware roots, are the house specialty and should not be missed. The menu—influenced by the far side of the Pacific Rim—changes regularly, with the lunch menu featuring some of the same offerings available at night but at lower prices. It's way too easy to fill up on the restaurant's breads, which are baked in the adjacent Dahlia Bakery, and for dessert, it takes a Herculean effort to resist the crème caramel and the coconut-cream pie.

2001 Fourth Ave. 📍 **206/682-4142**. www.tomdouglas.com. Reservations highly recommended. Main courses \$12-\$29 lunch, \$28-\$38 dinner. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon-Thurs 11:30am-2:30pm and 5-10pm; Fri 11:30am-2:30pm and 5-11pm; Sat 9am-2pm and 5-11pm; Sun 9am-2pm and 5-9pm.

Matt's in the Market ★ 📺 REGIONAL AMERICAN/FRENCH This casual gourmet restaurant boasts the best location in Pike Place Market. It's up on the third floor of the Corner Market Building facing the big neon clock that is the quintessential symbol of the market. The menu at Matt's changes regularly, with an emphasis on fresh ingredients from the market stalls that are only steps away. The latest culinary trends are always well represented. Recent starters included a classic seared foie gras as well as Spanish-style grilled octopus. Confit, whether duck or pork, is a good choice here, as are lamb shanks if they're on the menu. There's also a good selection of reasonably priced wines.

Corner Market Building, 94 Pike St. 📍 **206/467-7909**. www.mattsinthemarket.com. Reservations highly recommended. Main courses \$12-\$23 lunch, \$29-\$38 dinner. AE, MC, V. Mon-Sat 11:30am-2:30pm and 5:30-10pm (in summer, also Sun 11:30am-3pm).

MODERATE

Café Campagne ★★★ 🍷 FRENCH This little cafe is an offshoot of the popular Campagne, a much more formal French restaurant, and though it's in the heart of the Pike Place Market neighborhood, it's a world away from the market madness. I like to duck in here for lunch and escape the shuffling crowds. What a relief—so civilized, so very French. Most people leave this dark, cozy place feeling that they've discovered some secret hideaway. The menu changes with the seasons, but the roast chicken is always on the menu and is a favorite of mine. The cafe also doubles as a wine bar.

1600 Post Alley. 📍 **206/728-2233**. www.campagnerestaurant.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$13-\$23 lunch, \$14-\$23 dinner. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon-Thurs 11am-10pm; Fri 11am-5pm and 5:30-11pm; Sat 8am-4pm and 5:30-11pm; Sun 8am-4pm and 5-10pm.

Etta's Seafood ★ SEAFOOD Seattle chef Tom Douglas's strictly seafood (well, almost) restaurant, Etta's, is located smack in the middle of the Pike Place Market neighborhood and, of course, serves Douglas's signature crab cakes (crunchy on the

outside, creamy on the inside), which are not to be missed (and if they're not on the menu, just ask). Don't ignore your side dishes, either; they can be exquisite and are usually enough to share around the table. In addition to the great seafood, the menu always has a few other fine options. Stylish contemporary decor sets the mood, making this place as popular with locals as it is with tourists.

2020 Western Ave. 📞 **206/443-6000**. www.tomdouglas.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$12–\$29 lunch, \$14–\$29 dinner. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11:30am–9:30pm; Fri 11:30am–10pm; Sat 9am–3pm and 4–10pm; Sun 9am–3pm and 4–9pm.

Le Pichet ★★ FRENCH Seattle seems to have a thing for French restaurants. They're all over the place, with a surprising number clustered around Pike Place Market. Le Pichet is one of my favorites. The name is French for “pitcher” and refers to the traditional ceramic pitchers used for serving inexpensive French wines. This should clue you in to the casual nature of the place, the sort of spot where you can drop by any time of day, grab a stool at the bar, and have a light meal. The menu is rustic French, and almost everything is made fresh on the premises. With lots of small plates and appetizers, it's fun and easy to piece together a light meal of shareable dishes. I like the country-style *pâté*, which is served with honey and walnuts. On Sunday afternoons, there's live music. Le Pichet also operates Capitol Hill's **Café Presse**, 1117 12th Ave. 📞 **206/709-7674**; www.cafepresseseattle.com).

1933 First Ave. 📞 **206/256-1499**. www.lepichetseattle.com. Dinner reservations recommended. Small plates \$8–\$17; main courses \$16–\$19. DISC, MC, V. Daily 8am–midnight.

Lola ★★ GREEK Local celeb chef Tom Douglas celebrates his wife's Greek heritage with this restaurant in the über-hip Hotel Ändra. More akin to Douglas's Palace Kitchen than his plush Dahlia Lounge, Lola is a loud, lively, casual spot. Other than the words *kebab*, *tzatziki*, and *dolmades*, you won't find much common ground here with other Greek restaurants. Start things out with the super-garlicky *skordalia* spread and pita bread. I also recommend the salmon kebabs and the prawn kebabs with curried Muscat glaze. By the way, the lamb burger is absolutely fabulous.

2000 Fourth Ave. 📞 **206/441-1430**. www.tomdouglas.com. Reservations highly recommended. Main courses \$13–\$17 lunch, \$14–\$28 dinner. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 6am–midnight; Fri 6am–2am; Sat 7am–2am; Sun 7am–midnight.

Palace Kitchen ★ REGIONAL AMERICAN/MEDITERRANEAN Aside from Serious Pie, Tom Douglas's pizza place, this is the most casual of Douglas's five Seattle restaurants. The atmosphere is urban chic, with cement pillars, simple wood booths, and a few tables in the front window, which overlooks the monorail tracks. The menu is short and features a nightly selection of unusual cheeses and different preparations from the apple-wood grill (chicken wings with coriander cream, beef tongue with horseradish aioli, albacore tuna with braised green olives). I like to begin a meal here with the lavender-scented goat-cheese fondue. Entrees are usually simple and delicious, and the Palace Burger Royale is a strong contender for best burger in Seattle. For dessert, the coconut-cream pie is an absolute must.

2030 Fifth Ave. 📞 **206/448-2001**. www.tomdouglas.com. Reservations accepted only for parties of 6 or more. Main courses \$15–\$26. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Daily 5pm–1am.

The Pink Door ★ ITALIAN Pike Place Market's better restaurants tend to be well hidden, and if I didn't tell you about this one, you'd probably never find it. There's no sign out front—only the pink door for which the restaurant is named

(look for it btw. Stewart and Virginia). On the other side of the door, stairs lead to a cellarlike space, which is almost always empty on summer days when folks forsake it to dine on the deck with a view of Elliott Bay. What makes this place so popular is as much the fun atmosphere as the reliable Italian food. You might encounter a tarot-card reader or a magician, and most nights in the bar there's some sort of Fellini-esque cabaret performer (accordionists, trapeze artists, and the like). The lasagna is always reliable, as are seafood dishes with fresh market seafood.

1919 Post Alley. 📞 **206/443-3241**. www.thepinkdoor.net. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$12–\$21 lunch, \$15–\$24 dinner. AE, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11:30am–10pm; Fri–Sat 11:30am–10pm; Sun 4–10pm.

Restaurant Zoë ★★ NORTHWEST Belltown is packed with trendy, upscale restaurants where being seen is often more important than the food being served. This is definitely *not* one of those places, although the huge windows facing Second Avenue provide plenty of people-watching opportunities. The decor is subtly stylish and the waitstaff lacks the attitude that mars the experience at so many other trendy restaurants. Chef/owner Scott Staples mines the bounties of the Northwest to prepare his seasonal fare, preparing such dishes as wild-boar Bolognese with arugula pappardelle pasta. Risotto here is reliably good and changes with the seasons. For dessert, try one of the tarts with seasonal fruit.

2137 Second Ave. 📞 **206/256-2060**. www.restaurantzoe.com. Reservations highly recommended. Main courses \$19–\$29. AE, MC, V. Sun–Thurs 5–10pm; Fri–Sat 5–11pm.

INEXPENSIVE

Lowell's AMERICAN Everyone in Seattle seems to have a favorite budget place to eat at Pike Place Market. Most of the time I like to grab little bites here and there and savor lots of flavors, but when I've been on my feet for too many hours and just have to sit down, I head to Lowell's. Although the counter-service restaurant is nothing to e-mail home about, this place is a market institution. I like the fish tacos, but there are also good steamer clams, decent fish and chips, salmon dishes, chowder, and burgers. However, what makes this place truly special is the view. Big walls of glass look out to Elliott Bay and the Olympic Mountains. It's so quintessentially Seattle and so unforgettable that you can't help wondering why you aren't being asked to pay a king's ransom to eat with this view. Altogether Lowell's has three floors (with a bar on the second floor), all of which have those same superb views.

Main Arcade, 1519 Pike Place. 📞 **206/622-2036**. www.eatatlowells.com. Reservations not accepted. Main courses \$9–\$19. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Daily 7am–6pm (until 7pm in summer).

Noodle Ranch 🍱 PAN-ASIAN This Belltown hole in the wall serves Pan-Asian cuisine for the hip but financially challenged crowd. It's a lively, boisterous scene, and the food is packed with intense, and often unfamiliar, flavors. The Mekong grill—rice noodles with a rice-wine/vinegar-and-herb dressing topped with grilled pork, chicken, beef, or tofu—should not be missed. You'll also find plenty of vegetarian options. Although the place is frequently packed, the wait's not usually too long.

2228 Second Ave. 📞 **206/728-0463**. Reservations not accepted. Main courses \$9–\$10. AE, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11am–10pm; Sat noon–10pm.

Pike Place Chowder SEAFOOD This place does chowder, pure and simple. And while their great New England-style clam chowder has won a national award, they also do Manhattan clam chowder, smoked salmon chowder, mixed seafood chowder,

and even a Southwestern-style chowder with chicken and corn. Can't decide which to get? Try the four-cup sampler and decide for yourself which is the best. You'll find this tiny place tucked away in Pike Place Market's Post Alley. There's a second restaurant in Pacific Place Shopping Center, 600 Pine St. (☎ 206/838-5680).

1530 Post Alley. ☎ 206/267-2537. www.pikeplacechowder.com. Reservations not accepted. Main courses \$6.25–\$12. AE, MC, V. Daily 11am–5pm.

Serious Pie ★★ PIZZA Another big hit from Seattle's own Tom Douglas, Serious Pie is a little pizza place around the corner from the Dahlia Lounge. With the feel of a *Ratskeller*, Serious Pie bakes beautiful crunchy-chewy crusts topped with the likes of chanterelle mushrooms and truffle cheese or red peppers and fennel sausage. The pizza list is short, and the pies are small enough that you can order several for your table. Top it all off with some Italian wine from the short wine list. Be sure to save room for dessert.

316 Virginia St. ☎ 206/838-7388. www.tomdouglas.com. Reservations not accepted. Main courses \$14–\$16. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Sun–Wed 11am–10pm; Thurs–Sat 11am–10pm.

Two Bells Bar & Grill AMERICAN Looking for the best burger in Seattle? Give the patties here a try. Although this is little more than an old tavern and a hangout for Belltown residents who can still remember the days before all the condos went up, the burgers are superb. They're thick, hand-formed patties served on chewy sourdough rolls. You can get yours with grilled onions and bacon, with blue cheese, or a few other ways. Accompany your burger with a pint of local beer and some mustardy coleslaw for the perfect burger-and-beer indulgence.

2313 Fourth Ave. ☎ 206/441-3050. www.thetwobells.com. Reservations not accepted. Main courses \$8–\$10. AE, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11am–10pm; Sat 1–10pm; Sun 11:30am–10pm.

Queen Anne & Seattle Center

VERY EXPENSIVE

Canlis ★★★ CONTINENTAL/NORTHWEST A local institution, Canlis has been in business since 1950 and yet still manages to keep up with the times. Its stylish interior mixes contemporary decor with Asian antiques, and its Northwest cuisine, with Asian and Continental influences, keeps both traditionalists and more adventurous diners content. Steaks from the copper grill are perennial favorites here, as are the Canlis salad and the spicy Peter Canlis prawns. To finish, why not go all the way and have the Grand Marnier soufflé? Canlis also has one of the best wine lists in Seattle. This is one of Seattle's most formal and traditional restaurants, the perfect place to celebrate a very special occasion.

2576 Aurora Ave. N. ☎ 206/283-3313. www.canlis.com. Reservations highly recommended. Main courses \$36–\$78; chef's tasting menu \$85–\$115 (\$140–\$210 with wines). AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 5:30–9pm; Fri 5:30–10pm; Sat 5–10pm.

SkyCity at the Needle ★ NORTHWEST Both the restaurant and the prices are sky-high at this revolving restaurant, located just below the observation deck at the top of Seattle's famous Space Needle. However, because you don't have to pay extra for the elevator ride if you dine here, the charges start to seem a little bit more in line with those at other Seattle splurge restaurants. Okay, so maybe you can get better food elsewhere, but you won't get a more spectacular panorama anywhere else in Seattle. Simply prepared steaks and seafood make up the bulk of the offerings,

with a couple of vegetarian options and some Northwest favorites thrown in. I recommend coming here for lunch; the menu includes some of the same dishes, prices are more reasonable, and the views, encompassing the city skyline, Mount Rainier, and the Olympic Mountains, are unsurpassed.

Space Needle, 400 Broad St. 📍 **800/937-9582** or 206/905-2100. www.spaceneedle.com. Reservations highly recommended. Main courses \$21–\$34 lunch, \$34–\$59 dinner; weekend brunch \$45 adults, \$16 children 10 and under. AE, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11:30am–2pm and 5–8:45pm; Fri 11:30am–2pm and 5–9:45pm; Sat 10am–2:45pm and 5–9:45pm; Sun 10am–2:45pm and 5–8:45pm.

EXPENSIVE

Palisade ★★ NORTHWEST With a panorama that sweeps from downtown to West Seattle and across the sound to the Olympic Mountains, Palisade has one of the best views of any Seattle waterfront restaurant and is always my choice for a splurge waterfront dinner. It also happens to have fine food and inventive interior design (incorporating a saltwater pond, complete with fish, sea anemones, and starfish, right in the middle of the dining room). The menu features a good mix of fish and meats prepared in both a wood-fired oven and a wood-fired rotisserie. The three-course sunset dinners, served before 6pm, cost \$29 and are a great way to enjoy this place on a budget. Palisade also has an excellent and very popular Sunday brunch. **Note:** The restaurant is not easy to find; call for directions or to have the restaurant's complimentary limo pick you up at your hotel.

Elliott Bay Marina, 2601 W. Marina Place. 📍 **206/285-1000**. www.palisaderestaurant.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$12–\$17 lunch, \$19–\$59 dinner; Sun brunch \$27–\$35. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11am–9pm; Fri 11am–10pm; Sat 3–10pm; Sun 9:30am–2pm and 4–9pm.

MODERATE

Boat Street Café and Kitchen ★★ FRENCH At the north end of Belltown 2 blocks north of the Olympic Sculpture Park, this hidden gem is one of my favorite Seattle restaurants. The setting, with its Japanese lanterns and rice-paper umbrellas hanging from the ceiling, is quintessential Seattle casual, while the menu is superbly prepared French cuisine at reasonable prices. Attention to the tiniest of details is what makes this place so special. I like to start with the pickle plate, which consists of an assortment of house-made pickled vegetables and fruit. Salads can be artfully composed and packed with distinctive flavors. Entrees lean toward hearty farmhouse French such as roast chicken with celeriac-and-potato purée. Crab cakes and the savory flan (maybe mushroom, maybe asparagus) are two other good bets.

3131 Western Ave. 📍 **206/632-4602**. www.boatstreetcafe.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$6.50–\$12 lunch, \$15–\$32 dinner. DISC, MC, V. Mon 10:30am–2:30pm; Tues–Sat 10:30am–2:30pm and 5–10pm; Sun 10:30am–2:30pm.

Toulouse Petit ★🍷 CAJUN/CREOLE This lively restaurant in lower Queen Anne celebrates New Orleans and the French Quarter. To that end, a party atmosphere prevails, and the happy hour, with its list of 75 discounted dishes and tasty cocktails, is a huge hit with locals. Likewise, breakfast (\$6, 9–11am Mon–Fri) and weekend brunch are immensely popular not only for the great assortment of well-prepared dishes but also for the low prices. Throw in a pretty dining room space, with 10-foot-tall windows and a view of the Space Needle from some tables, and you have the sort of place you'll want to come back to over and over again.

601 Queen Anne Ave. N. 📍 **206/432-9069**. www.toulousepetit.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$13–\$35. AE, MC, V. Daily 9am–1am.

INEXPENSIVE

The 5 Spot ★ AMERICAN REGIONAL Every 3 months or so, this restaurant, one of Seattle's favorite diners, changes its menu to reflect a different regional U.S. cuisine. You might find Brooklyn comfort food featured, or perhaps Cuban-influenced Miami-style meals, but you can bet that whatever's on the menu will be filling and fun. The atmosphere here is pure kitsch—whenever the theme is Florida, the place is adorned with palm trees and flamingos and looks like the high-school gym done up for prom night. This bustling diner is popular with all types who appreciate the fact that you won't go broke eating here. To find it, look for the neon sign of coffee pouring into a giant coffee cup, right at the top of Queen Anne Hill.

1502 Queen Anne Ave. N. ☎ **206/285-7768**. www.chowfoods.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$10–\$16. MC, V. Mon–Fri 8:30am–midnight; Sat–Sun 8:30am–3pm and 5pm–midnight.

Maggie Bluffs Marina Grill ☺ AMERICAN It's never easy to find affordable waterfront dining in any city, and Seattle is no exception. However, if you're willing to drive a few miles, you can save quite a few bucks at this casual marina restaurant at the foot of Magnolia Bluff (northwest of downtown Seattle). On sunny summer days, it's worth waiting for a patio table. The menu is fairly simple for the most part, offering the likes of burgers and fish and chips, but it also includes a few more creative dishes. The restaurant overlooks a marina full of pleasure boats, and though the view is partially obstructed by a breakwater, you can also see Elliott Bay, West Seattle, downtown, and even the Space Needle. Crayons are on hand to keep the kids entertained. After your meal, walk out on Pier G and take a free shuttle boat a few yards through the marina to an observation deck atop the breakwater.

Elliott Bay Marina, 2601 W. Marina Place. ☎ **206/283-8322**. www.maggiabluffs.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$9–\$14. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11am–8pm; Fri 11am–9pm; Sat 9am–9pm; Sun 9am–8pm.

Sport Restaurant & Bar ☺ AMERICAN If you've got sports fans for kids (or you're one yourself), this big restaurant right across the street from the Space Needle is a must. While the food is decent enough (especially the chili and the burgers), it's the in-booth plasma-screen TVs that make this place such a hit with sports fans. Be forewarned, however, that you can't reserve one of these way-cool booths, so arrive early or plan on a wait for one of these in-demand tables. For adults, there's a bar with a huge wall-hung TV, in addition to plenty of other standard-size screens.

140 Fourth Ave. N., Ste. 130. ☎ **206/404-7768**. www.sportrestaurant.com. Reservations accepted only for parties of 6 or more. Main courses \$7–\$20. AE, DISC, MC, V. Sun–Thurs 11:30am–11pm; Fri–Sat 11:30am–1am.

Lake Union & South Lake Union

MODERATE

I Love Sushi on Lake Union ★ JAPANESE This locals-favorite sushi bar is right on Lake Union at the south end of the lake, and although it's a bit difficult to find, it's well worth searching out. Not only is the sushi excellent, but there are some tasty, exotic cocktails. The views of the lake are limited, which is probably why the food is so good. Be sure to try the Seattle roll, which is made with flying fish roe and salmon (a nod to the flying fish at Pike Place Market perhaps). If you're not a fan of sushi, try the black cod *kasuzuke*, which is marinated in sake curd.

1001 Fairview Ave. N ☎ **206/625-9604**. www.ilovesushi.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$10–\$27 lunch, \$16–\$30 dinner. AE, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11:30am–2pm and 4–10pm; Fri 11:30am–2pm and 4–10:30pm; Sat noon–2:30pm and 5–10:30pm; Sun noon–9:30pm.

Ivar's Salmon House ★ 😊 SEAFOOD With a view of the Space Needle on the far side of Lake Union, flotillas of sea kayaks silently slipping by, sailboats racing across the lake, and boaters tying up at the dock out back, this restaurant on the north side of Lake Union is quintessential Seattle. Add a building designed to resemble a Northwest Coast Indian longhouse, and you have what just might be the very best place in town for a waterfront meal. This place is a magnet for weekend boaters who abandon their own galley fare in favor of Ivar's clam chowder and famous alder-smoked salmon. Lots of artifacts, including long dugout canoes and historical photos of Native American chiefs, make Ivar's a hit with both kids and adults. Bear in mind that this restaurant's popularity means that service can be slow; just relax and keep enjoying the views.

401 NE Northlake Way. ☎ **206/632-0767**. www.ivals.net. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$9–\$20 lunch, \$16–\$29 dinner. AE, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11am–9pm; Fri–Sat 11am–10pm; Sun 9:30am–2pm and 3:30–9pm.

INEXPENSIVE

Portage Bay Café ★ AMERICAN This restaurant, right on the streetcar line through the developing South Lake Union neighborhood, is my favorite neighborhood breakfast spot. Local, organic, and sustainable ingredients are used as much as possible, and the portions at breakfast are huge. Order pancakes, waffles, or French toast, and you'll get to make a trip to the toppings bar, which is loaded with fresh fruit, organic maple syrup, nuts, and other goodies. There are even breakfast choices for the gluten-intolerant (buckwheat pancakes and rice-flour pancakes). At lunch, you can get sandwiches and burgers, but this place is really all about breakfast, which is served all day.

391 Terry Ave. N. ☎ **206/462-6400**. www.portagebaycafe.com. Reservations not accepted. Main courses \$7–\$14. AE, DISC, MC, V. Daily 7:30am–2:30pm.

Capitol Hill, First Hill & Madison Valley

VERY EXPENSIVE

Rover's ★★★ NORTHWEST/VEGETARIAN Tucked away in a quaint clapboard house behind a chic little shopping center in the Madison Valley neighborhood east of downtown, Rover's is one of Seattle's most acclaimed restaurants. Thierry Rautureau, the restaurant's award-winning chef, received classical French training before falling in love with the Northwest and all the wonderful ingredients it has to offer. The delicacies on the frequently changing menu are enough to send the most jaded of gastronomes into fits of indecision. Luckily, you can simply opt for one of the fixed-price dinners and leave the decision making to a professional. Notable creations include scrambled eggs with lime crème fraîche; ahi tuna tartare with Osetra caviar; venison medallions with peppercorn sauce; and prawns with fennel fondue. **Vegetarians, take note:** You won't find many vegetarian feasts to compare with what's served here. Also, during spring and summer, there is a Sunday brunch. (Call for hours.)

2808 E. Madison St. ☎ **206/325-7442**. www.thechefinthehat.com. Reservations required. Main courses \$20–\$22 lunch; \$35 prix-fixe 3-course lunch; bistro menu \$55; 5-course degustation menu \$85 (vegetarian) and \$99; chef's 8-course grand menu \$135. AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Thurs 6–8:30pm; Fri noon–1:30pm and 5:30–10pm; Sat 5:30–10pm; Sun 5–9pm.

EXPENSIVE

Cascina Spinasse ★★ ITALIAN This little hole in the wall on Capitol Hill is the most authentic-feeling Italian restaurant in Seattle. The menu is written in Italian on a blackboard (though with English translations on the paper menu), candles light the dining room, and a long wooden table down one side of the restaurant provides communal seating. Highlighting the cuisine of Italy's Piedmont region, the menu lets the simple flavors of each ingredient shine through. You might start your meal with onions stuffed with salt cod, caramelized celery, and pine nuts or a roasted cauliflower flan. Pastas are made in-house (all the pasta-making equipment is on view at dinner), so be sure to have a pasta course, perhaps ravioli stuffed with winter greens and walnuts. As much as possible, the restaurant relies on organic ingredients.

1531 14th Ave. E. ☎ **206/251-7673**. www.spinasse.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$18–\$28. AE, DISC, MC, V. Sun–Mon and Wed–Thurs 5–10pm; Fri–Sat 5–11pm.

Poppy ★★★ NORTHWEST When chef Jerry Traunfeld, long head of the kitchen at fabled restaurant The Herbfarm, struck out on his own, he did not go the expected route of opening a French restaurant or a trendy tapas place. Instead, he took as inspiration the compartmentalized platters that are common in India and are known as *thalis*. That is where the similarity to Indian food begins and ends. Your thali here might include carrot-orange-thyme soup; salmon with sea beans, bacon, and pinot noir sauce; snap peas with peppermint and sesame seeds; zucchini-basil gratin; fritters made with green rice and ricotta; and pickles made from spring onions and strawberries. The flavors are very reminiscent of dishes at The Herbfarm, but the presentation is very casual.

622 Broadway E. ☎ **206/324-1108**. www.poppyseattle.com. Reservations highly recommended. Prix-fixe dinner \$22–\$32. AE, DISC, MC, V. Sun and Tues–Thurs 5:30–10pm; Fri–Sat 5:30–11pm.

MODERATE

Lark ★ NORTHWEST/MEDITERRANEAN You wouldn't think to look at it, but this little neighborhood restaurant on a somewhat run-down back street on Capitol Hill has an impressive pedigree. Chef Johnathan Sundstrom formerly headed the kitchen at the W Seattle's Earth & Ocean restaurant, but Sundstrom fled the downtown financial district in favor of the 'hoods and opened this far more casual bistro. The menu consists of dozens of small plates that you assemble into a meal to fit your appetite. The menu changes with the seasons, and it pays to be adventurous. You might try carpaccio of yellowtail with preserved lemons and green olives; foie gras terrine with Marcona almonds and kumquat-vanilla preserve; or beef tartare with a raw quail egg and onion crackers. Cheese lovers take note: The cheese list is one of the best in the city, and whether you order some as an appetizer or as an end to your meal, be sure to try something from this list.

926 12th Ave. ☎ **206/323-5275**. www.larkseattle.com. Same-day reservations accepted (and recommended). Main courses \$8–\$20. MC, V. Tues–Sun 5–10:30pm.

Quinn's ★ NEW AMERICAN Patterned after the much-lauded gastropubs of London, Quinn's is the second Seattle restaurant for local kitchen legend Scott Staples, whose Restaurant Zoë is one of my favorite Belltown eateries. This place is casual and boisterous, but the food, made from top ingredients, is great and the beer list, heavy on Belgian beers, is one of the best in the city. If you're looking for simple comfort food, go for the wild-boar sloppy Joe or the fish and chips. Foodies looking

for something more interesting might want to opt for the foie gras, the marrow bones, or a selection of artisan cheeses. **Be forewarned:** This is a mix-and-match small-plates sort of place, and your tab will add up quickly.

1001 E. Pike St. ☎ **206/325-7711**. www.quinnspubseattle.com. Reservations not accepted. Main courses \$10–\$19. AE, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 5pm–midnight; Fri–Sat 5pm–1am; Sun 5–10pm.

INEXPENSIVE

Baguette Box INTERNATIONAL Sandwiches served on crunchy slices of baguette are the specialty of this casual little restaurant just a few blocks uphill from the convention center. The crispy drunken chicken sandwich, served with caramelized onions, cilantro, and a sweet-and-sour sauce, was inspired by a Vietnamese dish and is the house favorite, but I also like the grilled lemon grass skirt steak sandwich, which is also inspired by an Asian dish. There's a second Baguette Box in the Fremont neighborhood at 626 N. 34th St. (☎ **206/632-1511**).

1203 Pine St. ☎ **206/332-0220**. www.baguettebox.com. Main courses \$7–\$13. AE, MC, V. Daily 11am–8pm.

Cafe Flora ★ VEGETARIAN Big, bright, and airy, this Madison Valley cafe will dispel any ideas you might have about vegetarian food being boring. This meatless gourmet cooking draws on influences from around the world, which makes this a vegetarian's dream come true. One of the house specialties is a portobello Wellington made with mushroom-pecan pâté and sautéed leeks in a puff pastry. Keep an eye out for unusual pizzas such as roasted cauliflower and yam with rosemary oil and dried-cranberry chutney. On weekends a casual brunch features interesting breakfast fare.

2901 E. Madison St. ☎ **206/325-9100**. www.cafe flora.com. Reservations accepted only for parties of 8 or more. Main courses \$10–\$18. MC, V. Mon–Thurs 9am–9pm (until 10pm spring and summer); Fri 9am–10pm; Sat 9am–2pm and 5–10pm; Sun 9am–2pm and 5–9pm.

Café Presse ★ FRENCH Under the same ownership as Belltown's Le Pichet (my favorite Seattle French cafe), Café Presse is modeled after a traditional Parisian bar-cafe. This is an all-day sort of place. You can start with eggs or a pastry for breakfast, get a ham sandwich for lunch, and at dinner order steak *frites* or a salad with boneless quail. At the end of the day, you can wind down with a drink at the bar. This is a casual neighborhood place that's popular with students from Seattle University, which is only half a block away. There's even a little newsstand with imported magazines and soccer games on the TV.

1117 12th Ave. ☎ **206/709-7674**. www.cafepresseseattle.com. Reservations not accepted. Main courses \$5–\$16. DISC, MC, V. Daily 7am–2am.

North Seattle (Including Ballard, Fremont, Wallingford & the University District)

EXPENSIVE

Ray's Boathouse/Ray's Cafe ★★ SEAFOOD When Seattleites want to impress visiting friends and relatives, this restaurant often ranks right up there with the Space Needle, the ferries, and Pike Place Market. The view across Puget Sound to the Olympic Mountains is guaranteed to impress out-of-towners. You can watch the boat traffic coming and going from the Lake Washington Ship Canal, and bald eagles are often seen fishing just offshore. Then there's Ray's dual personality—Ray's Cafe upstairs is a lively (and loud) cafe and lounge, while Ray's Boathouse downstairs is a much more formal, sedate scene. The downstairs menu is more creative,

the upstairs menu less expensive (but even upstairs you can order from the downstairs menu). The crab cakes here are a must; they're delicious and packed full of crab. Also, if you see any sort of fish in *sake kasu* (a typically Northwest/Pacific Rim preparation), order it.

6049 Seaview Ave. NW. **☎ 206/789-3770** for Boathouse or 782-0094 for Cafe. www.rays.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$24–\$39 at Boathouse, \$11–\$21 at Cafe. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Boat-house Sun–Thurs 5–9pm; Fri–Sat 5–9:30pm. Cafe Sun–Thurs 11:30am–9:30pm; Fri–Sat 11:30am–10pm.

Tilth ★★ NEW AMERICAN Tilth is one of the nation's only restaurants to receive organic certification from Oregon Tilth (an organization that sets organic standards), but don't confuse organic with granola-crunchy hippie food. Chef Maria Hines, one of Seattle's most creative chefs, oversaw the kitchen at the W Seattle's acclaimed Earth & Ocean before opening this restaurant in a cute little cottage in the Wallingford neighborhood. The menu emphasizes fresh, seasonal ingredients in dishes that seem simple yet are packed with flavor. While the menu changes with the seasons, you can almost always count on finding the mini duck burgers on the menu. One of my favorite aspects of the menu here is that most dishes are available as appetizers or entrees, so if you want to try several dishes, you can.

1411 N. 45th St. **☎ 206/633-0801**. www.tilthrestaurant.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$24–\$29. MC, V. Mon–Thurs 5–10pm; Fri 5–10:30pm; Sat 10am–2pm and 5–10:30pm; Sun 10am–2pm and 5–10pm.

MODERATE

Chinook's at Salmon Bay ★ SEAFOOD Fishermen's Terminal, the winter home of the large Alaska fishing fleet, is just across the Lake Washington Ship Canal from the Ballard neighborhood, and overlooking all of the moored commercial fishing boats is one of Seattle's favorite seafood restaurants. This big, boisterous place has walls of windows looking out onto the marina and a long menu featuring seafood fresh off the boats. My favorite meal here is a cup of the oyster stew followed by the alder-plank-roasted salmon.

The only problem with Chinook's is that it isn't very easy to reach. Take Elliott Avenue north from the downtown waterfront, continue north on 15th Avenue West, take the last exit before crossing the Ballard Bridge, and follow the signs to Fishermen's Terminal. Before or after a meal, you can stroll around the marina and have a look at all the fishing boats.

1900 W. Nickerson St. **☎ 206/283-4665**. www.anthonys.com. Reservations not accepted. Main courses \$7–\$30. AE, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11am–10pm; Fri 11am–11pm; Sat 7:30am–11pm; Sun 7:30am–10pm.

Volterra ★★ ITALIAN It would be hard to imagine a more picture-perfect little restaurant than Volterra. Set on a shady tree-lined street of historic brick buildings, this place is made for romantic dinners. It's also a wonderful place for a weekend brunch. Rest assured that this is not your typical southern Italian joint. Start your meal with polenta stuffed with fontina cheese and served with truffle-scented wild mushroom ragu, then move on to the wild boar tenderloin with Gorgonzola sauce. At brunch, be sure you order something with hash browns—they're to die for. Whenever you come here to dine, be sure to do a little shopping along Ballard Avenue before or after your meal.

5411 Ballard Ave. NW. **☎ 206/789-5100**. www.volterrarestaurant.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$15–\$29. AE, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 5–10pm; Fri 5–11pm; Sat 9am–2pm and 5–11pm; Sun 9am–2pm and 5–9pm.

INEXPENSIVE

Agua Verde Cafe ★ 🍷 MEXICAN Set on the shore of Portage Bay, which lies between Lake Union and Lake Washington, this casual Mexican restaurant is a hit with college students from the adjacent University of Washington. Consequently, there's often a line out the door. The menu is limited to tacos, burritos, *tortas* (Mexican-style sandwiches), quesadillas, and, at dinner, a handful of more substantial entrees. I recommend the tacos, which come three to an order. Try the smoked salmon or yam versions, both of which are topped with a delicious avocado cream sauce. Add a couple of sides—cranberry slaw, pineapple-jicama salsa, or creamy chili potatoes—for a filling and inexpensive meal. Agua Verde also serves good margaritas and rents kayaks for \$15 to \$18 per hour. This is Mexican food with a conscience—Agua Verde uses wild-caught fish, free-range chickens, and shade-grown coffee.

1303 NE Boat St. ☎ **206/545-8570**. www.aguaverde.com. Dinner reservations accepted for parties of 8 or more. Main courses \$6–\$10 lunch, \$7–\$16 dinner. AE, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11am–3:30pm and 4–9pm; Sat 9am–3:30pm and 4–9pm; Sun 9am–3 or 4pm (takeout window Mon–Fri 7:30am–2:30pm).

Red Mill Burgers AMERICAN Just a little north of Woodland Park Zoo, this retro burger joint is tiny and always hoppin' because everyone knows it does one of the best burgers in Seattle. Try the verde burger, made with Anaheim peppers for just the right amount of fire. Don't miss the onion rings. And don't come dressed in your finest attire—burgers here are definitely multi-napkin affairs.

A second Red Mill Burgers is at 1613 W. Dravus St. (☎ **206/284-6363**), which is midway between downtown Seattle and Ballard. Lines often seem to be shorter here.

312 N. 67th St. ☎ **206/783-6362**. www.redmillburgers.com. Burgers \$4–\$7. No credit cards. Tues–Sat 11am–9pm; Sun noon–8pm.

Thaiku ★ 🍷 THAI Ballard Avenue is one of the prettiest streets in Seattle: Its sidewalks are shaded by trees, and the old brick commercial buildings have been converted into boutiques, galleries, restaurants, and nightclubs. Amid these pleasant historic surroundings, you'll find my favorite Thai restaurant in town. Known to locals as the Noodle House, Thaiku is a dark place with lots of wooden Asian antiques hanging from the walls and ceilings. The fun atmosphere is just a bonus, though, since it's the great noodle dishes that are the main attraction. I don't think you'll find a better *phad Thai* anywhere in Seattle. The bar here, which is known for its unusual herb-infused cocktails, gets lively on weekends, and there's even live jazz on Wednesday and Thursday nights.

5410 Ballard Ave. NW. ☎ **206/706-7807**. www.thaiku.com. Reservations not necessary. Main courses \$7–\$13. AE, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11:30am–9:30pm; Fri 11:30am–10:30pm; Sat noon–10:30pm; Sun noon–9:30pm.

West Seattle

EXPENSIVE

Salty's on Alki Beach ★★ SEAFOOD Although the prices here are almost as out of line as those at the Space Needle, and the service is unpredictable, this restaurant has *the* waterfront view in Seattle, and the food is usually pretty good. Because Salty's is on the northeast side of the Alki Peninsula, it faces downtown Seattle on the far side of Elliott Bay. Come at sunset for dinner and watch the setting

sun sparkle off skyscraper windows as the lights of the city begin to twinkle. On sunny summer days, lunch on one of the two decks is a sublimely Seattle experience. Don't be discouraged by the ugly industrial/port area you drive through to get here; Salty's marks the start of Alki Beach, the closest Seattle comes to a Southern California beach scene. Watch for the giant rusted salmon sculptures swimming amid rebar kelp beds and the remains of an old bridge (hey, Seattle even recycles when it comes to art).

1936 Harbor Ave. SW. 📞 **206/937-1600**. www.saltys.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$9–\$23 lunch, \$15–\$40 dinner. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11am–9pm (9:30pm in summer); Fri 11am–9:30pm (10pm in summer); Sat 8:45am–1pm and 4–9:30pm (10pm in summer); Sun 8:45am–1:30pm and 4–9pm.

INEXPENSIVE

Alki Crab & Fish 🦀 SEAFOOD Sure, there are plenty of places on the Seattle waterfront to get fish and chips, but for an unforgettable cheap meal, catch the water taxi over to Alki Beach. Right at the dock, you'll find this little fish-and-chips joint that boasts one of the best views in Seattle. In fact, next-door-neighbor Salty's on Alki Beach has made its reputation almost solely based on this very vista. So if you want the city's best view of the Seattle skyline but don't want to blow your budget, this is the place. The cost of the water taxi from the Seattle waterfront plus the halibut and chips doesn't even come close to what you would spend on a meal at Salty's.

1660 Harbor Ave. SW. 📞 **206/938-0975**. Main dishes \$4–\$15. MC, V. Sun–Thurs 9am–8pm; Fri–Sat 9am–9pm.

The Eastside (Including Bellevue & Kirkland)

VERY EXPENSIVE

The Herbfarm Restaurant ★★★ NORTHWEST The Herbfarm, the most highly acclaimed restaurant in the Northwest, is known for its lavish themed meals that change with the seasons. Wild gathered vegetables, Northwest seafood and meats, organic produce, wild mushrooms, and, of course, fresh herbs from The Herbfarm gardens are the ingredients from which the restaurant creates its culinary extravaganzas. Dinners are paired with complementary Northwest wines.

The restaurant is in a reproduction country inn beside a contemporary Northwest-style lodge. Dinner highlights might include paddlefish caviar on crisp salmon skin; rosemary-mussel skewers with cucumber kimchi; oysters with sorrel sauce; Dungeness crab and wild mushroom “handkerchiefs”; salmon in a squash blossom with lemon thyme; perch on salsify purée with parsley-lovage sauce; lamb served three ways; truffled cheese; and, for dessert, muscat-poached peaches with anise hyssop ice. If you're a foodie, you need to have a dinner like this at least once in your life.

14590 NE 145th St., Woodinville. 📞 **425/485-5300**. www.theherbfarm.com. Reservations required. Fixed-price 9-course dinner \$179–\$195/person with 6 or 7 matched wines. AE, DISC, MC, V. Seatings Thurs–Sat at 7pm; Sun at 4:30pm.

Coffee, Tea, Bakeries & Pastry Shops

CAFES, COFFEE BARS & TEA SHOPS

Unless you've been on Mars for the past 20 years, you're likely aware that Seattle has become the espresso capital of America. Seattleites are positively rabid about coffee, which isn't just a hot drink or a caffeine fix anymore, but rather a way of life.

Wherever you go in Seattle, you're rarely more than about a block from your next cup. There are espresso carts on the sidewalks, drive-through espresso windows, espresso bars, espresso counters at gas stations, espresso milkshakes, espresso chocolates, even eggnog lattes at Christmas.

Starbucks (www.starbucks.com), the ruling king of coffee, is seemingly everywhere you turn. It sells some 30 types and blends of coffee beans. Close on the heels of Starbucks in popularity and citywide coverage is the **Tully's** (www.tullys.com) chain, which seems to have an espresso bar on every corner that doesn't already have a Starbucks or an SBC. Serious espresso junkies, however, swear by **Caffè Ladro** (www.caffeladro.com) and **Caffè Vita** (www.caffevita.com). If you see one of either of these chains, check it out and see what you think.

As places to hang out and visit with friends, coffeehouses and cafes are as popular as bars and pubs. I list many of my favorite Seattle cafes in the following sections (organized by neighborhood):

Downtown

Ancient Grounds ★, 1220 First Ave. (☎ 206/749-0747), is hands down the coolest and most unusual espresso bar in Seattle. This coffeehouse doubles as an art gallery specializing in antique Mexican, Japanese, and Northwest Coast Indian masks and ethnic artifacts from around the world. Cases are full of colorful minerals and insects in glass boxes. It's all very dark and Victorian.

Caffè Ladro, a small local chain of espresso bars, is one of my favorite places to get coffee in Seattle. Downtown, you'll find cafes at 801 Pine St. (☎ 206/405-1950) and 108 Union St. (☎ 206/267-0600). The coffee served here is 100% fair-trade, organic, and shade grown.

If you're getting tired from shopping all day, head to **Caffè Senso Unico**, 622 Olive Way (☎ 206/264-7611; www.caffesensounico.com), which is right across the street from the Pacific Place shopping mall, yet has a very Italian feel.

Pioneer Square & the International District

Zeitgeist Art/Coffee ★, 171 S. Jackson St. (☎ 206/583-0497; www.zeitgeistcoffee.com), with its big windows and local artwork, is popular with the Pioneer Square art crowd. For a classically Italian cafe experience, sit and sip at **Caffè Umbria**, 320 Occidental Ave. S. (☎ 206/624-5847; www.caffeumbria.com), which is on a pretty, shady plaza.

In the International District, don't miss the atmospheric **Panama Hotel Tea & Coffee House** ★, 607 S. Main St. (☎ 206/515-4000; www.panamahotelseattle.com), which is filled with historical photos and offers a fascinating glimpse into the neighborhood's past. This is a great place to relax over a pot of rare Chinese tea.

Belltown, Pike Place Market & the Waterfront

Seattle is legendary as a city of coffeeholics, and Starbucks is the main reason. This company has coffeehouses all over town (and all over the world), but the **Starbucks** in Pike Place Market, at 1912 Pike Place (☎ 206/448-8762), was once the only Starbucks anywhere. Today it is the only chain store allowed in the market. Although you won't find any tables or chairs here, Starbucks fans shouldn't miss an opportunity to get their coffee at the source. Be sure to notice the bare-breasted-mermaid sign out front, which is how the Starbucks logo started out before becoming modest enough for mass-market advertising.

If you're wandering around checking out the hip shops in Belltown and need a pick-me-up, head over to **Uptown Espresso**, 2504 Fourth Ave. (☎ 206/441-1084; www.uptownespresso.net). Down on the waterfront, try the branch at Pier 70, 2801 Alaskan Way (☎ 206/770-7777).

For hot chocolate, sipping chocolate (basically warm liquid chocolate), and a wide variety of chocolates and chocolate confections, don't miss **Chocolate Box**, 108 Pine St. (☎ 888/861-6188 or 206/443-3900; www.sschocolatebox.com), which is just a half-block from Pike Place Market.

The Seattle Center, Queen Anne & Lake Union Areas

In the heart of the pleasant Upper Queen Anne area, **Caffe Ladro Espresso Bar & Bakery**, 2205 Queen Anne Ave. N. (☎ 206/282-5313), has the feel of a cozy neighborhood coffeehouse. Another Caffe Ladro is in the MarQueen Hotel building in Lower Queen Anne, at 600 Queen Anne Ave. N. (☎ 206/282-1549).

Uptown Espresso, 525 Queen Anne Ave. N. (☎ 206/285-3757), with its crystal chandelier, gilt-framed classical paintings, and opera music on the stereo, has a very theatrical European feel. Good baked goodies, too.

Caffé Vita is one of Seattle's finest coffee roasters. In the Lower Queen Anne neighborhood, you can sample these superb coffees at Caffé Vita's own coffeehouse, at 813 Fifth Ave. N. (☎ 206/285-9662).

If you've tired of double tall raspberry mochas and are desperately seeking a new coffee experience, make a trip to Upper Queen Anne's **El Diablo Coffee Co.**, 1811 Queen Anne Ave. N. (☎ 206/285-0693; www.eldiablocoffee.com), a Latin-style coffeehouse. The Cubano, made with two shots of espresso and caramelized sugar, and the *café con leche* (a Cubano with steamed milk) are both devilishly good drinks. ¡Viva la revolución!

Lake Union & South Lake Union

A Seattle friend insists that the espresso at **Espresso Vivace Alley 24** ★, 227 Yale Ave. N. (☎ 206/388-5164; www.espressovivace.com), across the street from the REI flagship store, is the best in Seattle. Give it a try and see if you agree.

Capitol Hill, First Hill & Madison Valley

On the downtown edge of Capitol Hill, **Bauhaus Coffee & Books**, 301 E. Pine St. (☎ 206/625-1600), is a great place to hang out and soak up the atmosphere of Seattle's main gay neighborhood. You can always find lots of interesting 30-something types (mostly men) hanging out reading or carrying on heated discussions.

Caffé Vita, 1005 E. Pike St. (☎ 206/709-4440), has a devoted following of espresso fanatics who swear by the perfectly roasted coffee beans and lovingly crafted lattes served here.

Capitol Hill has two outposts of Espresso Vivace, a locals' favorite. There's **Vivace Espresso Bar at Brix** ★, 532 Broadway Ave. E. (☎ 206/860-2722; www.espressovivace.com), a curved marble bar, and a sidewalk cart at 321 Broadway Ave. E. (no phone). By the way, this coffee roastery participates in a carbon-sequestration program.

If hot chocolate and chocolate cake are more your style, stop in at **Dilettante Mocha Martini Bar**, 538 Broadway Ave. E. (☎ 206/329-6463; www.dilettante.com), which is located in a modern space at the north end of the Capitol Hill commercial district not far from Volunteer Park.

North Seattle

In the U District, you'll find Seattle's oldest coffeehouse: **Café Allegro**, 4214 University Way NE (☎ 206/633-3030; www.cafeallegromusic.com), down an alley around the corner from "the Ave" (as University Way is called by locals). This is a favored hangout of University of Washington students. Keep looking; you'll find it.

In Wallingford, I give up espresso so I can sip one of the wonderful gourmet hot chocolates served at **Chocolati**, 1716 N. 45th St. (☎ 206/633-7765; www.chocolati.com). There are two other Chocolati cafes in the Greenlake neighborhood near the zoo—7810 E. Greenlake Dr. N. (☎ 206/527-5467) and 8319 Greenwood Ave. N. (☎ 206/783-7078). These cafes also serve organic, fair-trade espresso.

In Fremont, try **Caffe Ladro**, 452 N. 36th St. (☎ 206/675-0854), or the pretty little **Fremont Coffee Company**, 459 N. 36th St. (☎ 206/623-3633; www.fremontcoffee.net), which is in a quaint little house that dates to 1904.

BAKERIES & PASTRY SHOPS

Downtown

If you're staying downtown in one of the city's business hotels and want a delicious treat, drop by **Belle Epicurean**, Fairmont Olympic Hotel, 1206 Fourth Ave. (☎ 206/262-9404; www.belleepicurean.com), which specializes in sweet brioche buns.

Pioneer Square & the International District

Grand Central Baking Company ★, 214 First Ave. S. (☎ 206/622-3644; www.grandcentralbakery.com), in Pioneer Square's Grand Central Arcade, is responsible for awakening Seattle to the pleasures of rustic European-style breads. This bakery not only turns out great bread, but also does good pastries and sandwiches.

Although the name is none too appealing, **Cow Chip Cookies**, 102A First Ave. S. (☎ 206/292-9808; www.cowchipcookies.com), bakes Seattle's best chocolate-chip cookies, which come in different sizes depending on the size of your craving.

Belltown & Pike Place Market

The **Crumpet Shop**, 1503 First Ave. (☎ 206/682-1598; www.thecrumpetshop.com), specializes in its British namesake pastries, but does scones as well. It's almost a requirement that you accompany your crumpet or scone with a pot of tea. **Le Panier**, 1902 Pike Place (☎ 206/441-3669; www.lepanier.com), is a great place to get a croissant and a latte and watch the market action. Chocolate chip cookie lovers should be sure to stop by **Cow Chip Cookies**, 111 Pike St. (☎ 206/623-3851; www.cowchipcookies.com). If cheesecake is your vice, head to **The Confectional**, 1530 Pike Place (☎ 206/282-4422; www.theconfectional.com), which specializes in individual cheesecakes. Just don't expect me to absolve you of your weight gain.

For some of the best baked goodies in the city, head to **Macrina** ★★, 2408 First Ave. (☎ 206/448-4032; www.macrinabakery.com), a neighborhood bakery/cafe that's a cozy place for a quick, cheap breakfast or lunch. In the morning, the smell of baking bread wafts down First Avenue and draws in many passersby.

Tom Douglas's restaurants—Dahlia Lounge, Palace Kitchen, Etta's, Lola, and Serious Pie—are all immensely popular, and there was such a demand for the breads and pastries served at these places that Douglas opened his own **Dahlia Bakery**, 2001 Fourth Ave. (☎ 206/441-4540; www.tomdouglas.com). The croissants here are the best in Seattle—and you can even get Douglas's fabled coconut cream pie to go.

Leave it to Seattle to take the doughnut craze and turn it into something sophisticated. **Top Pot Doughnuts**, 2124 Fifth Ave. (☎ 206/728-1966; www.toppotdoughnuts.com), is housed in a former showroom building with big walls of glass. Books now line the walls; doughnuts fill the display cases. This place was created by the same folks who gave Seattle the Zeitgeist and Bauhaus coffeehouses.

Capitol Hill

If you've been on your feet at Volunteer Park for a while and need a snack, try the **North Hill Bakery**, 518 15th Ave. E. (☎ 206/325-9007; www.northhillbakery.com), just a few blocks east of the park. There's always a good selection of baked goods in the cases.

North Seattle

When nothing else will satisfy but a rich cupcake slathered with butter frosting, stop in at Ballard's **Cupcake Royale/Vérité Coffee**, 2052 NW Market St. (☎ 206/782-9557; www.cupcakeroyale.com), which also has locations in the Capitol Hill, West Seattle, and Madrona neighborhoods. This was Seattle's very first specialty cupcake bakery. For stollen, kringles, and other classic Danish pastries, head to **Larsen's Danish Bakery**, 8000 24th Ave. NW (☎ 800/626-8631; www.larsensbakery.com), in Ballard, Seattle's Scandinavian neighborhood.

Market Munching

Few Seattle activities are more fun than munching your way through Pike Place Market. The market has dozens of fast-food vendors, and it's nearly impossible to resist the interesting array of finger foods and quick bites.

If you're planning a picnic, **DeLaurenti** ★, 1435 First Ave. (☎ 800/873-6685 or 206/622-0141; www.delaurenti.com), near the market's brass pig, is the perfect spot to get your pâté, sandwiches, and wine.

Sausage lovers should be sure to have at least one sausage sandwich at **Uli's Famous Sausage**, 1511 Pike Place (☎ 206/839-1000; www.ulisfamoussausage.com). Pick from the long list of sausages and have your sausage grilled up with your choice of toppings. Whether you crave a German bratwurst or a French merguez, you'll find it here.

Piroshky, Piroshky, 1908 Pike Place (☎ 206/441-6068; www.piroshkybakery.com), lays it all out in its name. The sweet or savory Russian filled rolls are the perfect finger food.

At **Beecher's Handmade Cheese**, 1600 Pike Place (☎ 206/956-1964; www.beecherscheese.com), you can watch cheese being made and sample some of the products. But what brings me back here again and again is the awesome macaroni-and-cheese. Get some to go, and have a picnic down on the waterfront.

The **Spanish Table**, 1426 Western Ave. (☎ 206/682-2827; www.spanishtable.com), is a specialty food shop on one of the lower levels of the market. You can get simple Spanish-style sandwiches, great soups, cheeses, and other light meal items, and then shop for a paella pan. This quiet corner of the market is a great place to get away from the crowds and try some food you might never have encountered before.

And when you just have to have something sweet, cold, and creamy, try the much-lauded gelato at **Bottega Italiana**, 1425 First Ave. (☎ 206/343-0200; www.bottegitaliana.com), or the conveniently located **Procopio**, 1501 Western Ave.

(☎ 206/622-4280; www.procopiogelati.com), which is on the Pike Street Hill-climb that links the waterfront with Pike Place Market. For some of the best and most unusual ice cream in Seattle, head up to Capitol Hill, and get in line at **Molly Moon's Homemade Ice Cream**, 917 E. Pine St. (☎ 206/708-7947; www.mollymoonicecream.com), on Capitol Hill. Alternatively, you can stand in line in Wallingford at 1622 N. 45th St. (☎ 206/547-5105), their second location. Flavors here include such untraditional ice creams as salted caramel, cardamom, rosemary-Meyer lemon, honey lavender, and pomegranate-curry sorbet.

WHAT TO SEE & DO

I hope you've got a good pair of walking shoes and a lot of stamina (a double latte helps), because Seattle is a walking town. The city's two biggest attractions—the waterfront and Pike Place Market—are the sorts of places where you'll spend hours on your feet. When your feet are beat, you can relax on a tour boat and enjoy the views of the city from the waters of Puget Sound, or you can take a 2-minute rest on the monorail, which links downtown with Seattle Center, home of the Space Needle. If your energy level sags, don't worry; there's always an espresso bar nearby.

By the way, that monorail ride takes you right through the middle of Paul Allen's Experience Music Project, the Frank Gehry–designed rock-music museum also located in Seattle Center. Allen, who made his millions as one of the cofounders of Microsoft, has spent many years changing the face of Seattle. He has renovated Union Station and developed the area adjacent to Qwest Field, which was built for the Seattle Seahawks football team, whose owner is . . . you guessed it: Paul Allen. The stadium is adjacent to the Seattle Mariners' Safeco Field, which is one of the few ballparks in the country with a retractable roof. Allen is currently working on a large-scale development project at the south end of Lake Union.

Despite Seattle's many downtown diversions, however, the city's natural surroundings are still its primary attraction. You can easily cover all of Seattle's museums and major sights in 2 or 3 days. Once you've seen what's to see indoors, you can begin exploring the city's outdoor life.

On the Waterfront

The Seattle waterfront, which lies along Alaskan Way between Yesler Way in the south and Bay Street and Myrtle Edwards Park in the north, is the city's most popular attraction. Yes, it's very touristy, with tacky gift shops, saltwater taffy, T-shirts galore, and lots of overpriced restaurants, but it's also home to the Seattle Aquarium and Ye Olde Curiosity Shop (king of the tacky gift shops). Ferries to Bainbridge Island and Bremerton, as well as several different boat tours, also operate from the waterfront.

You'll find the Washington State Ferries terminal at **Pier 52**, which is at the south end of the waterfront near Pioneer Square. (A ferry ride makes for a cheap cruise.) **Pier 55** has excursion boats offering harbor cruises and trips to Tillicum Village on Blake Island. At **Pier 56**, cruise boats leave for trips through the Chittenden (Baldard) Locks to Lake Union. See "Organized Tours" (p. 125) for details on these excursions. At **Pier 57** you'll find the **Bay Pavilion**, which has a vintage carousel and a video arcade to keep the kids busy.



Saving Money on Sightseeing

If you're a see-it-all, do-it-all kind of person, you'll definitely want to buy a **CityPass** (☎ 888/330-5008 or 208/787-4300; www.citypass.com), which gets you into the Space Needle, Pacific Science Center, Seattle Aquarium, Woodland Park Zoo, and either the Museum of Flight or the Experience Music Project/Science Fiction Museum, and also lets you take a boat tour of the harbor with Argosy Cruises, all at a savings of 50% if you visit all five attractions and do the harbor tour. The passes, good for 9 days from the date of first use, cost \$54 for adults and \$39 for children 4 to 12. Purchase your

CityPass at any of the participating attractions.

The **Go Seattle Card** (☎ 866/628-9029; www.goseattlecard.com) is another interesting option for the see-it-all, do-it-all travelers who are able to plan out a daily tour route in advance. It takes careful planning to get your money's worth out of this card, but it can be done. You pay \$50 (\$38 for children ages 3-12) for a card that will get you into as many participating attractions as you can visit in 1 day. There are discounts for the 2-, 3-, 5-, and 7-day cards; your best bet would probably be the 3-day card.

5

What to See & Do

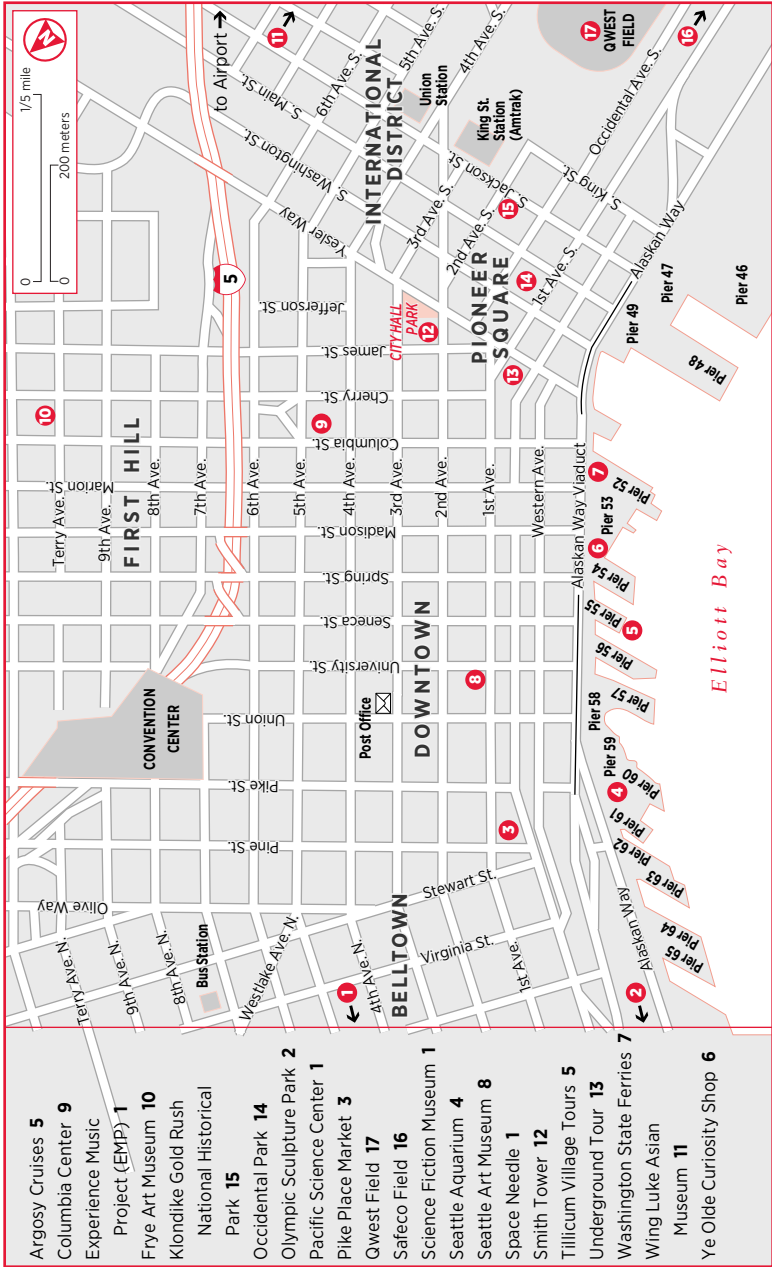
SEATTLE

Pier 59 is home to the Seattle Aquarium (see below for details) and a small waterfront park. If you continue up the waterfront, you'll find **Pier 66**, also called the Bell Street Pier, which has a rooftop park. Anthony's (p. 89), one of the best seafood restaurants on the waterfront, is on this pier. At **Pier 67** is The Edgewater hotel (p. 70), a great place to take in the sunset over a drink or dinner.

Next door, at **Pier 69**, you can see the dock for the ferries that ply the waters between Seattle and Victoria, British Columbia. Just north of this pier is the **Olympic Sculpture Park** and the grassy **Myrtle Edwards Park**, which together make all the waterfront schlock worth enduring, a nice finale to the waterfront. Myrtle Edwards Park has a popular bicycling-and-skating trail and is a great spot for a sunset stroll or a picnic. The Olympic Sculpture Park (below), which covers a hillside overlooking the north end of the waterfront, is one of my favorite spots in Seattle, offering not only monumental sculptures, but also gardens of native plants and superb views of the Seattle skyline, Elliott Bay, and the Olympic Mountains.

Olympic Sculpture Park ★★ ★ Covering 9 acres of hillside, the Olympic Sculpture Park stretches from Belltown down to the waterfront at Myrtle Edwards Park. Modern and contemporary monumental sculptures are the focus of the collection, which includes works from regional, national, and international artists, including Alexander Calder, whose sculpture *Eagle* is one of the highlights of the collection. From just the right perspective, this sculpture perfectly frames the distant Space Needle. What a view! Other noteworthy works include Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen's *Typing Eraser*, *Scale X*, Richard Serra's massive plate-steel *Wake*, and *Split*, a life-size stainless-steel tree by Roxy Paine. If the sculptures aren't enough to hold your attention, turn your eyes toward the views of Elliott Bay and the distant Olympic Mountains. Down along the water, you'll also find a perfect little beach that was constructed as part of the sculpture park. This diminutive stretch of shoreline feels as wild as any beach on the Olympic Peninsula.

Seattle Attractions



5

SEATTLE

What to See & Do

2901 Western Ave.  **206/654-3100**. www.seattleartmuseum.org. Free admission. Park 30 min. before sunrise to 30 min. past sunset. Pavilion May to Labor Day Tues–Sun 10am–5pm; day after Labor Day to Apr Tues–Sun 10am–4pm. Pavilion closed New Year’s Day, Thanksgiving, Dec 24–25, and New Year’s Eve. Bus: 1, 2, 13, 15, 18, 21, 22, 56, or 57. Waterfront Streetcar Bus: Pier 69 stop.

Seattle Aquarium ★★  The Seattle Aquarium is a fabulous introduction to the sea life of the Northwest. The “Window on Washington Waters” exhibit, a huge tank just inside the entrance, is a highlight of a visit, especially when divers feed the fish. There’s also a tank that generates crashing waves, and, in the *Life on the Edge* tidepool exhibit that focuses on life along Washington’s shores, you can reach into the water to touch starfish, sea cucumbers, and anemones (kids love these tanks). The aquarium’s main focus is on the water worlds of the Puget Sound region, but there are also fascinating exhibits of sea life from around the world, including a beautiful coral-reef tank. The star attractions, however, are the playful river otters and sea otters, as well as the giant octopus. From the underwater viewing dome you get a fish’s-eye view of life beneath the waves, and each September you can watch salmon return up a fish ladder to spawn.

Pier 59, 1483 Alaskan Way.  **206/386-4300**. www.seattleaquarium.org. Admission \$17 adults, \$11 children 4–12, free for children 3 and under. Daily 9:30am–5pm. Bus: 10, 12, 15, 16, or 18, and then walk through Pike Place Market to the waterfront. Waterfront Streetcar Bus (no. 99): Pike St. stop.

Pike Place Market to Pioneer Square

Pike Place Market and the Pioneer Square historic district lie at opposite ends of First Avenue; midway between the two is the Seattle Art Museum.

The **Pioneer Square** area, with its historic buildings, interesting shops, museum, and Underground Tour (see “Good Times in Bad Taste,” below), is well worth a morning or afternoon of exploration

Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park “At 3 o’clock this morning the steamship *Portland*, from St. Michaels for Seattle, passed up (Puget) Sound with more than a ton of gold on board and 68 passengers.” When the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* published that sentence on July 17, 1897, it started a stampede. Would-be miners heading for the Klondike gold fields in the 1890s made Seattle their outfitting center and helped turn it into a prosperous city. When they struck it rich up north, they headed back to Seattle, the first U.S. outpost of civilization, and unloaded their gold, making Seattle doubly rich. Although this place isn’t in the Klondike (that’s in Canada) and isn’t really a park (it’s more of a museum in a historic building), it’s still a fascinating place, and it seems only fitting that it should be here in Seattle. (Another unit of the park is in Skagway, Alaska.) During the summer, free walking tours of the Pioneer Square neighborhood are scheduled daily.

319 Second Ave. S.  **206/220-4240**. www.nps.gov/klse. Free admission. Daily 9am–5pm. Closed New Year’s Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. Bus: 3, 4, 15, 16, 18, 21, or 22. Waterfront Streetcar Bus (no. 99): Occidental Park stop.

Pike Place Market ★★ ★ Pike Place Market, originally a farmers market, was founded in 1907 when housewives complained that middlemen were raising the price of produce. The market allowed shoppers to buy directly from producers and thus save on grocery bills. For several decades, the market thrived. However, World War II deprived the market of nearly half its farmers when Japanese Americans were moved to internment camps. With the postwar flight to the suburbs, the market was never able to recover from the war years, and by the 1960s, the market was no longer

good times **IN BAD TASTE**

If your kids (or you) love bad jokes and are fascinated by the bizarre, you won't want to miss the Underground Tour and a visit to Ye Olde Curiosity Shop. Together, these two attractions should reassure you that Seattle isn't just about deep, cerebral conversations over espresso; the city has a sense of humor, too.

If you have an appreciation for off-color humor and are curious about the seamier side of Seattle history, the **Underground Tour**, 608 First Ave. (☎ **206/682-4646**; www.undergroundtour.com), will likely entertain and enlighten you. The tours wander around below street level in the Pioneer Square area, where you can still find the vestiges of Seattle businesses built just after the great fire of 1889. Learn the lowdown dirt on early Seattle, a town

where plumbing was problematic and a person could drown in a pothole. Tours are held daily. The cost is \$15 for adults, \$12 for seniors and students 13 to 17 or with college ID, and \$7 for children 7 to 12; children 6 and under are discouraged from participating.

Ye Olde Curiosity Shop, Pier 54, 1001 Alaskan Way (☎ **206/682-5844**; www.yeoldecuriosityshop.com), is a cross between a souvenir store and *Ripley's Believe It or Not!* It's weird! It's wacky! It's tacky! The collection of oddities was started in 1899 by Joe Standley, who developed a more-than-passing interest in strange curios. See conjoined-twin calves, a natural mummy, the Lord's Prayer on a grain of rice, a narwhal tusk, shrunken heads, a 67-pound snail, fleas in dresses—all the stuff that may have fascinated you as a kid.

the popular spot it had been. When it was announced that the site was being eyed for a major redevelopment project, a grass-roots movement arose to save the 9-acre market and, eventually, the market was declared a National Historic District.

These days the market bustles from dawn to dusk, but the 100 or so farmers and fishmongers who set up shop on the premises are only a small part of the attraction. You'll also find more than 150 local craftspeople and artists selling their creations as street performers serenade milling crowds. Hundreds of small specialty shops are scattered throughout the market, plus dozens of restaurants, including some of the city's best. At the **information booth** almost directly below the large **PIKE PLACE MARKET** sign, you can pick up a free map and guide to the market. Keep an eye out for low-flying fish at the **Pike Place Fish** stall, and be sure to save some change for **Rachel**, the market's giant charity piggy bank.

Victor Steinbrueck Park, at the north end of the market at the intersection of Pike Place, Virginia Street, and Western Avenue, is a popular lounging area for both the homeless and those just looking for a grassy spot in the sun. In the park, you'll see two 50-foot-tall totem poles.

The market's "**Gum Wall**" is a bit of a sticky subject. No one can agree whether it is art or just a disgusting form of litter. Maybe you'll have to decide for yourself. You'll find the chewing-gum-covered wall just down Pike Street (actually a cobbled alley) from the market information booth. The wall is across the street from the Alibi Room bar.

See the "Market Munching" section on p. 108 for a rundown of some of my favorite market food vendors. Also, if you're going to be in town in October, consider

attending the annual Feast at the Market (☎ **206/461-6935**, ext. 160; www.pikemarket.org/feast), a showcase for food from market restaurants.

In summer, there are guided tours of the market on Saturday mornings at 10am (\$10 adults, \$7 seniors and children). These tours leave from *Rachel*, the market piggy bank. Advance reservations are required; call the Friends of the Market (☎ **206/322-2219**).

Btw. Pike and Pine sts., at First Ave. ☎ **206/682-7453**. www.pikeplacemarket.org. Pike Place/First Ave. businesses Mon–Sat 10am–6pm, Sun 11am–5pm; Down Under stores daily 11am–5pm; many produce vendors open at 8am in summer; restaurant hours vary. Closed New Year’s Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. Bus: 2, 3, 4, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18, 21, 22, 24, 25, 33, 36, 43, 49, 56, or 70. Waterfront Streetcar Bus (no. 99): Pike St. Hillclimb stop.

Seattle Art Museum (SAM) ★★ This large museum verges on world-class and should not be missed on a visit to Seattle. With acres of gallery space and cutting-edge exhibit designs, this is definitely not your typical, stodgy art museum. Before you even step inside the museum, you’ll come face to faceless silhouette with Jonathan Borofsky’s shadowy *Hammering Man*, an animated three-story steel sculpture that pounds out a silent beat in front of the museum. Inside the museum, white cars go tumbling through the air with colored lights shooting out of them in Cai Guo-Qiang’s sculpture *Inopportune: Stage One*. Once you finally get inside the museum proper, you’ll find one of the nation’s premier collections of Northwest Coast Indian art and artifacts, and an equally large collection of African art. The museum is particularly strong in modern and contemporary art, but there are also good collections of European and American art ranging from ancient Mediterranean works to pieces from the medieval, Renaissance, and baroque periods. Of course, the Northwest contemporary art collection is also quite extensive. (The museum also has a smattering of Asian art, but the city’s major collection of Asian art is at the affiliated Seattle Asian Art Museum in Volunteer Park; see p. 118.)

1300 First Ave. ☎ **206/654-3100**. www.seattleartmuseum.org. Admission \$15 adults, \$12 seniors, \$9 youths ages 13–17, free for children 12 and under. Free for all on 1st Thurs of each month; free for seniors on 1st Fri of each month; free for teens on 2nd Fri of each month from 5–9pm. Wed and Sat–Sun 10am–5pm; Thurs–Fri 10am–9pm. Closed New Year’s Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas, and New Year’s Eve (open some holiday Mon). Bus: Any downtown bus.

Seattle Center Attractions

Built in 1962 for the World’s Fair, Seattle Center is today not only the site of Seattle’s famous Space Needle but also a cultural and entertainment park that doubles as the city’s favorite festival grounds. Within Seattle Center’s boundaries, you’ll find the Experience Music Project (EMP), the Science Fiction Museum, the Pacific Science Center, the Seattle Children’s Museum, the Seattle Children’s Theatre, Key Arena, the Marion Oliver McCaw Hall, the Intiman Theatre, the Bagley Wright Theatre, a small amusement park, and a fountain that’s a favorite summertime hangout. The “Especially for Kids” section (p. 124) lists further details on Seattle Center attractions that young travelers will enjoy.

Experience Music Project (EMP) ★★ The brainchild of Microsoft cofounder Paul Allen and designed by avant-garde architect Frank Gehry, who is known for pushing the envelope of architectural design, this rock-’n’-roll museum is a massive, multicolored blob at the foot of the Space Needle. Originally planned as a memorial to Seattle native Jimi Hendrix, the museum grew to encompass not only Hendrix,

but all of the Northwest rock scene (from “Louie Louie” to grunge) and the general history of American popular music.

The most popular exhibits here (after the Jimi Hendrix room) are the interactive rooms. In the Sound Lab, you can play guitars, drums, keyboards, or even DJ turntables. In On Stage, you can experience what it’s like to be onstage performing in front of adoring fans. Another exhibit focuses on the history of guitars and includes some of the first electric guitars, which date from the early 1930s. Give yourself plenty of time to explore this unusual museum.

Seattle Center, 325 Fifth Ave. N. ☎ **877/367-7361** or 206/770-2700. www.empsfm.org. Admission \$15 adults, \$12 seniors and children 5–17, free for children 4 and under. Free 1st Thurs of each month 5–8pm. Science Fiction Museum combination tickets available. Memorial Day to Labor Day daily 10am–7pm; other months daily 10am–5pm (until 8pm 1st Thurs of each month). Closed Thanksgiving and Christmas. Bus: 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 24, 33, 45, 74, 81, or 82. Monorail: From Westlake Center at Pine St. and Fourth Ave.

Pacific Science Center ★ ☺ Although its exhibits are aimed primarily at children, the Pacific Science Center is fun for all ages. The main goal of this sprawling complex at Seattle Center is to teach kids about science and to instill a desire to study it. To that end, kids can investigate life-size robotic dinosaurs, a butterfly house and insect village (with giant robotic insects), technology exhibits where they can play virtual-reality soccer or challenge a robot to tic-tac-toe, and dozens of other fun hands-on exhibits addressing the biological sciences, physics, and chemistry. Throughout the year there are special events that are guaranteed to keep your kids entertained for hours. There’s a planetarium for learning about the skies (and laser shows for the fun of it), plus an IMAX theater. Be sure to check the schedule for special exhibits when you’re in town.

Seattle Center, 200 Second Ave. N. ☎ **800/664-8775** or 206/443-2001, 206/443-4629 for IMAX information, or 206/443-2850 for laser-show information. www.pacsci.org. Admission \$14 adults, \$12 seniors, \$9 ages 6–15, \$7 ages 3–5, free for children 2 and under. IMAX \$9–\$13 adults, \$8–\$12 seniors, \$7–\$10 ages 6–15, \$6–\$9 ages 3–5, free for children 2 and under. Laser show \$5–\$8.50. Various discounted combination tickets available. Summer daily 10am–6pm; other months Mon and Wed–Fri 10am–4pm, Sat–Sun 10am–6pm. Closed Thanksgiving and Christmas. Bus: 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 24, 33, 45, 74, 81, or 82. Monorail: From Westlake Center at Pine St. and Fourth Ave.

Science Fiction Museum and Hall of Fame (SFM) ★ Located inside the Experience Music Project, this is another pet project of Seattle’s own billionaire nerd Paul Allen. This museum is packed with more pop-culture icons, in this case from the world of science fiction. With displays of actual props and costumes from such historic sci-fi films and TV shows as *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*, *Alien*, *Dr. Who*, and *Terminator*, this place is an absolute must for devoted fans of one of literature’s least-respected yet best-loved genres. The museum spends a lot of time chronicling the history of science fiction, including displays of 1930s and 1940s pulp fiction magazines. Other displays focus on the fans themselves (and the conventions they stage), as well as the connections to science. But for most visitors, it’s the movie props that are the real draw. From robots to jet packs to space suits and ray guns, it’s all here.

Seattle Center, inside Experience Music Project building, 325 Fifth Ave. N. ☎ **877/367-5483** or 206/SCI-FICT (724-3428). www.empsfm.org. Admission \$15 adults, \$12 seniors and children 5–17, free for children 4 and under. Free 1st Thurs of each month 5–8pm. Memorial Day to Labor Day daily 10am–7pm; Labor Day to Memorial Day daily 10am–5pm (until 8pm 1st Thurs of each month). Closed Thanksgiving and Christmas. Bus: 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 24, 33, 45, 74, 81, or 82. Monorail: From Westlake Center at Pine St. and Fourth Ave.

space needle **ALTERNATIVES**

If you don't want to deal with the crowds at the Space Needle but still want an elevated downtown view, you have some alternatives. One is the big, black **Columbia Center** (☎ **206/386-5151**), at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Columbia Street. At 943 feet, this is the tallest building in Seattle (twice as tall as the Space Needle), with more stories (76, to be exact) than any other building west of the Mississippi. On the 73rd floor is an observation deck with views that dwarf those from the Space Needle. Admission is only \$5 for adults and \$3 for seniors and children. It's open Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 4:30pm.

Not far from Columbia Center is the **Smith Tower**, 506 Second Ave. (☎ **206/622-4004**; www.smithtower.com). Opened in 1914, this was Seattle's first skyscraper and, for 50 years, the tallest building west of Chicago. Although the Smith Tower has only 42 stories, it still offers excellent views from its 35th-floor observation deck, which surrounds the ornate Chinese Room, a

banquet hall with a carved ceiling. A lavish lobby and original manual elevators make this a fun and historic place to take in the Seattle skyline. Deck hours vary with the time of year and scheduled events in the Chinese Room; check in advance to be sure it will be open when you want to visit. Admission is \$7.50 for adults, \$6 for seniors and students, and \$5 for children 6 to 12.

If you've ever seen a photo of the Space Needle framed by Mount Rainier and the high-rises of downtown Seattle, it was probably taken from **Kerry Viewpoint**, on Queen Anne Hill. If you want to take your own drop-dead gorgeous photo of the Seattle skyline from this elevated perspective, head north from Seattle Center on Queen Anne Avenue North, and turn left on West Highland Drive. When you reach the park, you'll immediately recognize the view.

Another great panorama is from the water tower in **Volunteer Park** on Capitol Hill at East Prospect Street and 14th Avenue East.

Space Needle ★ From a distance it looks like a flying saucer on a tripod, and when it was built for the 1962 World's Fair, the 605-foot-tall Space Needle was meant to suggest future architectural trends. Today the Space Needle is the quintessential symbol of Seattle, and at 520 feet above ground level, its observation deck provides superb views of the city and its surroundings. Displays identify more than 60 sites and activities in the Seattle area, and high-powered telescopes let you zoom in on them. You'll also find a pricey restaurant, SkyCity (p. 96), atop the tower. If you don't mind standing in line and paying quite a bit for an elevator ride, make this your first stop in Seattle so that you can orient yourself. (However, cheaper alternatives exist if you just want a view of the city—see "Space Needle Alternatives," above.)

Seattle Center, 400 Broad St. ☎ **206/905-2100**. www.spaceneedle.com. Admission \$17 adults, \$15 seniors, \$9 ages 4-13, free for children 3 and under (day-and-night tickets \$22 adults, \$20 seniors, \$14 ages 4-13). No charge if dining in the SkyCity restaurant. Mon-Thurs 10am-9:30pm; Fri-Sat 9:30am-10:30pm; Sun 9:30am-9:30pm. Bus: 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 24, 33, 45, 74, 81, or 82. Monorail: From Westlake Center at Pine St. and Fourth Ave.

The Neighborhoods

THE INTERNATIONAL DISTRICT

Seattle today boasts of its strategic location on the Pacific Rim, but its ties to Asia are nothing new. This is evident in the International District, Seattle's main Asian neighborhood, which is centered between Fifth Avenue South and 12th Avenue South (btw. S. Washington St. and S. Lane St.). Called both Chinatown and the International District (because so many Asian nationalities have made this area home), the neighborhood has been the center of the city's Asian communities for more than a century. You can learn about the district's history at the **Wing Luke Asian Museum** (see below).

At the corner of Maynard Avenue South and South King Street is **Hing Hay Park**, the site of an ornate and colorful pavilion given to Seattle by the city of Taipei, Taiwan.

The I.D. has many restaurants, import stores, and food markets. The huge **Uwa-jimaya** (p. 138) is all of these rolled into one.

Wing Luke Asian Museum Despite much persecution in the 19th and 20th centuries, Asians, primarily Chinese and Japanese, have played an integral role in developing the Northwest, and today the connection between this region and the far side of the Pacific has opened both economic and cultural doors. Named for the first Asian American to hold public office in the Northwest and located in the heart of Seattle's International District, this small museum has exhibits that explore the roles various Asian cultures have played in the settlement and development of the region. Other exhibits help explain Asian customs to non-Asians. If you're walking around the International District, this place will give you a better appreciation of the neighborhood, but the exhibits tend to have a narrow range of appeal.

719 S. King St. 📞 **206/623-5124**. www.wingluke.org. Admission \$13 adults, \$9.95 seniors and students, \$8.95 children 5-12, free for children 4 and under. Free admission 1st Thurs and 3rd Sat of each month. Tues-Sun 10am-5pm (until 8pm 1st Thurs and 3rd Sat of each month). Closed New Year's Day, July 4th, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and Christmas. Bus: 7, 14, 36, or 99 (Waterfront Streetcar Bus), or any bus using the transit tunnel.

FIRST HILL (PILL HILL) & CAPITOL HILL

Seattle is justly proud of its parks, and **Volunteer Park** ★ on Capitol Hill at 14th Avenue East and East Prospect Street (drive north on Broadway and watch for signs) is one of the most popular. Here you'll find not only acres of lawns, groves of trees, and huge old rhododendrons, but also an old water tower that provides one of the best panoramas in the city. A winding staircase leads to the top of the water tower, from which you get 360-degree views. The observatory level also has an interesting exhibit about the Olmsted Brothers and the system of parks they designed for Seattle. To find the water tower, park near the Seattle Asian Art Museum if you can, and then walk back out of the parking lot to where the road splits. The view from directly in front of the museum, by Isamu Noguchi's *Black Sun* sculpture, is one of those quintessential Seattle photo ops.

Frye Art Museum ★ On First Hill not far from downtown Seattle, this museum is primarily an exhibit space for the extensive personal art collection of Charles and Emma Frye, Seattle pioneers who began collecting art in the 1890s. The collection focuses on late-19th-century and early-20th-century representational art by European and American painters, with works by Andrew Wyeth, Thomas Hart Benton,

Edward Hopper, Albert Bierstadt, and Pablo Picasso, as well as a large collection of engravings by Winslow Homer. In addition to galleries filled with works from the permanent collection, temporary exhibitions, often of more contemporary works, are held throughout the year.

704 Terry Ave. (at Cherry St.). ☎ **206/622-9250**. www.fryeart.org. Free admission. Tues–Wed and Fri–Sat 10am–5pm; Thurs 10am–8pm; Sun noon–5pm. Closed New Year’s Day, July 4th, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. Bus: 3, 4, or 12.

Seattle Asian Art Museum ★ Housed in an Art Deco building in Volunteer Park, the collection at this museum places an emphasis on Chinese and Japanese art, but also includes works from Korea, Southeast Asia, South Asia, and the Himalayas. Among the museum’s most notable pieces are Chinese terra-cotta funerary art, Chinese snuff bottles, and Japanese *netsuke* (belt decorations). Entire rooms are devoted to Japanese and Chinese ceramics. The central hall contains stone religious sculptures from South Asia (primarily India).

Volunteer Park, 1400 E. Prospect St. ☎ **206/654-3100**. www.seattleartmuseum.org. Admission \$7 adults, \$5 seniors and youths 13–17, free for children 12 and under. Each month, museum is free to all 1st Thurs and 2nd Thurs from 5–9pm, free for seniors 1st Fri, and free for families 1st Sat. Wed–Sun 10am–5pm; Thurs and Fri 10am–9pm; closed Mon and Tues. Closed New Year’s Day; Martin Luther King, Jr., Day; Presidents’ Day; Memorial Day; July 4th; Columbus Day; Thanksgiving; and Christmas. Bus: 10.

Volunteer Park Conservatory ★★ This stately old Victorian conservatory, built in 1912, houses a large collection of tropical and desert plants, including palm trees, orchids, and cacti, and features seasonal floral displays. Both the plants and the building are beautiful and should not be missed. It’s especially rewarding to visit on a rainy day.

Volunteer Park, 1400 E. Galer St. ☎ **206/684-4743**. www.volunteerparkconservatory.org or www.seattle.gov/parks/parkspaces/volunteerpark/conservatory.htm. Free admission. Tues–Sun 10am–4pm. Bus: 10.

NORTH SEATTLE (INCLUDING THE U DISTRICT, FREMONT & MONTLAKE)

The **Fremont District**, which begins at the north end of the Fremont Bridge—near the intersection of Fremont Avenue North and North 36th Street—is one of Seattle’s funkiest and most unusual neighborhoods. Even livelier, though not nearly as eclectic or artistic, the **University District** (known locally as the U District) has loads of cheap restaurants and the types of shops you would associate with a college-age clientele. But the main attractions for visitors are the two excellent museums on the university campus and the nearby Museum of History and Industry, which is just across the Montlake Bridge from the U District.

Burke Museum ★★ At the northwest corner of the University of Washington campus, the Burke Museum features exhibits on the natural and cultural heritage of the Pacific Rim and is the Northwest’s foremost museum of paleontology, archaeology, and ethnology. Permanent exhibits include *Life & Times of Washington State*, which covers 500 million years of Washington history (and prehistory) with lots of fossils, including a complete mastodon. The second permanent exhibit, *Pacific Voices*, focuses on the many cultures of the Pacific Rim and their connections to Washington state. In front of the museum stand several modern totem poles that are replicas of poles carved in the late 19th century. Because this museum is fairly large,

it mounts touring shows that often make only a few other stops in the U.S., so be sure to check the exhibition schedule when you are in town.

University of Washington, 17th Ave. NE and NE 45th St.  **206/543-5590** or 543-7907. www.burkemuseum.org. Admission \$9.50 adults, \$7.50 seniors, \$6 children 5-18, free for children 4 and under. For \$1 more, you can get admission to the nearby Henry Art Gallery. Free 1st Thurs of each month. Daily 10am-5pm (1st Thurs of each month until 8pm). Closed New Year's Day, July 4th, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. Bus: 43, 70, 71, 72, or 73.

Henry Art Gallery Expect the unexpected here—and prepare to be challenged in your concept of what constitutes art. The focus of the Henry Art Gallery, on the west side of the UW campus, is on contemporary art with retrospectives of individual art-

ists, as well as exhibits focusing on specific themes or media. The museum benefits from large, well-lit gallery spaces illuminated by pyramidal and cubic skylights that can be seen near the main entrance. Photography and video are both well represented, and for the most part, the exhibits are the most avant-garde in the Seattle area. The museum's permanent Skyspace installation by James

Insider Tip

Parking on the University of Washington campus is expensive on weekdays and Saturday mornings, so try to visit the Burke Museum or Henry Art Gallery on a Saturday afternoon or a Sunday, when parking is free.

Turrell, who uses light to create his artwork, is worth the price of admission if you're the contemplative type. The Skyspace is a small room with an oval ceiling opening that frames the sky. At night, the outside of the glass Skyspace is illuminated by an ever-changing light show. The museum also has a cafe and a small sculpture courtyard. Parking is often available at the Central Parking Garage, at NE 41st Street and 15th Avenue NE.

University of Washington, 15th Ave. NE and NE 41st St.  **206/543-2280**. www.henryart.org. Admission \$10 adults, \$6 seniors, free for students and children 13 and under; free for all Thurs. Thurs-Fri 11am-9pm; Sat-Sun 11am-4pm. Closed New Year's Day, July 4th, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. Bus: 43, 70, 71, 72, or 73.

Hiram M. Chittenden (Ballard) Locks ★★ For some reason, many people are intrigued by the concept of two side-by-side bodies of water on two different levels. Consequently, the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks are one of Seattle's top attractions. The two locks here link Puget Sound with the Lake Washington Ship Canal, which connects to both Lake Union and Lake Washington. Barges, commercial fishing vessels, and small private boats all use the locks. A fish ladder and fish-viewing windows here provide opportunities for salmon viewing during the summer months, and the chance to see salmon in a fish ladder is as much of a draw as the locks themselves. The locks are also the site of the **Carl S. English, Jr. Botanical Gardens**, a park filled with rare and unusual shrubs and trees. Tours of the grounds are offered much of the year (call for schedule).

3015 NW 54th St.  **206/783-7059**. Free admission. Daily 7am-9pm (visitor center May-Sept daily 10am-6pm; Oct-Apr Thurs-Mon 10am-4pm). Bus: 17 or 44.

Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI) ★ If the Seattle Underground Tour's vivid description of life before the 1889 fire has you curious about what the city's more respectable citizens were doing back in those days, you can find out here,

where re-created storefronts provide glimpses into their lives. Located at the north end of the Washington Park Arboretum, this museum explores Seattle's history with frequently changing exhibits on more obscure aspects of the city's past. While many of the displays will be of interest only to local residents, anyone wishing to gain a better understanding of the history of the city and the Northwest may also enjoy the exhibits here. There's a Boeing mail plane from the 1920s, plus an exhibit on the 1889 fire that leveled the city. MOHAI also hosts touring exhibitions that address Northwest history. Although not actually in north Seattle, this museum is just across the Montlake Bridge from the University District. There are plans to move the museum to Lake Union Park in 2012.

McCurdy Park, 2700 24th Ave. E. ☎ **206/324-1126**. www.seattlehistory.org. Admission \$8 adults, \$7 seniors and students, \$6 youths 5-17, free for children 4 and under; free 1st Thurs of each month. Daily 10am-5pm (until 8pm 1st Thurs of each month). Closed Thanksgiving and Christmas. Bus: 25, 43, or 48. From I-5, take Wash. 520 east (exit 168B) to the Montlake exit, go straight through the stoplight to 24th Ave. E, and turn left.

Woodland Park Zoo ★ ☺ This sprawling zoo has outstanding exhibits focusing on Alaska, tropical Asia, the African savanna, and the tropical rainforest. The brown-bear enclosure, one of the zoo's best exhibits, is a very realistic reproduction of an Alaskan stream and hillside. In the savanna, zebras gambol and giraffes graze contentedly near a reproduction of an African village. An elephant forest provides plenty of space for the zoo's pachyderms, and the gorilla and orangutan habitats are also nicely done. A farm-animal area is a big hit with the little ones, and young kids like the Zoomazium, an interactive educational play area where they can see what it's like to be wild animals.

750 N. 50th St. ☎ **206/548-2500**. www.zoo.org. Admission May-Sept \$17 adults, \$15 seniors, \$11 children 3-12, free for children 2 and under; Oct-Apr \$11 adults, \$9 seniors, \$8 children 3-12, free for children 2 and under. May-Sept daily 9:30am-6pm; Oct-Apr daily 9:30am-4pm. Parking \$5. Bus: 5 or 44.

SOUTH SEATTLE

Museum of Flight ★★ ☺ Right next door to Boeing Field, at an active airport 15 minutes south of downtown Seattle, this museum will have aviation buffs walking on air. Housed inside the six-story glass-and-steel repository are some of history's most famous planes.

The collection of planes starts with a replica of the Wright brothers' 1903 plane and continues through to the present state of flight. Suspended in the Great Hall are more than 20 planes, including a 1935 DC-3, the first Air Force F-5 supersonic fighter, and the *Gossamer Albatross*, a human-powered airplane. The Personal Courage Wing houses 28 World War I and World War II fighter planes. You'll also see one of the famous Blackbird spy planes, which at one time were the world's fastest jets (you can even sit in the cockpit of one of these babies). There's also a rare World War II Corsair fighter that was rescued from Lake Washington and restored to its original glory. Visitors also get to board a retired British Airways Concorde supersonic airliner. An exhibit on the U.S. space program features an Apollo command module. Of course, you'll also see plenty of Boeing planes, including a reproduction of Boeing's first plane, which was built in 1916. The museum also incorporates part of Boeing's old wooden factory building, a remnant from the company's earliest years.

9404 E. Marginal Way S. ☎ **206/764-5720**. www.museumofflight.org. Admission \$15 adults, \$13 seniors, \$8 children 5-17, free for children 4 and under. Free 1st Thurs of each month 5-9pm. Daily 10am-5pm (until 9pm 1st Thurs of each month). Closed Thanksgiving and Christmas. Bus: 124. Take exit 158 off I-5.

NORTH OF SEATTLE

Future of Flight Aviation Center & Boeing Tour ★★ Before Bill Gates and Microsoft, **Boeing** was by far the largest employer in the Seattle area. Although the airplane manufacturer no longer has its corporate headquarters in Seattle, Boeing is still a major presence in the city, and it still has something that Microsoft can never claim: the single largest building, by volume, in the world. The company's Everett assembly plant could easily hold 911 basketball courts, 74 football fields, 2,142 average-size homes, or all of Disneyland (with room left over for covered parking). This impressive building is open to the public by guided tour, and a visit to the plant is one of the most interesting tourist activities in Seattle. On the tour, you'll get to see how huge passenger jets are assembled. In the Future of Flight Aviation Center, from which the tours leave, you can stick your head inside a giant jet engine, climb into the cockpit of a Boeing 727, design your own jet on a computer, or go for a ride in a flight simulator.

The guided 90-minute tours are offered on the hour from 9am to 3pm, and tickets for same-day use are sold on a first-come, first-served basis; in summer, tickets for any given day's tours often sell out by noon. To check availability of same-day tickets, call the number below. It's also possible to make reservations 24 hours or more in advance by calling ☎ **800/464-1476** or 360/756-0086 daily between 9am and 5pm, or by booking online at the website below. If making reservations, you'll pay an extra \$2.50 per ticket.

If you're in town without a car, you can book a tour to the plant through **Customized Tours** (☎ **800/770-8769** or 206/878-3965; www.customizedtours.net), which charges \$57 and will pick you up at your Seattle hotel.

8415 Paine Field Blvd., Mukilteo. ☎ **888/467-4777** or 425/438-8100. www.futureofflight.org. Admission \$16 adults, \$14 seniors, \$8 children 4 ft. tall to age 15, no children under 4 ft. tall on Boeing tour; exhibit hall only admission \$10 adults and seniors, \$5 children 6-15. Daily 8:30am-5:30pm. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. Drive 30 miles north from Seattle on I-5, take exit 189 to Wash. 526 W., and continue 4 miles to the intersection of Paine Field Blvd. and 84th St. SW.

Beaches, Parks & Public Gardens

BEACHES

Because the waters of **Puget Sound** stay chilly year-round, the saltwater beaches in the Seattle area are not really swimming beaches. They are primarily places to play in the sand, gaze across the water at the Olympic Mountains, and enjoy a picnic. Seattle is also bordered on the east by **Lake Washington**, a large lake with numerous parks and small beaches along its shores. Even though the waters never get truly warm, the lake is still popular for swimming. There is, however, one caveat. A parasite spread by geese and known as swimmer's itch is commonplace in the waters of Lake Washington. Consequently, you should always change out of your bathing suit and shower as soon after swimming as possible.

Alki Beach ★, across Elliott Bay from downtown Seattle, is the city's most popular beach and is the nearest approximation you'll find in the Northwest to a Southern California beach scene. The paved path that runs along this 2½-mile beach is popular with skaters, walkers, and cyclists, and the road that parallels the beach is lined with shops, restaurants, beach houses, and apartment buildings. But the views across Puget Sound to the Olympic Mountains confirm that this is indeed the Northwest. (Despite those views, this beach lacks the greenery that makes some

of the city's other beaches so much more appealing.) From April through October, a water taxi operates between the downtown Seattle waterfront and Alki Beach; see p. 66 for details. By the way, Alki rhymes with *sky*, not *key*.

PARKS

Seattle's many parks are part of what make it such a livable city and an enjoyable place to visit. In the downtown area, **Myrtle Edwards Park ★**, 3130 Alaskan Way W. (☎ 206/684-4075), at the north end of the waterfront, is an ideal spot for a sunset stroll with views of Puget Sound and the Olympic Mountains. The park includes a 1.25-mile paved pathway. At its north end, this park connects with the Port of Seattle's **Elliott Bay Park**.

For serious communing with nature, nothing will do but **Discovery Park ★★**, 3801 W. Government Way (☎ 206/386-4236). Occupying a high bluff and sandy point jutting into Puget Sound, this is Seattle's largest and wildest park. You can easily spend a day wandering its trails and beaches. The visitor center is open Tuesday through Sunday from 8:30am to 5pm. Discovery Park is a 15-minute drive from downtown; to get here, follow the waterfront north from downtown Seattle toward the Magnolia neighborhood and watch for signs to the park. When you reach the park, follow signed trails down to the beach and out to the lighthouse at the point. Although the lighthouse is only occasionally open to the public, the views from the beach make this a good destination for an hour's walk. The beach and park's bluff-top meadows both make good picnic spots.

Up on Capitol Hill, at East Prospect Street and 14th Avenue East, you'll find **Volunteer Park ★**, 1247 15th Ave. E. (☎ 206/684-4075), which is surrounded by the elegant mansions of this old neighborhood. It's a popular spot for sunning and playing Frisbee, and is home to the Seattle Asian Art Museum (p. 118), an amphitheater, a water tower with a superb view of the city, and a conservatory filled with tropical and desert plants (p. 118). With so much variety, you can easily spend a morning or afternoon exploring this park.

North Seattle has several parks worth visiting, including the unique **Gas Works Park ★**, 2101 N. Northlake Way, at Meridian Avenue North (☎ 206/684-4075), at the north end of Lake Union. In the middle of its green lawns looms the rusting hulk of an old industrial plant; the park's small Kite Hill is a popular kite-flying spot.

Moving farther north, on Green Lake Drive North near Woodland Park Zoo, you'll find **Green Lake Park ★★**, 7201 E. Green Lake Dr. N. (☎ 206/684-4075), a center for exercise buffs who jog, bike, and skate on its 2.8-mile paved path. It's also possible to picnic on the many grassy areas and swim in the lake (there are changing rooms and a beach with summer lifeguards).

North of the Ballard neighborhood is **Golden Gardens Park ★★**, 8498 Seaview Place NW (☎ 206/684-4075), which, with its excellent views of the Olympic Mountains and its somewhat wild feeling, is my favorite Seattle waterfront park. It has great views, some small wetlands, and a short trail. Golden Gardens is best known as one of Seattle's best beaches, too, and even though the water here is too cold for swimming, the sandy beach is a pleasant spot for a sunset stroll. People often gather on summer evenings to build fires on the beach. To reach this park, drive north from the waterfront on Elliott Avenue, which becomes 15th Avenue West; after crossing the Ballard Bridge, turn left on Market Street and follow this road for about 2 miles (it will change names to become NW 54th St. and then Seaview Ave. NW).

fish GOTTA SWIM

It's no secret that salmon in the Puget Sound region have dwindled to dangerously low numbers in recent years. But it's still possible to witness the annual return of spawning salmon in various spots around the sound.

In the autumn, on the waterfront, you can see returning salmon at the **Seattle Aquarium** (p. 112), which has its own fish ladder. But the very best place to see salmon is at the **Hiram M. Chittenden (Ballard) Locks**, 3015 NW 54th St. (☎ **206/783-7059**; p. 119 for directions and hours). Between June and September (July–Aug are the peak months), you can view salmon through underwater observation windows as they leap up the locks' fish ladder. These locks, which

are used primarily by small boats, connect Lake Union and Lake Washington with the waters of Puget Sound, and depending on the tides and lake levels, there is a difference of 6 to 26 feet on either side of the locks.

East of Seattle, in downtown Issaquah, salmon can be seen year-round at the **Issaquah Salmon Hatchery**, 125 W. Sunset Way (☎ **425/391-9094** or 392-1118; www.issaquahfish.org). However, it is in the fall that adult salmon can be seen returning to the hatchery. Each year on the first weekend in October, the city of Issaquah holds the Issaquah Salmon Days Festival to celebrate the return of the natives.

PUBLIC GARDENS

See also the listings for Volunteer Park Conservatory on p. 118 and Hiram M. Chittenden Locks on p. 119.

Japanese Garden Covering 3½ acres, the Japanese Garden is a perfect little world unto itself, with a cherry orchard (for spring color), babbling brooks, and a lake rimmed with Japanese irises and filled with colorful koi (Japanese carp). A special tea garden encloses a teahouse, where on certain Saturdays and Sundays, you can attend a traditional tea ceremony (\$10). Unfortunately, noise from a nearby road can be distracting. Between April and October, there are free guided tours of the gardens Wednesday and Saturday at 12:30pm and Sunday at 12:30 and 2:30pm.

Washington Park Arboretum, 1075 Lake Washington Blvd. E. (north of E. Madison St.). ☎ **206/684-4725**. Admission \$5 adults; \$3 seniors, college students, and youths 6–17; free for children 5 and under. Late Feb to early May and mid-Sept to mid-Nov Tues–Sun 10am–dusk; May to mid-Sept daily 10am–dusk. Closed mid-Nov to mid-Feb. Bus: 11.

Washington Park Arboretum The acres of trees and shrubs in Washington Park Arboretum stretch from the far side of Capitol Hill all the way to the Montlake Cut (a canal connecting Lake Washington to Lake Union). Within the 230-acre arboretum are 4,600 varieties of plants and quiet trails that are pleasant throughout the year but are at their most beautiful in spring, when the azaleas, cherry trees, rhododendrons, and dogwoods are all in bloom. The north end of the arboretum, a marshland that is home to ducks and herons, is popular with bird-watchers as well as kayakers and canoeists (see “Outdoor Pursuits,” later in this chapter, for places to rent a canoe or kayak). A boardwalk with views across Lake Washington meanders along the waterside in this area (though noise from the adjacent freeway detracts considerably from the experience).

2300 Arboretum Dr. E. ☎ **206/543-8800**. www.washington.edu. Free admission. Daily dawn-dusk; Graham Visitors Center daily 9am-5pm. Bus: 11. Enter on Lake Washington Blvd. E. off E. Madison St.; or take Wash. 520 off I-5 north of downtown, take the Montlake Blvd. exit, and go straight through the 1st intersection.

Especially for Kids

In addition to the listings below, kids will also enjoy many of the attractions described earlier in this chapter, including the **Seattle Aquarium** (p. 112), **Pacific Science Center** (p. 115), and **Woodland Park Zoo** (p. 120).

Adolescent and preadolescent boys seem to unfailingly love **Ye Olde Curiosity Shop** and the **Underground Tour** (p. 113 for both). Younger kids also love the **Museum of Flight** (p. 120). And even the surliest teenagers will think you're pretty cool for taking them to the **Experience Music Project** (p. 114).

Kids need to burn off some energy? Earlier in this chapter, see "Beaches, Parks & Public Gardens" for descriptions of Seattle's best beaches and recreational areas; "Outdoor Pursuits" for the lowdown on biking; and "Spectator Sports" for details on Seattle's professional football and baseball teams.

You might also be able to catch a performance at the **Seattle Children's Theatre** (☎ **206/441-3322**; www.sct.org), in Seattle Center (see below); or at the **Northwest Puppet Center**, 9123 15th Ave. NE (☎ **206/523-2579**; www.nw-puppet.org).

5

What to See & Do

SEATTLE

Children's Museum ☺ The Children's Museum is in the basement of the Center House at Seattle Center, which is partly why Seattle Center is such a great place to spend a day with the kids. The museum includes plenty of hands-on cultural exhibits, a child-size neighborhood, a Discovery Bay for toddlers, a mountain wilderness area, a global village, and other special exhibits to keep the little ones busy learning and playing for hours.

Seattle Center, Center House, 305 Harrison St. ☎ **206/441-1768**. www.thechildrensmuseum.org. Admission \$7.50 adults and children, \$6.50 seniors, free for children 12 mos. and under. Mon-Fri 10am-5pm; Sat-Sun 10am-6pm. Closed New Year's Day, Labor Day weekend, Thanksgiving, and Dec 24-25. Bus: 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 24, 33, 45, 74, 81, or 82. Monorail: From Westlake Center at the corner of Pine St. and Fourth Ave.

Seattle Center ★ ☺ If you want to keep the kids entertained all day long, head to Seattle Center. This 74-acre cultural center and amusement park stands on the northern edge of downtown at the end of the monorail line. The most visible building at the center is the **Space Needle** (p. 116), which provides an outstanding panorama of the city from its observation deck. However, of much more interest to children are the **Children's Museum** (see above) and the **Seattle Children's Theatre** (see above). This is also Seattle's main festival site, and in the summer months hardly a weekend goes by without some special event filling its grounds. On hot summer days the **International Fountain** is a great place for kids to keep cool (bring a change of clothes). In 2012, Seattle Center will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Seattle World's Fair.

305 Harrison St. ☎ **206/684-7200**. www.seattlecenter.com. Free admission to grounds; attractions, activities and performances priced separately. Bus: 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 24, 33, 45, 74, 81, or 82. Monorail: From Westlake Center at the corner of Pine St. and Fourth Ave.

ORGANIZED TOURS

For information on the **Underground Tour**, see the box titled “Good Times in Bad Taste” on p. 113.

Walking Tours

In addition to the walking tours mentioned here, Pike Place Market offers tours of the market itself. See the Pike Place Market listing on p. 112 for details.

If you’d like to explore downtown Seattle with a knowledgeable guide, join one of the informative walking tours offered by **See Seattle Walking Tours** (☎ 425/226-7641; www.see-seattle.com), which visit Pike Place Market, the waterfront, and the Pioneer Square area. Tours cost \$20 and usually last 6 hours. There have to be a minimum of six people signed up before these tours go out.

You can also learn a lot about local history and wander through hidden corners of the city on the 2-hour tours run by **Duse McLean/Seattle Walking Tours** (☎ 425/885-3173; www.seattlewalkingtours.com). These tours wind their way from the International District to Pike Place Market, taking in historic buildings, public art, and scenic vistas. Tours are \$15 per person, are offered year-round by reservation, and require a minimum of three people to go out.

For an insider’s glimpse of life in Seattle’s Chinatown/International District (I.D.), hook up with **Chinatown Discovery** (☎ 206/623-5124; www.seattlechinatown-tour.com). On these walking tours, which last 1½ hours, you learn the history of this

colorful and historic neighborhood. Rates (for four or more on a tour) range from \$17 for adults, \$12 for students, and \$10 for children.

Food-focused tours of Pike Place Market are offered by **Savor Seattle** (☎ 888/987-2867; www.savorseattle-tours.com), which charges \$38 for a 2-hour tour and also offers a coffee-and-chocolate tour, and **Seattle Food Tours** (☎ 206/725-4483; <http://seattlefoodtours.com>), which charges \$39 for a 2½-hour tour and also offers a tour of Belltown restaurants (\$49). If you want to learn more about the famous Seattle coffee culture, go on a

coffee crawl with **Seattle by Foot** (☎ 800/838-3006; www.seattlebyfoot.com). These 2-hour tours cost \$24 if you make a reservation and \$27 if you just show up. This company also does an evening Seattle pub-crawl.

Bus Tours

If you’d like an overview of Seattle’s main tourist attractions, or if you’re pressed for time during your visit, you can pack in a lot of sights on a city tour with **Gray Line of Seattle** (☎ 800/426-7532 or 206/626-5200; www.graylineofseattle.com). Half-day tours cost \$35 for adults, \$18 for children. Many other options, including tours

Seattle Noir

If your tastes run to the macabre, you might be interested in the tours offered by **Private Eye on Seattle** (☎ 206/365-3739; www.privateeyetours.com). These somewhat bizarre van tours are led by a private eye named Jake, who shares stories of interesting and unusual cases from the Emerald City. Tours are \$25 per person. Another option is a tour of some of the city’s haunted locales.

to Mount Rainier National Park and to the Boeing plant in Everett, are also available.

Gray Line also operates a **Double-Decker Tour** in open-top buses. These city tours run from May through September and cost \$21 for adults and \$11 for children. Buses depart from seven stops around the city; call for details or keep an eye out for a parked double-decker bus.

To glimpse a bit more of Seattle on a guided van tour, try the Explore Seattle City Tour offered by **Customized Tours** (☎ 800/770-8769 or 206/878-3965; www.customizedtours.net), which charges \$44 per person. This tour stops at Pike Place Market, the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks and Fish Ladder, and the Klondike Gold Rush Historical Park. The company also offers a Boeing plant tour (\$52/person) and a Snoqualmie Falls and wineries tour (\$75/person).

Boat Tours

In addition to the boat tours and cruises mentioned below, you can do your own low-budget “cruise” simply by hopping on one of the ferries operated by **Washington State Ferries** (☎ 800/843-3779 or 888/808-7977 in Washington, or 206/464-6400; www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries). Try the Bainbridge Island or Bremerton ferries out of Seattle for a 1½- to 2½-hour round-trip. For more information on these ferries, see p. 66.

If you don't have enough time for an overnight trip to the **San Juan Islands**, it's still possible to get a feel for these picturesque islands by riding the San Juan Islands ferry from Anacortes (75 miles north of Seattle) to Friday Harbor. If you get off in Friday Harbor, you can spend a few hours exploring this town before returning to Anacortes. Alternatively, if you have more money to spend (and even less time), boat tours of the San Juan Islands depart from the Seattle waterfront. For information on ferries and boat excursions to the San Juan Islands, see chapter 6.

If you opt for only one tour while in Seattle, the Argosy Cruises' **Tillicum Village Tour ★★**, Pier 55 (☎ 888/623-1445 or 206/622-8687; www.tillicumvillage.com) should be it—it's unique and truly Northwestern. The tour includes a boat excursion, a salmon dinner, and Northwest Coast Indian masked dances. The salmon is cooked over an alder-wood fire in much the same way it has been done for generations, and

Seattle by Duck

Paul Revere would have had a hard time figuring out what to tell his fellow colonists if the British had arrived by Duck. A Duck, if you don't know, is a World War II amphibious vehicle that can arrive by land or by sea, and these odd-looking things are now being used to provide tours of Seattle on both land and water. Duck tours take in the standard city sights, but then plunge right into Lake Union for a tour of the

Portage Bay waterfront, with its many houseboats and great views. The 90-minute tours leave from a parking lot across from the Space Needle; they cost \$25 for adults and \$15 for kids. Contact **Seattle Duck Tours ★**, 516 Broad St. (☎ 800/817-1116 or 206/441-3825; www.seattleducktours.net). Because these tours encourage visitors to get a little daffy, they're very popular; reservations are recommended.

the traditional dances are fascinating (although more for the craftsmanship of the masks than for the dancing itself). At Blake Island State Park, across Puget Sound from Seattle, and only accessible by boat, Tillicum Village was built in conjunction with the 1962 Seattle World's Fair. The "village" is actually just a large restaurant and performance hall fashioned after a traditional Northwest Coast longhouse, but with the totem poles standing vigil out front, the forest encircling the longhouse, and the waters of Puget Sound stretching into the distance, Tillicum Village is a beautiful spot. After the dinner and dances, you have a little free time to walk along the beach or stretch your legs on one of the island's trails. There are even beaches on which to relax. Tours are \$80 for adults, \$73 for seniors, \$30 for children 5 to 12, and free for children 4 and under. They're offered daily from late May to early September, and on a more limited basis (usually weekends only) from March to late May and from early September to October. You can also just opt to ride the boat out to Blake Island and skip the meal and dancing.

Seattle is a city surrounded by water; so while you're here, you should be sure to set sail one way or another. **Argosy Cruises** ★ (☎ 888/623-1445 or 206/622-8687; www.argosycruises.com) offers the greatest variety of boat-tour options. If you're short on time, just do the 1-hour harbor cruise that departs from Pier 55 (\$17–\$22 adults, \$15–\$20 seniors, \$8.50–\$9.75 children 5–12) or the 2½-hour cruise from Lake Union through the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks to Elliott Bay (\$34–\$40 adults, \$30–\$37 seniors, \$12–\$13 children). This latter tour departs from Pier 56 and includes a bus connection between the waterfront and Lake Union. Argosy also operates two Lake Washington cruises that will take you past Bill Gates's fabled waterfront Xanadu. The 2-hour cruise departs from the AGC Marina at the south end of Lake Union (\$27–\$33 adults, \$23–\$29 seniors, \$11–\$12 children), while the 1½-hour cruise departs from the city dock in downtown Kirkland on the east side of the lake (\$31 adults, \$27 seniors, \$11 children). Of these options, I recommend the cruise through the locks; it may be the most expensive outing, but you get good views and the chance to navigate the locks. Reservations are recommended for all cruises; in rate ranges above, the higher rates are for cruises between mid-March and early September.

Want a meal with your cruise? Try one of Argosy's lunch, brunch, or dinner cruises aboard the **Royal Argosy** (www.argosycruises.com). Lunch and brunch cruises are \$47 to \$57 for adults and \$22 for children 5 to 12; dinner cruises are \$79 to \$89 for adults and \$30 for children. These cruises get my vote for best dinners afloat.

If you prefer a quieter glimpse at Seattle from the water, from May to mid-October **Emerald City Charters**, Pier 54 (☎ 206/624-3931; www.sailingseattle.com), offers 1½- and 2½-hour sailboat cruises. The longer excursions are at sunset. The cruises cost \$25 and \$40 for adults, \$20 and \$35 for seniors, and \$18 and \$30 for children 11 and under.

Victoria Excursions

Among Seattle's most popular boat tours are daylong excursions to Victoria, British Columbia. These trips are operated by **Victoria Clipper** ★★, Pier 69, 2701 Alaskan Way (☎ 800/888-2535, 206/448-5000, or 250/382-8100 in Victoria; www.clippervacations.com), several times a day during the summer (once or twice a day in other months). The high-speed passenger ferry takes 2 to 3 hours to reach Victoria. If you leave on the earliest ferry, you can spend the better part of the day

exploring Victoria and be back in Seattle for a late dinner. Round-trip fares range from \$85 to \$155 for adults (from \$73–\$125 with 7-day advance purchase), \$79 to \$145 for seniors, and \$43 to \$73 for children ages 1 to 11 (btw. mid-Sept and June, one child travels free with each adult paying for a 7-day advance-purchase round-trip fare). Some scheduled trips also stop in the San Juan Islands during the summer. Various tour packages are available, including an add-on tour to Butchart Gardens. Overnight trips can also be arranged.

You can also fly to Victoria from Seattle in a floatplane operated by **Kenmore Air** (☎ 866/435-9524 or 425/486-1257; www.kenmoreair.com). Flights take only an hour, which leaves plenty of time to explore Victoria and still make it back to Seattle in time for dinner. The round-trip fare is \$209 to \$239 per person.

For more complete information on Victoria, pick up a copy of *Frommer's Vancouver & Victoria*.

Scenic Flights

Seattle is one of the few cities in the United States where floatplanes are a regular sight in the skies and on the lakes. If you want to see what it's like to take off and land from the water, you've got a couple of options.

Seattle Seaplanes ★, 1325 Fairview Ave. E. (☎ 800/637-5553 or 206/329-9638; www.seattleseaplanes.com), which takes off from the southeast corner of Lake Union, offers 20-minute scenic flights over the city for \$88. This company also offers flights to nearby waterfront restaurants for dinner.

If you'd rather pretend you're back in the days of the red baron, you can go up in a vintage biplane with **Olde Thyme Aviation** (☎ 206/730-1412; www.olde-thymeaviation.com), which operates from Boeing Field. A 20-minute flight along the Seattle waterfront to the Space Needle costs \$135 for two people; other flights range in price from \$165 to \$549 for two people. Keep in mind that these flights only operate when weather conditions are appropriate.

OUTDOOR PURSUITS

See “Beaches, Parks & Public Gardens,” earlier in this chapter, for a rundown of great places to play.

Biking

Montlake Bicycle Shop, 2223 24th Ave. E. (☎ 206/329-7333; www.montlakebike.com), rents bikes by the day for \$35 to \$90. This shop is just south of the Montlake Bridge and is convenient to the **Burke-Gilman/Sammamish River Trail** ★, a 27-mile paved pathway created mostly from an old railway bed. This immensely popular path is a great place to take the family for a bike ride or to get in a long, vigorous ride without having to deal with traffic. The Burke-Gilman portion of the trail starts in the Ballard neighborhood of North Seattle, but the most convenient place to start a ride is at **Gas Works Park**, on the north shore of Lake Union. From here you can ride north and east, by way of the University of Washington, to **Kenmore Logboom Park**, at the north end of Lake Washington. Serious riders can continue on from Kenmore Logboom Park on the Sammamish River portion of the trail, which leads to **Marymoor Park**, at the north end of Lake Sammamish. Marymoor Park is the site of a velodrome (bicycle racetrack). This latter half of the trail

is my favorite part; it follows the Sammamish River and passes through several pretty parks. Riding the entire trail out and back is a ride of more than 50 miles and is popular with riders in training for races. Plenty of great picnicking spots can be found along both sections of the trail.

The West Seattle bike path along **Alki Beach** is another good place to ride; it offers great views of the sound and the Olympics. If you'd like to pedal this pathway, you can rent single-speed bikes at **Alki Kayak Tours**, 1660 Harbor Ave. SW (☎ 206/953-0237; www.kayakalki.com), which charges \$7 per hour. Because this outfitter has a limited number of bikes, it's a good idea to call ahead and make a reservation. You can then take the water taxi from the downtown waterfront to West Seattle; the dock is right at the Alki Kayak Tours building.

Hiking

Within Seattle itself there are several large nature parks laced with enough trails to allow for a few good, long walks. Among these are **Seward Park**, 5895 Lake Washington Blvd. S., southeast of downtown, and **Lincoln Park**, 8011 Fauntleroy Way SW, south of Alki Beach in West Seattle.

The city's largest natural park, and Seattleites' favorite spot for a quick dose of nature, is **Discovery Park**, 3801 W. Government Way (☎ 206/386-4236), northwest of downtown, at the western tip of the Magnolia neighborhood. Covering more than 500 acres, this park has many miles of trails and beaches to hike—not to mention gorgeous views, forest paths, and meadows in which to laze away after a long walk. To get here, follow Elliott Avenue north along the waterfront from downtown Seattle, then take the Magnolia Bridge west toward the Magnolia neighborhood, and follow Grayfield Street to Galer Street to Magnolia Boulevard.

Sea Kayaking, Canoeing, Rowing & Sailing

If you'd like to try your hand at **sea kayaking** ★★, head to the **Northwest Outdoor Center**, 2100 Westlake Ave. N. (☎ 800/683-0637 or 206/281-9694; www.nwoc.com), on the west side of Lake Union. Here you can rent a sea kayak for between \$13 and \$20 per hour. You can also opt for guided tours lasting from a few hours to several days, and plenty of classes are available for those who are interested.

Moss Bay Rowing, Kayaking and Sailing Center, 1001 Fairview Ave. N. (☎ 206/682-2031; www.mossbay.net), rents sea kayaks, rowing shells, and sailboats at the south end of Lake Union near Chandler's Cove. Rates range from \$13 per hour for a single kayak to \$18 per hour for a double. Because this rental center is a little closer to downtown Seattle and can be reached on the Seattle Streetcar, it's a better choice if you are here without a car.

If you're interested in renting a wooden rowboat or sailboat, head to Lake Union and the **Center for Wooden Boats** ★, 1010 Valley St. (☎ 206/382-2628; www.cwb.org). Rates range from \$20 to \$50 per hour. This center can also be reached on the Seattle Streetcar.

Near the Washington University campus, you can rent kayaks at the **Agua Verde Paddle Club**, 1303 NE Boat St. (☎ 206/545-8570; www.aguaverde.com), at the foot of Brooklyn Avenue on Portage Bay (the body of water btw. Lake Union and Lake Washington). Kayaks can be rented from March through October and go for

\$15 to \$18 per hour. Best of all, this place is part of the Agua Verde Cafe (p. 103), a great Mexican restaurant! Before or after a paddle, be sure to get an order of tacos.

At **Greenlake Boat Rental**, 7351 E. Greenlake Dr. N. (☎ 206/527-0171; www.greenlakeboatrentals.com), in North Seattle not far from Woodland Park Zoo, you can rent canoes, kayaks, sailboats, rowboats, pedal boats, sailboards, and paddle boards for a bit of leisurely time on the water. A paved path circles the park, which is one of the most popular in Seattle (it's a great place to join crowds of locals enjoying one of the city's nicest green spaces). Kayaks, canoes, rowboats, and pedal boats all rent for \$15 per hour, and sailboats go for \$20 per hour.

SPECTATOR SPORTS

With professional football, baseball, ice hockey, soccer, and women's basketball teams, as well as the various University of Washington Huskies teams, Seattle is definitely a city of sports fans. **Ticketmaster** (☎ 800/745-3000 or 206/346-1660; www.ticketmaster.com) sells tickets to almost all sporting events in the Seattle area. You'll find Ticketmaster outlets at area Fred Meyer stores.

Baseball

Seattle's most popular professional sports team is the **Mariners** (☎ 206/346-4000 or 346-4001; www.seattlemariners.com), part of Major League Baseball's American League. The team has a devoted following, so buy your tickets well in advance if you want to see a game.

The Mariners' retro-style **Safeco Field ★★** is one of the most beautiful ballparks in the country. It's also one of only a handful of stadiums with a retractable roof (which can open or close in 10–20 min.), allowing the Mariners a real grass playing field without the worry of getting rained out.

Ticket prices mostly range from \$7 to \$77. Though you may be able to buy a single ticket on game day at the Safeco Field box office, it's tough to get two seats together. To ensure that you get good seats, order in advance at **Mariners Team Stores** (at Fourth and Stewart sts. downtown or in the Bellevue Square shopping mall) or through **Ticketmaster** (☎ 206/622-4487; www.ticketmaster.com). Parking is next to impossible in the immediate vicinity of Safeco Field, so plan to leave your car behind.

If you'd like a behind-the-scenes look at the ballpark, you can take a **1-hour tour**, which costs \$9 for adults, \$7 for seniors and kids 3 to 12. Tickets can be purchased at the Mariners Team Store at Safeco Field, at other Mariners Team Stores around the city, or through Ticketmaster. Tour times vary, and tours are not offered on days when day games are scheduled.

Basketball

The **Seattle Storm** (☎ 877/962-2849 or 206/217-9622; www.wnba.com/storm), of the Women's National Basketball Association, play in Key Arena. Most ticket prices range from \$18 to \$62; they're available at the arena box office or through Ticketmaster (☎ 206/628-0888).

The **University of Washington Huskies** women's basketball team has also been very popular for years. For information on both the women's and the men's Huskies basketball games, call ☎ 206/543-2200 or go to www.gohuskies.com.

Football

Ever since they made it to the Super Bowl in 2006, the **Seattle Seahawks** (☎ 888/635-4295 or 425/203-8000; www.seahawks.com) have been getting way more respect in their hometown than they used to get. So, you may find it difficult to get your hands on tickets if you decide on the spur of the moment to attend a Seahawks game. The Seahawks play at **Qwest Field**, 800 Occidental Ave. S. (☎ 206/381-7500; www.qwestfield.com), which is adjacent to Safeco Field. Tickets to games run from around \$50 to upwards of \$400 and are sold through **Ticketmaster** (☎ 206/622-HAWK [4295]; www.ticketmaster.com). Regardless of how the Seahawks are doing in a particular year, games against Oakland, Denver, and a couple of other teams usually sell out as soon as tickets go on sale in July or August. Traffic and parking in the vicinity of Qwest Field are a nightmare on game days, so take the bus if you can. If you want a behind-the-scenes look at Qwest Field, you can take a tour of the stadium. Tours operate daily at 12:30 and 2:30pm between June and August and only on Friday and Saturday in other months (note that there are not tours on game days or when other events are scheduled). Tours cost \$7 for adults and \$5 for seniors and children 4 to 12.

Not surprisingly, the **University of Washington Huskies** (☎ 206/543-2200; www.gohuskies.com), who play in Husky Stadium on the university campus, have a loyal following. Big games (Oregon or Washington State) sell out as soon as tickets go on sale in the summer. Other games can sell out in advance, but obstructed-view tickets are usually available on game day. Ticket prices range from \$66 to \$72 for reserved seats, and from \$32 to \$37 for general admission.

SHOPPING

Nordstrom, Eddie Bauer, REI—these names are familiar to shoppers all across the country. They're also the names of stores that got their start here in Seattle. Throw in such regional favorites as Pendleton, Nike, and Filson, and you'll find that Seattle is a great place to shop, especially if you're in the market for recreational and outdoor gear and clothing.

As Washington's largest city, Seattle is also home to all the national retail chains you would expect to find in a major metropolitan area including Banana Republic, Old Navy, Levi Strauss, Ann Taylor, Coach, St. John, Louis Vuitton, Tiffany, and Barneys New York. If you forgot to pick up that dress in Chicago or those running shoes in New York, have no fear—you can find them here.

Pike Place Market is Seattle's bastion of local merchandising. No national chains are allowed in the market with the exception of Starbucks, which has been in the market since there was only one Starbucks on the planet. Once the city's main produce market (and many produce stalls remain), this sprawling collection of buildings is filled with hundreds of unusual shops. Whether shopping is a passion or an indulgence, you shouldn't miss this historic market (p. 112).

The Shopping Scene

The heart and soul of the Seattle shopping scene is the corner of **Pine Street and Fifth Avenue**. Within 2 blocks of this intersection are two major department stores (**Nordstrom** and **Macy's**) and two upscale urban shopping malls (**Westlake**

Center and **Pacific Place**). A sky bridge between Nordstrom and Pacific Place makes shopping that much easier. Fanning out east and south from this intersection are blocks of upscale national and international boutiques and megastores that will likely be familiar to most shoppers. Here in this neighborhood, you can now find Ann Taylor, Banana Republic, Barneys New York, Coach, Gap, and Niketown. Among these, a few local independents remain.

Within this downtown shopping district, you also find the loosely affiliated shops of **Rainier Square** (www.rainier-square.com). Although not actually a shopping mall, Rainier Square, which is bordered by University and Union streets and Fourth and Sixth avenues, is packed with great upscale shops and boutiques, including Brooks Brothers, Gucci, Louis Vuitton, Northwest Pendleton, and St. John.

The city's main tourist shopping district is the **Pike Place Market** neighborhood, with dozens of T-shirt and souvenir shops, as well as import shops and stores appealing to teenagers and 20-somethings. Pike Place Market is a fascinating warren of cubbyholes that pass for shops. While produce isn't usually something you stock up on during a vacation, several market shops sell ethnic cooking supplies that are less perishable than a dozen oysters or a king salmon. You may not find anything here you really need, but it's fun to look.

Just west of and downhill from Pike Place Market is the Seattle **waterfront**, site of many more gift and souvenir shops. This is the city's tackiest and most touristy neighborhood—save your money for somewhere else.

South of downtown, in the historic **Pioneer Square** area, is the city's greatest concentration of art galleries, some of which specialize in Native American art. This neighborhood has several antiques stores, but is also home to a dozen or more bars and attracts a lot of homeless people. It's fun to explore by day but strictly for young partiers by night.

As the center of the gay community and the city's youth culture, **Capitol Hill** has the most eclectic selection of shops in Seattle. Beads, imports, CDs, vintage clothing, politically correct merchandise, and gay-oriented goods fill the shops along Broadway.

The **Fremont** neighborhood, just north of Lake Union, is filled with retro stores selling vintage clothing, curious crafts, and mid-20th-century furniture and collectibles. However, in the past decade, the neighborhood has become somewhat gentrified, forcing many of the smaller and more unusual shops out of the neighborhood. Keep looking; you'll still find some of the holdouts.

A couple of miles east of Fremont is the **Wallingford** neighborhood, anchored by an old school building that has been converted into a shopping arcade with boutiques selling interesting crafts, fashions, and gifts. This area seems to be most popular with young moms and their kids.

The **University District**, also in North Seattle, has everything necessary to support a student population—and also goes upscale at the University Village shopping center.

Shopping A to Z

ANTIQUES & COLLECTIBLES

If antiques are your passion, you won't want to miss the opportunity to spend a day browsing the many antiques stores in the historic farm town of **Snohomish**, located roughly 30 miles north of Seattle. The town has hundreds of antiques dealers and

is, without a doubt, the antiques capital of the Northwest. There are also plenty of antiques stores right in Seattle.

Laguna ★ Twentieth-century art pottery is the specialty of this Pioneer Square shop. With pieces from such mid-century pottery factories as Fiesta, Roseville, Bauer, Weller, and Franciscan, the shelves here are a riot of colors. It's true eye candy for collectors of vintage pottery and a great place to look for dinnerware and vintage tiles. 116 S. Washington St. ☎ **206/682-6162**. www.lagunapottery.com.

Michael Maslan Vintage Photographs, Postcards & Ephemera This store, across the street from the Seattle Art Museum, is crammed full of vintage travel posters, ethnographic photos, and thousands of postcards. With a focus on social, industrial, and historical images, Michael Maslan's philosophy is to collect (and sell) just about anything "written, printed, or painted" that's old or interesting. 109 University St. ☎ **206/587-0187**.

Souvenir ★ 🎁 This unusual little shop is a little hard to categorize, but it's so cool, you just have to see it. Designed to resemble Victorian-era curiosity cabinets, the displays of small antiques and curios here are works of art in themselves. That everything is for sale is an added bonus. Pull open old wooden drawers, gaze at tiny works of art through magnifying glasses, and marvel at a world of fascinating little discoveries. 5325 Ballard Ave. NW. ☎ **206/297-7116**. www.curtissteiner.com.

ANTIQUES MALLS & FLEA MARKETS

Antiques at Pike Place Located in the Pike Place Market area, this antiques and collectibles mall is one of the finest in Seattle. There are more than 80 dealers, and much of what's available here is fairly small, which means you might be able to fit your find into a suitcase. 92 Stewart St. ☎ **206/441-9643**. www.antiquesatpikeplace.com.

Fremont Sunday Market ★★ Crafts, imports, antiques, and collectibles combine in a sort of European-style flea market that is Seattle's second-favorite public market (after Pike Place Market). From March to October the market is open every Sunday from 10am to 5pm; other months it's open Sunday from 10am to 4pm. N. 34th St. (1 block west of the Fremont Bridge). ☎ **206/781-6776**. www.fremontmarket.com/FremontWelcome.html

Seattle Antique Market Down in a big, dark warehouse space under the Alaskan Way Viaduct, you can shop for old Japanese fishing floats, Victorian furniture, old pocket knives, whatever. This place reminds me of the big antiques stores my parents used to drag me to as a child, and I almost always find something here that I just have to have. The store is just a few doors south of the Pike Street Hill Climb. 1400 Alaskan Way. ☎ **206/623-6115**. www.seattleantiquesmarket.com.

ART GALLERIES

The **Pioneer Square** area is Seattle's main gallery district, and anyone interested in art should be sure to wander south of Yesler Way. Some galleries are closed on Monday.

General Art Galleries

Davidson Galleries ★ In the heart of the Pioneer Square neighborhood, this gallery focuses on both contemporary prints by American and European artists and antique prints, some of which date from the 1500s. The gallery also features contemporary paintings and sculptures, with an emphasis on Northwest artists. 313 Occidental Ave. S. ☎ **206/624-7684**. www.davidsongalleries.com.

Patricia Rovzar Gallery Bold, colorful, often whimsical art can be seen at this gallery adjacent to the Seattle Art Museum. Look for the dreamy Northwest landscapes of Z. Z. Wei and the circus-inspired surrealist works of Tyson Grumm. 1225 Second Ave. ☎ **206/223-0273**. www.rovzargallery.com.

Art Glass

Foster/White Gallery ★★ If you are enamored of art glass, be sure to stop by this gallery, which represents Dale Chihuly and always has works by this master glass artist. Foster/White also represents top-notch Northwest artists in the disciplines of painting, ceramics, and sculpture. 220 Third Ave. S. ☎ **206/622-2833**. www.fosterwhite.com.

Glasshouse Studio In the Pioneer Square area and founded in 1972, Glasshouse claims to be the oldest glass-blowing studio in the Northwest. In the studio, you can watch hand-blown art glass being made, and then, in the gallery, you can check out the works of numerous local glass artists. 311 Occidental Ave. S. ☎ **206/682-9939**. www.glasshouse-studio.com.

Traver Gallery ★★ This is one of the nation's top art-glass galleries and showcases the work of dozens of glass artists. The pieces displayed are on the cutting edge of glass art, so to speak, and illustrate the broad spectrum of contemporary work by artists in this medium. The gallery is on the second floor. 110 Union St. ☎ **206/587-6501**. www.travergallery.com.

Vetri ★ Affiliated with the prestigious William Traver Gallery, Vetri showcases innovative work primarily from emerging glass artists and local area studios, but also sells pieces by artists from other countries. It's all high quality and riotously colorful. Prices are relatively affordable. 1404 First Ave. ☎ **206/667-9608**. www.vetriglass.com.

Native American Art

Ancient Grounds ★ This eclectic downtown antiques shop and natural-history gallery sells not only quality Northwest Coast Indian masks but also Japanese masks, rare mineral specimens, and a wide variety of other rare and unusual pieces from all over the world. An espresso bar is on the premises. 1220 First Ave. ☎ **206/749-0747**.

Flury & Company Ltd. ★ This Pioneer Square gallery specializes in prints by famed Seattle photographer Edward S. Curtis, known for his late-19th- and early-20th-century portraits of Native Americans. The gallery also has an excellent selection of antique Native American art and artifacts. 322 First Ave. S. ☎ **206/587-0260**. www.fluryco.com.

The Legacy Ltd. ★★ In business since 1933, this is Seattle's oldest and finest gallery of contemporary and historic Northwest Coast Indian and Alaskan Eskimo art and artifacts. You'll find a large selection of masks, boxes, bowls, baskets, ivory artifacts, jewelry, prints, and books for the serious collector. 1003 First Ave. ☎ **800/729-1562** or 206/624-6350. www.thelegacyltd.com.

Steinbrueck Native Gallery With art and crafts by both emerging and established Native American artists, this gallery near Pike Place Market is a good place to shop for deals. 2030 Western Ave. ☎ **206/441-3821**. www.steinbruecknativegallery.com.

Stonington Gallery This is another of Seattle's top galleries specializing in contemporary Native American arts and crafts. It offers a good selection of Northwest Coast Indian masks, totem poles, mixed-media pieces, prints, carvings, and Northwest

Coast-style jewelry. 119 S. Jackson St. ☎ **866/405-4485** or 206/405-4040. www.stoningtongallery.com.

BOOKS

In addition to the store listed below, you'll find more than a half-dozen locations of **Barnes & Noble** around the metro area, including one downtown at 600 Pine St. (☎ **206/264-0156**). A **Borders** is downtown at 1501 Fourth Ave. (☎ **206/622-4599**).

Elliott Bay Book Company ★★ In 2010, this huge bookstore, long a Pioneer Square institution, moved to Capitol Hill. While the new location feels completely different, this is still a destination bookstore well worth searching out for its excellent selection of titles on Seattle and the Northwest. There's also a cafe operated by Tamara Murphy, long one of my favorite Seattle chefs. 1521 Tenth Ave. ☎ **800/962-5311** or 206/624-6600. www.elliottbaybook.com.

CRAFTS

The Northwest is a magnet for skilled craftspeople, and shops all around town sell a wide range of high-quality and imaginative pieces. At **Pike Place Market** (p. 112), you can see what area craftspeople are creating and meet the artisans themselves.

Fireworks Fine Crafts Gallery Playful, outrageous, bizarre, beautiful—these are just some of the adjectives that can be used to describe the eclectic collection of Northwest crafts on sale at this Pioneer Square gallery. Cosmic clocks, wildly creative jewelry, artistic picture frames, and creative works of Judaica are among the fine and unusual items found here. 210 First Ave. S. ☎ **206/682-9697**. www.fireworksgallery.net. Also at Westlake Center, 400 Pine St. (☎ **206/682-6462**); University Village, 2617 NE Village Lane (☎ **206/527-2858**); and Bellevue Square, 196 Bellevue Sq., Bellevue (☎ **425/688-0933**).

Frank & Dunya Located in the Fremont neighborhood, this store epitomizes the fun-and-funky Fremont aesthetic. The art, jewelry, and crafts tend toward the colorful and the humorous, and just about everything is made by Northwest artists and artisans. 3418 Fremont Ave. N. ☎ **206/547-6760**. www.frankanddunya.com.

Northwest Craft Center ★🎁 This large gallery at Seattle Center is the city's premier ceramics showcase. In the main gallery, you'll find art ceramics that push the envelope of what can be made from clay. There's also a gift shop selling less expensive pieces. Seattle Center, 305 Harrison St. ☎ **206/728-1555**. www.northwestcraftcenter.com.

Northwest Fine Woodworking ★★ This store has some of the most amazing woodworking you'll ever see. Be sure to stroll through here while you're in the Pioneer Square area, even if you aren't in the market for a one-of-a-kind piece of furniture. The warm hues of the exotic woods are soothing, and the designs are beautiful. Furniture, boxes, sculpture, vases, bowls, and much more are created by more than 20 Northwest artisans. 101 S. Jackson St. ☎ **206/625-0542**. www.nwfinewoodworking.com.

Twist ★ This store is filled with slightly offbeat yet tasteful objets d'art, including unusual artist-created jewelry pieces, Adirondack chairs made from recycled water skis, twisted glass vases, candlesticks, and ceramics. Pacific Place, 600 Pine St. ☎ **206/315-8080**. www.twistonline.com.

DEPARTMENT STORES

Nordstrom ★★★ Known for personal service, Nordstrom has gained a reputation for being among the premier department stores in the United States. The company originated in Seattle (opening its first store in 1901), and its customers are devotedly loyal. This is a state-of-the-art store, with all sorts of little boutiques, cafes, live piano music, and other features to make your shopping excursion an experience.

Whether it's your first visit or your 50th, the knowledgeable staff will help you in any way they can. Prices may be a bit higher than those at other department stores, but for your money you get the best service available. The store is packed with shoppers during the half-yearly sales for women and kids in May and November, the half-yearly sale for men in mid-June and late December, and the anniversary sale in July. You'll also find Nordstrom stores at area shopping malls. 500 Pine St. ☎ 206/628-2111. www.nordstrom.com.

DISCOUNT SHOPPING

Nordstrom Rack 🛍 This is the Nordstrom overflow shop where you'll find three floors of discontinued lines as well as overstock, all at greatly reduced prices. Women's fashions make up the bulk of the merchandise, but there is also a floor full of men's clothes and shoes, plus plenty of kids' clothes. 1601 Second Ave. ☎ 206/448-8522. Also at 3920 124th St. SE, Bellevue ☎ 425/746-7200, and 19500 Alderwood Mall Pkwy., Lynnwood ☎ 425/774-6569. www.nordstrom.com.

FASHION

In addition to the stores listed below, you'll find quite a few familiar names in downtown Seattle, including Ann Taylor, Banana Republic, Barneys New York, Eddie Bauer, Gap, and MaxMara.

Men's & Women's Clothing

Eddie Bauer Eddie Bauer got his start here in Seattle back in 1920, and today the chain that bears his name is one of the country's foremost purveyors of outdoor fashions—although these days, outdoor fashion is looking quite a bit more urban. Pacific Place, 600 Pine St. ☎ 206/622-2766. www.eddiebauer.com.

Ex Officio ★ 🛍 If you've already started planning your next trip, be sure to stop by this travel-clothing store up toward the north end of Belltown. It's an outlet for the Seattle-based Ex Officio and is packed full of lightweight, easy-care clothes designed for world travelers. 114 Vine St. ☎ 206/283-4746. www.exofficio.com.

Filson ★★★ This Seattle company has been outfitting people headed outdoors ever since the Alaskan gold rush at the end of the 1890s. You won't find any high-tech fabrics here—just good old-fashioned wool, and plenty of it. Filson's clothes are meant to last a lifetime (and have the prices to prove it), so if you demand only the best, even when it comes to outdoor gear, be sure to check out this local institution. 1555 Fourth Ave. S. ☎ 866/860-8906 or 206/622-3147. www.filson.com.

Northwest Pendleton ★★★ For Northwesterners, and for many other people across the nation, Pendleton is and always will be *the* name in classic wool items. This store features tartan plaids and American Indian-pattern separates, accessories, shawls, and blankets. 1313 Fourth Ave. ☎ 800/593-6773 or 206/682-4430. www.nwmuseumstore.com.

Women's Clothing

Alhambra Alhambra stocks a very eclectic collection of women's clothing and jewelry. There are purses from France, shoes from Italy, and fashions from Turkey and the U.S. These add up to a unique European look that's a little more refined than what you find at Baby & Co. 101 Pine St. ☎ **206/621-9571**. www.alhambranet.com.

Baby & Co. ★★ Claiming to have stores in Seattle and on Mars, Baby & Co. stocks fashions that can be trendy, outrageous, or out of this world. The designs are strictly French, so you aren't likely to find these fashions in too many other places in the U.S. Whether you're into earth tones or bright colors, you'll likely find something you can't live without. 1936 First Ave. ☎ **206/448-4077**.

Endless Knot ★ If you've ever had a thing for funky fashions from Asia, you'll be amazed at how tasteful and upscale such styles can be. The racks of this Belltown boutique are lined with drapery natural-fiber fashions in bold colors—plus, there are lots of accessories to accompany the clothes. 2300 First Ave. ☎ **206/448-0355**.

Ragazzi's Flying Shuttle ★★ Fashion becomes art and art becomes fashion at this chic boutique-cum-gallery in the Pioneer Square area. Hand-woven fabrics and hand-painted silks are the specialties, but, of course, such sophisticated fashions require equally unique body decorations in the form of exquisite jewelry creations. Designers and artists from the Northwest and the rest of the nation find an outlet for their creativity at the Flying Shuttle. 607 First Ave. ☎ **206/343-9762**. www.ragazzisflyingshuttle.com.

FOOD

The Spanish Table ★🎁 There are cases full of imported meats and cheeses, as well as all manner of other Spanish ingredients, and, if you've decided your life's goal is to prepare the ultimate paella, this store will set you on the path to perfection. Paella pans and everything you could ever want for cooking Spanish cuisine fill this Pike Place Market shop. 1426 Western Ave. ☎ **206/682-2827**. www.spanishtable.com.

Theo Chocolate ★★ Although there's lots of good chocolate to be had in Seattle, Theo is the first roaster of fair-trade cocoa beans. At their Fremont factory, you can sample their chocolates, tour the factory, and, of course, buy yummy chocolate confections. Tours, which cost \$6 per person, are offered daily, and reservations are recommended. 3400 Phinney Ave. N. ☎ **206/632-5100**. www.theochocolate.com.

GIFTS/SOUVENIRS

Pike Place Market (p. 112) is the *ne plus ultra* of Seattle souvenirs, with stiff competition from the Seattle Center and Pioneer Square areas.

Made in Washington Whether it's salmon, wine, or Northwest crafts, you'll find a varied selection of Washington state products in this shop. This is an excellent place to pick up gifts for all those friends and family members who didn't get to come to Seattle with you. Pike Place Market, 1530 Post Alley (at Pine St.). ☎ **206/467-0788**. www.madeinwashington.com. Also at Westlake Center, 400 Pine St. ☎ **206/623-9753**.

Ye Olde Curiosity Shop 😊 If you can elbow your way into this waterfront institution, you'll find nearly every inch of space, horizontal and vertical, covered with souvenirs and crafts, both tacky and tasteful (but mostly tacky). Surrounding this merchandise are shrunken heads, a mummy, preserved conjoined-twin calves, and many other oddities that have made this one of the most visited shops in Seattle. Pier 54, 1001 Alaskan Way. ☎ **206/682-5844**. www.yeoldecuriosityshop.com.

MALLS/SHOPPING CENTERS

Pacific Place ★ This downtown mall, adjacent to Nordstrom, contains five levels of upscale shop-o-tainment, including Tiffany & Co., bebe, Barney's New York, Coach, MaxMara, six restaurants, and a multiplex movie theater. A huge skylight fills the interior space with much-appreciated natural light, and an adjoining garage means you usually have a place to park. 600 Pine St. ☎ **877/883-2400** or 206/405-2655. www.pacificplaceseatle.com.

Westlake Center In the heart of Seattle's main shopping district, this upscale, urban shopping mall has more than 80 specialty stores, including Godiva Chocolatier, Fireworks (a great contemporary crafts shop), and Made in Washington, along with an extensive food court. The mall is also the southern terminus for the monorail to Seattle Center. 400 Pine St. ☎ **206/467-1600**. www.westlakecenter.com.

MARKETS

Pike Place Market ★★ Pike Place Market is one of Seattle's most famous landmarks and tourist attractions. Besides produce vendors, fishmongers, and butchers, it shelters artists, craftspeople, and performers. Hundreds of shops and dozens of restaurants (including some of Seattle's best) are tucked away in nooks and crannies on the numerous levels of the market. With so much to see and do, a trip to Pike Place Market can easily become an all-day affair. See also the sightseeing listing on p. 112. Pike St. and First Ave. ☎ **206/682-7453**. www.pikeplacemarket.org.

Uwajimaya ★★ Typically, your local neighborhood supermarket probably has a section of Chinese cooking ingredients that's about 10 feet long, with half that space taken up by various brands of soy sauce. Now imagine your local supermarket with nothing but Asian foods, housewares, produce, and toys. That's Uwajimaya, Seattle's Asian supermarket in the heart of the International District. A big food court here serves all kinds of Asian food. 600 Fifth Ave. S. ☎ **206/624-6248**. www.uwajimaya.com.

RECREATIONAL GEAR

REI ★★ Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI) is the nation's largest co-op selling outdoor gear, and the company's impressive flagship is a cross between a high-tech warehouse and a mountain lodge. This massive store sells almost anything you could ever need for pursuing your favorite outdoor sport. It also has a 65-foot climbing pinnacle. With all this under one roof, who needs to go outside? 222 Yale Ave. N. ☎ **888/873-1938** or 206/223-1944. www.rei.com.

SALMON

If you think that the fish at Pike Place Market looks great but that you could never get it home on the plane, think again. Any of the seafood vendors in Pike Place Market will pack your fresh salmon or Dungeness crab in an airline-approved container that will keep it fresh for up to 48 hours. Alternatively, you can buy vacuum-packed smoked salmon that will keep for years without refrigeration.

Pike Place Fish ★ Located behind *Rachel*, Pike Place Market's life-size bronze pig, this fishmonger is just about the busiest spot in the market most days. What pulls in the crowds are the antics of the workers here. Order a big silvery salmon and you'll have employees shouting out your order and throwing the fish over the counter. These "flying fish" are a major Seattle attraction, so just step right up and pick your salmon. Pike Place Market, 86 Pike Place. ☎ **800/542-7732** or 206/682-7181. www.pikeplacefish.com.

Portlock Port Chatham Smoked Seafood If the sight of all the salmon swimming through the fish ladder at the Chittenden Locks has you craving some smoked salmon, just head 2 blocks east from the locks to the retail outlet of this big mail-order smoked-salmon store. They've got all kinds of smoked fish that you can have for a picnic or pack home with you. 2821 NW Market St. ☎ **800/872-5666** or 206/781-7260. www.portchatham.com.

TOYS

Archie McPhee ★★ ☺ You may already be familiar with this temple of the absurd through its mail-order catalog or website. Now, imagine the fun of wandering through aisles full of goofy gags and all that other wacky stuff. Give yourself plenty of time and take a friend. Archie's place is in the Wallingford neighborhood. 2428 NW Market St. ☎ **206/297-0240**. www.archiemcpheseattle.com.

Magic Mouse Toys ★ ☺ Adults and children alike have a hard time pulling themselves away from this, the wackiest toy store in downtown Seattle. It's conveniently located in Pioneer Square and has a good selection of European toys. 603 First Ave. ☎ **206/682-8097**.

Market Magic Shop ★ This little Pike Place Market shop is a must for aspiring magicians. You'll find all kinds of great tricks and all the tools of the trade. There are also juggling supplies and plenty of cool posters. Pike Place Market, 1501 Pike Place, #427. ☎ **206/624-4271**. www.generallrubric.com/magicposters/marketmagic.

AFTER DARK

It's true that Seattleites spend much of their free time enjoying the city's natural surroundings, but that doesn't mean they overlook the more cultured evening pursuits. In fact, the winter weather that keeps people indoors, combined with a long-time desire to be the cultural mecca of the Northwest, has fueled a surprisingly active and diverse nightlife scene. Music lovers will find a plethora of classical, jazz, and rock offerings. The Seattle Opera is ranked one of the top companies in the country, and its stagings of Wagner's *Ring* series have achieved near-legendary status. The Seattle Symphony also receives frequent accolades. Likewise, the Seattle Repertory Theatre has won Tony awards for its productions, and a thriving fringe theater scene keeps the city's lovers of avant-garde theater contentedly discoursing in cafes and bars about the latest hysterical or thought-provoking performances.

Much of Seattle's evening entertainment scene is clustered in the **Seattle Center** and **Pioneer Square** areas. The former hosts theater, opera, and classical-music performances; the latter is a bar-and-nightclub district. Other concentrations of nightclubs can be found in **Belldowntown**, where crowds of the young and hip flock to the neighborhood's many trendy clubs, and in **Capitol Hill**, with its ultracool gay scene. **Ballard**, formerly a Scandinavian neighborhood in North Seattle, attracts a primarily middle-class, not-too-hip, not-too-old crowd, including lots of college students and techies. It's not the hipster Belldowntown scene, it's not the PBR-swilling blues scene of Pioneer Square, and it's not the sleek gay scene of Capitol Hill. It's just a comfortable neighborhood nightlife scene.

While winter is a time to enjoy the performing arts, summer brings an array of outdoor festivals. These take place during daylight hours as much as they do after dark; information on all these festivals and performance series is in this chapter.

To find out what's going on when you're in town, pick up a free copy of **Seattle Weekly** (www.seattleweekly.com), Seattle's arts-and-entertainment newspaper. You'll find it in bookstores, convenience stores, grocery stores, newsstands, and newspaper boxes around downtown and other neighborhoods. On Friday the **Seattle Times** includes a section called "NW Ticket," a guide to the week's arts-and-entertainment offerings.

The Performing Arts

While the Seattle Symphony performs in downtown's Benaroya Hall, the main venues for the performing arts in Seattle are primarily clustered at **Seattle Center**, the special-events complex that was built for the 1962 World's Fair. Here, in the shadow of the Space Needle, you'll find Marion Oliver McCaw Hall, Bagley Wright Theatre, Intiman Playhouse, Seattle Children's Theatre, Seattle Center Coliseum, and Memorial Stadium.

OPERA & CLASSICAL MUSIC

The **Seattle Opera** (☎ 800/426-1619 or 206/389-7676; www.seattleopera.org), which performs at Seattle Center's Marion Oliver McCaw Hall, is considered one of the finest opera companies in the country and is the Wagnerian opera company in the United States. The stagings of Wagner's four-opera *The Ring of the Nibelungen* are breathtaking spectacles that draw crowds from around the country. However, Wagner's magnum opus is staged only every 4 years. In addition to such classical operas as *Tristan und Isolde* and *The Magic Flute*, the regular season usually includes a more contemporary production. Ticket prices range from around \$25 to more than \$168. The 90-musician **Seattle Symphony** (☎ 866/833-4747 or 206/215-4747; www.seattlesymphony.org), which performs at the acoustically superb Benaroya Hall, offers an amazingly diverse season that runs from September to July. With several different series, there is a little something for every type of classical-music fan, including evenings of classical, light classical, and pops music, plus afternoon concerts, children's concerts, guest artists, and more. Ticket prices range from \$9 to \$100.

THEATER

The **Seattle Repertory Theatre** (☎ 877/900-9285 or 206/443-2222; www.seattlerep.org), which performs at the Bagley Wright and Leo K. theaters at Seattle Center, 155 Mercer St., is Seattle's top professional theater and stages the most consistently entertaining productions in the city. The Rep's season runs from September to May, with seven or more plays staged in the two theaters. Productions range from classics to world premières. Tickets go for \$15 to \$59. When available, rush tickets are distributed half an hour before show time for \$22.

With a season that runs from March to December, the **Intiman Theatre** (☎ 206/269-1900; www.intiman.org), which performs at the Intiman Playhouse, Seattle Center, 201 Mercer St., fills in the gap left by those months when the Seattle Rep's lights are dark. Ticket prices range from \$25 to \$62.

A **Contemporary Theater (ACT)**, Kreielsheimer Place, 700 Union St. (☎ 206/292-7676; www.acttheatre.org), performing in the historic Eagles Building theater adjacent to the Washington State Convention and Trade Center, offers slightly more adventurous productions than the other major theater companies in

Seattle, though it's not nearly as avant-garde as some of the smaller companies. ACT also puts on Seattle's annual staging of *A Christmas Carol*. The season runs from March to December. Ticket prices usually range from \$25 to \$55.

Check the listings in *Seattle Weekly* or the Friday *Seattle Times* "NW Ticket" entertainment guide to see what's going on during your visit.

DANCE

The **Pacific Northwest Ballet**, Marion Oliver McCaw Hall, 301 Mercer St. (☎ 206/441-2424; www.pnb.org), is Seattle's premier dance company. During the season, which runs from September to June, the company presents a wide range of classics, new works, and (the company's specialty) pieces choreographed by George Balanchine. This company's performance of *The Nutcracker*, with outstanding dancing and sets, plus costumes by children's book author Maurice Sendak, is the highlight of every season. The Pacific Northwest Ballet performs at Marion Oliver McCaw Hall at Seattle Center. Ticket prices range from \$25 to \$160.

Much more adventurous choreography is the domain of **On the Boards**, Behnke Center for Contemporary Performance, 100 W. Roy St. (☎ 206/217-9888; www.ontheboards.org), which, although it stages a wide variety of performance art, is best known as Seattle's premier modern-dance venue. In addition to dance performances by Northwest artists, there are a variety of productions each year by internationally known performance artists. Tickets go for \$12 to \$24.

MAJOR PERFORMANCE HALLS

Benaroya Hall (☎ 206/215-4747), on Third Avenue between Union and University streets in downtown Seattle, is the home of the Seattle Symphony. This state-of-the-art performance hall houses two concert halls—the main hall and a smaller recital hall. It's home to the Watjen concert organ, a magnificent pipe organ, as well as a Starbucks, a cafe, a symphony store, and a pair of Dale Chihuly chandeliers. Amenities aside, the main hall's excellent acoustics are the big attraction.

The **5th Avenue Theatre**, 1308 Fifth Ave. (☎ 888/584-4849 or 206/625-1900; www.5thavenuetheatre.org), which first opened its doors in 1926 as a vaudeville house, is a loose re-creation of the imperial throne room in Beijing's Forbidden City. Don't miss an opportunity to attend a performance here. Broadway shows are the theater's mainstay; ticket prices usually range from \$30 to \$95.

The **Paramount Theatre**, 911 Pine St. (☎ 206/682-1414; www.stgpresents.org), one of Seattle's few historic theaters, has been restored to its original beauty and today shines with all the brilliance it had when it first opened in 1928. New lighting and sound systems have brought the theater up to contemporary standards. The theater hosts everything from rock concerts to Broadway musicals. Tickets are available through Ticketmaster.

Affiliated with the Paramount Theatre, the **Moore Theatre**, 1932 Second Ave. (☎ 206/682-1414; www.stgpresents.org), in Belltown, gets lots of national rock acts that aren't likely to draw quite as many people as bands that play at the Paramount.

PERFORMING ARTS SERIES

The **UW World Series** (☎ 800/859-5342 or 206/543-4880; www.uwworldseries.org), held at Meany Hall on the University of Washington campus, is actually several different series that include chamber music, classical piano, dance, and world music and theater. Together these four series keep the Meany Hall stage busy between

October and May. Special events are also scheduled. Tickets go for \$33 to \$46. The box office is at 4001 University Way NE, which is off campus.

At **Woodland Park Zoo** (☎ 206/548-2500; www.zoo.org/zootunes), the **Zoo Tunes** concert series brings in more big-name performers from the world of jazz, easy listening, blues, and rock. Tickets go for \$15 to \$28; bear in mind that they usually sell out almost as soon as they go on sale in early May.

North of Seattle, in Woodinville, **Summer Concerts at the Chateau**, 14111 NE 145th St. (☎ 425/415-3300 for information, or 800/745-3000 for tickets; www.ste-michelle.com), is the area's most enjoyable outdoor summer concert series. It's held at the Chateau Ste. Michelle's amphitheater, which is surrounded by beautiful estate-like grounds. This is Washington's largest winery, so plenty of wine is available. The lineup is calculated to appeal to the 30- to 50-something crowd (past performers have included Bruce Hornsby, Lyle Lovett, Madeleine Peyraux, and Harry Connick, Jr.). Ticket prices usually range from \$35 to \$100, with a few shows each summer priced a bit higher. See "Easy Excursions: Seattle's Wine Country," later in this chapter for more about Woodinville and Chateau Ste. Michelle.

At the summertime **Concerts at Marymoor**, 6046 W. Lake Sammamish Pkwy. NE (☎ 206/628-0888; www.concertsatmarymoor.com), at Marymoor Park, 20 to 30 minutes east of Seattle at the north end of Lake Sammamish, you can expect the likes of Alison Krauss and UB40. Tickets for most shows are between \$30 and \$70, although prices sometimes go higher.

The Club & Music Scene

Whether you want to hear a live band, hang out in a dive bar, or dance, **Pioneer Square** is a good place to start. Keep in mind that this neighborhood tends to attract a very rowdy crowd (lots of frat boys) and can be pretty rough late at night.

Belletown, north of Pike Place Market, is a more sophisticated and trendy place to club-hop. Clubs here are way more style-conscious than those in Pioneer Square and tend to attract 20- and 30-something hipsters.

Seattle's other main nightlife district is the former Scandinavian neighborhood of **Ballard**, where you'll find more than a half-dozen nightlife establishments, including taverns, bars, and live-music clubs.

Capitol Hill, a few blocks uphill from downtown Seattle, is the city's main gay nightlife neighborhood, with much of the action centered on the corner of East Madison Street and 15th Avenue East.

FOLK, ROCK & REGGAE

Downtown

The Triple Door ★★ Popular music for adults? What a concept! This swanky nightclub is a total novelty in the Seattle club world. It isn't geared toward the 20-something crowd. The music is diverse—from jazz to world beat to flamenco to Maria Muldaur, the Tubes, and Ottmar Liebert. You'll find the club in the basement below the ever-popular Wild Ginger restaurant, across the street from Benaroya Hall. 216 Union St. ☎ 206/838-4333. www.thetripledoors.net. Cover \$12-\$32 (occasionally more for special shows).

Pioneer Square

Central Saloon Established in 1892, the Central is the oldest saloon in Seattle. As a local institution, it's a must-stop during a night out in Pioneer Square, although

you should have an appreciation of dive bars before stepping through the doors here. You might catch sounds ranging from funk to punk. 207 First Ave. S. ☎ **206/622-0209**. www.centralsaloon.com. Cover \$5-\$7.

Belltown & Environs

The Crocodile Back in the days when grunge music was sweeping the nation, this was one of Seattle's top live-music venues. After closing down for a while, it has come back again and is as popular as ever, with alternative rock dominating the schedule. 2200 Second Ave. (at Blanchard St.). No phone. www.thecrocodile.com. Cover \$8-\$20.

Showbox at the Market Located across the street from Pike Place Market, this large club books a wide variety of local and name rock acts. Definitely *the* downtown rock venue for performers with a national following. There's a second club, Showbox Sodo, at 1700 First Ave. S. 1426 First Ave. No phone. www.showboxonline.com. Cover \$9-\$24 (occasionally higher).

Capitol Hill

Chop Suey Looking like a cross between a down-market Chinese restaurant and a Bruce Lee shrine, this kitschy Capitol Hill club books a very eclectic mix of music. Hip-hop and various alt-rock styles predominate, and the crowd is young with a mix of straights and gays. 1325 E. Madison St. ☎ **206/324-8000**. www.chopsuey.com. Cover \$5-\$25.

Neumo's Located in a space that has housed numerous clubs over the years, Neumo's is currently Seattle's leading club for indie rock bands that haven't yet developed a big enough following to play the Showbox. 925 E. Pike St. ☎ **206/709-9467**. www.neumos.com. Cover \$5-\$25.

Ballard

Tractor Tavern For an ever-eclectic schedule of music for people whose tastes go beyond the latest rap artist, the Tractor Tavern is the place to be. You can catch almost anything from rockabilly to Hawaiian slack-key guitar to singer-songwriters to square dancing to Celtic to folk to zydeco. Sound like your kind of place? 5213 Ballard Ave. NW. ☎ **206/789-3599**. www.tractortavern.com. Cover \$5-\$25.

JAZZ & BLUES

Dimitriou's Jazz Alley ★★ Cool and sophisticated, this Belltown establishment is reminiscent of a New York jazz club and has been around for more than 30 years. As Seattle's premier jazz venue (and one of the top jazz clubs on the West Coast), it books only the best performers, including many name acts. 2033 Sixth Ave. ☎ **206/441-9729**. www.jazzalley.com. Cover usually \$23-\$35.

Highway 99 Blues Club In the basement of an old brick building beneath the waterfront's Alaskan Way Viaduct, this club not far from Pike Place Market is Seattle's quintessential blues joint. You can hear the best of local blues bands, as well as touring national acts. 1414 Alaskan Way. ☎ **206/382-2171**. www.highwayninety.com. Cover \$5-\$15.

New Orleans Creole Restaurant If you like your food and your jazz hot, check out the New Orleans in Pioneer Square. Throughout the week, there's Cajun, Dixieland, R&B, jazz, and blues. 114 First Ave. S. ☎ **206/622-2563**. www.neworleanscreolrestaurant.com. Cover none-\$12.

Tula's ★ This is the real thing: a jazz club that's a popular jazz musicians' after-hours hangout and a good place to catch up-and-coming performers. American and Mediterranean food is served. 2214 Second Ave. ☎ **206/443-4221**. www.tulas.com. Cover \$5-\$15.

CABARET

Can Can Down below sidewalk level in the same Pike Place Market Building that houses Matt's in the Market, you'll find the latest in urban entertainment. This Moulin Rouge-inspired cabaret stages neo-burlesque shows, Django Reinhardt-style jazz performances, and other forms of obscure and imaginative retro entertainment. Yes, the ladies in petticoats really do kick up their heels here! 94 Pike St. ☎ **206/652-0832**. www.thecancan.com. Cover mostly none-\$15.

The Pink Door ★★ Better known as Pike Place Market's unmarked restaurant, The Pink Door has a hopping after-work bar scene that tends to attract a 30-something crowd. It also doubles as a cabaret featuring Seattle's most eclectic lineup of performers, including cross-dressing tango dancers, trapeze artists, and the like. Lots of fun and not to be missed. 1919 Post Alley. ☎ **206/443-3241**. www.thepinkdoor.net. No cover Sun-Fri; \$15 cover Sat.

DANCE CLUBS

Baltic Room This swanky Capitol Hill hangout for the beautiful people stages a wide range of contemporary dance music (mostly DJs) encompassing everything from electronica to hip-hop and *bhangra* (contemporary Indian disco). 1207 Pine St. ☎ **206/625-4444**. www.thebalticroom.net. Cover none-\$10.

Century Ballroom With a beautiful wooden dance floor, this is *the* place in Seattle for a night out if you're into swing, salsa, or tango. Every week, there are a couple of nights of swing and a couple of nights of salsa dancing, complete with lessons early in the evening. Tuesday nights are currently tango nights and Friday nights are often gay nights. The crowd here is very diverse, with patrons of all ages. 915 E. Pine St. ☎ **206/324-7263**. www.centuryballroom.com. Cover \$5-\$15 (sometimes higher for special shows).

See Sound Lounge With walls of colored lights and a front wall that swings open to let in the summer air, this retro-mod club, on one of the prettiest streets in Belltown, is among the neighborhood's hottest nightclubs. The nightly \$3 drink specials are also a big attraction. The cool scene here is a required stop during a night out in trendy Belltown. 115 Blanchard St. ☎ **206/374-3733**. www.seesoundlounge.com. Cover none-\$10.

The Bar & Pub Scene

BARS

The Waterfront

Six Seven Lounge ★ If you got any closer to the water than this bar, you'd have wet feet. Located inside downtown Seattle's only waterfront hotel, this bar boasts what just might be the best bar view in the city. Watch the ferries come and go, or see the sun set over Puget Sound and the Olympics. In The Edgewater, Pier 67, 2411 Alaskan Way. ☎ **206/269-4575**. www.edgewaterhotel.com.

Downtown

Oliver's ★ Maybe you've been to one too many places that claim to make the best martini and you're feeling dubious. Here at Oliver's, they've repeatedly put their martinis to the test and come out on top. The atmosphere is classy and the happy-hour appetizers are good, but in the end, only you can decide whether or not these martinis are the best in Seattle. In the Mayflower Park Hotel, 405 Olive Way. ☎ **206/623-8700**. www.mayflowerpark.com.

Vessel ★★ Located next door to the beautiful 5th Avenue Theatre in the 1926 Skinner Building, this stylish bar is my favorite downtown drinking establishment. Not only does it serve classy cocktails that come with long histories, but the bar food is also unforgettable. Oh, and don't be dissuaded if the place looks full; there's a second floor. 1312 Fifth Ave. ☎ **206/652-0521**. www.vesselseattle.com.

Von's Roasthouse 🍷 Although best known for its \$3.50 house martinis that are basically gin with a spritz of Vermouth from a spray bottle, this popular downtown bar also boasts the largest selection of spirits in Seattle. 619 Pine St. ☎ **206/621-8667**. www.vonsroasthouse.com.

Belltown

Virginia Inn Although the Virginia Inn is in *très chic* Belltown, this bar/restaurant has a decidedly Old Seattle feel, due in large part to the fact that it has been around since 1903. Quite surprising for a bar, the Virginia Inn serves decent, inexpensive French food! 1937 First Ave. ☎ **206/728-1937**. www.virginiainnseattle.com.

Pike Place Market

The Tasting Room ★★ Located in Pike Place Market, this cozy wine bar has the feel of a wine cellar and is cooperatively operated by several small Washington state wineries. You can taste the wines of Camaraderie Cellars, Harlequin Wine Cellars, Latitude 46° N Winery, Mountain Dome, Naches Heights Winery, Wilridge Winery, and Wineglass Cellars, or buy wine by the glass or bottle. Light snacks are also available. 1924 Post Alley. ☎ **206/770-9463**. www.winesofwashington.com.

The Zig Zag Cafe ★★ You'll have to look hard to find this hidden Pike Place Market bar. It's on one of the landings of the Pike Street Hill Climb, which is the staircase that links the market with the waterfront. Perfectly crafted cocktails, both classic and contemporary, are the specialty here and are so well made that the bar has garnered national recognition. 1501 Western Ave. ☎ **206/625-1146**. www.zigzagseattle.com.

Ballard

Fu Kun Wu @ ThaiKu ★🎁 You'll find this unforgettable bar at the back of Ballard's ThaiKu, which is one of my favorite Thai restaurants in Seattle. Designed to look like an old Chinese apothecary and filled with Asian woodcarvings and artifacts, Fu Kun Wu specializes in various herb-infused cocktails. There's live jazz on Wednesday and Thursday nights. 5410 Ballard Ave. NW. ☎ **206/706-7807**. www.fukunwu.com.

Portalis On a shady back street in Ballard, in a dark space in an old brick building, you'll find one of Seattle's best wine bars. This is a great place to hang out and have a glass of wine—and because this is also a wine shop, you can search the racks for your favorite Washington vintages, too. 5205 Ballard Ave. NW. ☎ **206/783-2007**. www.portaliswines.com.

BREW PUBS

Big Time Brewery & Alehouse Big Time, Seattle's oldest brewpub, is in the University District and is done up to look like an old tavern, complete with a 100-year-old back bar and a wooden refrigerator. The pub serves as many as 12 of its own brews at any given time, and some of these are pretty unusual. 4133 University Way NE. ☎ **206/545-4509**. www.bigtimebrewery.com.

Elysian Brewing Company ★ This large Capitol Hill brewpub has an industrial feel that sums up the Northwest concept of "local brewpub." The stouts and strong ales are especially good, and the brewers' creativity here just can't be beat. Hands-down, Elysian is the best brewpub in Seattle. The newest Elysian pub is at 542 First Ave. S. ☎ **206/382-4498**, and there's a third at 2106 N. 55th St. ☎ **206/547-5929**. 1221 E. Pike St. ☎ **206/860-1920**. www.elysianbrewing.com.

The Pike Pub & Brewery In an open, central space inside Pike Place Market, this brewpub makes excellent stout and pale ale, but is best known for its Kilt Lifter Scottish ale. This is a great place to get off your feet after a long day in the market. 1415 First Ave. ☎ **206/622-6044**. www.pikebrewing.com.

IRISH PUBS

Fadó This Irish pub is part of a national chain but has the feel of an independent pub. Lots of antiques, old signs, and a dark, cozy feel make it a very comfortable place for a pint. There's live Irish music several nights a week, a weekly pub quiz, and, of course, you can watch soccer and rugby matches on the telly. 801 First Ave. ☎ **206/264-2700**. www.fadoirishpub.com. No cover.

Kells ★ At one time, the space now occupied by this pub was the embalming room of a mortuary. These days, the scene is much livelier and has the feel of a casual Dublin pub. Kells pulls a good pint of Guinness, serves traditional Irish meals, and features live Irish music 7 nights a week. Pike Place Market, 1916 Post Alley. ☎ **206/728-1916**. www.kellsirish.com. Cover none-\$5.

Other Pubs

Brouwer's Café ★ Beer geeks (and I count myself among this tribe) swarm to this friendly, modern Fremont pub for its huge selection of Belgian beers, and while this isn't actually a brewpub, the owner, who also owns Seattle's premier beer store, does have beers custom brewed for him at regional breweries. Of the 60 beers on tap and more than 300 bottled beers, a preponderance of them are Belgian. Of course, you can also get Belgian food to accompany your beer. 400 N. 35th St. ☎ **206/267-2437**. www.brouwerscafe.com.

Collins Pub If you're looking for someplace in the Pioneer Square area where you can sip a beer without having your nostrils assaulted by the stench of stale beer and industrial cleaners, you don't have a lot of options, which is why the Collins Pub is the only place I'll drink beer in the neighborhood. There's a good selection of regional microbrews and decent food, too. 526 Second Ave. ☎ **206/623-1016**. www.thecollinspub.com.

The Gay & Lesbian Scene

Capitol Hill is Seattle's main gay neighborhood; consequently, it has the city's greatest concentration of gay and lesbian bars and clubs. Look for the readily available

Seattle Gay News (© 206/324-4297; www.sgn.org), in which many of the city's gay bars and nightclubs advertise.

BARS

Madison Pub This low-key darts-and-pool sports pub on Capitol Hill is popular with guys who have outgrown or just aren't into cruising. So, if you just want to hang out with local gay men and aren't out to pick someone up, this is a good choice. 1315 E. Madison St. ☎ 206/325-6537. www.madisonpub.com.

Wildrose This friendly restaurant/bar is a longtime favorite of the Capitol Hill lesbian community and claims to be the oldest lesbian bar on the West Coast. In spring and summer there is an outdoor seating area. Pool tournaments and karaoke are mainstays here. 1021 E. Pike St. ☎ 206/324-9210. www.thewildrosebar.com. Cover none-\$5.

DANCE CLUBS

Neighbours This has been the favorite dance club of Capitol Hill's gay community for years. As at other clubs, different nights of the week feature different styles of music. You'll find this club's entrance down the alley. 1509 Broadway. ☎ 206/324-5358. <http://neighboursnightclub.com>. Cover none-\$10.

Re-Bar Each night there's a different theme, with the DJs spinning everything from funk to punk. This club isn't exclusively gay, but it's still a gay-Seattle favorite. 1114 Howell St. ☎ 206/233-9873. www.rebarseattle.com. Cover none-\$10.

R Place Bar & Grill With three floors of entertainment, including a video bar on the ground floor, pool tables and video games on the second floor, and a dance floor up on the top level, you hardly need to go anywhere else for a night on the town. 619 E. Pine St. ☎ 206/322-8828. www.rplaceseattle.com. Cover none-\$7.

At the Movies

Summertime in the Fremont neighborhood always means **Fremont Outdoor Cinema** (www.fremontoutdoormovies.com), a series that features modern classics, B movies (sometimes with live overdubbing by a local improv comedy company), and indie shorts. Films are screened on Saturday nights in the parking lot at North 35th Street and Phinney Avenue North. The parking lot opens at 7:30pm; there is a \$5 suggested donation.

EASY EXCURSIONS: SEATTLE'S WINE COUNTRY

Washington is one of the fastest-growing wine regions in the country and today produces more wine than any other state except California. Although the main wine country lies more than 200 miles to the east, in Central and Eastern Washington, there is a concentration of more than 50 wineries and tasting rooms a 30-minute drive north of Seattle, outside the town of Woodinville. Most of these wineries and tasting rooms are open to the public, but the majority are only open on weekends (and sometimes just on Sat afternoon). The proximity of Woodinville to Seattle makes this an excellent day's outing. Woodinville is also home to the Northwest's top

restaurant (The Herbfarm) and a gorgeous contemporary lodge (Willows Lodge), which make this a great place for a romantic getaway.

To reach this miniature wine country from Seattle, head east on Wash. 520 or I-90 to I-405, drive north on I-405 and take the NE 124th Street exit, and drive east to 132nd Avenue NE. Turn left here and continue north to NE 143rd Place/NE 145th Street. Turn right and drive down the hill. At the bottom of the hill, you will be facing the first of the area's wineries.

The **Columbia Winery**, 14030 NE 145th St. (☎ 800/488-2347 or 425/482-7490; www.columbiawinery.com), has Washington's largest tasting bar and produces a wide range of good wines. It's open Sunday through Tuesday from 10am to 6pm and Wednesday through Saturday from 11am to 7pm. This winery tends to be crowded on weekends, so try to arrive early.

Directly across NE 145th Street from the Columbia Winery, you'll find the largest and most famous of the wineries in the area, **Chateau Ste. Michelle** ★, 14111 NE 145th St. (☎ 800/267-6793 or 425/415-3633; www.ste-michelle.com). In a grand mansion on a historic 1912 estate, this is by far the most beautiful winery in the Northwest. It's also the largest winery in the state and is known for its consistent quality. Hours are daily from 11am to 5pm; if you take the free tour, you can sample several of the less expensive wines. A basic wine tasting is free, but you can also opt for \$10 and \$15 tastings that can include more expensive and older reserve wines. Because this winery is so big and produces so many different wines, you never know what you might find in the tasting room. An amphitheater on the grounds stages big-name music performances throughout the summer.

If you drive north from Chateau Ste. Michelle, NE 145th Street becomes Woodinville-Redmond Road (Wash. 202) and you soon come to **Januik Winery/Novelty Hill Winery**, 14710 Woodinville-Redmond Rd. NE (☎ 425/481-5502; www.januikwinery.com or www.noveltyhillwines.com). The tasting room is open daily from 11am to 5pm. Along this stretch of road, you'll also find **Silver Lake Winery**, 15029 Woodinville-Redmond Rd. NE (☎ 425/485-2437; www.silverlakewinery.com). This winery sometimes crafts good reds at good prices but can be hit-or-miss. The tasting room is open Monday through Saturday from 11am to 5pm and Sunday from noon to 5pm.

Next up the road heading north is a hidden gem, the small **Facelli Winery**, 16120 Woodinville-Redmond Rd. NE (☎ 425/488-1020; www.facelliwinery.com), which is open Saturday and Sunday from noon to 4pm and produces some good red wines.

Continue a little farther to get to **DiStefano Winery**, 12280 Woodinville Dr. SE (☎ 425/487-1648; www.distefanowinery.com), which is best known for its full-bodied red wines but also produces some memorable whites. The tasting room is open Saturday and Sunday from noon to 5pm.

Just because this is wine country doesn't mean you can't get a good pint of beer. The large **Redhook Ale Brewery**, 14300 NE 145th St. (☎ 425/483-3232; www.redhook.com), next door to Columbia Winery, is one of Washington's top breweries. Tours are available; there's a pub here as well.

[FastFACTS] SEATTLE

Airport See “Getting There & Around” in chapter 3 and “Arriving,” earlier in this chapter.

Car Rentals See “Getting Around,” earlier in this chapter.

Dentist In downtown Seattle, contact **Gateway Dental Centre of Seattle**, 700 Fifth Ave., Ste. 1616 (☎ **206/343-8929**; www.gatewaydentalcentre.com).

Doctor To find a physician, check at your hotel for a referral, contact **Swedish Medical Center** (☎ **800/833-8879**; www.swedish.org), or call the referral line of the **Virginia Mason Medical Center** (☎ **888/862-2737** or **260/223-6881**; www.virginiamason.org).

Emergencies For police, fire, or medical emergencies, phone ☎ **911**.

Hospitals Hospitals convenient to downtown include **Swedish Medical Center**, 747 Broadway (☎ **206/386-6000**; www.swedish.org), and **Virginia Mason Medical Center**, 1100 Ninth Ave. (☎ **206/624-1144** for information; www.virginiamason.org).

Information See “Visitor Information,” earlier in this chapter.

Internet Access First, ask at your hotel to see if

it provides Internet access. Alternatively, you can head to the **Seattle Central Library**, 1000 Fourth Ave. (☎ **206/386-4636**), which has hundreds of online computer terminals.

Newspapers & Magazines The *Seattle Times* is Seattle’s daily newspaper. *Seattle Weekly* is the city’s free arts-and-entertainment weekly.

Pharmacies In Belltown, near the Space Needle, there’s a **Rite Aid Pharmacy**, at 2603 Third Ave. (☎ **206/441-8790**). You can also contact Rite Aid (☎ **800/748-3243**; www.riteaid.com) for the location nearest you. For 24-hour service, try **Bartell Drug Store**, 600 First Ave. N. (☎ **206/284-1353**), in the Lower Queen Anne neighborhood. You can also contact Bartell Drug Stores (☎ **877/227-8355**; www.bartelldrugs.com) for the location nearest you.

Police For police emergencies, phone ☎ **911**.

Restrooms There are public restrooms in Pike Place Market, Westlake Center, Pacific Place, Seattle Center, and the Washington State Convention and Trade Center. You’ll also find restrooms in most hotel lobbies and coffee bars in downtown Seattle.

Safety Although Seattle is a relatively safe city, it has its share of crime. The most questionable neighborhood you’re likely to visit is the Pioneer Square area, which is home to more than a dozen bars and nightclubs. By day, this area is quite safe (though it has a large contingent of street people), but late at night, when the bars are closing, stay aware of your surroundings and keep an eye out for suspicious characters and activities. Also take extra precautions with your wallet or purse when you’re in the crush of people at Pike Place Market. Whenever possible, try to park your car in a garage at night. If you must park on the street, make sure there are no valuables in view—or anything that even looks as if it might contain something of worth. I once had my car broken into because I left a shopping bag full of trash on the back seat.

Taxes Seattle has a 9.5% sales tax. In restaurants, there’s an additional .5% food-and-beverage tax. The hotel-room tax in Seattle is 15.6%. On rental cars, you pay a 19.2% tax, plus, if you rent at the airport, a 10% to 12% airport concession fee (plus other fees for a whopping total of almost 50%!).

Taxis See "Getting Around," earlier in this chapter.

Transit Info For 24-hour information on Seattle's Metro bus system, call ☎ **800/542-7876** in Washington, or 206/553-3000 or go to

<http://metro.kingcounty.gov>. For information on the Washington State Ferries, call ☎ **800/843-3779** or 888/808-7977 in Washington or 206/464-6400 or go to www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries.

Weather Check the *Seattle Times* newspaper for forecasts. If you want to know what to pack before you depart, go to www.wrh.noaa.gov/seattle, www.cnn.com/weather, or www.wunderground.com/us/wa.

THE SAN JUAN ISLANDS & NORTHWEST COAST

6

Water, water everywhere, and quite a few islands, too. That about sums up the landscape of the north Puget Sound and San Juan Islands region. Here, within a vast inland sea recently designated the Salish Sea, lie hundreds of islands both large and small, and the lure of these emerald isles is powerful. There may not be any turquoise waters, white-sand beaches, or palm trees swaying in the breeze, but an island is a getaway no matter where it is—and these islands are no exception. The fact that many of the region's islands bear Spanish names seems to further add to the romance of a trip to the San Juans.

When English explorer Capt. George Vancouver first sailed down the Strait of Juan de Fuca in 1792, he discovered a vast inland sea and named it Puget Sound. To the north of this sound, within a convolution of twisting channels, narrow straits, and elongated bays, lay an archipelago of islands, and rising to the east in a magnificent backdrop stood a range of snowcapped peaks. Several of the archipelago's islands—San Juan, Lopez, Fidalgo, Guemes, Sucia, and Matia—had already been named by earlier Spanish explorers, but Vancouver's 2 months of exploring and charting the waters of the region left Northwest maps with many new names—Deception Pass, Whidbey Island, Bellingham Bay, and Mount Baker.

From the mid-19th century to the mid-20th century, this region was primarily a fishing, farming, and logging region, but as early as the first decade of the 20th century, Washingtonians from the mainland had begun to discover the charms of island life. Today, the northern Puget Sound and San Juan Islands are home to Washington's favorite summer playgrounds and weekend getaway spots. Shimmering waters, mountain vistas, and tranquil islands are the ingredients of the tonic that revives

the weary souls of vacationers from densely populated and industrialized southern Puget Sound. Though it's only 30 miles from Seattle to Whidbey Island and 85 miles to the San Juans, the distance is multiplied by the serenity that descends as you cross the sound by ferry.

However, this corner of the state isn't all about island life. On the mainland, the historic fishing village of La Conner has become the most charming little town in the state. Surrounding La Conner are the Skagit Valley bulb fields, which burst into bloom each spring with acres and acres of tulips and daffodils.

Farther north, the city of Bellingham serves as a base for exploring Washington's northwest coast. There are few crowds here, and the vistas (and the oysters) are as good as any you'll find in the islands. It is also on this coast that you'll find the state's premier waterfront golf resort.

WHIDBEY ISLAND ★★

30 miles N of Seattle, 40 miles S of Bellingham

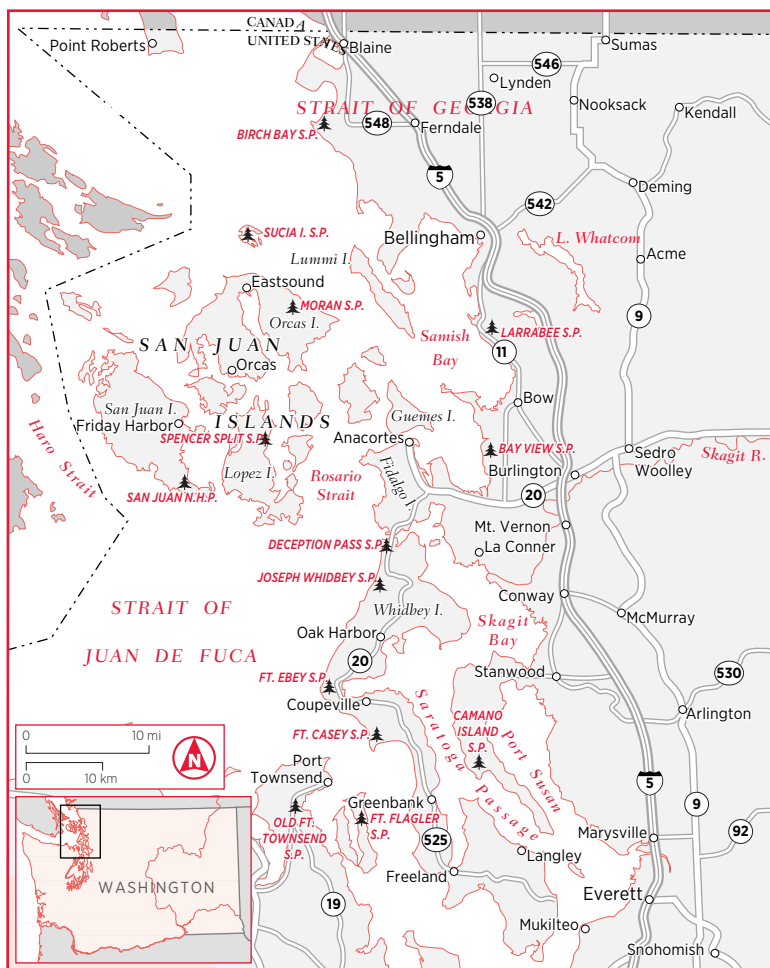
While the San Juan Islands are beautiful, their beauty has become something of a liability—during the summer, they're just too crowded. If you don't relish the hours-long waits for ferries, you can still have an island experience here on Whidbey Island, which is only 30 miles from Seattle and is popular as a weekend getaway for Seattleites who come seeking tranquillity and relaxation. Outside of Washington, Whidbey Island isn't nearly as well known as the San Juans, which is why it is less crowded in the summer.

Whidbey Island is 45 miles in length, which makes it one of the largest islands in the continental United States. However, because it is never more than a few miles wide, Whidbey offers views of the water at seemingly every turn of its winding country roads. Farms, forests, bluffs, and beaches provide the foregrounds to the aquatic vistas, and two historic villages, Langley and Coupeville, offer the same sort of quaint settings people expect from the San Juans. Old wooden commercial buildings have been restored and now house excellent restaurants, art galleries, and unique shops. Charming bed-and-breakfast inns (and one of the state's most luxurious small hotels) pamper visitors to the island and provide the romantic surroundings that are so much a part of the Whidbey experience.

But what, you wonder, is there to do on Whidbey Island? Next to nothing, and that is the island's main appeal. This is an island you visit in order to rest and rejuvenate. You don't have to do anything, just sit back and relax. However, there are a few options for burning off excess energy: wine tasting, shopping, garden touring, hiking in state parks and a national historic reserve, walking on beaches, and sea kayaking. Sounds a lot like the San Juans, doesn't it?

Let's you get the impression that Whidbey Island is heaven on earth, let me make you aware of the Whidbey Island Naval Air Station, which, with its thundering jets, has considerably altered the idyllic atmosphere of the island's northern half. Oak Harbor, the island's largest community, is located just outside the base and is characterized by the sort of strip-mall sprawl that surrounds most military bases. For this reason, the vast majority of the island's B&Bs are located in central and south Whidbey. It's partly because of what has happened to Oak Harbor that Ebey's Landing National Historic Reserve was created. When people who had moved to the island because of its tranquil atmosphere saw the sprawl that was spreading around Oak

Northwest Washington Coast



Harbor, they acted quickly to preserve some of the island's rural beauty, the very essence of Whidbey Island.

Essentials

GETTING THERE From I-5, take Wash. 20 west at Burlington. The highway turns south before you reach Anacortes and crosses over the Deception Pass Bridge to reach the north end of Whidbey Island.

Washington State Ferries (☎ 800/843-3779 or 888/808-7977 in Washington, or 206/464-6400; www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries) operates ferries between Mukilteo

and Clinton at the south end of the island and from Port Townsend to Keystone near Coupeville. Fares are \$7 to \$8.75 for a car and driver and \$4.10 for passengers between Mukilteo and Clinton; \$9.15 to \$11 for a car and driver and \$2.65 for passengers between Port Townsend and Keystone.

VISITOR INFORMATION Contact **Central Whidbey Chamber of Commerce**, 27 NW Front St. (P.O. Box 152), Coupeville, WA 98239 (☎ 360/678-5434; www.centralwhidbeychamber.com); the **Langley Chamber of Commerce**, 208 Anthes Ave. (P.O. Box 403), Langley, WA 98260 (☎ 360/221-6765; www.visitlangley.com); or **Island County Tourism**, P.O. Box 365, Coupeville, WA 98239 (☎ 888/747-7777 or 360/675-5412; www.whidbeycamanoislands.com).

GETTING AROUND **Island Transit** (☎ 800/240-8747 or 360/321-6688; www.islandtransit.org) provides free public bus service on Whidbey Island.

FESTIVALS In late February, aspiring private detectives descend on Whidbey Island for the **Langley Mystery Weekend** (www.langleymystery.com), during which participants wander around trying to figure out “who done it.” On the first weekend of March, you can eat your fill of mussels at the **Penn Cove Mussel Festival** (www.thepenncovemusselfestival.com), and in mid-July, Langley celebrates the visual and performing arts with the **Choochokam Arts** (www.choochokamarts.org) festival. In mid-August, there's the **Coupeville Arts and Crafts Festival** (www.coupevilleartsandcraftsfestival.org).

Exploring the Island

If you're coming from the south and take the ferry from Mukilteo, then the best place to start exploring Whidbey Island is in the historic fishing village of **Langley**, which is reached by taking Langley Road off Wash. 525. Before you ever reach town, you'll pass by the **Whidbey Island Vineyard & Winery**, 5237 Langley Rd. (☎ 360/221-2040; www.whidbeyislandwinery.com), where you can taste a few wines. Many of the white wines are made from grapes grown here on the island, while the reds are made from grapes grown in eastern Washington. The tasting room is open Wednesday through Sunday from 11am to 5pm (July–Sept, open Mon also).

Langley is a compact little village with a mix of sophisticated shops, interesting art galleries, and good, moderately priced restaurants occupying restored wooden commercial buildings along the waterfront. **First Street Park**, right in downtown, provides access to a narrow, rocky beach and offers views of Saratoga Passage and the distant Cascades. A couple of blocks away, you'll find the **South Whidbey Historical Museum**, 312 Second St. (☎ 360/221-2101; www.southwhidbeyhistory.org), a small museum housing displays on local history. The museum is open Saturday and Sunday from 1 to 4pm (in summer, also open Fri 1–4pm); admission is a \$2 suggested donation.

Before leaving the Langley area, be sure to swing by historic **Bayview Corner**, at the intersection of Wash. 525 and Bayview Road. Here, in a historic building dating to 1924, you can sample local wines at **Taste 4 Wines** (☎ 360/321-0515), check out local contemporary art at **Open Door Gallery + Café** (☎ 360/321-3020; www.opendoorwhidbey.com), get something to eat at **Basil Café** (☎ 360/321-7898), and look for cool gardening tools at **Bayview Farm & Garden** (☎ 360/321-6789; www.bayviewfarmandgarden.com). Between April and October, the **Bayview Farmers Market** (☎ 360/321-4302; www.bayviewfarmersmarket.com) sets up here on

Saturdays from 10am to 2pm. Heading north from here, just north of the town of Freeland, you can make a short detour north of Wash. 525 to **Holmes Harbor Cellars**, 4591 S. Honeymoon Bay Rd. (☎ 360/331-3544; www.holmesharborcellars.com). The Tuscan-style estate makes wines from grapes grown in eastern Washington. The tasting room is open Friday through Sunday from 11am to 5pm.

Seven miles northwest of **Freeland**, the narrowest point of the island, **South Whidbey State Park** (☎ 360/902-8844), has almost a mile of shoreline, hiking trails through some old-growth forest, and a campground. Continuing north, you come to **Greenbank Farm**, 765 Wonn Rd. (☎ 360/678-7700; www.greenbankfarm.com), which is just off Wash. 525 in **Greenbank**. This former loganberry farm is now a community park. For many years, the farm was known for its loganberry liqueur, and today, in the farm's tasting room, you can still sample loganberry wine, as well as other wines from around the region. The farm's main building houses the tasting room and a small cafe known for its delicious loganberry pies. With its big red barns and rolling fields, Greenbank Farm is as picture-perfect a farm as you'll find anywhere in western Washington. A network of trails meanders around the property, making this a good place to stretch your legs. Not far away, you can sample more wines at **Greenbank Cellars**, 3112 Day Rd., Greenbank (☎ 360/678-3964; www.whidbey.com/wine). The winery is open Thursday to Monday from 11am to 5pm. To reach the winery from Greenbank Farm, drive south on Wash. 525 and then take Bakken Road west to Day Road.

Also in Greenbank (just off Wash. 525) is **Meerkerk Rhododendron Gardens**, 3531 Meerkerk Lane (☎ 360/678-1912; www.meerkerkgardens.org), which was originally a private garden, but is now operated as a display and test garden. March 15 to September 15, it's open daily from 9am to 4pm (peak bloom is Apr–May); other months it's closed on Monday and Tuesday. Admission is \$8.

Coupeville, located in central Whidbey Island just north of the turnoff for the ferry to Port Townsend, is another historic waterfront village. This town was founded in 1852 by Capt. Thomas Coupe, and the captain's 1853 home is among those in town that have been restored. The quiet charm of yesteryear is Coupeville's greatest appeal, and many of its old wooden commercial buildings now house antiques stores. At the north end of downtown, a gravel path leads up a bluff to the Coupeville Town Park, which is a good spot for a picnic. At the end of the Coupeville Wharf, you can see the skeleton of Rosie the gray whale, which hangs from the ceiling of the building at the end of the wharf.

In Coupeville you'll find the **Island County Historical Museum**, 908 NW Alexander St. (☎ 360/678-3310; www.islandhistory.org), which is the best place to learn about the island's seafaring, farming, and military history. Between May and September, the museum is open Monday to Saturday from 10am to 5pm and Sunday from 11am to 5pm; October through April, it's open Monday to Saturday from 10am to 4pm and Sunday 11am to 4pm. Admission is \$3 for adults, and \$2.50 for seniors and students.

Much of the land around Coupeville is now part of the **Ebey's Landing National Historic Reserve** (☎ 360/678-6084; www.nps.gov/ebla). The reserve, one of the first of its kind in the nation, was created "to preserve and protect a rural community which provides an unbroken historic record from the nineteenth century exploration and settlement of Puget Sound to the present time." There is no visitor center for the reserve, but there is an information kiosk near the dock in Coupeville,

and the adjacent museum has copies of an informative brochure about the reserve, as well as a brochure that outlines a driving and bicycling tour of the preserve.

Three miles south of Coupeville, adjacent to the Keystone ferry landing, **Fort Casey State Park** (☎ 360/902-8844) is a former military base that was built in the 1890s to guard Puget Sound. The park has the original gun batteries, which are always a hit with young boys. The park also has beaches, hiking trails, a campground, and the 1897 **Admiralty Head Lighthouse** (☎ 360/240-5584; www.admiraltyhead.wsu.edu), which is now an interpretive center that is open daily from 11am to 5pm in summer (call for hours other months). A few miles north of Fort Casey is the smaller **Fort Ebey State Park**, Libbey Road (☎ 360/902-8844), another former military site built to protect the sound. Here there are excellent views of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, as well as a campground, hiking and mountain biking trails, and a lake for fishing.

Deception Pass State Park (☎ 360/675-2417; www.parks.wa.gov), at the northern tip of the island, is the prettiest state park in the area and has miles of beaches, quiet coves, freshwater lakes, forests, hiking trails, camping, and views of Deception Pass, a churning channel between Whidbey Island and Fidalgo Island. A high bridge connects these two large islands by way of a smaller island in the middle of Deception Pass. Overlooks at the bridge allow you to gaze down on tidal waters that surge and swirl between the islands.

You can explore Deception Pass from sea level on boat tours offered by **Deception Pass Tours** (☎ 888/909-8687 or 360/914-0096; www.deceptionpasstours.com), which charges only \$21 per person (\$19 for seniors and children) for a quick trip through the pass. Tours operate April through October from 11am to dusk.

Sports & Outdoor Activities

SEA KAYAKING One of the best ways to get a feel for Whidbey Island is from water level in a sea kayak. Tours originating in Langley are offered by **Whidbey Island Kayaking Company** (☎ 800/233-4319 or 360/661-5183; www.whidbeyislandkayaking.com), which charges \$49 for a 2-hour tour. These tours operate between March and October.

Where to Stay

IN LANGLEY

Boatyard Inn ★ Right on Langley's little marina and designed to look like an old cannery building, this three-story inn is clad in a combination of wood, cedar shingles, and corrugated metal. Guest rooms are huge and have full kitchens, water-views, gas fireplaces, and small balconies. There are also four two-bedroom loft suites. Downtown Langley is a few hundred yards uphill, and there's a small adjacent beach as well as the marina. This is a good choice if you like lots of space or need a kitchen.

200 Wharf St. (P.O. Box 866), Langley, WA 98260. ☎ 360/221-5120. Fax 360/221-5124. www.boatyardinn.com. 12 units. \$195-\$295 double (lower midweek winter rates). AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Pets accepted (\$50 fee). **Amenities:** Concierge. *In room:* TV, hair dryer, kitchenette, MP3 docking station, free Wi-Fi.

The Inn at Langley ★★★ This is one of the most luxurious and romantic inns in the Northwest. With its weathered cedar shingles, exposed beams, works of contemporary art, and colorful garden, the inn evokes all the best of life in the region, and the guest rooms have a Zen-like quality that soothes and relaxes. The inn's four floors jut out from a bluff overlooking Saratoga Passage, and with 180-degree views

from every room, you'll have plenty of opportunities to spot orca whales and bald eagles. While the bedrooms are luxurious enough, the bathrooms are the star attractions. Each comes with an open shower and a double whirlpool tub that looks out over the water. Several nights a week, the Chef's Kitchen Restaurant serves a gourmet six-course dinner focusing on creative Northwest flavors (\$85/person).

400 First St. (P.O. Box 835), Langley, WA 98260. ☎ **360/221-3033**. www.innatlangley.com. 26 units. \$265-\$285 double; \$395 suite; \$495 cottage. Rates include continental breakfast. 2-night minimum on weekends. AE, MC, V. Children 12 and over welcome. **Amenities:** Restaurant; access to nearby health club; spa. *In room:* TV/VCR/DVD, fridge, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

IN COUPEVILLE

The Captain Whidbey Inn ★ Three miles west of Coupeville off Madrona Way stands one of the Northwest's most unusual inns. Shady, quiet grounds offer a tranquil setting that has revived flagging spirits for more than a century. Built in 1907 of small madrona logs, the historic inn is architecturally fascinating, a bit of American folk art. I love the character of this place, though it is not for everyone. The rooms in the main building are small and lack private bathrooms, but they manage to capture the feel of the island's seafaring past. Suites, cottages, and cabins are available for those who need more space (though none of these have as much character as the inn rooms). The inn's dining room overlooks Penn Cove, and serves mussels from the cove.

2072 W. Captain Whidbey Inn Rd., Coupeville, WA 98239. ☎ **800/366-4097** or 360/678-4097. www.captainwhidbey.com. 32 units, 12 with shared bathroom. \$94-\$105 double with shared bathroom; \$165-\$190 double with private bathroom; \$171-\$180 suite; \$193-\$230 cabin. 2-night minimum on weekends, 3-night minimum on holiday weekends. MC, V. No children 12 or under in main building. **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge. *In room:* No phone.

Where to Dine

IN LANGLEY

If you're looking for a good up of coffee in Langley, drop by the eclectic little **Island Coffeehouse and Books**, 124 Second St. (☎ **360/221-2414**; www.islandcoffeehouseandbooks.org), which is a sort of community center that has live music on Friday nights. Alternatively, try **Useless Bay Coffee Co.**, 121 Second St. (☎ **360/221-4515**), which makes great lattes and is in an unusual contemporary rusted-steel building.

The Chef's Kitchen Restaurant ★★ ★ NORTHWEST The bounty of Whidbey Island, which produces a mouthwatering variety of seafood and produce, serves as the basis for the gourmet meals served at this tiny restaurant. Complex sauces, unexpected flavor combinations, and impeccably fresh ingredients all add up to memorable meals. A recent meal began with an egg filled with divine white-truffle custard and then moved on to a sweet corn consommé with tomatoes and cherries and a salad of chanterelle mushrooms and lentils. Entrees included roast quail with zucchini blossom stuffing and halibut with honey-drizzled Penn Cove mussels. All in all, meals here are unforgettable and are best paired with a stay at the Inn at Langley.

At the Inn at Langley, 400 First St. ☎ **360/221-3033**. www.innatlangley.com. Reservations required. 6-course prix-fixe meal \$85. Seatings Fri-Sun 7pm; Sun 6pm (also Thurs 7pm in summer).

Prima Bistro ★★ NEW AMERICAN This second-floor restaurant overlooking the water has only a door opening off the sidewalk at street level, so it is easy to overlook. Don't! The menu here is almost as creative as that at the Inn at Langley's

Restaurant (see above), but the prices are much easier to swallow. Boisterous and casual, Prima is a foodie's dream come true. There are plenty of creative small plates, including duck confit with *puy* lentils, truffled prawns, and pan-seared sweetbreads with apricot-and-thyme sauce. The entree list always seems to have a good risotto, and the steak *frites* is a local favorite. However, I can never resist the local Penn Cove mussels *a la marinière*.

201½ First St. ☎ **360/221-4060**. www.primabistro.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$10–\$27. MC, V. Daily 11:30am–9pm. Closed 1st Thurs of each month 3–5pm.

IN COUPEVILLE

For gourmet picnic fare, stop by **Bayleaf**, 101 NW Coveland St. (☎ **360/678-6603**; www.bayleaf.us).

Christopher's ★ NORTHWEST In an attractive glass-walled building a block off the water in downtown Coupeville, Christopher's may not have much in the way of water-views, but it does boast the prettiest dining room and serves some of the best food in town, especially pasta. Chef/owner Andreas Wurzrainer is from Austria, and occasionally dishes from the home country show up on the menu. For the most part, the menu sticks to familiar fare such as shrimp scampi and seafood stew, though you'll also find dishes such as barbecued salmon with raspberry barbecue sauce. It would be foolish to pass up the Penn Cove mussels, which are steamed with white wine, cream, garlic, and herbs.

103 NW Coveland St. ☎ **360/678-5480**. www.christopheronwhidbey.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$9–\$12 lunch, \$14–\$24 dinner. AE, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11:30am–2pm and 5–8pm; Fri 11:30am–2pm and 5–9pm; Sat noon–2:30pm and 5–9pm.

The Oystercatcher ★★ NORTHWEST A block off the waterfront at the back of a small building, this tiny restaurant is the best in town. The menu changes frequently and usually includes five appetizers and five entrees. With such a short menu, you can be sure every dish is perfectly done. On a recent menu, appetizers included oysters with aioli, as well as local mussels steamed in white wine, butter, and herbs. Among the entrees were a roasted chicken served with creamy turnip sauce and gooseberry chutney and venison *osso buco* (braised shank) with an orange-juniper sauce.

901 Grace St. ☎ **360/678-0683**. www.oystercatcherwhidbey.com. Reservations highly recommended. Main courses \$23–\$31. MC, V. Thurs–Sat 5–8pm; Sun 11am–1pm and 5–8pm.

ANACORTES

75 miles N of Seattle, 39 miles S of Bellingham, 92 miles S of Vancouver, British Columbia

For many people, Anacortes is little more than that town you drive through on the way to the San Juan Islands ferry terminal. Actually, Anacortes has much more to offer than a driver late for the ferry could ever know. The route to the ferry sticks to roads that are fine examples of commercial and suburban sprawl—strip malls, gas stations, aging motels, housing developments. However, if you have time to detour off the main road, you'll find a town that, while not nearly as quaint as those on the San Juans, does have some historic character and a surprising number of good restaurants. A restored downtown business district; residential neighborhoods full of old Victorian homes; a large, forested waterfront park; and a mountaintop viewpoint are all worth a look. If you can, slow down and spend a little time in Anacortes before or after a trip to the San Juans.

The Name Game

Founded in the 1850s by Amos Bowman, Anacortes was named after Bowman's wife, Annie Curtis, but over the years the spelling and pronunciation were slowly corrupted to its current Spanish-sounding pronunciation (in keeping with such local Spanish names as San Juan, Lopez, and Guemes).

Anacortes made its early fortunes on lumbering and fishing, and today commercial fishing, as well as boat-building, are still important to the town's economy. This marine orientation has given the town its character, which can be seen in the many restored buildings along Commercial Avenue.

Anacortes also makes a good base for exploring the San Juans if you either can't get or can't afford a room on the islands. Using Anacortes as a

base and leaving your car here on the mainland, you can travel as a passenger on the ferries and, by using public transit, mopeds, or bicycles, still manage to see plenty of the San Juans. In any event, Anacortes is also on an island, Fidalgo Island, with plenty of water-views, the best of which are from Washington Park near the ferry terminal, from atop Mount Erie in the middle of the island, and from Deception Pass State Park at the south end of the island.

Essentials

GETTING THERE From I-5 at Burlington, take Wash. 20 west to the Wash. 20 Spur. South of Anacortes, Wash. 20 connects to Whidbey Island by way of the Deception Pass Bridge.

See "Getting There" under "The San Juan Islands," below, for details on airport shuttle service to Anacortes from Seattle-Tacoma International Airport and for information on ferry connections to Anacortes from the islands and Vancouver Island, British Columbia.

VISITOR INFORMATION For information on Anacortes, contact the **Anacortes Chamber of Commerce**, 819 Commercial Ave., Ste. F, Anacortes, WA 98221 (☎ 360/293-3832; www.anacortes.org).

Exploring Anacortes

If you want to learn more about local history, stop by the **Anacortes Museum/Carnegie Gallery**, 1305 Eighth St. (☎ 360/293-1915; <http://museum.cityofanacortes.org>), housed in a former Carnegie Library. It's open Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday to Saturday from 10am to 4pm and Sunday from 1 to 4pm; admission is by donation. Across the street from the museum is **Causland Memorial Park**, the town's most unusual attraction. Built in 1919 to honor servicemen who died in World War I, the park contains rock walls constructed as giant mosaics. It's a piece of folk art that reflects a simpler era.

Any walking tour of downtown should include a visit to the historic **W. T. Preston Snagboat Heritage Center**, 713 R Ave. (☎ 360/293-1916), a sternwheeler that was built in the 1890s to clear logjams on Puget Sound and now sits on dry land in a little park at the corner of Seventh Street and R Avenue. June through August, the sternwheeler is open Monday to Saturday from 10am to 4pm and Sunday from 11am to 4pm; April, May, September, and October, it's open on weekends only. Admission is \$3 for adults, \$2 for seniors, and \$1 for children ages 8 to 16. Next door, at the corner of Seventh Street and R Avenue, is **The Depot Arts Center**, 611 R Ave.

(☎ 360/293-3663; www.depotartscenter.org), a restored 1911 railway depot that now serves as an arts center, with a collection of work by regional artists.

For a glimpse of an old-fashioned hardware store, stop by **Marine Supply & Hardware Co.**, 202 Commercial St. (☎ 360/293-3014; www.marinesupplyandhardware.com), which is the oldest continuously operating marine supply store on the West Coast.

Nature lovers can head to **Washington Park**, just a short distance past the ferry terminal. The park contains not only a campground and several miles of hiking trails, but tranquil **Sunset Beach**, which looks out across Rosario Strait to the San Juan Islands. For even more spectacular views, head up to **Mount Erie Park ★★** on the summit of 1,270-foot Mount Erie. From here, on a clear day you can see Mount Rainier, Mount Baker, and the Olympic Mountains. You'll find this park by heading south out of Anacortes on Commercial Avenue, turning right on 32nd Street and then left on H Avenue (which becomes Heart Lake Rd.), and then taking Erie Mountain Drive to the top of the mountain.

You don't have to go all the way to the San Juans if you want to do some whale-watching. Orca-viewing excursions are offered by **Island Adventures** (☎ 800/465-4604 or 360/293-2428; www.islandadventurecruises.com), which charges \$79 to \$99, and also by **Mystic Sea Charters** (☎ 800/308-9387 or 360/588-8000; www.mysticseacharters.com), which charges \$79 to \$89. It's also possible to do a little sea kayaking here in the Anacortes area. Sea-kayak tours are available at the **Sea Kayak Shop**, 2515 Commercial Ave. (☎ 866/445-7506 or 360/299-2300; www.seakayakshop.com), which charges \$49 to \$69 per person for tours.

Where to Stay

Majestic Inn & Spa ★★ This is one of the most beautiful and romantic hotels in the region, and yet it gets overlooked because Anacortes is generally thought of as someplace you just drive through on your way to the ferry terminal. The Majestic looks like it was transported here from Martha's Vineyard and is definitely worth stopping for. Elegant rooms with plush beds and beautiful furnishings are as luxurious as any rooms in the San Juans. The inn is conveniently located in downtown Anacortes within walking distance of several good restaurants and has a full-service spa.

419 Commercial Ave., Anacortes, WA 98221. ☎ 877/370-0100 or 360/299-1400. Fax 360/299-8835. www.majesticinnandspa.com. 21 units. \$139–\$239 double; \$379 suite. Rates include continental breakfast. AE, DISC, MC, V. Pets accepted (\$50 fee). **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge; access to nearby health club; room service; full-service spa. *In room:* TV/DVD, CD player, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

Ship Harbor Inn Immediately adjacent to the ferry terminal for San Juan Islands ferries and overlooking a wetland with good bird-watching, this inn is a good choice if you weren't able to get a room on the islands or are planning on taking the early ferry all the way to Vancouver Island, Canada. This is also a good choice if you are planning to explore the islands by bicycle. Rooms are large and most have balconies and views of the water. If you plan to spend more than 1 night here, you might want to opt for one of the "cabin" rooms, which have full kitchens. There's also a Jacuzzi suite.

5316 Ferry Terminal Rd., Anacortes, WA 98221. ☎ 800/852-8568 or 360/293-5177. www.shipharborinn.com. 28 units. \$99–\$179 double (lower rates in winter). Rates include continental breakfast. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. MC, V. Pets accepted (free). **Amenities:** Laundry; library. *In room:* TV, fridge, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

Where to Dine

Before leaving town, you should also be sure to pick up some smoked salmon at **Seabear Smokehouse and Store** ★, 605 30th St. (☎ 800/645-3474 or 360/293-4661; www.seabear.com).

Gere-a-Deli ★ DELI Many places claim to be New York–style delis, but this is one of the only ones in the state that comes close to duplicating the genuine feel of a deli in Manhattan. Big and bustling, Gere-a-Deli is *the* place for lunch in Anacortes, and while the sandwiches may not be as good as those in the Big Apple, the urban feel, vintage signs, huge windows, and lively chatter of conversation all add up to a classic deli experience. On Friday nights, dinner is served.

502 Commercial Ave. ☎ 360/293-7383. www.gere-a-deli.com. Reservations required for Fri dinner. Sandwiches \$6–\$10. AE, MC, V. Mon–Thurs and Sat 7am–4pm; Fri 7am–4pm and 5–9pm.

Rockfish Grill and Anacortes Brewery AMERICAN Although you can get good fish and chips, pizzas, and burgers in this brewpub, the menu also includes plenty of dishes that are unexpectedly imaginative. For a starter, try the tequila-lime shrimp cocktail or the double oyster “martini.” Among the entrees, the ravioli is a good bet. Wash it all down with one of the brewery’s excellent beers. There’s also live jazz, blues, and bluegrass here several nights each week.

320 Commercial Ave. ☎ 360/588-1720. www.anacortesrockfish.com. Main courses \$9–\$24. AE, MC, V. Sun–Thurs 11:30am–10pm; Fri–Sat 11:30am–midnight.

Star Bar ★★ NEW AMERICAN The Star Bar is the most sophisticated restaurant in Anacortes and serves up some of the best food in the region. Between this restaurant and the Majestic Inn across the street, Anacortes is a respectable alternative to a stay in the San Juans. The menu here changes regularly and includes quite a few small plates that make this a great place to eat if you aren’t in the mood for a big meal. You could start with pan-seared scallops with vanilla-bean tapioca, figs, and avocado sauce or curry-marinated flank steak. Entrees might include an Asian-inspired ahi tuna dusted with ginger or pan-seared duck breast with plum sauce. There’s a separate, less expensive menu in the lounge, and economical four-course meals are also offered.

416½ Commercial Ave. ☎ 360/299-2120. www.starbaranacortes.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$25–\$28. AE, MC, V. Tues–Sat 5–9:30pm.

THE SAN JUAN ISLANDS ★★★

On a late afternoon on a clear summer day, the sun slants low, suffusing the scene with a golden light. The fresh salt breeze and the low rumble of the ferry’s engine lull you into a dream state. All around you, rising from a shimmering sea, are emerald-green islands, the tops of glacier-carved mountains inundated with water at the end of the last ice age. A bald eagle swoops from its perch on a twisted madrona tree. Off the port bow, you spot several fat harbor seals lounging on a rocky islet. As the engine slows, you glide toward a narrow dock with a simple sign above it that reads ORCAS ISLAND. With a sigh of contentment, you step out onto the San Juan Islands and into a slower pace of life.

There’s something magical about traveling to the San Juans. Some people say it’s the light, some say it’s the sea air, some say it’s the weather (temperatures are always

moderate, and rainfall is roughly half what it is in Seattle). Whatever the answer, the San Juans have become the favorite getaway of urban Washingtonians, and if you make time to visit these idyllic islands, I think you, too, will fall under their spell.

There is, however, one caveat: The San Juans have been discovered. In summer, if you're driving a car, you may encounter waits of several hours to get on the ferries (although there is talk of implementing a reservation system). One solution is to leave your car on the mainland and come over either on foot or by bicycle. If you choose to come over on foot, you can then rent a car, moped, or bike; take the San Juan island shuttle bus; or use taxis to get around. Then again, you can just stay in one place and relax.

Along with crowded ferries come hotels, inns, and campgrounds booked up months in advance, and restaurants that can't seat you unless you have a reservation. If it's summer, you likely won't find a place to stay if you don't have a reservation.

In other seasons it's a different story. Spring and fall are often clear, and in spring, the islands' gardens and hedgerows of wild roses burst into bloom, making this one of the nicest times of year to visit. Perhaps best of all, room rates in spring and fall are much lower than they are in summer.

No one seems to be able to agree on how many islands there actually are in the San Juans; there may be fewer than 200 or almost 800. The lower number represents those islands large enough to have been named, while the larger number includes all the islands, rocks, and reefs that poke above the water at low tide. Of all these islands, only four (San Juan, Orcas, Lopez, and Shaw) are serviced by the Washington State Ferries, and of these, only three (San Juan, Orcas, and Lopez) have anything in the way of tourist accommodations.

Essentials

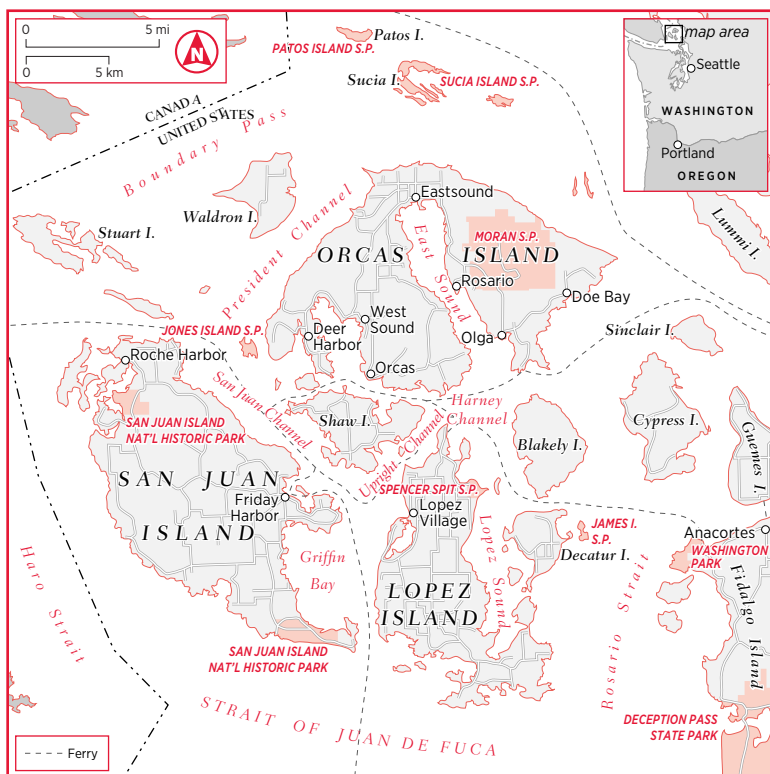
For information on all the islands, contact the **San Juan Islands Visitors Bureau**, P.O. Box 1330, Friday Harbor, WA 98250 (☎ 888/468-3701; www.visitsanjuans.com). For specific information on San Juan, contact the **San Juan Island Chamber of Commerce**, 135 Spring St. (P.O. Box 98), Friday Harbor, WA 98250 (☎ 360/378-5240; www.sanjuanisland.org). For Orcas, contact the **Orcas Island Chamber of Commerce**, 65 N. Beach Rd. (P.O. Box 252), Eastsound, WA 98245 (☎ 360/376-2273; www.orcasislandchamber.com). And for Lopez, contact the **Lopez Island Chamber of Commerce**, 6 Old Post Rd. (P.O. Box 102), Lopez, WA 98261 (☎ 877/433-2789 or 360/468-4664; www.lopezisland.com). Also check out www.thesanjuans.com.

GETTING THERE **Washington State Ferries** (☎ 800/84-FERRY [33779], 888/808-7977 in Washington, or 206/464-6400; www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries) operates ferries between Anacortes, four of the San Juan Islands (Lopez, Shaw, Orcas, and San Juan) and Sidney, British Columbia (on Vancouver Island near Victoria).

The round-trip fare for a vehicle and driver from Anacortes to Lopez is \$25 to \$37, to Shaw or Orcas \$30 to \$44, to San Juan \$35 to \$53, and to Sidney \$44 to \$55. The higher fares reflect a summer surcharge, and the lower fares (with the exception of trips to Sidney) are Sunday-through-Tuesday fares.

The round-trip fare for passengers from Anacortes to any of the islands ranges from \$10 to \$14 (\$33 btw. Anacortes and Sidney). The fare for a vehicle and driver on all westbound inter-island ferries is \$18 to \$23; walk-on passengers and passengers in cars ride free. Except for service from Sidney, fares are not collected on eastbound ferries, nor are walk-on passengers charged for inter-island ferry service.

The San Juan Islands



If you plan to explore the islands by car, you'll save some money by starting your tour on San Juan Island and making your way back east through the islands.

During the summer you may have to wait several hours to get on a ferry, so arrive early. If you plan to leave your car on the mainland, any time between May 1 and September 30, you'll pay \$10 to park it overnight at the Anacortes ferry terminal (\$25 for 3 days, \$40 for 1 week). The rest of the year, parking rates are mostly half the summer rates.

There are also passenger-ferry services from several cities around the region. **Victoria Clipper** (☎ 800/888-2535, 206/448-5000, or 250/382-8100; www.clippervacations.com) operates excursion boats between Seattle and Friday Harbor on San Juan Island. There are also boats that go to Victoria. The round-trip fare to Friday Harbor is \$80 to \$120 (\$40–\$60 for children 11 and under), depending on the time of year. Discounted 1-day advance-purchase round-trip tickets are available, and if you book in advance, children travel for free.

Between Port Townsend and Friday Harbor, passenger service is available from mid-March to mid-October from **P.S. Express** (☎ 360/385-5288; www.pugetsoundexpress.com), which will also carry bicycles and sea kayaks. One-way fares are

\$50 to \$53 for adults and \$35 to \$43 for children ages 2 to 10; round-trip fares are \$69 to \$79 for adults and \$49 to \$54 for children.

From Bellingham, there is passenger service to Friday Harbor (San Juan Island) on the **Victoria San Juan Cruises**, Bellingham Cruise Terminal, 335 Harris Ave. (☎ **800/443-4552** or 360/738-8099; www.islandcommuter.com). The round-trip fare is \$58 for adults and \$48 for students ages 13 to 21, \$38 for children ages 6 to 12. These passenger ferries operate between May and early September.

If you're short on time, you can fly to the San Juans. **Kenmore Air** (☎ **866/435-9524** or 425/486-1257; www.kenmoreair.com) offers floatplane flights that take off from either Lake Union or the north end of Lake Washington. Round-trip fares to the San Juans are between \$219 and \$259 (lower fares often available on website). Flights go to Friday Harbor and Roche Harbor on San Juan Island; Rosario Resort, Deer Harbor, and West Sound on Orcas Island; and the Lopez Islander on Lopez Island. This company also operates flights out of Boeing Field, which is just south of downtown Seattle. You can also get from Seattle, Bellingham, or Anacortes to the San Juans on **San Juan Airlines** (☎ **800/874-4434**; www.sanjuanairlines.com).

You can also get from Sea-Tac Airport or downtown Seattle to the San Juan Islands ferry terminal in Anacortes on the **Airporter Shuttle** (☎ **866/235-5247** or 360/380-8800; www.airporter.com), which charges \$33 one-way and \$61 round-trip.

GETTING AROUND Car rentals are available on San Juan Island from **M&W Auto Sales**, 725 Spring St. (☎ **800/323-6037** or 360/378-2886, or, on Orcas Island ☎ **360/376-5266**; www.interisland.net/mandw), which charges between \$50 and \$80 per day during the summer. On Orcas Island, cars (\$60/day) are only available from mid-May to mid-October.

Cars can also be rented from **Susie's Mopeds**, 125 Nichols St. (☎ **800/532-0087** or 360/378-5244; www.susiesmopeds.com), which is 1 block from the top of the ferry lanes in Friday Harbor. Susie's charges \$32 per hour and \$96 per day for a car and also rents scooters and mopeds (\$30–\$60/hour or \$65–\$130/day). Mopeds are also available at the north end of the island at Roche Harbor.

For a cab, call **Bob's Taxi** (☎ **360/378-6777**) or **Friday Harbor Taxi** (☎ **360/298-4434**).

During the summer, **San Juan Transit** (☎ **800/887-8387** or 360/378-8887; www.sanjuantransit.com) operates a San Juan Island shuttle bus that can be boarded at the ferry terminal. It operates frequently throughout the day, stopping at all the island's major attractions, which makes it a great way to get around for those traveling without a car. Day passes are \$15 for adults and \$5 for children 5 to 12. Two-day passes (\$25 for adults, \$21 for seniors, and \$10 for children), one-way tickets (\$5 adults, \$2 children), and round-trip tickets (\$10 adults, \$4 children) are also available. Children 4 and under ride free. Over Memorial Day weekend and from the late June to early September, the **Orcas Island Shuttle** (☎ **360/376-7433**; www.orcasislandshuttle.com) can transport you around Orcas Island. The fare is \$6 per person between any two points on the island or \$12 for a day pass (children ages 6–12 are half price). This same company also provides rental cars.

San Juan Island

San Juan Island is not the largest of these islands, but it is the most populous, and is home to the county seat, Friday Harbor, which is the biggest and most developed town in the islands. As the hub of island activity, San Juan Island is home to more

whale-watching and sea-kayaking companies than any of the other islands. It also has charter boats, fishing boats, moped rentals, and lots of souvenir shops. This all adds up to crowds in the summer, so if you're looking for an idyllic island getaway, you might want to try Orcas or Lopez.

However, what San Juan Island has going for it is lots of history, plus great views of the Olympic Mountains across the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and it is the only place in the islands where you can reliably see orca whales from shore.

EXPLORING FRIDAY HARBOR

Friday Harbor is the only real town on all of the islands, and as such it is home to numerous tourist-oriented shops, restaurants, motels, and B&Bs, as well as such island necessities as grocery and hardware stores. With its well-protected, large marina, it's also one of the most popular places in the islands for boaters to drop anchor.

If you arrive by car, you'll first want to find a parking space, which can be difficult in the summer. Once on foot, take a stroll around **Friday Harbor** to admire the simple wood-frame shop buildings, constructed in the early 20th century. At that time, Friday Harbor was a busy little harbor sometimes referred to as the southernmost port in Alaska. Schooners and steamships hauled the island's fruit, livestock, and lime (for cement) off to more populous markets. Today such pursuits have all ceased, but reminders of the island's rural roots linger on, and these memories have fueled San Juan's new breadwinner: tourism.

Whale-watching is one of the most popular summer activities in the San Juans, and no one should visit the islands at this time of year without going out to see the area's orca whales. Before you head out, stop by **The Whale Museum ★★**, 62 First St. N. (☎ 360/378-4710; www.whale-museum.org), where you can see whale skeletons and models of whales and learn all about the area's pods of orcas (also known as killer whales). The museum is open daily from 10am to 5pm; admission is \$6 for adults, \$5 for seniors, and \$3 for students and children 5 to 18.

If you're interested in learning more about island history, stop by the **San Juan Historical Museum**, 441 Price St. (☎ 360/378-3949; www.sjmuseum.org), which is housed in an 1894 farmhouse and also includes several other historic buildings on its grounds. May to September the museum is open Wednesday through Saturday from 10am to 4pm and Sunday from 1 to 4pm; April and October, the museum is open Saturday from 1 to 4pm. Open by appointment in other months. Admission is \$5 for adults, \$4 for seniors, \$3 for children ages 6 to 18, and free for children 5 and under.



Say Spaaaa!

The San Juan Islands are all about living in the slow lane, and for my money, there's no better way to slow down and relax than by spending time being pampered at a spa. The islands now have several spa options. On San Juan Island, you can get a massage at Friday Harbor's **Lavandera Day Spa**, 440 Spring St. (☎ 800/349-0337 or

360/378-3637; www.lavenderadayspa.com). Up at the north end of the island, there is the luxurious **Afterglow Spa at Roche Harbor** (☎ 360/378-9888; www.rocheharbor.com). On Orcas Island, try the **Orcas Spa & Athletic Center**, 188 A St., Eastsound (☎ 888/894-8881; www.orcasspaandathletics.com).

Many of the town's old buildings now house art galleries and interesting shops. At **Waterworks Gallery**, 315 Spring St. (☎ 360/378-3060; www.waterworksgallery.com), you'll find fine art and contemporary crafts by local and regional artists. **Arctic Raven Gallery**, 130 S. First St. (☎ 888/378-3222 or 360/378-3433; www.arcticravengallery.com), specializes in contemporary Native American arts and crafts. Also here in town, you can visit the little **Island Museum of Art**, 28 First St. (☎ 360/370-5050; www.sjima.org), which is affiliated with the Westcott Bay Sculpture Park. The museum, which highlights local and regional artists, is open Tuesday through Saturday from 11am to 5pm in the summer (call for hours in other months). Admission is by donation.

The tasting room at **Island Wine Company**, 2 Cannery Landing (☎ 800/248-9463 or 360/378-3229; www.sanjuancellars.com), sells a wide variety of Washington wines and is the only place you can buy wine from the shop's own San Juan Cellars. You'll find the wine shop on the immediate left as you leave the ferry.

If you walk over to the other side of the ferry landing and then out on the pier that serves as the dock for passenger ferries, you can take a peek at the **Spring Street Landing Aquarium**, a modest tank full of local denizens of the deep. The tank is in a building at the end of the pier. Also keep an eye out for wildlife here; I've seen an otter swimming around by this pier.

Continuing along the waterfront toward the marina, you'll come to **Fairweather Park**, where you'll find artist Susan Point's traditional Northwest Coast Indian house-post sculpture, which is similar to a totem pole. The sculpture represents the human-animal relationship and the marine ecosystem. Here in the park, you'll also find some covered picnic tables.

SEEING THE REST OF THE ISLAND

Most of the island's main attractions can be seen on a long loop drive around the perimeter of San Juan. Start the drive by following Roche Harbor signs north out of Friday Harbor. (Take Spring St. to Second St. to Tucker Ave.)

In about 3 miles, you'll come to **San Juan Vineyards** ★, 3136 Roche Harbor Rd. (☎ 360/378-9463; www.sanjuanvineyards.com), which makes wines both from grapes grown off the island and from its own estate-grown Siegerrebe and Madeline Angevine grapes. The tasting room is housed in an old schoolhouse built in 1896. It's open daily from 11am to 5pm in summer. (Call for hours in other months.)

A little farther north is **Roche Harbor**, once the site of large limestone quarries that supplied lime to much of the West Coast. Some of the quarries' old structures are still visible, giving this area a decaying industrial look, but amid the abandoned machinery stands the historic **Hotel de Haro**, a simple whitewashed wooden building with verandas across its two floors. Stop to admire the old-fashioned marina and colorful gardens, and have a drink or a meal on the deck of the hotel's lounge. In an old pasture on the edge of the resort property, you'll find the **Westcott Bay Sculpture Park** (☎ 360/370-5050; www.sjima.org), a sculpture park that includes more than 100 works of art set in grassy fields and along the shores of a small pond. Admission to the sculpture park is a suggested \$5 donation. Back in the woods near the resort is an unusual **mausoleum**, which was erected by the founder of the quarries and the Hotel de Haro.

South of Roche Harbor, on West Valley Road, you'll come to the **English Camp** unit of **San Juan Island National Historical Park** ★ (☎ 360/378-2902; www.nps.gov/sajh). This park commemorates the San Juan Island Pig War, one of North

America's most unusual and least remembered confrontations. Way back in 1859, San Juan Island nearly became the site of a battle between the British and the Americans. The two countries had not yet agreed upon the border between the United States and Canada when a British pig on San Juan Island decided to have dinner in an American garden. Not taking too kindly to this, the owner of the garden shot the pig. The Brits, instead of welcoming this succulent addition to their evening's repast, demanded redress. In less time than it takes to smoke a ham, both sides were calling in reinforcements. Luckily, this pigheadedness was defused, and a more serious confrontation was avoided.

The English Camp unit of the historical park is set on picturesque Garrison Bay, and, with its huge old shade trees, wide lawns, and white wooden buildings, it's the epitome of British civility. There's even a formal garden surrounded by a white picket fence. You can look inside the reconstructed buildings and imagine the days when this was one of the most far-flung corners of the British Empire. If you're full of energy, hike the 1.25-mile trail to the top of 650-foot **Mount Young** for a beautiful panorama of the island. An easier 1-mile hike hugs the shoreline out to the end of **Bell Point**. The grounds are open daily from dawn to 11pm, and the visitor center is open from late May through early September daily from 9am to 5pm. Throughout the summer, various living-history programs are held here on weekends.

South of English Camp, you'll pass the idyllic **Krystal Acres**, 152 Blazing Tree Rd. (☎ 360/378-6125; www.krystalacres.com), where you and the kids can ooh and ahh over all the cuddly alpacas and then shop for alpaca fashions. Knitters should not miss this shop; it's full of gorgeous alpaca yarns. There are also stuffed animals for the kids.

Continuing south, watch for the Mitchell Bay Road turnoff. This connects to the Westside Road, which leads down the island's west coast. Along this road, you'll find **San Juan County Park**, a great spot for a picnic. A little farther south is **Lime Kiln Point State Park** ★★ (☎ 360/902-8844; www.parks.wa.gov), the country's first whale-watching park and a great place to spot these gentle giants in summer. This latter park is open daily from 8am to dusk. Flanking the state park are Deadman Bay Nature Preserve and Lime Kiln Nature Preserve, two properties acquired for public use by the San Juan County Land Bank. Together the state park and the two preserves have more than 3 miles of hiking trails, making this the best hiking area on the island.

As Westside Road moves inland, it becomes Bailer Hill Road. As you cross the island, watch for the picture-perfect **Shepherd's Croft**, 2575 Bailer Hill Rd. (☎ 360/378-6372), a sheep farm set behind a white picket fence. A small store here sells sheepskins, yarn, baby sweaters, and a variety of other products. Tours of the farm can be arranged. From here, take a left onto Wold Road, and you will come to **Pelindaba Lavender Farms**, 33 Hawthorne Lane (☎ 866/819-1911 or 360/378-4248; www.pelindaba.com). The farm has roughly 20 acres of lavender plants, including a cutting field where visitors can cut their own lavender stems. May through October, the farm's gift shop is open daily from 9:30am to 5:30pm; closed the rest of the year. The gift shop is packed with lavender-scented products, as is **Pelindaba Lavender Friday Harbor**, Friday Harbor Center shopping plaza, 150 First St., in downtown Friday Harbor. This shop is open daily from 9:30am to 5pm throughout the year. The farm holds its San Juan Island Lavender Festival each year in mid-July.

At the far south end of the island is the wind-swept promontory on which **American Camp** stood during the Pig War. Here you'll find two reconstructed buildings



Under Sail in the San Juans

If you leave the San Juan Islands without doing some sort of boating, you've missed the point. The waters surrounding these islands are ideal for exploring by boat, and one of my favorite ways to see the San Juans is from the deck of a sailboat. A good option is **Emerald Isle Sailing Charters** (☎ 866/714-6611 or

360/376-3472; www.emeraldisesailing.com), which offers 6-hour day sails, as well as overnight and multi-day sailboat charters. On a sail through the islands you're likely to see orcas, harbor seals, harbor porpoises, and plenty of bald eagles. A 6-hour tour is \$135 per person. Tours lasting 3 to 7 days are also offered.

and a visitor center (late May to late Sept daily 8:30am–5pm; late Sept to late May Wed–Sun 8:30am–4:30pm); before American Camp was built here, this was the site of a Hudson's Bay Company farm. The meadows sweeping down to the sea were once grazed by sheep and cattle, but today you'll see only rabbits browsing amid the high grasses and wildflowers (and the occasional red fox stalking the rabbits). Hiking trails here lead along the bluffs and down to the sea. My favorites are the **Mount Finlayson Trail**, which leads to the top of a grassy hill, and the **Lagoon Trail**, which passes through a dark forest of Douglas fir to **Jackle's Lagoon**, a great spot for bird-watching. Keep your eyes peeled for bald eagles, which are relatively plentiful around here. If you'd just like to picnic at a pleasant and secluded beach, head to the park's **Fourth of July Beach**.

Continuing past American Camp will bring you to Cattle Point, site of a lighthouse and the **Cattle Point Interpretive Area**, one of the best picnic spots on the island. In the 1920s, the Interpretive Area served as a Navy Radio Compass Station that helped ships navigate the nearby waters. Today there are rock outcrops, two tiny beaches, great views of Lopez Island, interpretive signs, and a few picnic tables. Cattle Point is also a good destination for a bike ride from Friday Harbor.

BOAT & BUS TOURS

If you come over to San Juan Island without a car and want to see as much of the island as possible in a short amount of time, consider taking a narrated bus tour through **San Juan Transit**, Cannery Landing building, Front and East streets (☎ 800/887-8387 or 360/378-8887; www.sanjuantransit.com), which has its office right at the ferry landing and charges \$17 for adults, \$15 for seniors, \$10 for kids ages 5 to 17 with adult, and is free for children 4 and under with adult.

SPORTS & OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

BICYCLING Bicycling is a favorite sport of island visitors. Winding country roads are ideal for leisurely trips. If you didn't bring your own wheels, you can rent a bike in Friday Harbor from **Island Bicycles**, 380 Argyle Ave. (☎ 360/378-4941; www.islandbicycles.com), which charges \$9.50 to \$19 per hour (2-hr. minimum) or \$38 to \$76 per day. Here on San Juan Island you can also rent scooters and mopeds. They're available in Friday Harbor by the hour or by the day from **Susie's Mopeds**, 125 Nichols St. (☎ 800/532-0087 or 360/378-5244; www.susiesmopeds.com), which is 1 block from the top of the ferry lanes in Friday Harbor. Expect to pay \$30 to \$60 per hour or \$65 to \$130 per day for a moped or scooter.

BOAT CHARTERS If you and a few friends would just like to get out on the water for a leisurely cruise, there are always boats to be chartered in Friday Harbor. Check around the marina for notices.

FISHING If you want to try catching some salmon, contact **A Trophy Fishing Charters** (☎ 360/378-2110; www.fishthesanjuans.com).

HIKING In addition to the hiking trails at English Camp and American Camp, and adjacent to Limekiln State Park, you'll find a network of almost 20 miles of trails just outside Roche Harbor, on the north end of the island. You can find out more about these and other island trails at the website of the **San Juan Island Trails Committee** (www.sanjuanislandtrails.org), which also has printable trail maps. The trails near Roche Harbor link up with trails in the English Camp unit of San Juan Island National Historical Park.

SCUBA DIVING Believe it or not, scuba diving is also popular in the San Juans. Though the water stays frigid year-round, it's also exceedingly clear. If you're a diver and want to rent equipment or go on a guided dive, or if you want to take a diving class while you're here, contact **Naknek Charters** (☎ 360/378-9297; www.naknekcharters.com). A two-tank dive will cost you \$95.

SEA KAYAKING ★★★ Three- and 5-hour sea-kayak tours out of Roche Harbor (my preference) and Friday Harbor are offered by **San Juan Safaris** (☎ 800/450-6858 or 360/378-1323; www.sanjuansafaris.com). Tours run early April through October and cost \$75 to \$89. **Crystal Seas Kayaking** (☎ 877/732-7877 or 360/378-4223; www.crystalseas.com) does anything from 3-hour tours (\$75) and sunset tours (\$75) to all-day tours (\$89) and multi-day trips. Three- and 4-day trips are offered by **San Juan Kayak Expeditions** (☎ 360/378-4436; www.sanjuankayak.com), which charges \$520 and \$620, respectively, for its outings. You can also rent unusual pedal kayaks (\$25–\$40/hour) and electric boats (\$80/hour) in Friday Harbor from **SJI Marine Center**, 4 Front St. (☎ 360/378-6202; www.sjimarine.com).

WHALE-WATCHING ★★★ When it's time to spot some whales, you have three choices. You can take a whale-watching cruise, go out in a sea kayak, or head over to **Lime Kiln Point State Park ★★**, where a short trail leads down to a rocky coastline from which orca whales, minke whales, Dall's porpoises, and sea lions can sometimes be seen. The best months to see orcas are June through September, but it's possible to see them throughout the year.



Thar She Blows!

While summer visitors to San Juan have a plethora of ways to go whale-watching, as far as I'm concerned, the best way to search for orcas is from a sea kayak, and the best kayaking company for such an outing is **Outdoor Odysseys** (☎ 800/647-4621, 360/378-3533 in summer, or 206/361-0717 in winter; www.outdoorodysseys.com), which has been operating in the San Juans for

almost 25 years. This company's trips start from San Juan County Park and head out through the local orca pods' favorite feeding grounds near Lime Kiln Point State Park. In the summer, you stand a good chance of seeing orcas, and any time of year, you're likely to see harbor seals and bald eagles. Day tours, offered mid-May through September, cost \$95 and include lunch.

ALL ABOUT Orcas

Although they are also known as killer whales and were once much maligned as the wolves of the deep, orcas are actually highly intelligent, family-oriented mammals. Orcas can be found in every ocean, but one of their highest concentrations is in the waters stretching north from Puget Sound along the coast of British Columbia. Consequently, this has become one of the most studied and most publicized orca populations in the world.

These whales, which can grow to 30 feet long and weigh almost 9,000 pounds, are the largest members of the porpoise family. In the wild, they can live for up to 80 years, with female orcas commonly living 20 to 30 years longer than males.

Orcas are among the most family-oriented creatures on earth, and related whales will often live together their entire lives, sometimes with three generations present at the same time. Family groups frequently band together with other closely related groups into extended families known as pods. A

community of orcas consists of several pods, and in this region the community numbers around 100 individuals. There are three distinct populations of orcas living in the waters off Vancouver Island, British Columbia. They are referred to as the northern and southern resident communities and the transient community. It's the southern resident community that whale-watchers in the San Juan Islands are most likely to encounter.

As predators, orcas do live up to the name "killer whale" and have been known to attack whales much larger than themselves. Some orcas off the coast of Argentina even swim up onto the shore, beaching themselves to attack resting sea lions, and then thrash and twist their way back into the water. But not all orcas feed on other marine mammals. Of the three communities frequenting the waters near Vancouver Island, only the transients feed on mammals. The two resident communities feed primarily on salmon, which are abundant in these waters, especially off the west side of San Juan Island during the summer.

In the summer, 3- to 4-hour whale-watching cruises from Roche Harbor Village, on the north side of the island, are offered by **San Juan Safaris** (☎ 800/450-6858 or 360/378-1323; www.sanjuansafaris.com), which charges \$75 for adults and \$49 for children 12 and under. This company also runs tours from Friday Harbor. Similar cruises are offered by **San Juan Excursions** (☎ 800/809-4253 or 360/378-6636; www.watchwhales.com), which operates out of Friday Harbor. Cruises are \$65 to \$75 for adults and \$39 to \$49 for children 2 to 12.

For a speedier and more personalized whale-watching excursion, book a tour with **Maya's Westside Charters** (☎ 360/378-7996; www.mayaswhalewatch.biz), which operates one of the fastest whale-watching boats in the islands and usually takes out no more than six people at a time. A 3-hour tour costs \$85.

WHERE TO STAY

In addition to the hotels, B&Bs, and inns listed here, there are also lots of vacation rentals available on San Juan Island through **Windermere Vacation Doorways**, P.O. Box 488, Friday Harbor, WA 98250 (☎ 800/391-8190 or 360/378-3601; www.windermerevacationrentals.com).

Expensive

Earthbox Motel & Spa ★😊 This lodging 4 blocks uphill from the ferry dock is one of the hippest hotels on the island. That said, with its complimentary bikes and indoor pool and Jacuzzi, it is also a great choice for families. With an associated day spa, this is also a good place for a hedonistic couple's retreat. There are a number of different equally stylish room types from which to choose, but most have hardwood floors and black platform beds with plush mattresses and linens, definitely not what you would expect from the well-maintained but dated architecture of this place. This hotel also operates the nearby Bird Rock Hotel, where rooms have a similar contemporary, urban feel.

410 Spring St. (P.O. Box 1729), Friday Harbor, WA 98250. ☎ **800/793-4756** or 360/378-4000. www.earthboxmotel.com. 72 units. Late May to early Sept \$197–\$227 double, \$257–\$407 suite/house; Oct to late May \$99–\$197 double, \$187–\$357 suite/house. Children 12 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, MC, V. Pets accepted (\$15/day). **Amenities:** Bikes; concierge; exercise room and access to nearby health club; Jacuzzi; indoor pool; sauna; spa. *In room:* TV, fridge, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

Friday Harbor House ★★ With its contemporary yet distinctly Northwest architecture, this luxurious little boutique hotel brings urban sophistication to Friday Harbor. From the hotel's bluff-top location, you have excellent views of the ferry landing, the Friday Harbor marina, and, in the distance, Orcas Island. Guest rooms have fireplaces and oversize whirlpool tubs, making this place a great choice for a romantic getaway. In some rooms, you can relax in your tub and gaze at both the view out the window and the gas fire in the fireplace. Many units have small balconies. Rooms and suites here are some of the best in the San Juan Islands, and if you enjoy contemporary styling, you'll love this place.

130 West St. (P.O. Box 1385), Friday Harbor, WA 98250. ☎ **866/722-7356** or 360/378-8455. Fax 360/378-8453. www.fridayharborhouse.com. 23 units. Memorial Day weekend through Sept \$215–\$325 double, \$360 suite; Oct to before Memorial Day weekend \$130–\$200 double, \$260 suite. Lower mid-week rates in winter. Rates include continental breakfast. Children 15 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Pets accepted (\$50 fee). **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge; concierge; access to nearby health club; room service. *In room:* TV, fridge, hair dryer, MP3 docking station, free Wi-Fi.

Lakedale Resort at Three Lakes ★★😊 Although best known as the island's favorite private campground, Lakedale Resort at Three Lakes also has six very attractive modern log cabins, a 10-room lodge that is a luxurious rendition of a classic log mountain lodge, and 13 canvas-walled, tentlike cabins. The cabins are attractively and individually decorated, with large cedar porches that overlook the forest and lake. All have two bedrooms, two bathrooms, a full kitchen, and a gas fireplace. There's a hot tub in a gazebo, and guests have access to the resort's 82 acres, which include trails and several lakes that are good for trout fishing, swimming, and canoeing (boat rentals are available). Think of this as a sort of summer camp for the entire family. Lots of fun and very woodsy. Guests staying in the lodge get a continental breakfast, and those staying in a canvas tent get breakfast in a canvas "mess tent."

4313 Roche Harbor Rd., Friday Harbor, WA 98250. ☎ **800/617-2267** or 360/378-2350. Fax 360/378-0944. www.lakedale.com. 30 units. \$149 canvas cabin double (available May–Oct); \$179–\$249 lodge double; \$249–\$349 cabin; \$419–\$549 house. Children 15 and under stay free in parent's cabin; children 16 and over welcome in lodge rooms; AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Pets accepted in cabins (\$35/day). **Amenities:** Watersports equipment/boat rentals; Wi-Fi. *In room (lodge):* TV/DVD, fridge, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi. *In room (cabin and house):* TV/DVD, kitchen.

Roche Harbor ★★☺ At the north end of San Juan, Roche Harbor is steeped in island history and makes a fascinating getaway. The centerpiece of this resort is the historic Hotel de Haro, which was built in 1886 and overlooks the resort's marina and a gorgeous formal garden. Because the old hotel has not been renovated in recent years, its rooms are the most basic here. To fully appreciate Roche Harbor's setting, you should stay in a suite (the Quarryman Hall suites are among the finest rooms on the island), a Company Town cottage, or one of the carriage houses or cottages on the green. The condominiums, although dated, are good bets for families. The waterfront dining room has a view of the marina, and the deck makes a great spot for a sunset cocktail. In addition to the amenities listed below, there are moped rentals, whale-watching cruises, and sea-kayak tours.

248 Reuben Memorial Dr. (P.O. Box 4001), Roche Harbor, WA 98250. ☎ **800/451-8910** or 360/378-2155. Fax 360/378-6809. www.rocheharbor.com. 78 units (16 with shared bathroom). Summer \$109 double with shared bathroom, \$249-\$449 suite, \$269-\$379 condo, \$319-\$799 cottage or town house; other months \$79 double with shared bathroom, \$149-\$259 suite, \$179-\$279 condo, \$179-\$599 cottage or town house. AE, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; lounge; outdoor pool; full-service spa; 2 tennis courts; free Wi-Fi. *In room:* Hair dryer.

Tucker House ★ This collection of 1898 Victorian houses, just 2 blocks from the ferry landing, is a convenient choice, especially if you came to the islands without a car. Most rooms and suites have their own two-person whirlpool tubs, and some also have balconies. If you enjoy a luxurious bathroom, ask for the Dove in the Window or Patience Corner room. The inn's gourmet breakfast can be served in the inn's garden cafe or in your room. The inn's owners also operate the adjacent Harrison House Suites Bed & Breakfast and Coho Restaurant.

260 B St., Friday Harbor, WA 98250. ☎ **800/965-0123** or 360/378-2783. www.tuckerhouse.com. 10 units. \$175-\$260 double; \$275-\$385 suite; \$150-\$260 cottage (lower rates Oct-May). Rates include full breakfast. Children 6 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DISC, MC, V. Pets accepted (\$25/day). **Amenities:** Restaurant; bikes; concierge; access to nearby health club; room service. *In room:* TV/VCR/DVD, CD player, fridge (in some), hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

Moderate

Bird Rock Hotel ★ Conveniently located in downtown Friday Harbor 2 blocks from the ferry landing, this small hotel blends a historic exterior with a minimalist, contemporary interior. Only a few of the rooms fall within the moderate category, and these rooms happen to have shared bathrooms. However, these are certainly the island's most stylish rooms in this price range. Other, more expensive rooms have in-room Jacuzzi tubs, kitchenettes, or fireplaces. The best rooms are the ground-floor rooms, including a two-bedroom suite that's a good choice for families.

35 First St. (P.O. Box 2023), Friday Harbor, WA 98250. ☎ **800/352-2632** or 360/378-5848. Fax 360/378-2881. www.birdrockhotel.com. 15 units, 4 with shared bathroom. \$77-\$157 double with shared bathroom; \$137-\$197 double with private bathroom; \$207-\$297 suite. Rates include continental breakfast. AE, MC, V. **Amenities:** Bikes; access to nearby health club; room service. *In room:* MP3 docking station, no phone, free Wi-Fi.

Olympic Lights Bed & Breakfast ★★ Located at San Juan's dry southwestern tip, the Olympic Lights is a Victorian farmhouse surrounded by wind-swept meadows, and if it weren't for the sight of Puget Sound out the window, you could easily mistake the setting for the prairies of the Midwest. There are colorful flower gardens, an old barn, even some hens to lay the eggs for your breakfast. The ocean breezes, nearby beach, and friendliness of innkeepers Christian and Lea Andrade

lend a special feel to this American classic. My favorite room here is the Ra Room, which is named for the Egyptian sun god and features a big bay window. The view is enough to soothe the most stressed-out soul.

146 Starlight Way, Friday Harbor, WA 98250. ☎ **888/211-6195** or 360/378-3186. Fax 360/378-2097. www.olympiclights.com. 4 units. Mid-May to mid-Oct \$150–\$160 double; mid-Oct to mid-May \$105 double. Rates include full breakfast. 2-night minimum July–Sept. No credit cards. *In room:* Hair dryer, no phone.

Inexpensive

Discovery Inn Finding a decent economical room in the San Juans is next to impossible. However, the Discovery Inn should fit the bill if you're just looking for a cheap place to sleep at the end of the day. Although more of a 1970s vintage motel than an inn, this place does have a big hot tub and attractive, shady grounds complete with picnic tables. Rooms are simply furnished and tend to be a bit dark, but some have refrigerators and microwaves, so feasibly, you could save a bit more money on your island vacation by preparing light meals here and eating outside at a picnic table. The least expensive rooms are on the third floor and have low ceilings, so they aren't recommended for tall people.

1016 Guard St., Friday Harbor, WA 98250. ☎ **888/754-0034** or 360/378-2000. www.discovery-inn.com. 20 units. Late May to mid-Sept \$129–\$164 double; mid-Sept to late May \$99–\$139 double (discounts for stays longer than 1 night). Children 6 and under stay free in parent's room. DISC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Jacuzzi (May–Sept); sauna (May–Sept). *In room:* TV, fridge (some rooms), hair dryer, no phone, free Wi-Fi.

Juniper Lane Guest House ★🏠 This cedar-shingled house, with its colorful trim, sits on the outskirts of Friday Harbor and has views of pastures just over the back fence. Constructed primarily from salvaged wood, this eco-friendly guesthouse is a labor of love for young owner Juniper Maas, who patterned her lodging after places she's visited in her world travels. The interior is a bold blend of burnished wood and bright colors, with eclectic artwork on display throughout. Some guest rooms have shared bathrooms, while others have private bathrooms. My personal favorite is the Regal room, with its claw-foot tub. Although breakfast is not included in the rates, guests have use of the kitchen. Young travelers, and the young at heart, should like this place as much as I do.

1312 Beaverton Valley Rd., Friday Harbor, WA 98250. ☎ **888/397-2597** or 360/378-7761. www.juniperlaneguesthouse.com. 6 units. \$65–\$85 double with shared bathroom; \$89–\$135 double with private bathroom; \$100–\$185 family room; \$150–\$199 cabin. Children 7 and under allowed only in cabin. MC, V. *In room:* Hair dryer, no phone, free Wi-Fi.

WHERE TO DINE

In addition to the restaurants listed below, Friday Harbor has several other places where you can get a quick, simple meal. About a block from the top of the ferry lanes is **The Market Chef**, 225 A St. (☎ **360/378-4546**), a combination espresso bar and gourmet take-out restaurant that also bakes outrageously good chocolate-chip cookies. This place is open Monday through Friday from 10am to 4pm. If you're staying someplace with a kitchen and want fresh seafood for dinner, stop by **Friday Harbor Seafood** (☎ **360/378-5779**), on the main dock in the Friday Harbor marina. This seafood market also sells smoked fish (including succulent smoked oysters), which makes great picnic fare. For breakfast pastries, check out **Café Demeter**, 80 Nichols St. (☎ **360/370-5443**), in downtown Friday Harbor. If



Striking Colors at Roche Harbor

As the summer sun sets over the San Juans, strains of the *Colonel Bogie March* drift over the boats docked at the Roche Harbor marina. The music signals the nightly lowering of the four flags that fly over the marina. With plenty of pomp and circumstance, the flags of Washington

state, the United States, Canada, and Great Britain are lowered by Roche Harbor employees. Appropriate music accompanies the lowering of each flag, and a cannon is fired as the U.S. flag is lowered. There's no better way to end a summer day on San Juan Island.

you're craving pizza or want some bread for a picnic, search out **Bakery San Juan**, 775 Mullis St. (☎ 360/378-5810; www.bakerysanjuan.com), which is in an industrial park near the Friday Harbor airport. For good espresso, head to **Roy's Drive-Thru Espresso**, 25 Nichols St. (☎ 360/378-8822).

If you're near the north end of the island at lunchtime or the cocktail hour, you've got a couple of good options at the Roche Harbor resort. For cocktails overlooking the marina, don't miss the **Madrona Grill** (☎ 360/378-5757), which, of course, is popular with the boating crowd. The Madrona is famous among boaters for its fluffy duck cocktail, which is made with vodka, rum, orange juice, and cream. The Madrona's deck is the perfect place from which to watch the striking of the colors ceremony. For breakfast, lunch, or a light dinner, head to the **Lime Kiln Cafe** (☎ 360/378-5757), on the dock at Roche Harbor. This lively little cafe serves good chowder and fish and chips. Big windows let you gaze out at the boats in the marina. If you're an early riser, you can also drop by for a hearty breakfast or some fresh cinnamon-and-sugar doughnuts.

Backdoor Kitchen ★ INTERNATIONAL This is the sort of gem that travelers dream of discovering. Hidden at the back of a warehouse-like building in Friday Harbor, the Backdoor Kitchen is a back-alley find serving some of the best food in the islands. The clientele seems to be primarily locals, many of whom come to sip creative cocktails and hang out in the restaurant's little bar. The menu ranges all over the globe for inspiration and changes seasonally. I've had a delicious and unusual spiced-duck cake appetizer here, and there are also well-prepared salads and seafood dishes from which to choose. Entrees are as diverse as pan-seared scallops with ginger-sake beurre blanc and a classic Mediterranean lamb sirloin. Don't miss this place.

400b A St. ☎ 360/378-9540. www.backdoorkitchen.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$24-\$32. MC, V. Summer Wed-Mon 5-9pm; other months Thurs-Sun 5-8:30pm, Mon 11:30am-2:30pm.

Coho Restaurant ★★ NORTHWEST Coho, housed in a little Craftsman bungalow a block from the ferry lanes, serves the best food in Friday Harbor. Small and sophisticated, this restaurant features a short menu that changes with the season. The hazelnut-encrusted lavender chicken I once had here ranked right up there with some of the best chicken I've ever had, and the Asian-inspired, sesame-seed-encrusted salmon is another good bet. The owners, Anna Maria de Freitas and David Pass, also own the nearby Tucker House and Harrison House B&Bs. Coho gets much of its produce locally and participates in the Island's Certified Local Program.

120 Nichols St. ☎ 360/378-6330. www.cohorestaurant.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$23-\$34; 3-course dinner \$35. AE, MC, V. June-Sept Mon-Sat 5-9pm; call for days and hours in other months.

Duck Soup Inn ★★ NORTHWEST/INTERNATIONAL This restaurant, located 4½ miles north of Friday Harbor, perfectly sums up the San Juan Islands experience. It's rustic and casual, set in tranquil rural surroundings beside a small pond, and yet serves superb multi-course dinners. Inside the quintessentially Northwest building, you'll find lots of exposed wood and a fieldstone fireplace. The menu changes frequently, depending on the availability of fresh produce, but is always very creative (chef Gretchen Allison has a penchant for the flavors of Asia and the Mediterranean). On the menu, you'll often find duck of some sort, perhaps duck leg confit or grilled duck breast with cherry sauce. Just keep in mind that it is way too easy to fill up on the delicious fresh-baked bread and anchovy–olive oil spread.

50 Duck Soup Lane. ☎ **360/378-4878**. www.ducksoupinn.com. Reservations highly recommended. Main courses \$17–\$35. MC, V. July to mid-Sept Tues–Sun 5–10pm; call for days and hours in other months. Closed Nov–Mar.

McMillin's Dining Room ★ AMERICAN Located in the 1886 home of John McMillin, the founder of Roche Harbor, this waterfront restaurant at the north end of the island is absolutely timeless. The menu emphasizes local ingredients as much as possible, and in season, you can have local spot prawns served a number of different ways or Orcas Island's Judd Cove oysters on the half shell. Lamb on the menu comes from here in the islands, and the crab and salmon are caught by local fishermen. If you aren't a fan of seafood, rest assured there are plenty of steaks, as well as prime rib, on the menu.

248 Reuben Memorial Dr. ☎ **360/378-5757**. www.rocheharbor.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$20–\$40. AE, MC, V. Daily 5–10pm.

The Place Bar & Grill ★ NORTHWEST/INTERNATIONAL Just to the right as you get off the ferry, and housed in a small wooden building that was once part of a U.S. Coast Guard station, The Place is the island's finest waterfront restaurant. The menu changes regularly, but one of my favorite dishes—baked oysters with hazelnut-garlic butter—is almost always available and comes in both appetizer and entree portions. Looking for something else? Try the lamb chops. No matter what you order, I recommend starting your meal with the mushroom sauté, which has been featured in *Bon Appetit* magazine.

1 Spring St. ☎ **360/378-8707**. www.theplacesanjuan.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$22–\$35. DISC, MC, V. Summer daily 4:30–8:30pm; call for hours other months.

Orcas Island

Orcas Island, the largest of the San Juans, is also the most beautiful of the islands. If you have time to visit only one island, make it this one. The island, which covers 58 square miles, is a particular favorite of nature lovers who come to enjoy the views of green rolling pastures, the hiking trails of Moran State Park, the forested mountains (at 2,409 ft. tall, Mount Constitution is the highest point in the islands), and fiordlike bays (Eastsound, West Sound, and Deer Harbor).

EXPLORING THE ISLAND

Eastsound, the largest town on the island, has several interesting shops and good restaurants. Other villages on Orcas include Deer Harbor, West Sound, and Olga.

In Eastsound, be sure to stop in at **Darvill's Bookstore**, 296 Main St. (☎ **360/376-2135**), which specializes in Northwest fiction, history, and guidebooks. Chocoholics

won't want to miss **Kathryn Taylor Chocolates**, 109 N. Beach Rd. (☎ 360/376-1030; www.ktchocolates.com), where you can get hand-dipped chocolates made with local fruit and nuts. If you're a gardener, don't miss the fascinating **Smith & Speed Mercantile**, 294 A St. (☎ 360/376-1006; www.smithandspeed.com), which sells homestead supplies and tools. You've never seen so many different spades and garden forks in one place. To learn more about Orcas Island, stop by the interesting little **Orcas Historical Museum**, 181 N. Beach Rd. (☎ 360/376-4849; www.orcas-museum.org), which is housed in a collection of six interconnected historic buildings that were moved to the center of Eastsound from locations around the island. The museum is open late May through late September Tuesday through Sunday from 11am to 4pm. Admission is \$5 for adults, \$4 for seniors, \$3 for students, and children 12 and under are free.

Just outside Eastsound, off Horseshoe Highway, you'll find **Howe Art**, 236 Double Hill Rd. (☎ 360/376-2945; www.howeart.net), a studio and gallery run by sculptor Anthony Howe, who fashions hanging kinetic sculptures from stainless steel. **Coffelt's Farm**, 1071 Crow Valley Rd. (☎ 360/376-4357), a sheep farm where you can pet the sheep and buy yarn and sheepskins, is also worth a stop.

Several interesting pottery shops are located around the island. A few miles west of Eastsound off Enchanted Forest Road is **Orcas Island Pottery**, 338 Old Pottery Rd. (☎ 360/376-2813; www.orcasislandpottery.com), the oldest pottery studio in the Northwest. Between Eastsound and Orcas, on Horseshoe Highway, is **Crow Valley Pottery**, 2274 Orcas Rd. (☎ 877/512-8184 or 360/376-4260; www.crow-valley.com), housed in an 1866 log cabin. There's also a second Crow Valley Pottery shop in Eastsound at 296 Main St. And on the east side of the island in the community of Olga, you'll find **Orcas Island Artworks**, 11 Point Lawrence Rd. (☎ 360/376-4408; www.orcasisland.com/artworks), which is full of beautiful works by island artists. Just a couple of blocks from this gallery, you'll find the much smaller **Olga Pottery**, 6928 Olga Rd. (☎ 360/376-4648; www.olgapottery.com), which showcases the work of potter Jerry Weatherman.

SPORTS & OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Moran State Park ★★ (☎ 360/902-8844; www.parks.wa.gov) covers 5,252 acres of the island. This is the largest park in the San Juans and the main destination for most island visitors. If the weather is clear, you'll enjoy great views from the summit of Mount Constitution, which rises 2,409 feet above Puget Sound. Also here are five lakes, 33 miles of hiking trails, and an environmental learning center. Popular park activities include fishing, hiking, boating, mountain biking, and camping (for campsite reservations, contact **Washington State Parks** at ☎ 888/226-7688; www.parks.wa.gov/reservations). The park is off Horseshoe Highway, approximately 13 miles from the ferry landing.

AIRPLANE RIDES For an overview of Orcas Island, try a scenic ride in a vintage Travelair biplane. The 30-minute flights with **Magic Air Tours** (☎ 800/376-1929 or 360/376-2733; www.magicair.com) cost \$299 for two people (\$249 for one person).

BIKING ★ Although Orcas is considered the most challenging of the San Juan Islands for biking, plenty of cyclists pedal the island's roads. **Dolphin Bay Bicycles** (☎ 360/376-4157 or 317-6734; www.rockisland.com/~dolphin), located just to the right as you get off the ferry, has long been my favorite place in the islands to rent a bike. It's so close to the ferry dock that you can come to Orcas without a car,

walk up the street to the shop, and hop on a bike. From here you can explore Orcas Island or take a free ferry to Lopez Island or Shaw Island. Bikes rent for \$30 per day, \$70 for 3 days, and \$100 per week.

If you're already on the island and staying up near Eastsound, try **Wildlife Cycles**, 350 N. Beach Rd., Eastsound (☎ 360/376-4708; www.wildlifecycles.com), where bikes rent for \$30 to \$45 per day.

BOAT TOURS, RENTALS & CHARTERS If you're interested in heading out on the water aboard a 1940s sloop, contact Captain Ward Fay at **Northwest Classic Day Sailing** (☎ 360/376-5581; www.classicdaysails.com). Tours are aboard the 1940s vintage sloop *Aura*, which is skippered by Ward Fay. Three-hour afternoon and evening tours operate out of Deer Harbor and cost \$70 for adults and \$55 for children 12 and under. The season runs from mid-May through September.

At Rosario you can rent a bareboat or skippered sailboat from **Orcas Island Sailing** (☎ 360/376-2113; www.orcassailing.com), which charges \$160 for a half-day bareboat rental and \$280 for a full day. You can also rent small sailboats and powerboats at **Orcas Boat Rentals**, Deer Harbor Marina, Deer Harbor Road (☎ 360/376-7616; www.orcasboats.com). Boats go for between \$250 and \$300 for an 8-hour rental.

Outer Island Expeditions (☎ 360/376-3711; www.outerislandx.com), based at the Smuggler's Villa Resort on the north shore of Orcas Island, operates a ferry to Sucia Island (a state park and one of the prettiest islands in the San Juans). Round-trip service costs \$45, with a two-person minimum. Mountain bikes (there are trails on the island) and sea kayaks can also be transported.

GOLF Golfers can head to the 9-hole **Orcas Island Country Golf Club**, 2171 Orcas Rd. (☎ 360/376-4400; www.golfforcas.com) near Eastsound. For 9 holes, it costs \$20 to \$28, and 18 holes cost \$30 to \$40. Golf carts are an additional \$22 to \$30.

HIKING **Moran State Park ★★**, with its 33 miles of trails, is the best known and most popular place on Orcas to hike. The park offers hikes ranging from short, easy strolls alongside lakes to strenuous, all-day outings. However, the very best hiking destination on the island is in the 1,576-acre **Turtleback Mountain Preserve** (☎ 360/378-4402; www.sjclandbank.org/turtle_back.html), which is on the west side of the island. A trail runs north and south through the preserve, and the hike up from the southern trailhead is the best hike in the entire Puget Sound region. In 1 hour's strenuous uphill walking, you'll climb nearly 1,000 feet and reach a rocky knoll from which you can look east to the pastures and hedgerows of Crow Valley and west across West Sound to dozens of islands scattered across shimmering waters. In the distance rise the Olympic Mountains and the hazy blue ridges of Canada's Vancouver Island. Come in June and you'll likely see wildflowers on Turtleback Mountain's open slopes. To reach the southern trailhead, drive 1¼ miles west from the community of West Sound on Deer Harbor Road and turn right on Wild Rose Lane. The parking area is about 100 yards up this gravel road.

Another good hiking spot can be found south of the community of Olga, on the east arm of the island, where you'll find a .5-mile trail through **Obstruction Pass State Park ★★**. This trail leads to a quiet little cove that has a few walk-in/paddle-in campsites. The park is at the end of Trailhead Road, which is off Obstruction Pass Road.

You can learn about the natural history and plant life of the islands on guided hikes offered by **Gnats Nature Hikes** (☎ 360/376-6629; www.orcasislandhikes.com). Half-day hikes (\$30) head out on the trails of Moran State Park.

SEA KAYAKING ★★★ The best way to see the Orcas Island coast is by sea kayak. My favorite local kayaking company is **Shearwater Adventures** (☎ 360/376-4699; www.shearwaterkayaks.com), which offers guided 3-hour tours (\$65) and all-day tours (\$159). These tours go out from several locations around the island, but I think those departing from Deer Harbor are the most scenic.

If you're on the island without a car, it's possible to go out from right at the ferry landing with **Orcas Outdoors** (☎ 360/376-4611; www.orcasoutdoors.com), which offers guided sea-kayak tours lasting from 1 to 3 hours (\$30–\$60). Multi-day tours can also be arranged.

Two-hour paddle tours (\$30) are offered morning and evening by **Spring Bay** (☎ 360/376-5531; www.springbayinn.com), which is on the east side of the island near the village of Olga. These trips are in an area where bald eagles nest in summer.

WHALE-WATCHING ★★★ If you want to see some of the orca whales for which the San Juans are famous, you can take a whale-watching excursion with **Deer Harbor Charters** (☎ 800/544-5758 or 360/376-5989; www.deerharborcharters.com), which operates out of both Deer Harbor and Rosario Resort and charges \$52 to \$69 for adults and \$35 to \$42 for children; or with **Orcas Island Eclipse Charters** (☎ 800/376-6566 or 360/376-6566; www.orcasislandwhales.com), which operates out of the Orcas Island ferry dock and charges \$72 for adults and \$48 for children.

WHERE TO STAY

Expensive

The Inn at Ship Bay ★★★ Set on a high bluff just outside the village of Eastsound, this inn boasts a tranquil setting and very comfortable rooms. There are pillow-top king-size beds, and most rooms have gas Franklin stoves. Together these features make it easy to spend way too much of your visit just cozying up in the rooms here. If you sit back in the Adirondack chairs on your balcony and gaze out over the water, you may never leave. Although guest rooms are in modern buildings that have been designed to look old, the inn's centerpiece is an 1869 home that serves as the restaurant.

326 Olga Rd., Orcas Island, WA 98245. ☎ 877/276-7296 or 360/376-5886. www.innatshipbay.com. 11 units. Summer \$175–\$195 double, \$275–\$295 suite; fall-spring lower rates. Rates include continental breakfast in summer. MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge. *In room:* TV, fridge, free Wi-Fi.

Inn on Orcas Island ★★★ Looking as if it were transplanted directly from Cape Cod or Martha's Vineyard, this inn blends traditional styling with contemporary lines to create a classically inspired beauty. Situated on a meadow overlooking a small bay just off Deer Harbor, this elegant inn has luxurious rooms in the main house plus a cottage and a more casually decorated carriage house with its own kitchen. Some rooms have balconies; suites have jetted tubs. All accommodations feature water-views, impeccable decor, and the plushiest beds in the San Juans. Innkeepers Jeremy Trumble and John Gibbs once owned a frame shop and spent years collecting and framing all the art that now hangs in the inn. A sunroom in the main house is a wonderful place to while away the morning. Breakfasts are lavish affairs that will leave you full until dinner.

114 Channel Rd. (P.O. Box 309), Deer Harbor, WA 98243. ☎ **888/886-1661** or 360/376-5227. Fax 360/376-5228. www.theinnonorcasland.com. 8 units. July–Aug \$205 double, \$235–\$305 suite, cottage, or carriage house; June and Sept \$185 double, \$215–\$285 suite, cottage, or carriage house; Oct–May \$145 double, \$185–\$245 suite, cottage, or carriage house. Rates include full breakfast. 2-night minimum May–Oct, holidays, and all weekends. AE, MC, V. No children. **Amenities:** Bikes; rowboat. *In room:* Dataport, fridge, free Wi-Fi.

Turtleback Farm Inn ★★ Nowhere on Orcas will you find a more idyllic setting than this bright-green restored farmhouse, overlooking 80 acres of farmland at the foot of Turtleback Mountain. Simply furnished with antiques, the guest rooms range from cozy to spacious, and each has its own special view. My favorite unit in the main house is the Meadow View Room, which has a private deck and a claw-foot tub. The four rooms in the Orchard House are among the biggest and most luxurious on the island (with gas fireplaces, claw-foot tubs, balconies, wood floors, and fridges). Days here start with a big farm breakfast served at valley-view tables that are set with bone china, silver, and linen, or, if you're staying in the Orchard House, with a breakfast delivered to your room. Finish your day with a nip of sherry by the fire.

1981 Crow Valley Rd., Eastsound, WA 98245. ☎ **800/376-4914** or 360/376-4914. Fax 360/376-5329. www.turtlebackinn.com. 11 units. Main house June 1–Oct 1 \$115–\$195 double; Orchard House June–Sept \$260 double; lower rates other months. Rates include full breakfast. 2-night minimum June–Sept, weekends, and holidays. DISC, MC, V. Children 5 and under stay free in parent's room in Orchard House; in farmhouse, children 8 and over welcome. Pets accepted (free). **Amenities:** Concierge; access to nearby health club; free Wi-Fi. *In room:* CD player, hair dryer.

Moderate

Cascade Harbor Inn Formerly a part of Rosario Resort, this hotel enjoys similar Eastsound views and is adjacent to both the Rosario marina and Moran State Park. Guest rooms range from standard motel rooms to studios with Murphy beds to spacious suites with kitchens. All rooms have water-views, though in some cases the view is somewhat hidden by trees. The lodge sits on a steep hillside above the water, and a path leads down to the Rosario marina.

1800 Rosario Rd., Eastsound, WA 98245. ☎ **800/201-2120** or 360/376-6350. Fax 360/376-6354. www.cascadeharborinn.com. 44 units. Summer \$129–\$199 double, \$299–\$399 suite; spring and fall \$90–\$139 double, \$209–\$279 suite; winter \$65–\$99 double, \$149–\$199 suite. 2-night minimum may apply. Rates include continental breakfast (summer only). Children 10 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DISC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Concierge. *In room:* TV, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

The Kingfish Inn ★🎁 Housed in the old West Sound general store, which now has a cozy little cafe on the ground floor, this inn is about as quaint as they come. Upstairs, there are three rooms with views over West Sound, and these views are among the best on the island. These rooms have a sort of Tuscan feel, with rustic armoires and beautiful beds with fluffy duvets. Two of the rooms have fireplaces and two have picture-perfect porches. Bathrooms, however, are very basic and have showers only. The fourth room is just off the cafe's deck.

4362 Crow Valley Rd., West Sound (mailing address 4362 Crow Valley Rd., Eastsound, WA 98245). ☎ **360/376-4440**. www.kingfishinn.com. 4 units. May–Oct \$140–\$170 double; Nov–Apr \$140 double. Rates include breakfast. MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; access to nearby health club. *In room:* TV/DVD, CD player, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

Rosario Resort & Spa ★😊 With a waterfront setting on the shore of Cascade Bay and a marina and historic mansion on the property, Rosario Resort abounds in island character and history. Guest rooms, however, are in buildings that date to the

1970s, and while the interiors have been updated and are quite comfortable, the buildings themselves don't fit the character of the setting. There are plans for an extensive remodeling of the resort, but until that happens, you can spend your time here enjoying the imposing Moran Mansion, which was built in 1904 and houses the resort's main dining room, lounge, spa, and library. Organ and piano concerts are held in the mansion. For the ultimate in luxury, stay in the Round House, a suite in an unusual round building set on a rocky knoll near the marina.

1400 Rosario Rd., Eastsound, WA 98245. ☎ **800/562-8820** or 360/376-2222. www.rosarioresort.com. 17 units. July–Sept \$129–\$169 double, \$179–\$299 suite; Apr–June and Oct \$109–\$149 double, \$159–\$279 suite; Nov–Mar \$89–\$129 double, \$139–\$259 suite. AE, DISC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; lounge; exercise pool; Jacuzzi; 1 indoor and 2 outdoor pools; sauna; full-service spa. *In room:* TV, hair dryer.

Inexpensive

Doe Bay Resort & Retreat This countercultural retreat center is certainly not for everyone, but recent upgrades to the cabins have made it a more recommendable budget option for open-minded young travelers and other liberal travelers who like to start the day with some yoga or a soak in a natural hot pool (clothing optional). The waterfront setting, on a rocky cove, is one of the best in the islands, and while the cabins are still very basic, many have been renovated in recent years. In addition to the cabins, there are hostel rooms and campsites. Kayak tours, yoga classes, and massages are also available.

107 Doe Bay Rd., Olga, WA 98279. ☎ **360/376-2291**. Fax 360/376-5809. www.doebay.com. 23 units. \$35–\$55 camping or hostel; \$75–\$120 yurt (circular tent cabin); \$70–\$275 double or cabin; \$490–\$650 house. Children 12 and under stay free in parent's room. MC, V. Pets accepted (\$20/day). **Amenities:** Restaurant (organic, local fare); sauna. *In room:* No phone, free Wi-Fi.

WHERE TO DINE

Housed in a little cottage in Eastsound, **The Kitchen**, 249 Prune Alley (☎ **360/376-6958**), is my favorite spot on the island for healthy light meals. This place isn't strictly vegetarian, but it does lots of great Asian-inspired wraps and rice-and-noodle dishes. In summer, the Kitchen is open Monday through Saturday from 11am to 7pm; hours are shorter in other months. If you just need some wine for a picnic, head to **Country Corner Cellars**, 837 Crescent Beach Dr. (☎ **360/376-6907**), which is behind the gas station just east of Eastsound. When you need something sweet, grab a cookie at **Teezer's Cookies**, North Beach Road and A Street, Eastsound (☎ **360/376-2913**; www.teezerscookies.com), or, if it's hot, some gelato across the street at **Enzo's**, 365 N. Beach Rd. (☎ **360/376-3732**), which also serves sandwiches, crepes, and espresso. For a sunset cocktail, it's hard to beat the view from the **Madrona Bar & Grill**, 310 Main St. (☎ **360/376-7171**).

You really shouldn't leave the island without having a picnic somewhere. My favorite spots include Eastsound Waterfront Park (right on the water in the village of Eastsound), Deer Harbor Waterfront Park (just before the marina in the village of Deer Harbor), and, if you don't mind a 30-minute uphill hike to your picnic spot, Turtleback Mountain Preserve.

Cafe Olga ★ 🎁 **INTERNATIONAL** Housed in an old strawberry-packing plant that dates from the days when these islands were known for their fruit, Cafe Olga is a good spot for reasonably priced breakfasts and lunches. Everything is homemade, using fresh local produce whenever possible. The scalibut cakes, made with scallops and halibut and served with Thai dipping sauce, are a local favorite. The blackberry

pie is a special treat, especially when accompanied by Lopez Island Creamery ice cream. This building also houses Orcas Island Artworks, a gallery representing more than 60 Orcas Island artists.

11 Point Lawrence Rd., Olga. ☎ **360/376-5098**. Main courses \$12–\$20 lunch, \$22–\$25 dinner. MC, V. July 1–Sept 15 Sun–Tues 9am–9pm, Wed–Sat 9am–6pm; shorter hours other months. Closed Jan to mid-Feb.

Inn at Ship Bay ★★ NORTHWEST About midway between Eastsound and the turnoff for Rosario Resort, you'll spot the Inn at Ship Bay, a cluster of farmhouse-style buildings set behind an old orchard in a field high above the water. Chef Geddes Martin, who worked at Rosario for many years, runs the kitchen here and relies heavily on fresh local seafood. There are always local oysters and mussels, and these are usually quite good, but it's the restaurant's scallops that are a local favorite. Have these with one of the excellent salads (and maybe a starter of oysters on the half shell) for the perfect dinner. Try to get a table near a window so you can enjoy the views of the water.

326 Olga Rd., Eastsound. ☎ **877/276-7296** or 360/376-5886. www.innatshipbay.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$21–\$30. MC, V. Tues–Sat 5:30–9 or 9:30pm. Closed late Nov to mid-Feb.

Kingfish Dining Room ★ 🎁 AMERICAN Want to eat where the locals go to get away from the tourists? Check out this casual spot on the west side of the island at the junction of Crow Valley and Deer Harbor roads. I always go for the fish and chips, which are the best on the island, but you can get plenty of more creative fare as well. There are halibut-and-shrimp cakes with spicy avocado sauce, fish tacos, and Thai curry halibut. In summer, try to get a table on the deck.

4362 Crow Valley Rd., West Sound. ☎ **360/376-4440**. www.kingfishinn.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$10–\$18. MC, V. Summer Tues–Sat 5–8pm; other months Wed–Sat 5–8pm.

Rose's ★★ NEW AMERICAN This is one of my favorite island eateries. With its Tuscan-influenced decor, big patio, and stone pizza oven, Rose's is both a casual and a stylish place for inexpensive lunches. The menu features creative sandwiches, flavorful soups, designer pizzas, and a few more substantial entree specials. Keep an eye out for the rose-scented ice cream. The restaurant also has an associated gourmet-food shop where you can pick up imported cheeses, baked goods, wine, and other foodstuffs.

382 Prune Alley, Eastsound. ☎ **360/376-4292**. Reservations accepted only for parties of 6 or more. Main dishes \$8–\$18. MC, V. Mon–Sat 10am–4pm. Closed Jan.

Lopez Island

Of the three islands with accommodations, Lopez is the least developed, and although it is less spectacular than Orcas or San Juan, it is flatter, which makes it popular with bicyclists who prefer easy grades to stunning panoramas. Lopez maintains more of its agricultural roots than either Orcas or San Juan, and likewise has fewer activities for tourists. If you just want to get away from it all and hole up with a good book for a few days, this may be the place for you.

EXPLORING THE ISLAND

Lopez Village is the closest this island has to a town, and it's where you'll find almost all the island's restaurants and shops. Be sure to check out the **Chimera Gallery**, Lopez Village Plaza, Lopez Road (☎ **360/468-3265**; www.chimeragallery.com),

Doing the Lopez Wave

Want to feel like a Lopez Island native? As you drive the island, give passing cars a quick wave of the hand. Among this island's friendly residents the greeting is so commonplace that it has come to be known as the Lopez Wave.

which is full of art by Lopez Island artists.

At the **Lopez Island Historical Museum**, Weeks Road (☎ 360/468-2049; www.lopezmuseum.org), in Lopez Village, you can learn about the island's history and pick up a map of its historic buildings. The museum is open May through September, Wednesday to Sunday from noon to 4pm.

Lopez Island Vineyards ★, 724 Fisherman Bay Rd. (☎ 360/468-3644; www.lopezislandvineyards.com), between the ferry landing and Lopez Village, was the first winery to make wine from grapes grown here in the San Juans. Both its Siegerrebe and Madeleine Angevine are from local grapes, and its organic fruit wines are made with local fruit. Lopez Island Vineyards also makes wines from grapes grown in the Yakima Valley. In July and August, the winery tasting room is open Wednesday to Friday from noon to 5pm; in May, June, and September it's open on Friday and Saturday from noon to 5pm; and in April and October through mid-December it's open on Saturday from noon to 5pm.

From June to Labor Day, you can pick organic strawberries a couple of days a week at **Crowfoot Farm**, 3759 Port Stanley Rd. (☎ 360/468-4748). This U-pick farm is a mile or so east of Lopez Village at the corner of Port Stanley and Hummel Lake roads. Be sure to call first to find out if there are berries and which days the farm will be open.

SPORTS & OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Seven county parks, one state park, and numerous preserves provide plenty of access to the woods and water on Lopez Island. The first park off the ferry is **Odlin County Park** (☎ 360/378-8420; www.sanjuanco.com/parks/lopez.aspx), which has a long beach, picnic tables, and a campground. Athletic fields make this more a community sports center than a natural area.

A more natural setting for a short, easy hike is **Upright Channel State Park**, on Military Road (about a mile north of Lopez Village in the northwest corner of the island). Right in Lopez Village, you can walk out into the marshes at the 22-acre **Weeks Wetland** unit of the **Fisherman Bay Preserves** (☎ 260/378-4402; www.sjclandbank.org/lopez.html). The trail through the wetlands begins on Weeks Point Way just behind the little shopping complex that houses Holly B's Bakery. There are a few interpretive plaques along the trail.

A little farther south and over on the east side of the island, you'll find **Spencer Spit State Park** ★ (☎ 360/902-8844; www.parks.wa.gov), which has a campground. Here, the forest meets the sea on a rocky beach that looks across a narrow channel to Frost Island. You can hike the trails through the forest or explore the beach.

South of Lopez Village on Bay Shore Road is the small **Otis Perkins County Park**, which is between Fisherman Bay and the open water. It has one of the longest beaches on the island. Continuing to the end of this road (it turns to gravel) will bring you to **The Spit**, a unit of the **Fisherman Bay Preserves**. The preserve is at the end of the spit that forms the mouth of Fisherman Bay. This preserve has trails and access to the beach along the sandy spit. It's one of the prettiest and most serene spots on the island; don't miss it.

Down at the south end of Lopez, you'll find the tiny **Shark Reef Sanctuary ★★**, where a short trail leads through the forest to a rocky stretch of coast that is among the prettiest on any of the ferry-accessible islands. Small offshore islands create strong currents that swirl past the rocks here. Seals and the occasional whale can be seen just offshore as well. It's a great spot for a picnic. To reach this natural area, drive south from Lopez Village on Fisherman Bay Road, turn right on Airport Road, and then turn left onto Shark Reef Road.

Also down toward the south end of the island, you'll find the **Watmaugh Bay Preserve ★★** (☎ 260/378-4402; www.sjclandbank.org/lopez.html), which protects a beautiful little cove that is a well-guarded local secret. The cove has a 100-yard-long gravel beach and is bordered on one side by cliffs and on the other by forest. The beach is a short, easy walk on a wide path. To reach the trailhead parking area, drive Fisherman Bay Road south from Lopez Village, turn right on Center Road and right again on Mud Bay Road, and follow this road through twists and turns to a right onto Aleck Bay Road. When this latter road makes a 90-degree curve to the right, go straight onto a gravel road and quickly fork left onto Watmaugh Head Road for $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile to a left into the signed Watmaugh Bay Preserve.

BIKING ★★ Because of its size, lack of traffic, numerous parks, and relatively flat terrain, Lopez is a favorite of cyclists. You can rent bikes for \$7 to \$45 an hour or \$30 to \$70 a day from **Lopez Bicycle Works**, 2847 Fisherman Bay Rd. (☎ 360/468-2847; www.lopezbicycleworks.com), at the marina on Fisherman Bay Road.

SEA KAYAKING ★★ To explore the island's coastline by kayak, contact **Cascadia Kayak Tours**, 135 Lopez Rd. (☎ 360/468-3008; www.cascadiakayaktours.com), which offers trips of varying lengths along some of the most picturesque stretches of the Lopez coastline. A half-day trip costs \$69, full-day trips are \$90, and sunset paddles are \$49. Alternatively, May through September, you can rent a kayak from **Lopez Island Sea Kayak** (☎ 360/468-2847; www.lopezkayaks.com) at the marina on Fisherman Bay Road. Single kayaks rent for \$15 to \$25 per hour, \$30 to \$50 per half-day. Double kayaks rent for \$25 to \$35 per hour, \$50 to \$70 per half-day.

WHERE TO STAY

Edenwild Inn ★ This modern Victorian country inn, located right in Lopez Village, is a good choice if you've come here to bike or want to use your car as little as possible. Within a block of the inn are all of the island's best restaurants and cafes. Most of the guest rooms are quite large, and most have views of the water. All rooms have interesting antique furnishings, and several have fireplaces. In summer, colorful gardens surround the inn, and guests can breakfast on a large brick patio. The front veranda, overlooking distant Fisherman Bay, is a great place to relax in the afternoon.

132 Lopez Rd. (P.O. Box 271), Lopez Island, WA 98261. ☎ 800/606-0662 or 360/468-3238. www.edenwildinn.com. 8 units. \$170–\$195 double. Rates include full breakfast. MC, V. No children 11 or under. **Amenities:** Bikes. *In room:* Fridge, hair dryer, no phone, free Wi-Fi.

Lopez Farm Cottages and Tent Camping ★★ 🏡 Set on 30 acres of pastures, old orchards, and forest between the ferry landing and Lopez Village, these modern cottages are tucked into a grove of cedar trees on the edge of a 2-acre meadow. From the outside, the board-and-batten cottages look like old farm buildings, but inside you'll find a combination of Eddie Bauer and Scandinavian design. There are kitchenettes, plush beds with lots of pillows, and, in the bathrooms of four

of the cottages, showers with double shower heads. If showering together isn't romantic enough for you, a hot tub is tucked down a garden path. Also on the property is a deluxe tents-only campground.

555 Fisherman Bay Rd. (P.O. Box 610), Lopez Island, WA 98261. ☎ **800/440-3556**. www.lopezfarmcottages.com. 5 units. July–Aug \$180–\$215 double; June and Sept \$170–\$205 double; Oct–May \$135–\$170 double. Tent sites \$45–\$75 double. Cottage rates include continental breakfast. MC, V. Children 14 and over welcome. **Amenities:** Jacuzzi. *In room:* TV, hair dryer, kitchenette.

MacKaye Harbor Inn ★ This former sea captain's home at the south end of the island was built in 1904 and was the first home on the island to have electric lights. Since that time this old house has gone through many incarnations, and is today a very comfortable B&B with a mix of classic country styling and plenty of creature comforts. The big white farmhouse is set on a pretty little stretch of flat beach, and, with kayaks for rent and the calm water of MacKaye Harbor right across the road, this is a good place to give sea kayaking a try. Bikes are also available for guests, and the innkeepers can direct you to good hikes in the area.

949 MacKaye Harbor Rd., Lopez Island, WA 98261. ☎ **888/314-6140** or 360/468-2253. Fax 360/468-2393. www.mackayeharborinn.com. 5 units. July–Aug \$175–\$235 double; May–June and Sept \$155–\$215 double; Oct–Apr \$135–\$165 double. 2-night minimum weekends and holidays. Rates include breakfast. MC, V. No children 10 or under. **Amenities:** Bikes; concierge; watersports equipment/boat rentals. *In room:* CD player, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

WHERE TO DINE

When it's time for espresso, head to Lopez Village and drop by **Isabel's Espresso**, 308 Lopez Rd. (☎ **360/468-4114**), a local hangout in the Village House Building on the corner of Lopez Road North, Lopez Road South, and Old Post Road. Across the street, you'll find divinely decadent pastries and other baked goods at **Holly B's Bakery**, Lopez Plaza, Lopez Road South (☎ **360/468-2133**; www.hollybsbakery.com). Note that this bakery is closed from late November to early April. For fresh-squeezed juices and healthy light meals, try **Vortex Juice Bar & Good Food**, 135B Lopez Road S. (☎ **360/468-4740**), which is located in Lopez Village in the Old Homestead. Next door to the juice bar, you can shop for natural foods at **Blossom Natural Grocery**, 135 Lopez Rd. (☎ **360/468-2204**; www.blossomgrocery.com).

Turn up Village Road North and you'll find **Vita's Wildly Delicious** (☎ **360/468-4268**), which sells wines and tasty gourmet take-out food from a colorfully painted Victorian house. In summer, this place is open Tuesday through Saturday from 11am to 5pm. A little farther along this same street is the **Lopez Island Old-Fashioned Soda Fountain**, 157 Village Rd. (☎ **360/468-4511**; www.lopezislandpharmacy.com), in the Lopez Island Pharmacy. For local produce (and handicrafts), check out the **Lopez Farmers Market**, which is held on summer Saturday mornings in a park on Village Road across from Vita's and the soda fountain. Down at the south end of the island, you can get good sandwiches and burgers at the **Southender Deli**, 3024 Mud Bay Rd. (☎ **360/468-2315**), which is located in the back of the Islandale Store.

Bay Café ★★ NORTHWEST/INTERNATIONAL Housed in an eclectically decorated old waterfront commercial building with a deck that overlooks Fisherman Bay, this cafe serves some of the best food in the state. This is the sort of place where diners animatedly discuss what that other flavor is in the *mole* sauce on the pork tenderloin, and where people walk through the door and exclaim, "I want whatever

it is that smells so good.” The menu, though short, spans the globe and changes frequently. Come with a hearty appetite; meals include soup and salad, and the desserts are absolutely to die for (and often come decorated with colorful flower petals). For the quintessential Lopez dinner, accompany your meal with a bottle of wine from Lopez Island Vineyards.

In Village Center, 9 Old Post Rd., Lopez Village. ☎ **360/468-3700**. www.bay-cafe.com. Reservations highly recommended. Main courses \$20; 3-course dinner \$30. AE, MC, V. Summer daily 5:30–8pm; other months Thurs–Sun 5:30–8pm.

Shaw Island

Shaw Island is the least developed of the four San Juan Islands served by ferries. The island is home to fewer than 200 tranquility-loving residents who like the solitude of the island and want to keep it undeveloped. If you enjoy leisurely drives (or bike rides) in the country, Shaw Island makes a good day trip from any of the other three islands. However, there are no hotels, B&Bs, or restaurants, only a general store at the ferry landing and one small county park down at the south end of the island. The park, **Shaw County Park** (☎ **360/378-8420**; www.co.san-juan.wa.us/parks/shaw.aspx), does, however, have a small campground that takes summer reservations and is popular with sea kayakers.

LA CONNER & THE SKAGIT VALLEY ★★

70 miles N of Seattle, 10 miles E of Anacortes, 32 miles S of Bellingham

In a competition for quaintest town in Washington, La Conner would leave the other contenders wallowing in the winter mud. This town, a former fishing village, has a waterfront street lined with restored wooden commercial buildings, back streets of Victorian homes, and acres of tulip and daffodil fields stretching out from the town limits. Add to this three museums, numerous plant nurseries and gardening-related stores, art galleries, luxurious inns, and good restaurants, and you have a town almost too good to be true.

La Conner does, however, have a couple of shortcomings. In the springtime, when the tulips blossom, the town and surrounding country roads are so jammed with cars that it can make a Seattle rush-hour commute seem pleasant. The other drawback is that La Conner is so close to the San Juans that it is hard to justify spending more than a day here when the islands are calling. If, however, you have some free time in your schedule, this town should not be missed.

La Conner dates from a time when Puget Sound towns were connected by water and not by road, and consequently, the town clings to the shore of Swinomish Channel. The town reached a commercial peak around 1900 (when steamers made the run to Seattle) and continued as an important grain- and log-shipping port until the Great Depression. La Conner never recovered from the hard times of the 1930s, and when the highways bypassed the town, it became a neglected backwater. The wooden false-fronted buildings built during the town’s heyday were spared the waves of progress that swept the Northwest during the latter half of the 20th century, and today these quaint old buildings give the town its charm.

Beginning in the 1940s, La Conner's picturesque setting attracted several artists and writers. By the 1970s, La Conner had become known as an artists' community, and tourism began to revive the economy. The town's artistic legacy eventually led to the building here of the Museum of Northwest Art, which is dedicated to the region's many contemporary artists.

Adding still more color to this vibrant little town are the commercial flower farms of the surrounding Skagit Valley. In the spring, tulips and daffodils carpet the surrounding farmlands with great swaths of red, yellow, and white. These flowers are grown to supply the fall bulb-planting needs of gardeners across the country, and heartbreaking as it sounds, the flowers are cut off in their prime to channel energy into the bulbs.

One more thing: Although the name sounds as if it's a combination of Spanish and Irish, La Conner is actually named for Louisa A. (LA) Conner, who helped found the town in the 1870s.

Essentials

GETTING THERE From I-5, take U.S. 20 west toward Anacortes. La Conner is south of U.S. 20 on La Conner–Whitney Road. Alternatively, take exit 221 off I-5 and head west on Fir Island Road to a left onto Chilberg Road, which leads into La Conner.

The **Airporter Shuttle** (☎ 866/235-5247 or 360/380-8800; www.airporter.com) operates between Sea-Tac Airport and the Anacortes ferry terminal, stopping at the Farmhouse Inn, which is at the junction of Wash. 20 and La Conner–Whitney Road, north of La Conner (\$32 one-way, \$58 round-trip).

VISITOR INFORMATION Contact the **La Conner Chamber of Commerce**, 606 Morris St. (P.O. Box 1610), La Conner, WA 98257 (☎ 888/642-9284 or 360/466-4778; www.laconnerchamber.com).

FESTIVALS For a few short weeks each year, from late March to mid-April, the countryside around La Conner is awash with color as hundreds of acres of Skagit Valley tulip and daffodil fields burst into bloom in a floral display that rivals that of the Netherlands. These flowers are grown for their bulbs, which each fall are shipped to gardeners all over the world. The **Skagit Valley Tulip Festival** (☎ 360/428-5959; www.tulipfestival.org), held each year during bloom time, is La Conner's biggest annual festival and includes dozens of events. Contact the festival office or stop by the La Conner Chamber of Commerce (see above), for a map of the flower fields.

Whether you're here in tulip time or not, you might want to stop by some of the area's farms, gardens, and nurseries. **Roosengaarde Flowers & Bulbs**, 15867 Beaver Marsh Rd. (☎ 866/488-5477 or 360/424-8531; www.tulips.com), is the largest grower of tulips, daffodils, and irises in the country and has a gift shop. At **Christianson's Nursery & Greenhouse**, 15806 Best Rd., Mount Vernon (☎ 800/585-8200 or 360/466-3821; www.christiansonsnursery.com), you'll find hundreds of varieties of roses and lots of other plants as well. Nearby you can tour the beautiful English country gardens of **La Conner Flats**, 15980 Best Rd. (☎ 360/466-3190; www.laconnerflats.com), where high tea is served by reservation. Both of these nurseries are northeast of town off McLean Road (the main road to Mount Vernon).

Exploring La Conner & its Environs

The **Museum of Northwest Art** ★★, 121 S. First St. (☎ 360/466-4446; www.museumofnwart.org), occupies a large contemporary building in downtown La Conner. The museum, which mounts a variety of exhibits throughout the year, features works by Northwest artists, including Morris Graves, Mark Tobey, and Guy Anderson, all of whom once worked in La Conner. This museum would be right at home in downtown Seattle, so it comes as a very pleasant surprise to find it in this tiny town. It's open Tuesday through Saturday from 10am to 5pm and Sunday and Monday from noon to 5pm; admission is \$5 for adults, \$4 for seniors, \$2 for students and children ages 12 and over, and free for children 11 and under. You can also see art around the streets of downtown La Conner where more than a dozen sculptures (all for sale) are set up each year in the spring.

High atop a hill in the center of town, you can learn about the history of this area at the **Skagit County Historical Museum**, 501 S. Fourth St. (☎ 360/466-3365; www.skagitcounty.net/museum). It's open Tuesday through Sunday from 11am to 5pm; admission is \$4 for adults, \$3 for seniors and children ages 6 to 12, and free for children 5 and under. A few blocks away, you'll find the **La Conner Quilt & Textile Museum**, 703 S. Second St. (☎ 360/466-4288; www.laconnerquilts.com), which is housed in the historic Gaches Mansion. On the first floor of this museum, you'll find rooms furnished with antiques, while on the second floor there are quilt displays. The museum is open Wednesday through Sunday from 11am to 5pm (open daily during Apr); admission is \$5.

There is excellent bird-watching around the Skagit Valley, especially during the winter months when migratory waterfowl, including trumpeter swans, snow geese, and various raptors, including peregrine falcons and bald eagles, flock to the area's marshes, bays, and farm fields. Eight miles north of La Conner at the **Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve**, 10441 Bayview-Edison Rd. (☎ 360/428-1558; www.padillabay.gov), you can bird-watch along 3 miles of trails through fields and along a dike. Interpretive exhibits at the reserve's Breazeale Interpretive Center explain the importance of estuaries and allow visitors to explore life in Padilla Bay and its salt marshes. The reserve is open daily; the interpretive center, Wednesday through Sunday from 10am to 5pm. Admission is free. The Skagit Wildlife Area, south of La Conner and west of Conway, is another good winter birding area.

Shopping is the most popular pastime in La Conner, and up and down First Street, you'll find lots of great galleries, boutiques, and gift shops filled with an eclectic assortment of must-have objects.

Cyclists can explore the region on bike tours offered by **Tulip Country Bike Tours** (☎ 360/424-7461; www.countrycycling.com), which offers spring tours of the tulip fields, as well as a variety of summer tours. Tours are \$65 to \$75 per person.

If you are heading north to Bellingham, consider driving the scenic Chuckanut Drive that begins about 15 miles north of La Conner. For details, see "Fairhaven Historic District," below.

Where to Stay

Hotel Planter ★ I must confess I have a weakness for second-story hotels. They always remind me of European hotels and thus feel just a little more exotic and romantic than comparable street-level hostels. This hotel is no exception. Up a

long flight of stairs and right on La Conner's main shopping street, the Hotel Planter will make you feel like a La Conner local. In addition to the views of all the activity on the street, there's a quiet little courtyard out back where you can soak in the hot tub at the end of the day. Rooms are done in a tasteful country decor.

715 First St. (P.O. Box 493), La Conner, WA 98257. ☎ **800/488-5409** or 360/466-4710. Fax 360/466-1320. www.hotelplanter.com. 12 units. \$89–\$139 double; \$139–\$159 suite. No children. MC, V. **Amenities:** Jacuzzi. *In room:* TV.

La Conner Channel Lodge ★★ Luxurious accommodations, Northwest styling, and views of Swinomish Channel from all but seven of the rooms make this modern, waterside lodge a truly memorable place. A flagstone entry and woodsy garden, cedar-shake siding, and a river-rock fireplace in the lobby set the tone for the rest of the lodge, and the lobby, with its small library alcove, has the sort of nautical feel you'd expect to find in a home built by a ship's captain 100 years ago. Most guest rooms are large, and all have small balconies and gas fireplaces. Fir accents and a combination of slate flooring and carpeting give the rooms a natural richness.

205 N. First St., La Conner, WA 98257. ☎ **888/466-4113** or 360/466-1500. www.laconnerlodging.com. 40 units. \$149–\$339 double. Rates include continental breakfast. Children 12 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Room service; spa treatments. *In room:* A/C, TV/DVD, fridge, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

The Wild Iris ★★ The Wild Iris is a modern Victorian inn on the edge of town, and most second-floor rooms have views of distant Mount Baker (these rooms are definitely worth asking for). The inn was designed for romantic getaways, and many of the rooms have jetted tubs, fireplaces, and porches or decks. In some the whirlpool tub is in the room, while in others it's on the deck. This is a good bet for a quiet, romantic retreat.

121 Maple Ave. (P.O. Box 696), La Conner, WA 98257. ☎ **800/477-1400** or 360/466-1400. www.wildiris.com. 18 units. \$119–\$129 double; \$149–\$199 suite. Rates include full breakfast. AE, MC, V. Children 9 and over welcome. **Amenities:** Concierge; access to nearby health club. *In room:* TV/DVD, CD player, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

Where to Dine

On a dark, rainy night, there's no better place in town to heft a pint of ale than at the **La Conner Brewing Company**, 117 S. First St. (☎ **360/466-1415**; www.laconnerbrew.com), which is located right next door to the Museum of Northwest Art.

Kerstin's ★★ NORTHWEST In a tall, narrow building across the street from the water, this contemporary restaurant and wine bar is your best bet in the area for a romantic dinner. Kerstin's also serves the most creative menu in town. While it looks from the street as though this restaurant only has a couple of tables, you'll find a larger dining room on the second floor. The local Samish Bay oysters, baked on the half shell, should not be missed. You'll also find plenty of other well-prepared local seafood, including wild salmon (perhaps with a pine nut and rosemary crust and a lime-butter sauce). Lamb, duck, and game hen also show up regularly.

505 S. First St. ☎ **360/466-9111**. www.kerstinsrestaurant.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$10–\$22 lunch, \$20–\$36 dinner. AE, DISC, MC, V. Tues–Wed 5–9pm; Mon and Thurs–Sat noon–2pm and 5–9pm; Sun noon–2pm.

Nell Thorn Restaurant & Pub ★ INTERNATIONAL Some of La Conner's finest meals are at this cozy restaurant attached to the La Conner Country Inn. The emphasis is on fresh, local, and organic, and the menu in the main dining room is limited. You might start with crispy polenta cakes or pan-fried local oysters dusted with local herbs. For a main course, the beach bowl, which is packed with local fish and shellfish, is delicious. If you're in the mood for a more casual meal, dine in the tiny downstairs pub, where you can get soups, salads, and sandwiches. The abundance of wood and cramped quarters of the pub give it the feel of an old sailing ship.

La Conner Country Inn, 205 Washington Ave. 📞 **360/466-4261**. www.nellthorn.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$11–\$28 dinner. AE, DISC, MC, V. Tues–Sat 11:30am–2:30pm and 4–9pm; Sun 4–9pm.

Seeds ★ AMERICAN Housed in what was for many years an old-fashioned seed company (thus the name), this casual restaurant on the edge of downtown La Conner has loads of historical character, which is what makes it one of my favorite places in town. With its battered wood floors and big windows, the renovated space still conjures up its seed-company heritage. The menu is simple, with an emphasis on sandwiches, salads, and a handful of more substantial entrees. I always go for the oysters. Be sure to notice the huge old beech tree growing through the deck near the front door.

623 Morris St. 📞 **360/466-3280**. www.seedsbistro.com. Main courses \$8–\$14 lunch, \$8–\$25 dinner. MC, V. Mon–Fri 11:30am–9pm; Sat–Sun 11am–9pm.

BELLINGHAM & ENVIRONS ★★

90 miles N of Seattle, 55 miles S of Vancouver, British Columbia

Perhaps best known outside of Washington state as the southern terminus for ferries heading north to Alaska, Bellingham is a vibrant little city that boasts excellent views of the San Juan Islands. Still an active shipping port, Bellingham has, at Squalicum Harbor, a large marina, a hotel and commercial complex, and a park that together provide residents and visitors with a chance to enjoy the bay. South of downtown Bellingham, near the Bellingham Cruise Terminal that is used by Alaska ferries, there is the historic community of Fairhaven. Fairhaven's old brick commercial buildings and interesting shops are a highlight of a visit to Bellingham.

Bellingham is in Whatcom County, which extends from the coast to the top of 10,778-foot Mount Baker and beyond. The county is still primarily rural in character, and near the coast, farming predominates. The nearby farm towns of Ferndale and Lynden are worth visiting for a glimpse of local history and a chance to explore the countryside. At Mount Baker there is a popular downhill skiing and snowboarding area in winter, while in summer, hiking trails lead through meadows and forests and up mountains for spectacular views. South of the city, the mountains and salt water come together along one of Washington's most scenic stretches of coastline. Winding along this coastline is Chuckanut Drive, with glimpses of rugged shores, expansive waters, and the San Juan Islands.

Essentials

GETTING THERE I-5 connects Bellingham with Seattle to the south and Vancouver to the north. Wash. 20, the North Cascades Scenic Highway, connects

Bellingham with eastern Washington by way of Winthrop, while Wash. 542 leads to Mount Baker.

Bellingham International Airport (☎ 360/671-5674; www.portofbelllingham.com), 5 miles northwest of downtown Bellingham, is served by Alaska Airlines, Allegiant Air, Horizon Airlines, and San Juan Airlines. The **Airporter Shuttle** (☎ 866/235-5247 or 360/380-8800; www.airporter.com) runs between Sea-Tac Airport and Bellingham (\$34 one-way, \$60 round-trip).

Both **Amtrak** trains and **Greyhound** buses stop in Bellingham at the Fairhaven Station, 401 Harris Ave., which is adjacent to the Bellingham Cruise Terminal in the Fairhaven district.

VISITOR INFORMATION Contact the **Bellingham/Whatcom County Convention & Visitors Bureau**, 904 Potter St., Bellingham, WA 98229 (☎ 800/487-2032 or 360/671-3990; www.bellingham.org), just east of I-5 at exit 253.

GETTING AROUND Rental cars are available at Bellingham International Airport from Avis, Budget, Enterprise, and Hertz. If you need a taxi, contact **Yellow Cab** (☎ 360/733-8294; www.yellowcabinc.com). Public bus service around the Bellingham area is provided by the **Whatcom Transportation Authority** (☎ 360/676-7433; www.ridewta.com).

What to See & Do

MUSEUMS

If you're interested in art, you shouldn't miss the **Western Washington University Outdoor Sculpture Collection**, off the Bill McDonald Parkway south of downtown. With nearly 30 large sculptures, including one by Isamu Noguchi, this is one of the largest collections of monumental sculptures on the West Coast. You can pick up a map and guide to the collection at the university's visitor center, or at **Western Gallery** (☎ 360/650-3900; www.westerngallery.wvu.edu), which is also on the campus and features exhibits of contemporary art. When the university is in session, the gallery is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 10am to 4pm, Wednesday from 10am to 8pm, and Saturday from noon to 4pm.

American Museum of Radio & Electricity ★★ Nowadays, DVDs, iPods, MP3s, satellite radio, and live streaming are so much a part of everyday life that it is easy to forget that radio broadcasting and sound recording is barely a century old. At this not-to-be-missed museum in downtown Bellingham, you can examine more than 1,000 antique radios (mostly pre-1930s wooden table-top models) and lots of other unusual instruments of early electrical technology. Among the displays is a mock-up of the radio room from the *Titanic*, and if you're lucky, a curator might demonstrate the Tesla coil, which can generate enough electricity to light up a fluorescent light several feet away. There's even an original Theremin, sort of a forerunner to modern electronic synthesizers.

1312 Bay St. ☎ 360/738-3886. www.amre.us. Admission \$5 adults, \$2 children 12 and under. Wed–Sat 11am–4pm; Sun noon–4pm.

Mindport ★😊 If you're traveling with the kids, be sure to check out the fascinating exhibits at this unusual little museum/gallery/learning center. The interactive exhibits blend art with science to create works of art that are hands-on examples of scientific principles. Science was never this fun when I was a kid.

210 W. Holly St. (📞 360/647-5614. www.mindport.org. Admission \$2. Wed–Fri noon–6pm; Sat 10am–5pm; Sun noon–4pm. Closed New Year’s Day, Easter, Thanksgiving, day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas, New Year’s Eve.

Whatcom Museum ★ This complex is housed in three downtown buildings, including a recently opened contemporary building known as the Lightcatcher and Bellingham’s former city hall building, which was built in 1892 and is one of Washington’s finest examples of Victorian municipal architecture. The Lightcatcher features changing art and photography exhibits, while the old city hall building and adjacent Syre Education Center feature historical exhibits that include tools, toys, and in a big glass case in the old city hall building, the old mechanism for the clock in this building’s tower.

250 Flora St. (📞 360/778-8930. www.whatcommuseum.org. Admission \$10 adults, \$8 seniors and students, \$4.50 children 4 and under. Tues–Sun noon–5pm.

Fairhaven Historic District

Though downtown Bellingham has a fair number of restaurants and a few galleries, the **Fairhaven Historic District** is the most interesting neighborhood in town (and is also the site of the Bellingham Cruise Terminal, the southern terminus for ferries to Alaska). Fairhaven was once a separate town, and many of its brick buildings, built between 1880 and 1900, have now been restored and house interesting shops, art galleries, and several good restaurants. Around the neighborhood, you’ll find more than two dozen historical markers, many of which commemorate the seamier side of life in Fairhaven in the 1890s.

Today, **Village Books**, 1200 11th St. (📞 800/392-2665 or 360/671-2626; www.villagebooks.com), serves as the cultural anchor for the neighborhood and has readings and book signings. Here in Fairhaven, you’ll also find several cafes and bakeries and even an old double-decker British bus that serves fish and chips. Several walking paths begin in Fairhaven. My favorite, the **South Bay Trail**, heads north along the shore and is actually built over the water on the Taylor Dock for part of its length. You’ll find the start of this path near the northwest corner of **Fairhaven Village Green**, which is the little park at the center of Fairhaven. In summer, outdoor movies are shown in this little park.

CHUCKANUT DRIVE

Chuckanut Drive (Wash. 11), which begins on the southern edge of the Fairhaven Historic District and heads south for almost a dozen miles to the Samish farmlands, is one of the most scenic stretches of road in northwestern Washington. The road clings to the shoreline of Chuckanut and Samish bays as it winds south through the Chuckanut Mountains, which rise straight out of the water. Though most of the way is through dense woods, there are several pull-offs where you can gaze out to the San Juan Islands or up and down the rugged coastline. There are also numerous trailheads that allow you to head down to the shore or up into the Chuckanut Mountains, which are home to an extensive network of hiking and mountain-biking trails. Chuckanut Drive is particularly popular at sunset, and several good restaurants are at the southern end (see “Where to Dine,” below).

At the northern end of the drive, be sure to stop in at the **Chuckanut Bay Gallery and Sculpture Garden**, 700 Chuckanut Dr. (📞 877/734-4885 or 360/734-4885; www.chuckanutbaygallery.com), which is full of interesting artworks by

Northwest artists and craftspeople. Continuing south, watch for the **North Chuckanut Mountain Trailhead**, which provides access to **Teddy Bear Cove ★★**, where you'll find a pair of tiny beaches separated by a small, rocky promontory. It's about a 2-mile round-trip hike to the cove. Although part of the trail is quite steep, part of the route follows the **Interurban Trail ★**, a 6-mile-long hiking and mountain-biking trail that follows the route of an old trolley line and extends from Fairhaven Parkway and 20th Street in Fairhaven to **Larrabee State Park ★★** (☎ 360/902-8844). This latter park is the most popular stop along Chuckanut Drive and can be quite crowded in summer. The pretty little beach and access to miles of hiking trails make this park a required stop along the scenic drive.

OTHER ATTRACTIONS & ACTIVITIES

If you're a fan of riding the rails, check the schedule of the **Lake Whatcom Railway** (☎ 360/595-2218; www.lakewhatcomrailway.com), which operates a historic excursion train from the town of Wickersham southeast of Bellingham. There are Saturday and Tuesday trips from early July to early September, as well as runs around Valentine's Day, on Easter, and in October and December. Along the route, you'll get occasional glimpses of Mount Baker. The trips last 1½ hours, and the fare is \$18 for adults and \$9 for children 17 and under. Railroad buffs will also want to visit the **Bellingham Railway Museum**, 1320 Commercial St. (☎ 360/393-7540; www.bellinghamrailwaymuseum.org), which has model railroad layouts and is open Tuesday and Thursday through Saturday from noon to 5pm. Admission is \$4 for adults and \$1 for children age 2 to 16.

To explore Chuckanut Bay from a sea kayak, contact **Moondance Sea Kayak Adventures** (☎ 360/738-7664; www.moondancekayak.com). It has half-day (\$60/person) and full-day (\$110/person) excursions starting at Larrabee State Park.

Sailboat excursions are another of my favorite ways to experience Bellingham. **Shawmanee Charters** (☎ 360/734-9849; www.bellinghamsailing.com), has 3-hour Wednesday evening sailings during the summer for \$45 per person. **Gatro Verde** (☎ 360/220-3215; www.gatoverde.com), is a 42-foot catamaran that offers sailboat outings of 1½ to 6 hours. The shorter outings are \$35 per person and the longer outings are \$95 per person. **Sailaway Custom Sailboat Charters** (☎ 360/305-0835; www.sailaway.net), offers day sails aboard a 50-foot wooden sailboat. These 5- to 6-hour excursions cost \$125 for adults (half price for children 5–16, free for children 4 and under). Sunset sails (\$110/person) and longer trips are also available.

Within a short drive of Bellingham, there are more than half a dozen wineries. Right in downtown Bellingham, there's **Chuckanut Ridge Wine Company**, 1017 N. State St. (☎ 360/527-0900; www.chuckanutridgewinecompany.com), which is open Tuesday and Wednesday from 2 to 8pm and Thursday through Saturday from 2 to 10pm. East of town, heading toward Mount Baker, there is **Vartanyan Estate Winery**, 1628 Huntley Rd. (☎ 360/756-6770; www.vewinery.com). From April to October, this winery is open Thursday through Sunday from 11am to 5pm (until 10pm on Fri); other months it's open Friday through Sunday from 11am to 5pm. North of Bellingham, near the town of Lynden, there's **Samson Estates**, 1861 Van Dyk Rd. (☎ 360/966-7787; www.samsonestates.com), which, from June through September, is open daily from 11am to 6pm; other months this winery is open Friday

through Sunday from 11am to 5pm. For more information, visit the website of the **Whatcom Wine Association** (www.whatcomwinetrail.com).

Where to Stay

The Chrysalis Inn & Spa ★★🎁 The Chrysalis is Bellingham's most luxurious hotel, and, with its contemporary lodge styling, it perfectly captures the essence of the Northwest today. In the lobby, big walls of glass focus the attention on the waters of Bellingham Bay, but the slate floors, burnished wood beams, and fireplace all give the views stiff competition. Guest rooms have water-views, and the tubs for two, gas fireplaces, and window seats make these rooms the ideal place to hide away on a rainy Northwest weekend. To make a getaway even better, there are a full-service spa and a wine bar serving excellent food. About the only drawback to this inn is the presence of a railroad track between the inn and the water. However, excellent insulation keeps the train noises to a minimum, and earplugs are provided free of charge.

804 10th St., Bellingham, WA 98225. ☎ **888/808-0005** or 360/756-1005. www.thechrysalisinn.com. 43 units. Mid-May to Sept \$209–\$229 double, \$299–\$319 suite; Oct to mid-May \$199–\$219 double, \$279–\$299 suite. Children 12 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Pets accepted (\$50 fee). **Amenities:** Restaurant; concierge; access to nearby health club; room service; full-service spa. *In room:* A/C, TV/DVD, CD player, hair dryer, minibar, free Wi-Fi.

Fairhaven Village Inn ★ This modern hotel in the heart of Fairhaven was designed to resemble a historic hotel and blends in perfectly with the adjacent historic buildings. There's even a cashier's cage for a front desk. Guest rooms are, however, quite modern and are tastefully traditional in their decor and furnishings. The balcony rooms, which also have fireplaces, are the most luxurious rooms and have views of the bay, but I actually prefer the rooms that overlook the Fairhaven Village Green. The location, amid Fairhaven's shops and restaurants—only a few blocks from the Alaska ferry terminal and Amtrak station—makes this one of Bellingham's best hotel choices.

1200 Tenth St., Bellingham, WA 98225. ☎ **877/733-1100** or 360/733-1311. Fax 360/756-2797. www.fairhavenvillageinn.com. 22 units. Summer \$169–\$199 double, \$289 suite; other months \$149–\$179 double, \$239 suite. Rates include full breakfast. Children 12 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, MC, V. **Amenities:** Bikes; access to nearby health club. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

Hotel Bellwether on Bellingham Bay ★ This hotel is the centerpiece of Squalicum Harbor, which also includes several restaurants, shops, a marina, and grassy Zuanich Park. The marina setting served as the design theme for this hotel, which has a distinct yacht-club feel. Dark-wood paneling abounds, and a traditional styling predominates. Guest rooms are large and have soaking tubs (for one person), fireplaces, and balconies. The hotel's most unusual room is a three-story "lighthouse" suite that was designed to resemble a lighthouse and has a viewing deck on its third floor. This hotel seems designed to appeal to an older and more conservative crowd.

1 Bellwether Way, Bellingham, WA 98225. ☎ **877/411-1200** or 360/392-3100. Fax 360/392-3101. www.hotelbellwether.com. 65 units. \$161–\$277 double; \$202–\$589 suite. Children 11 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Pets accepted (\$25/day). **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge; concierge; exercise room and access to nearby health club; room service; spa. *In room:* A/C, TV, CD player, hair dryer, minibar, free Wi-Fi.

NEARBY ACCOMMODATIONS

Semiahmoo Resort ★★ Located on 1,100 acres at the end of a long, sandy spit that reaches almost to Canada, Semiahmoo Resort is, despite the remote location, Washington's premier golf resort and health spa. Gables and gray shingles give the resort a timeless look, and throughout the classically styled interior of the main lodge are numerous lounges overlooking the water. Not all guest rooms have views, but those that do have beds facing out to sea. The main dining room overlooks the water and offers good Northwest-style meals and an extensive wine list. There's also an oyster bar and lounge in an old salmon-packing plant. In addition to amenities listed below, the resort has a marina, paved bike and running paths, and in summer, operates a free foot ferry to nearby Blaine Harbor.

9565 Semiahmoo Pkwy., Blaine, WA 98230. ☎ **800/770-7992** or 360/318-2000. www.semiahmoo.com. 198 units. May–Oct \$189–\$299 double, \$269–\$439 suite; Nov–Apr \$119–\$219 double, \$209–\$369 suite. Children 16 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Pets accepted (\$50 fee). **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; lounge; bikes; 2 18-hole golf courses; health club; Jacuzzi; outdoor pool; room service; sauna; full-service spa; 4 tennis courts; watersports equipment/boat rentals. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, minibar, free Wi-Fi.

The Willows Inn ★★ On quiet Lummi Island, which is a 6-minute ferry ride from the mainland north of Bellingham, this waterfront bed-and-breakfast inn is popular for its secluded location away from the crowds of the main San Juan Islands. People come here to get away from it all and to enjoy the excellent meals served in the inn's restaurant. With rooms, suites, a cabin, cottage, and guesthouse, there are lots of options here for accommodations and most are decorated with works by local artists. If you're looking for privacy, book the cabin or cottage. Orca whales can often be seen just offshore during the summer, and any time of year, you can play bocce on the inn's bocce court.

2579 W. Shore Dr., Lummi Island, WA 98262. ☎ **888/294-2620** or 360/758-2620. www.willows-inn.com. 9 units. \$135–\$180 double or cabin; \$175–\$195 cottage; \$210–\$230 suite; \$310–\$350 guesthouse. Rates include full breakfast. AE, MC, V. Pets accepted (\$30/day). **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge; bikes; Jacuzzi; spa services. *In room:* TV (some units), kitchen (some units), free Wi-Fi.

Where to Dine

IN TOWN

Something about the air in Fairhaven always makes me crave fish and chips from **Fairhaven Fish and Chips**, 1020 Harris Ave. (☎ **360/733-5021**), which is housed in an old double-decker English bus in the heart of Fairhaven. For great coffee, stop in at **Tony's Coffeehouse**, 1101 Harris Ave. (☎ **360/738-4710**; www.tonyscoffee.com), which has been a favorite Fairhaven hangout for many years. My other favorite coffee spot is **The Woods Coffee**, 470 Bay View Rd. (☎ **360/738-4771**; www.thewoodscoffee.com), which is right on the water in Boulevard Park just north of the Fairhaven neighborhood. At downtown's **La Vie en Rose**, 111 W. Holly St. (☎ **360/715-1839**; www.laviebakery.com), you can start your day with a French pastry.

Anthony's at Squalicum Harbor ★ SEAFOOD Anthony's, a regional restaurant chain, just seems to do things right. This impressive, lodgelike, waterfront building has big walls of glass overlooking a marina, an open kitchen with an eating bar, a lounge, and a bi-level dining room that assures everyone a water-view. There

is always plenty of variety on the menu, but dishes to try include the crab cakes, pan-fried Willapa Bay oysters, and the alder-planked salmon (a preparation that is a Northwest classic). Monday through Friday, four-course sunset dinners (\$19) are served from 4 to 6pm.

25 Bellwether Way. 📞 **360/647-5588**. www.anthonys.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$8-\$30. AE, MC, V. Mon-Thurs 11:30am-9:30pm; Fri-Sat 11:30am-10:30pm; Sun 10am-2pm and 3-9:30pm.

Colophon Café & Deli LIGHT FARE The Colophon is a Bellingham institution. Chill out with ice cream in summer, warm up with an espresso in winter, or make a filling meal of the star attractions here—homemade soups. You'll always find African peanut soup on the menu, as well as other soups, big sandwiches, quiches, and salads. However, for many Bellingham residents, the Colophon's desserts have long been the best reason to eat here.

1208 11th St. 📞 **360/647-0092**. www.colophoncafe.com. Main courses \$7-\$13. AE, DISC, MC, V. Mon-Thurs 9am-8pm; Fri-Sat 9am-10pm; Sun 10am-8pm.

Flats Tapas Bar ★ SPANISH Light eaters and culinary adventurers will both enjoy a meal at this cozy spot in historic Fairhaven. The menu is almost exclusively small plates, with everything from lamb-stuffed *piquillo* peppers to meatballs with saffron-tomato sauce to octopus braised in a red-wine-and-tomato sauce. Of course there are Spanish cheeses, great breads, and plenty of wine to accompany your meal.

1307 11th St. 📞 **360/738-6001**. www.flatstapas.com. Reservations accepted only for regularly scheduled special dinners. Main courses \$10-\$17. MC, V. Sun-Thurs 11:30am-8pm; Fri-Sat 11:30am-8:30pm.

ON CHUCKANUT DRIVE

The Oyster Bar on Chuckanut Drive ★★ NORTHWEST Near the south end of Chuckanut Drive, this restaurant is the most formal of the handful of restaurants along the scenic drive. There are great views of Samish Bay and the San Juan Islands, and, as the name implies, fresh local oysters are one of the specialties here. However, the restaurant also serves up a wide range of imaginative dishes, the likes of which you aren't likely to find on any other area menus: trout with chanterelle mushrooms, raspberries, basil oil, port syrup, and toasted pine nuts; grilled salmon with brie fondue sauce; abalone with hazelnut-lime butter. Desserts feature local fruit and berries.

2578 Chuckanut Dr. 📞 **360/766-6185**. www.theoysterbaronchuckanutdrive.com. Reservations highly recommended. Main courses \$11-\$20 lunch, \$22-\$62 dinner. AE, MC, V. Daily 11:30am-10pm.

Rhododendron Café ★★ 🎁 NORTHWEST/INTERNATIONAL At the southern end of Chuckanut Drive amid the Samish farmlands, this place looks from the outside like any other farm-country roadside diner. However, take one look at the menu, and you'll find that the farmers in this area are a lucky group. The menu melds creative Northwest cookery with influences from around the world, and each month there are specials from a different part of the globe. You might find Vietnamese, Guatemalan, Turkish, or Caribbean food on the menu when you stop by, and these adventurous specials are always worth trying. The regular menu has lots of local produce, fresh herbs from the restaurant's garden, and oysters from Samish Bay.

5521 Chuckanut Dr., Bow. 📞 **360/766-6667**. www.rhodycafe.com. Reservations accepted for 5 or more. Main courses \$10-\$22. AE, DISC, MC, V. Wed-Fri 11:30am-9pm; Sat-Sun 9:30am-9pm. Closed late Nov to early Jan.

The **Mount Baker Theatre**, 104 N. Commercial St. (☎ 360/734-6080; www.mountbakertheatre.com), is downtown Bellingham's other major landmark and is the city's premier performing-arts venue. The theater's 110-foot-tall lighthouse tower is visible from all over the city, and though the exterior decor is quite subdued, inside is an extravagant lobby resembling a Spanish galleon. For cocktails with the best view in town, head to **Nimbus**, 119 N. Commercial St. (☎ 360/676-1307; www.nimbusrestaurant.com), which is on the 14th floor of a downtown high-rise. Sunsets from here can be unforgettable. For regional microbrews and imported beers, try the very atmospheric **Archer Ale House**, 1212 Tenth St. (☎ 360/647-7002), in a basement in Fairhaven; or, for locally brewed beers, try **Boundary Bay Brewery & Bistro**, 1107 Railroad Ave. (☎ 360/647-5593; www.bbaybrewery.com), in downtown Bellingham, or **Chuckanut Brewery & Kitchen**, 601 W. Holly St. (☎ 360/752-3377; www.chuckanutbreweryandkitchen.com), which is just a few blocks toward the water from downtown.

SOUTH PUGET SOUND & WEST SOUND

7

With more arms than an octopus, the south end of Puget Sound is a region of convoluted waterways, inlets, bays, and harbors. Tucked among the peninsulas and islands created by all this salt water are some of Washington's most charming little towns. Past glacial activity gave this region the look of Norwegian fiords, and it was that similarity that attracted Scandinavian fishermen to the area in the mid-19th century. These fishermen founded what are today two of the region's most picturesque towns: Poulsbo and Gig Harbor. This region is also home to a couple of the state's largest cities—Tacoma and Olympia. While there are few major attractions in the area, there is an abundance of natural beauty (with plenty of parks to explore) and, in Tacoma, several interesting museums and attractions as well.

The people who choose to live in this region, as well as those who visit, tend to do so for the water. Forest-ringed waterways, old fishing villages turned yacht havens, idyllic rural settings, the romance of living on an island—these are the aspects of life that attract people to this area. However, down in the southern reaches of the sound, a very different aesthetic rules in the cities of Tacoma and Olympia. Tacoma, once derided as an industrial wasteland, has recently been undergoing a renaissance that has turned it into a very attractive and livable city. Olympia, as the capital of the state and home of a particularly liberal, liberal-arts university, has a mellow, laid-back air and, when the state legislature and the university are shut down, it becomes one of the quietest major cities in the state.

Life among this region's green forests and blue waters is ruled by ferries and bridges, and visitors are advised to keep this in mind as they

explore the area. While distances here are not great, missed ferries and traffic backups at the twin spans of the Tacoma Narrows bridges can add significantly to travel time. Leave plenty of room in your travel schedule for unforeseen delays.

BAINBRIDGE ISLAND ★

10 miles W of Seattle (by ferry), 35 miles NE of Bremerton, 46 miles SE of Port Townsend

Bainbridge Island, popular for its miles of waterfront, sound-and-mountain views, and rural feel, is for the most part an affluent bedroom community for Seattle. However, with its bustling little downtown area (reminiscent of tony towns in the San Francisco Bay area), excellent restaurants and B&Bs, many parks, and good bicycling and sea kayaking, it's also a great spot for a quick getaway.

Roughly 10 miles long and 3½ miles wide, Bainbridge Island had long been home to the Suquamish Indians when the island was first charted by Capt. George Vancouver in 1792. Within less than a century after Vancouver's visit, the island had become the site of the world's largest lumber mill (though this is now long gone). The island's early settlement centered around the ferry docks of what was known as the mosquito fleet, though eventually, when car ferries began using the community of Winslow (now known as downtown Bainbridge Island), that community became the island's business center. The island was not linked by bridge to the mainland of the Kitsap Peninsula until the Agate Pass Bridge was opened in 1950.

Essentials

GETTING THERE **Washington State Ferries** (☎ 800/843-3779 or 888/808-7977 within Washington, or 206/464-6400; www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries) operates a ferry service between Seattle's Pier 52 Colman Dock ferry terminal and Bainbridge Island. The trip takes 35 minutes and costs \$12 (\$15 from May to mid-Oct) for a car and driver one-way, \$6.90 for adult car passengers or walk-ons, \$3.45 for seniors, and \$5.55 for children ages 5 to 18; it's free for children 4 and under. Car passengers and walk-ons only pay fares on westbound ferries.

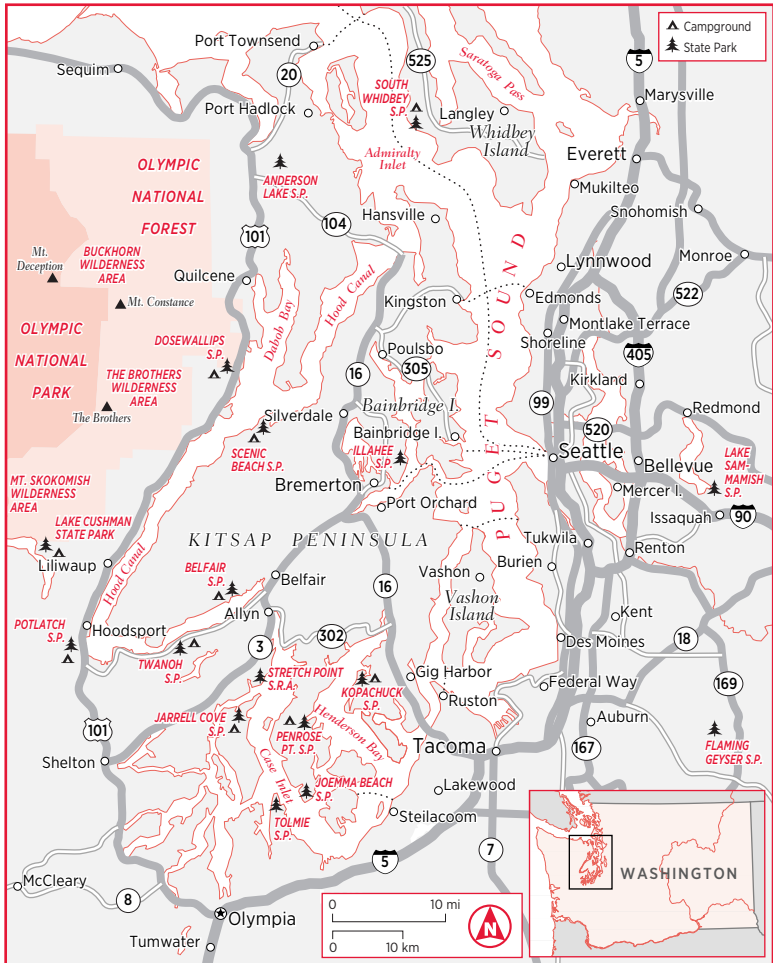
VISITOR INFORMATION For more information on Bainbridge Island, contact the **Bainbridge Island Chamber of Commerce**, 395 Winslow Way E., Bainbridge Island, WA 98110 (☎ 206/842-3700; www.bainbridgechamber.com).

Exploring Bainbridge Island

To learn more about Bainbridge Island history, stop in at the **Bainbridge Island Historical Museum**, 215 Ericksen Ave. NE (☎ 206/842-2773; www.bainbridgehistory.org). This little museum, housed partly in a little red 1908 schoolhouse, is open Wednesday through Monday from 1 to 4pm (in summer, from 10am on Sat). Admission is \$2.50 for adults and \$1.50 for students and seniors (children 4 and under are free). If you have the family along, you may also want to spend some time at the new green-built **Kids Discovery Museum (KiDiMu)**, Winslow Way and Wash. 305 (☎ 206/855-4650; www.kidimu.org), which is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10am to 4pm and Sunday from noon to 4pm. Admission is \$5 per person.

Between mid-April and late October, on Saturdays from 9am to 1pm, the **Bainbridge Island Farmer's Market** (☎ 206/855-1500; www.bainbridgefarmersmarket.com) sets up in the center of town at the City Hall Plaza. Here amid the

Puget Sound



many interesting shops and boutiques of downtown Bainbridge Island, you'll also find the tasting room of **Eleven Winery**, 287 Winslow Way E. (☎ 206/780-0905; www.elevenwinery.com), which makes a wide range of wines, including a couple of different port-style wines. The tasting room is open daily in summer and Thursday through Sunday or Monday in other months; call for hours.

Down at the south end of the island is **Fort Ward State Park**, 2241 Pleasant Beach (☎ 360/902-8844), on the quiet shore of Rich Passage. The park offers picnicking, good bird-watching, and a 2-mile hiking trail.

To sample some more local wines, drop by **Bainbridge Island Vineyards and Winery**, 8989 Day Rd. E. (☎ 206/842-9463; www.bainbridgevineyards.com), 4½ miles from the ferry landing (take Wash. 305 for 4 miles to the stoplight and turn right on Day Rd. E.). The winery specializes in European-style white wines made from estate-grown grapes. These wines are quite good and are only available here and at a few select restaurants. The winery is open Friday to Sunday from 11am to 5pm (closed in winter). For information on other Bainbridge Island wineries, check the **Bainbridge Wineries** website (www.bainbridgewineries.com).

Garden enthusiasts will want to call ahead and make a reservation to visit the **Bloedel Reserve** ★★, 7571 NE Dolphin Dr. (☎ 206/842-7631; www.bloedelreserve.org), 6 miles north of the ferry terminal off Wash. 305 (turn right on Agate Point Rd.). The expansive and elegant grounds are the ideal place for a quiet stroll amid plants from around the world. Admission is \$12 for adults, \$8 for seniors, and \$6 for children 5 to 12. The gardens are open Wednesday through Sunday from 10am to 4pm. Nearby, at the northern tip of the island, you'll find **Fay Bainbridge State Park**, 15446 Sunrise Dr. (☎ 360/902-8844), which offers camping and great views across the sound to the Seattle skyline.

If you'd like to do a little paddling in a sea kayak or canoe, turn left as you get off the ferry and head to **Back of Beyond Explorations**, 181 Winslow Way (☎ 206/842-9229; www.tothebackofbeyond.com), which rents boats at Waterfront Park. Sea kayaks and canoes rent for \$15 to \$20 per hour depending on the type of boat. Some unusual swan boats (patterned after those in Boston) can be rented for \$15 per half-hour. Want to get out on the water without expending any energy? Rent an electric boat from **Eagle Harbor Electric Boat Rentals** (☎ 206/949-2661; www.eagleharborelectricboats.com), which operates out of the Harbor Marina at the corner of Madison Avenue and Parfitt Way SW. Boats hold up to 10 people and rent for \$79 to \$89 per hour, with a 2-hour minimum. For \$100 per hour, you can arrange a boat tour for up to six people through **Shively Boat Company** (☎ 206/842-7595; www.bainbridgeboatours.com), which operates out of the same marina as the electric boat company. You can also pedal your way around Bainbridge Island by renting a bike from **Classic Cycle**, 740 Winslow Way E. (☎ 206/842-9191; www.classiccycleus.com), which rents bikes at the ferry dock bike barn during the summer. Bike rentals start at \$25 for 2 hours. Outside of the summer months, go to the shop to rent bikes.

Where to Stay

The Eagle Harbor Inn ★ This inn, a block from the water in downtown Bainbridge Island, is the prettiest and most convenient inn on the island. You can easily walk between the inn and the ferry, and across the street are a waterfront trail, a coffeehouse, a tavern, and a marina. This corner of town is quintessentially Bainbridge Island. With its colorful facade, varied rooflines, and residential feel, the Eagle Harbor Inn conjures up inns in a small town in Tuscany. Guest rooms, which vary in size and are done in a luxurious contemporary island-cottage style, are built around a small, attractively landscaped courtyard that is a pleasant place to sit in the sun over a cup of coffee. Keep in mind that this place is geared toward self-sufficient travelers.

291 Madison Ave. S. (P.O. Box 10386), Bainbridge Island, WA 98110. ☎ 206/842-1446. Fax 206/780-1715. www.theeagleharborinn.com. 8 units. \$149-\$199 double; \$169-\$179 suite; \$349-\$499 town house. AE, MC, V. Free parking. *In room:* A/C, TV, free Internet or Wi-Fi, but not in all rooms.

Where to Dine

If you're heading out to one of the island's state parks and need some rustic bread for a picnic, stop by **Blackbird Bakery**, 210 Winslow Way E. (☎ 206/780-1322), where you can also get good cookies and pastries. If it's a hot day, you can get some of the Puget Sound region's best ice cream at **Mora Ice Creamery**, 139 Madrone Lane (☎ 206/855-8822; www.moraicecream.com), which is just off Winslow Way East in the middle of the shopping district. If you'd prefer a pint of ale in a cozy waterfront pub, drop in at the **Harbour Public House**, 231 Parfitt Way SW (☎ 206/842-0969; www.harbourpub.com), which overlooks a marina about a block away from Pegasus Coffee. This place serves good pub food including burgers, fish and chips, and other seafood. For these latter two establishments, follow Winslow Way east through "downtown" Bainbridge Island and turn left onto Madison Avenue.

The Four Swallows ★★ ITALIAN/NORTHWEST Less than a block off Winslow Way in downtown Bainbridge Island, this casual, unpretentious restaurant is housed in a restored farmhouse built in 1889. Out front, under the shade trees, is a big deck for summer alfresco dining, and inside, rustic "primitive" antiques and old, high-backed wooden booths set the tone. The menu changes daily, but any month of the year, the antipasto plate, which showcases a wide range of seasonal specialties, makes a good starter. If you like seafood, keep an eye out for the seafood risotto. Pizzas and pastas make up a good portion of the menu, and there are always plenty of fresh seafood dishes.

481 Madison Ave. ☎ 206/842-3397. Reservations recommended. Main dishes \$14-\$36. AE, MC, V. Tues-Sat 5:30-8:30pm.

Pegasus Coffee House ★ NEW AMERICAN In business for more than 30 years, Pegasus was until 2009 a casual coffeehouse. In its current incarnation, it is the island's best lunch spot, with delicious salads and sandwiches. The sliced pork sandwich should not be missed, and there are always good specials. You can also get mussels prepared four different ways, and more substantial meals are available on weekend nights when the coffeehouse stays open late and has live music. You'll find Pegasus near the marina at the bottom of Madison Avenue. In 2010, Pegasus was having monthly "locavore's" dinners, so keep an eye out for such events in the future.

131 Parfitt Way SW. ☎ 206/842-6725. www.pegasuscoffeehouse.com. Main dishes \$6-\$10. MC, V. Sun-Thurs 7am-6pm; Fri-Sat 7am-10pm.

POULSBO ★★ & THE KITSAP PENINSULA ★

Poulsbo: 15 miles NW of Bainbridge Island ferry dock, 35 miles S of Port Townsend, 45 miles N of Tacoma

Roughly 45 miles long and confusingly convoluted, the Kitsap Peninsula looks something like an arrowhead wedged between Seattle and the Olympic Peninsula. Tucked amid the folds of its many glacial hills and fiordlike waterways is an eclectic assortment of small towns, each with a very different character.

For thousands of years, this region was home to several Native American tribes, including the Suquamish, who once had a 900-foot-long longhouse on the shores of

Agate Pass between the Kitsap Peninsula and Bainbridge Island. Chief Sealth (pronounced *See-alth*), for whom Seattle is named, was a member of the Suquamish tribe, and today his grave can be visited near the town of Suquamish.

The region's earliest pioneer history is linked to the logging industry. At Port Gamble, on the north end of the peninsula, Andrew Pope and William Talbot chose to build their sawmill, which became the longest-operating mill in the Northwest. Although the mill is now closed, Port Gamble remains a company town and still, for the most part, looks as if it hasn't changed in 100 years. It's a charming little village with restored homes, a village green, and miles of hiking and mountain-biking trails through the surrounding forests.

The state of Washington seems obsessed with theme towns; there's a Dutch town, a Wild West town, a Bavarian town, and here on the Kitsap Peninsula, a Scandinavian town. Though at first the town of Poulsbo seems merely a contrivance to sell tacky Scandinavian souvenirs, on closer inspection it proves to have much more character than that. The town's waterfront park, marinas, and picturesque setting on Liberty Bay have long made this town popular with the region's boating crowd.

Essentials

GETTING THERE The Kitsap Peninsula lies between Puget Sound and the east side of the Olympic Peninsula and is bounded on its west side by Hood Canal (which is not a canal, but rather a long fiordlike extension of Puget Sound). Wash. 16 connects the peninsula with I-5 at Tacoma via the two spans of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge. Wash. 3 connects the peninsula with U.S. 101 west of Olympia and continues north to the Hood Canal Bridge, a floating bridge that serves as the Kitsap Peninsula's northern link to the Olympic Peninsula. Bainbridge Island is connected to the Kitsap Peninsula by the Agate Pass Bridge on Wash. 305.

Washington State Ferries (☎ 800/84-FERRY [33779] or 888/808-7977 in Washington, or 206/464-6400; www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries) operates three ferries between the Kitsap Peninsula and the east side of Puget Sound: the Fauntleroy-Southworth ferry (a 35-min. crossing) from West Seattle, the Seattle-Bremerton ferry (a 60-min. crossing) from downtown Seattle, and the Edmonds-Kingston ferry (a 30-min. crossing) from north of Seattle. On the Seattle-Bremerton or Edmonds-Kingston route, fares are \$12 (\$15 from May 1 to the second Sat in Oct) for a car and driver, \$6.90 for adult car passengers or walk-ons, \$3.45 for seniors, and \$5.55 for children 6 to 18. On the Fauntleroy-Southworth route, fares are \$9.15 (\$11 from May to the second Sat in Oct) for a car and driver, \$5.30 for adult car passengers or walk-ons, \$2.65 for seniors, and \$4.25 for children 6 to 18. Car passengers and walk-ons only pay fares on westbound ferries.

VISITOR INFORMATION For information on the Kitsap Peninsula, contact the **Kitsap Peninsula Visitor & Convention Bureau**, 9481 Silverdale Way, Ste. 281, Silverdale, WA 98383 (☎ 800/337-0580; www.visitkitsap.com). For more information on Poulsbo, contact the **Greater Poulsbo Chamber of Commerce**, 19351 Eighth Ave., Ste. 108 (P.O. Box 1063), Poulsbo, WA 98370 (☎ 877/768-5726 or 360/779-4848; www.poulsbochamber.com).

FESTIVALS In Poulsbo each May, the **Viking Fest** celebrates traditional Scandinavian culture, as does the December **Yule Fest**.

Exploring the Kitsap Peninsula

Just across the Agate Pass Bridge from Bainbridge Island lies the Kitsap Peninsula and the Suquamish tribe's Port Madison Indian Reservation. The first thing you will see on the reservation is the huge **Suquamish Clearwater Casino Resort**, 15347 Suquamish Way NE, Suquamish (☎ 800/375-6073 or 360/598-8700; www.clearwatercasino.com), the tribe's main source of revenue. The next thing you see will likely be a fireworks stand, another of the tribe's main revenue sources. Turn right at the casino and fireworks stand, and at the gas station on the edge of the village of **Suquamish**, turn left to reach the grave of Chief Sealth, for whom Seattle was named. Nearby is **Old Man House Park**, which preserves the site of a large Native American longhouse. The Old Man House itself is long gone, but you'll find an informative sign and a small park with picnic tables. To find this park, go back to the gas station and go straight across the main road. From Suquamish, head back to Wash. 305, continue a little farther west, and watch for signs to the **Suquamish Museum**, 15838 Sandy Hook Rd. (☎ 360/598-3311, ext. 422; www.suquamish.org/museum.aspx), on the Port Madison Indian Reservation. The museum houses a compelling history of Puget Sound's native people, with lots of historical photos and quotes from tribal elders about growing up in the area. From May through September the museum is open daily from 10am to 5pm; October through April it's open Friday to Sunday from 11am to 4pm. Admission is \$4 for adults, \$3 for seniors, and \$2 for children 12 and under. A new museum is currently under construction and should be open some time in 2011, so be sure to call first before planning a visit to this museum.

Continuing north on Wash. 305, you next come to the small town of **Poulsbo**, which overlooks fiordlike Liberty Bay. Settled in the late 1880s by Scandinavians, Poulsbo was primarily a fishing, logging, and farming town until the town decided to play up its Scandinavian heritage. Shops in the Scandinavian-inspired downtown sell all manner of Viking and Scandinavian souvenirs. Between downtown and the waterfront, you'll find Liberty Bay Park. While in Poulsbo, be sure to stop by the **Poulsbo Marine Science Center**, 18743 Front St. NE (☎ 360/598-4460; www.poulsbo.msc.org), which has aquariums full of local sea life. The center is open Thursday through Sunday from 11am to 4pm, and admission is free. If you'd like to get out on the waters of Liberty Bay, rent a boat from **Northwest Boat Rentals & Adventures**, 18779 Front St., Ste. D (☎ 360/265-8300; www.northwestboatrentals.com), which rents sailboats, speedboats, kayaks, and electric boats.

If you have time and enjoy visiting historic towns, continue north from Poulsbo on Wash. 3 to **Port Gamble** (www.portgamble.com), which looks like a New England village dropped down in the middle of the Northwest woods. This community was established in 1853 as a company town for the Pope and Talbot lumber mill. Along the town's shady streets are Victorian homes that were restored by Pope and Talbot. Stop by the **Port Gamble General Store and Cafe**, 32400 Rainier Ave. (☎ 360/297-7636), a classic general store that is home to the **Of Sea and Shore Museum** (www.ofseaandshore.com). This little museum houses an exhibit of sea-shells from around the world and is open daily from 9am to 5pm; admission is free. Around the back of the building that houses the general store, you'll find the **Port Gamble Historical Museum** (☎ 360/297-8074), a collection of local memorabilia. Admission is \$4 for adults and \$3 for seniors and students (free for children 6

and under). From May through October the museum is open daily from 9:30am to 5pm; the rest of the year it's open Friday through Sunday, and major holiday Mondays, from 9:30am to 5pm.

If you're interested in seeing Port Gamble from the water, you can rent a sea kayak from **Olympic Outdoor Center**, 32379 Rainier Ave. (☎ 800/592-5983 or 360/297-4659; www.olympicoutdoorcenter.com), which charges \$18 to \$24 per hour or \$65 to \$90 by the day. This shop also rents kayaks on the waterfront in Poulsbo.

South of Port Gamble on Wash. 3, you can explore the Kitsap Peninsula's naval history. Between Poulsbo and Silverdale, you will be passing just east of the Bangor Navy Base, which is home port for a fleet of Trident nuclear submarines. The base is on Hood Canal. Near the town of Keyport, you can visit the **Naval Undersea Museum**, 1 Garnett Way (☎ 360/396-4148; www.history.navy.mil/museums/keyport/index1.htm), located 3 miles east of Wash. 3 on Wash. 308 near the town of Keyport. The museum examines all aspects of undersea exploration, with interactive exhibits, models, and displays that include a deep-sea exploration-and-research craft, a Japanese kamikaze torpedo, and a deep-sea rescue vehicle. The museum is open daily from 10am to 4pm (closed on Tues Oct–May); admission is free.

Continuing south, you come to **Bremerton**, which is home to the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, where mothballed U.S. Navy ships have included the aircraft carriers USS *Nimitz* and USS *Midway* and the battleships USS *Missouri* and USS *New Jersey*. There are always plenty of navy ships to be seen here in the harbor. Along the town's waterfront, several attractions are linked by the Bremerton Boardwalk, which provides a pleasant place to stroll along the waters of Sinclair Inlet. In this area, you'll also find a couple of pretty little parks with unusual fountains. **Harborside Fountain Park**, beside the ferry dock, has fountains reminiscent of the conning towers of submarines. A block away, at Pacific Avenue and Second Street, you'll find the **Puget Sound Naval Shipyard Memorial Plaza**, with fountains and interpretive displays about the shipyard.

To learn more about naval history, visit the **USS Turner Joy Museum Ship**, 300 Washington Beach Ave. (☎ 360/792-2457; www.ussturnerjoy.org), a mothballed destroyer that is open to the public as a memorial to those who served in the U.S. Navy and who helped build the navy's ships. You'll find the ship about 150 yards east of the Washington State Ferries terminal. From March through September, the ship is open daily from 10am to 5pm; October through February, it's open Friday through Sunday from 10am to 4pm. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors, and \$6 for children 5 to 12.

Nearby is the **Puget Sound Navy Museum**, 251 First St. (☎ 360/479-7447; www.history.navy.mil/museums/psnm/psnm.htm), an official U.S. Navy museum that showcases naval history and the historic contributions of the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard. The museum is open Monday through Saturday from 10am to 4pm and Sunday from 1 to 4pm (closed on Tues Oct–May). Admission is free.

One of the last remaining “mosquito-fleet” ferries still operates between Bremerton and **Port Orchard**. If you park your car on the waterfront in Bremerton, you can step aboard the little passenger-only ferry and cross the bay to Port Orchard. In this little waterfront town, you'll find several antiques malls that can provide hours of interesting browsing.

Where to Stay

Manor Farm Inn ★ Only about an hour from Seattle, between Poulsbo and the Hood Canal Bridge, Manor Farm Inn feels like a New England country inn. Whether you want to hide away in the comfort of your room or hang out with the farm animals, you'll feel content at this retreat from urban stress. If you crave lots of space, you might want to opt for the Carriage Room, which has the original carriage house doors on display. Two rooms have wood-burning fireplaces, and another, the Loft, is up a flight of stairs and has great views and a big bathroom. The Manor Farm Inn is as much a retreat center as just a place to spend the night and is popular with groups, especially wedding parties.

26069 Big Valley Rd. NE, Poulsbo, WA 98370. ☎ **360/779-4628**. Fax 360/779-4876. www.manorfarminn.com. 6 units. Feb–Apr \$125 double; May–Dec \$160–\$175 double (discounts for multiple-night stays). Closed Jan. Rates include full breakfast. Children 2 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, MC, V. Pets accepted (\$50 fee). *In room:* Hair dryer, no phone, free Wi-Fi.

Willcox House Country Inn ★★ Set on the shore of Hood Canal and with a superb view of the Olympic Mountains, this 1930s Art Deco mansion is one of the state's finest inns. The inn was once a private estate and is surrounded by lush gardens of rhododendrons and azaleas that erupt into bloom each spring. There's a library where you can curl up in a leather chair beside the fire, a billiards room, a home theater with big-screen TV, and, of course, an elegant great room. Guest rooms are similarly elegant. Dinners are served at the inn (reservation only) with fixed-price meals ranging in price from \$27 on weeknights to \$40 on Saturday nights. Regional cuisine and an excellent wine list make this one of the finest restaurants on the Kitsap Peninsula.

2390 Tekiu Rd. NW, Seabeck, WA 98380. ☎ **800/725-9477** or 360/830-4492. www.willcoxhouse.com. 5 units. \$169–\$259 double. Rates include full breakfast. Children 12 and over welcome. MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; concierge; free Wi-Fi. *In room:* Hair dryer, no phone.

Where to Dine

The most elegant meals on the Kitsap Peninsula are served at the Willcox House, a luxurious inn overlooking the Hood Canal. Most of the diners are guests at the inn, but the fixed-price meals are open to the public by reservation. See above for details.

IN POULSBO

If you have a sweet tooth, don't miss **Sluys Poulsbo Bakery**, 18924 Front St. NE (☎ **360/697-2253**), which bakes mounds of Scandinavian-inspired goodies (very sweet), as well as stick-to-your-ribs breads. When you need a cup of espresso, head to the **Poulsbohemian Coffeehouse**, 19003 Front St. (☎ **360/779-9199**; www.poulsbohemian.com), which has an excellent view of Liberty Bay from atop the bluff on the edge of downtown.

Molly Ward Gardens ★★ 🎁 NORTHWEST What a surprise to open the door of this rambling old barn in a picturesque little valley and find a magical, hobbit-like interior trimmed to the rafters with dried flowers and herbs. This restaurant is a husband-and-wife-operation. Using organic and locally sourced ingredients as much as possible, Sam, the chef, turns out such dishes as seared rosemary scallops with mango sauce, rack of lamb with rosemary-zinfandel sauce, and baked figs with Gorgonzola and pancetta. Lynn is an artist, and at Christmas the restaurant is decked

out with splendiferous garlands and arrangements created with bounty from woods and field. In summer, there's outdoor seating among the flowers. Molly Ward Gardens is located quite near the Manor Farm Inn.

27462 Big Valley Rd. 📞 **360/779-4471**. www.mollywardgardens.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$12–\$19 lunch, \$23–\$40 dinner. MC, V. Wed–Sat 11am–2:30pm and 6–9pm; Sun 10:30am–2:30pm and 6–9pm.

Mor Mor Bistro and Bar ★★ NORTHWEST You'll find downtown Poulsbo's best and most upscale restaurant partially hidden by a big magnolia tree. The space is sophisticated and unpretentious, a description that fits the food as well. The menu changes daily, but you can bet there will be simple comfort foods such as fish and chips, as well as grilled wild salmon. The raviolis are usually good bets as well. If you aren't worried about putting on pounds, try snacking on the garlic-and-Parmesan fries with aioli (they also come with the fish and chips).

18820 Front St. 📞 **360/697-3449**. www.mormorbistro.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$7–\$16 lunch, \$10–\$24 dinner. AE, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 11am–9pm; Sun 10am–3pm (call for winter hours).

IN BREMERTON

Anthony's at Bremerton ★ SEAFOOD Overlooking the Bremerton Marina and the ferry dock, this waterfront restaurant is part of the Puget Sound's most reliable seafood-restaurant chains. The convenient location in the middle of all of Bremerton's naval attractions makes Anthony's your best bet for lunch or dinner on an exploration of this town. Northwest seafoods are a specialty here. The pan-fried Willapa Bay oysters and Dungeness crab cakes are both good bets and can be ordered either as appetizers or entrees. If you're not fond of fish, you'll find plenty of meaty options.

20 Washington Ave. 📞 **360/377-5004**. www.anthonys.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$8–\$28. AE, DISC, MC, V. Sun–Thurs 11am–9:30pm; Fri–Sat 11am–10:30pm.

GIG HARBOR ★

45 miles S of Seattle, 30 miles S of Bremerton, 45 miles N of Olympia

On the far side of the two Tacoma Narrows bridges from Tacoma is the quaint waterfront town of Gig Harbor. With its interesting little shops, art galleries, seafood restaurants, fleet of commercial fishing boats, and marinas full of private pleasure craft, this town is the quintessential Puget Sound fishing village. Framing this picture of Puget Sound's past is the snowcapped bulk of Mount Rainier, which lends a near storybook quality.

Long the site of a Native American village, Gig Harbor was not discovered by Euro-Americans until 1841, when sailors from an exploratory expedition who were charting the area from a gig (a small boat that had been launched from the expedition's main ship) rowed into the bay. Settlers arrived here in 1867 and soon Gig Harbor was a thriving fishing village of Scandinavians and Croatians.

Essentials

GETTING THERE Gig Harbor lies just across the Tacoma Narrows Bridge from Tacoma off Wash. 16.

VISITOR INFORMATION For more information on this area, contact the **Gig Harbor Chamber of Commerce**, 3311 Harborview Dr., Ste. 101, Gig Harbor, WA 98332 (☎ **800/359-8804** or 253/851-6865; www.gigharborchamber.com).

Exploring Gig Harbor

Gig Harbor is a boaters' town. Up and down the length of the town's waterfront, marinas are crowded with sailboats and powerboats, and shops along the waterfront cater primarily to the boating crowd. However, all the boats, and the backdrop of Mount Rainier, also make this a very pleasant town for a leisurely stroll. You can also rent a boat and head out on the water.

On the waterfront, you'll find **Gig Harbor Rent-a-Boat**, 8829 N. Harborview Dr. (☎ **253/858-7341**; www.gigharborrentaboat.com), where you can rent a powerboat or sea kayak. Rates range from \$16 to \$20 an hour for a single sea kayak to between \$140 and \$200 for a 2-hour powerboat rental.

Most visitors to Gig Harbor come because of the boating opportunities, but landlubbers can stroll the town's main street, Harborview Drive, enjoy the view of the harbor, and stop to browse in dozens of interesting little shops and art galleries. Toward the south end of the waterfront, you'll find Skansie Brothers Park, which has a public dock and is a good place for a picnic. At the north end, after the bend in the bay, you'll come to the Finholm area. Across from the water here stands the **Finholm View Climb**, a flight of 90 steps that lead up a steep hill. At the top of the hill, you'll find the quintessential Gig Harbor view of the bay and Mount Rainier.

Within a short drive of Gig Harbor, you'll also find three waterfront state parks—**Penrose Point**, **Joemma**, and **Kopachuck**—all of which have beaches and campgrounds. Of these, Penrose Point (☎ **360/902-8844**) is the prettiest. This park is situated on Mayo Cove and has more than 2 miles of shoreline. To reach this park from Gig Harbor, drive north on Wash. 16 to Purdy, take Wash. 302 west, and then follow signs to Key Center and the park. In both Joemma (which is about 4 miles beyond Penrose Point) and Kopachuck (from Wash. 16 in Gig Harbor, follow signs for the park), there are good spots to watch sunsets, with a nice sandy beach at Kopachuck.

Where to Stay

The Maritime Inn ★ Across from the waterfront in downtown Gig Harbor, this small hotel manages to conjure up the image of an old beach resort cottage with its classic and simple styling. All the guest rooms have gas fireplaces, flatscreen TVs, and comfortable modern furnishings. While most rooms have some sort of water-view, the views are better from the few rooms on the second floor.

3212 Harborview Dr., Gig Harbor, WA 98335. ☎ **888/506-3580** or 253/858-1818. Fax 253/858-1817. www.maritimeinn.com. 15 units. \$129–\$198 double. Rates include continental breakfast. Children 2 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DISC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Concierge. *In room:* A/C, TV, CD player, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

Where to Dine

The Green Turtle ★ PAN-ASIAN/INTERNATIONAL With the hands-down best view in town (Mount Rainier is seen looming beyond the mouth of the harbor on clear days), this elegant little restaurant is tucked in an unlikely spot next door to a yacht sales office. Two walls of glass let everyone enjoy the views, and in summer

there is a deck under a big old maple tree. Be sure to start with the Green Turtle's award-winning seafood chowder. I usually stick with the seafood dishes, but they also do duck quite well.

2905 Harborview Dr. 📞 **253/851-3167**. www.thegreenturtle.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$13–\$17 lunch, \$14–\$34 dinner. AE, DISC, MC, V. Tues–Fri 11am–2pm and 4:30–9pm; Sat–Sun 4:30–9pm.

TACOMA ★★

32 miles S of Seattle, 31 miles N of Olympia, 93 miles S of Port Townsend

Tacoma is a city that, in the words of Rodney Dangerfield, “just don’t get no respect.” For years its industrial image made it the brunt of jokes, many of which centered around the aroma of Tacoma. I’d like to be able to tell you that the skies over Tacoma are always clear and the air is fresh and clean, but it would be stretching the truth just a bit. However, it is definitely time to forget the old jokes and take a new look at this city, which is in the midst of a profound transformation.

Things have changed a lot since the days when the city’s waterfront was lined with smoke-belching lumber and paper mills, and, with its current commitment to the arts, Tacoma competes with Seattle as a city on the move. With its impressive museums and free downtown streetcar, Tacoma has been managing to keep step with Seattle, its much more famous neighbor to the north.

Tacoma has also reclaimed much of its shoreline, and today a waterfront park runs the length of Ruston Way just north of downtown. Walkers, joggers, and cyclists all flock to the paved trail that runs through this park, and several good waterfront restaurants are along the park’s length. However, despite Tacoma’s ongoing make-over, little has changed in recent years at Point Defiance Park, which is a good thing. With its miles of trails, world-class zoo and aquarium, numerous historical attractions, and great bicycling, Point Defiance is one of the premier city parks in the Puget Sound region.

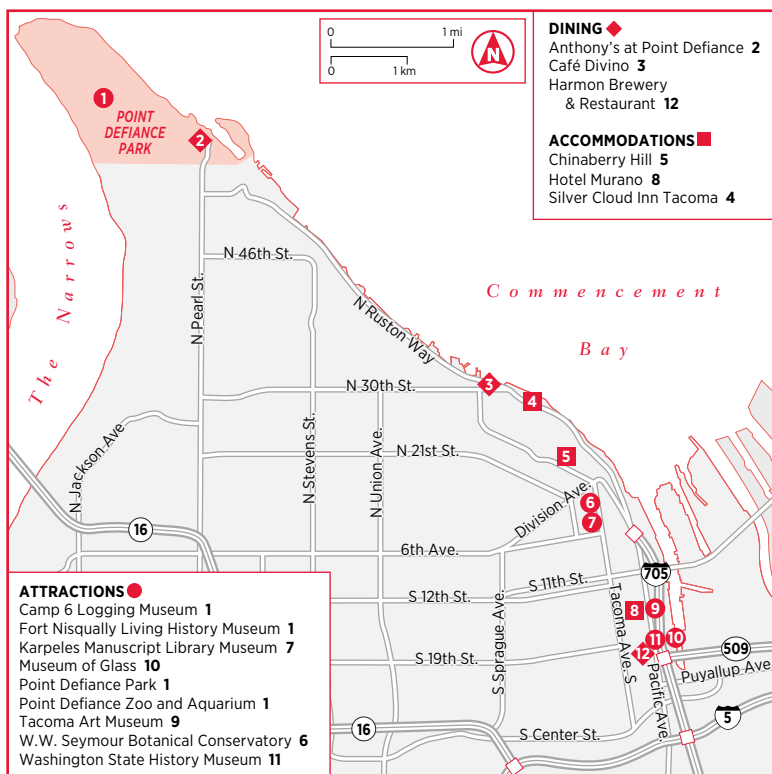
In between Point Defiance and downtown Tacoma lies one of the most impressive historic neighborhoods in the state. The streets of the Stadium Historic District are lined with beautiful mansions, some of which are now B&Bs. These homes are a testament to the important role Tacoma played in Washington history. In 1883, Tacoma became the western terminus of the Northern Pacific Railroad, thus sealing the city’s fate as the industrial center of Puget Sound, a fate that the city has only recently begun to overcome.

To see the past and the future of Tacoma, drop by downtown’s Fireman’s Park. From this small park, you can look down on smoke-belching mills and commercial port facilities, but if you then turn around, you’ll be facing a new, revitalized Tacoma where the arts are flourishing and historic buildings have been preserved.

Essentials

GETTING THERE Tacoma is on I-5 south of Seattle at the junction of Wash. 16, which is the main route north through the Kitsap Peninsula to Port Townsend and the Olympic Peninsula. Wash. 7 from the Mount Rainier area leads into downtown Tacoma from the south. Tacoma’s city center is accessed by I-705, a short spur that leads from I-5 into the middle of downtown.

Tacoma



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SOUTH PUGET SOUND & WEST SOUND

Tacoma

Seattle-Tacoma International Airport is 22 miles north of Tacoma. **ShuttleExpress** (☎ 800/487-7433 or 425/981-7000; www.shuttleexpress.com) operates an airport shuttle service; the fare is \$37 one-way to downtown Tacoma.

Amtrak (☎ 800/872-7245; www.amtrak.com) has service to Tacoma. The station is at 1001 Puyallup Ave.

VISITOR INFORMATION For more information on this area, contact the **Tacoma Regional Convention & Visitor Bureau**, 1119 Pacific Ave., Ste. 500, Tacoma, WA 98402 (☎ 800/272-2662 or 253/627-2836; www.traveltacoma.com), which has an information desk inside the Courtyard by Marriott Tacoma Downtown, 1516 Pacific Ave.

GETTING AROUND See “Getting There & Around” in chapter 3 for information on renting cars at Sea-Tac International Airport. If you need a taxi, contact **King Cab** (☎ 888/904-7770 or 253/474-8294; www.kingcabnw.com). Public bus service is provided by **Pierce Transit** (☎ 800/562-8109 or 253/581-8000; www.piercetransit.org).

What to See & Do

MUSEUMS

Karpeles Manuscript Library Museum ★ Housed in an imposing building across the street from Wright Park, this museum is dedicated to the preservation of original handwritten documents and letters. The founder of the libraries has amassed an astounding collection of original manuscripts, from musical scores by Beethoven to ancient papyrus texts to the cover letter for the Declaration of Independence.

407 S. G St. ☎ **253/383-2575**. Free admission. Tues–Sun 10am–4pm. Closed major holidays.

The LeMay Museum ★ Billing itself as “America’s Car Museum” and with plans to open a huge state-of-the-art museum near the Tacoma Dome some time in the next few years, this museum houses the car collection of Harold and Nancy LeMay, who amassed the largest privately owned car collection in the world. Currently, the collection includes more than 2,000 cars. Visits are by guided tour, and you should be sure to make a reservation.

325 152nd St. E. ☎ **877/902-8490** or 253/536-2885. www.lemaymuseum.org. \$15 adults, \$5 children 6–12. Apr–Sept Tues–Sat 10am–5pm, Sun noon–5pm; Oct–Mar Fri–Sat 9am–5pm, Sun noon–5pm. Closed most holidays.

Museum of Glass ★★ Dale Chihuly’s work inspired the construction of this museum, which travels far and wide to bring the very best art glass to Tacoma. A vast variety of glass artwork is featured in the galleries of this high-style building on the waterfront: Whether it’s stained glass in the style of Tiffany, a traveling exhibit from a European museum, or the latest thought-provoking installation by a cutting-edge glass artist, you’ll find it here. The highlight is the hot shop, a huge cone-shaped studio space where visitors can watch glass artists work at several kilns. Connecting the museum to the rest of the city is the 500-foot-long Chihuly Bridge of Glass, which spans the I-705 freeway. Adjacent to this museum at 1821 E. Dock St. are the **Traver Gallery** (☎ **253/383-3685**; www.travergallery.com) and **Vetri** (☎ **253/383-3692**; www.vetriglass.com), which are outposts of Seattle’s Traver Gallery, the most highly respected art-glass gallery in the region.

1801 Dock St. ☎ **866/468-7386** or 253/284-4750. www.museumofglass.org. Admission \$12 adults, \$10 seniors, \$5 children 6–12, free for children 5 and under. Free to all on 3rd Thurs of each month 5–8pm; free for college students on Sun. Memorial Day to Labor Day Mon–Sat 10am–5pm (until 8pm on 3rd Thurs of each month), Sun noon–5pm; other months closed Mon–Tues. Closed New Year’s Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

Tacoma Art Museum ★★ Housed in a building designed by noted contemporary architect Antoine Predock, the Tacoma Art Museum may not have as big a reputation as the Seattle Art Museum, but it mounts some impressive shows. The building is filled with beautiful galleries in which to display both the museum’s own collections and traveling exhibitions. The museum is best known for its large collection of art by native son Dale Chihuly, and fans of the glass artist can sign up for a walking tour of many of his works both here in the museum and around downtown. You can also see a large Chihuly just up the street at **Union Station**, 1717 Pacific Ave. Tours are offered a couple of days each week, cost \$15, and include museum admission. The museum also offers a cellphone tour of area Chihuly installations. It



Wednesday Bargains

With the Museum of Glass, the Tacoma Art Museum, and the Washington State History Museum all within 3 blocks of one another, Tacoma is an even better museum town than Seattle. You can save a little on the cost of visiting these

three museums by visiting on a Wednesday when you can get into all three museums for \$22 (\$20 for seniors and \$18 for students and children). For adults, this is a savings of \$7.

7

SOUTH PUGET SOUND & WEST SOUND

Tacoma

also has respectable collections of European Impressionism, Japanese woodblock prints, and American graphic art, and it regularly brings in large traveling shows.

1701 Pacific Ave. ☎ **253/272-4258**. www.tacomaartmuseum.org. Admission \$9 adults, \$8 seniors and students, free for children 5 and under. Free to all on 3rd Thurs of each month. Wed–Sun 10am–5pm (until 8pm on 3rd Thurs of each month). Closed New Year’s Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, July 4th, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

Washington State History Museum ★😊 A massive archive of Washington state history, this impressive museum is like no other history museum in the Northwest. A full barrage of high-tech displays makes history both fun and interesting. From a covered wagon to a sprawling model railroad layout, a Coast Salish longhouse to a Hooverville shack, the state’s history comes alive through the use of life-size mannequins, recorded narration, and “overheard” conversations. With loads of interactive exhibits and several films screened daily, it’s obvious this museum is trying to appeal to the video-game generation, but older visitors will have fun, too.

1911 Pacific Ave. ☎ **888/238-4373** or 253/272-3500. www.wshs.org/wshm. Admission \$8 adults, \$7 seniors, \$6 students 6–17, free for children 5 and under. Free for all 3rd Thurs 2–8pm. Wed–Fri 10am–4pm (3rd Thurs open until 8pm), Sat–Sun 10am–5pm. Closed Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

POINT DEFIANCE PARK

Point Defiance Park, on the north side of town at the end of Pearl Street, is Tacoma’s center of activity and one of the largest urban parks in the country. In the park are several attractions, including the Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, Fort Nisqually Historic Site, and the Camp 6 Logging Museum. Founded in 1888, this park preserved one of the region’s most scenic points of land. Winding through the wooded park is **Five Mile Drive**, which connects all the park’s main attractions, as well as picnic areas, and hiking and biking trails. Also in the park are a rose garden, a Japanese garden, a rhododendron garden, a dahlia test garden, and a native-plant garden. You can reach the park by following Ruston Way or Pearl Street north.

Camp 6 Logging Museum 😊 This museum focuses on the days of steam power in Washington’s logging history. Exhibits include plenty of steam equipment as well as old bunkhouses and a rail-car camp. The latter was a rolling logging camp with bunkhouses built on railroad cars. Indoor exhibits are closed November through March, but outdoor exhibits can be viewed year-round. On weekends from early April to late September and again in December, Camp 6 offers rides on an old logging train.

5400 N. Pearl St. (📞) **253/752-0047**. www.camp-6-museum.org. Free admission to museum; logging train rides \$4.50 adults, \$3.50 seniors, \$3 children ages 3–12. Early Apr to before Memorial Day Wed–Sun (and holidays) 10am–4pm; Memorial Day to late Sept Wed–Fri 10am–4pm, Sat–Sun 10am–6:30pm. Closed late Sept to early Apr.

Fort Nisqually Living History Museum ★ Fort Nisqually was a trading post founded in 1833 by the Hudson's Bay Company for the purpose of acquiring beaver pelts. However, it was established at a time when the fur trade was in decline and was soon moved to a new location and converted to a commercial farming business. This reconstruction, built in the 1930s, is based on the design of that second fort. Inside the stockade walls are two original buildings and several reconstructed buildings. On weekends throughout the summer (and on selected weekends in other months), costumed interpreters are on hand. Numerous living-history events are staged throughout the year.

5400 N. Pearl St., #11. (📞) **253/591-5339**. www.fortnisqually.org. Admission \$6 adults, \$5 seniors and students, \$4 youth 13–17, \$3 children 4–12, free for children 3 and under. Memorial Day to Labor Day daily 11am–5pm; after Labor Day through Apr Wed–Sun 11am–4pm; May 1 to before Memorial Day Wed–Sun 11am–5pm. Closed Oct 3, Thanksgiving and day after Thanksgiving, and Dec 22–25.

Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium ★★😊 The focus at this unusual combination zoo and aquarium is generally on the wildlife of Pacific Rim countries, and to that end, you'll find animals from such far-flung locations as the Arctic tundra, Southeast Asia, and the Andes Mountains. In the aquarium, the *Rocky Shores* exhibit features marine mammals, including walruses and sea otters. Other exhibits include a sea-horse aquarium, a northern Pacific aquarium, and a tropical coral reef aquarium that's home to more than 20 sharks. The zoo's biggest event of the year is its annual Zoolights program, which each December turns the grounds into a fantasy of Christmas lights.

5400 N. Pearl St. (📞) **253/591-5337**. www.pdza.org. Admission \$14 adults, \$13 seniors, \$12 children 5–12, \$7.50 for ages 3–4, free for children 2 and under. Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day daily 9:30am–6pm; early May to day before Memorial Day weekend and day after Labor Day to late Sept daily 9:30am–5pm; late Sept to early May daily 9:30am–4pm. Closed Tues–Wed Nov–Feb, 3rd Fri in July, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

TACOMA AREA PUBLIC GARDENS

Lakewold Gardens ★ Formerly a private estate, this 10-acre garden, designed by noted landscape architect Thomas Church and located 10 miles south of Tacoma, includes extensive collections of Japanese maples and rhododendrons.



Almond Roca Rocks!

If you're as crazy about Almond Roca® candy as I am, you may be surprised to discover that it's made right here in Tacoma by the Brown & Haley company, which has been in business since 1914. You can stock up on the addictive candies at the **Brown & Haley Tacoma**

Outlet Store, 110 E. 26th St. (📞) 253/620-3067; www.brown-haley.com.

This store, near the Tacoma Dome, is open 7 days a week. There's a second outlet in nearby Fife at 2105 Frank Albert Rd. (📞) **253/926-0240**.



Wild Waves & an Enchanted Village

Wild Waves Theme Park, 36201 Enchanted Pkwy. S., Federal Way ☎ **253/661-8000**; www.wildwaves.com, is a combination water park and amusement park with a large wooden

roller coaster. When temperatures heat up in July and August, the waterslides here are the cool place to be. Bring your kids here on vacation, and they'll never forget their trip to Washington.

There are also rose, fern, and alpine gardens that include numerous rare and unusual plants.

12317 Gravelly Lake Dr. SW, Lakewood. ☎ **888/858-4106** or 253/584-4106. www.lakewoldgardens.org. Admission \$7 adults, \$5 seniors and students, free for children 11 and under. Apr–Sept Wed–Sun 10am–4pm (July–Aug Wed until 8pm); Oct–Nov and Feb–Mar Fri–Sun 10am–3pm; Dec–Jan Fri 10am–3pm. Closed Thanksgiving and Dec 24–Jan 1. Take exit 124 off I-5.

Rhododendron Species Foundation and Botanical Garden ★★ Covering 22 acres, this garden has one of the most extensive collections of species (unhybridized) rhododendrons and azaleas in the world. More than 10,000 plants put on an amazing floral display from March through May. Also included in these gardens are collections of ferns, maples, heathers, and bamboos. For serious gardeners, this is one of the Northwest's garden musts. It's 8 miles north of Tacoma.

2525 S. 336th St., Weyerhaeuser corporate campus, Federal Way. ☎ **253/838-4646**. www.rhodygarden.org. Admission \$5 adults, \$3 seniors and students, free for children 11 and under; free to all Nov–Feb. Mar–Sept Fri–Wed 10am–4pm; Oct–Feb Sat–Wed 11am–4pm. Take exit 143 off I-5.

W. W. Seymour Botanical Conservatory ★ Constructed in 1908, this elegant Victorian conservatory is one of only three of this type on the West Coast and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. More than 200 species of exotic plants (including numerous orchid species) are housed in the huge greenhouse, which is built of more than 3,000 panes of glass. The conservatory stands in downtown Tacoma's Wright Park, which is a shady retreat from downtown's pavement.

Wright Park, 316 S. G St. ☎ **253/591-5330**. www.metroparkstacoma.org. Admission by \$4 suggested donation. Tues–Sun 10am–4:30pm. Closed New Year's Day, Thanksgiving, 1st 4 days of Dec, and Christmas.

Where to Stay

Chinaberry Hill ★★ Amid the stately old homes of the Stadium Historic District, this grand Victorian home has luxurious guest rooms and commanding views of Commencement Bay. For sheer opulence, it's hard to beat the Pantages Suite, with its beautifully dressed bed, harbor views, and a whirlpool tub in an alcove under the eaves. The Carriage Suite, in the former carriage house, has a hot tub for two tucked into what was once a horse stall. Above this suite is a room in what was once the hayloft. Beautiful century-old trees shade the grounds. Classic Northwest elegance makes this one of the finest inns in the state.

302 Tacoma Ave. N., Tacoma, WA 98403. ☎ **253/272-1282**. Fax 253/272-1335. www.chinaberryhill.com. 5 units. \$139–\$149 double; \$159–\$245 suite; \$325 cottage. Rates include full breakfast. AE, MC, V. Children 12 and over welcome in main house, all ages welcome in cottage (5 and under stay free in parent's room). **Amenities:** Concierge. *In room:* A/C, TV/VCR, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

Hotel Murano ★★ Although primarily a convention hotel, this downtown high-rise, with its art-glass decorative theme, is by far the most stylish hotel in Tacoma. The Museum of Glass is just a few blocks away from the Murano, and consequently, the hotel's decor highlights the city's important position in the world of art glass. Contemporary furnishings, bright colors, and fun accent pieces and art give the rooms here a playful, modern feel. So, if you're in town because you're a Dale Chihuly fan, this is definitely where you should stay.

1320 Broadway Plaza, Tacoma, WA 98402. ☎ **888/862-3255** or 253/238-8000. Fax 253/591-4105. www.hotelmuranotacoma.com. 319 units. \$149-\$219 double; \$209-\$369 suite. Children 12 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Valet parking \$18; self-parking \$15. Pets accepted (\$45 fee). **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge; concierge; executive-level rooms; exercise room; room service; spa. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, MP3 docking station, Wi-Fi (\$10/day).

Silver Cloud Inn Tacoma ★ Built out over the waters of Commencement Bay, on a pier on the Ruston Way waterfront, this hotel has water-views from every room. Although there's not a bad room in the hotel, you should try to get one on the third floor to maximize your views. If you're in the mood for a splurge, the corner Jacuzzi suites are very romantic. The tub is in a corner with two walls of bay-view windows, and there are also gas fireplaces. Within 2 blocks of the hotel are the restaurants of Old Town Tacoma, and along the Ruston Way waterfront pathway are good seafood restaurants.

2317 N. Ruston Way, Tacoma, WA 98402. ☎ **866/820-8448** or 253/272-1300. Fax 253/274-9176. www.silvercloud.com. 90 units. \$149-\$319 double; \$179-\$249 suite. Rates include continental breakfast. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Concierge; exercise room and access to nearby health club; room service. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

Thornewood Castle Inn ★★★★★ 🎁 There may not be any real castles in the United States, but this imposing 30,000-square-foot manor house, located a few miles south of Tacoma, sure comes close. Built in 1909, Thornewood has 28 bedrooms and 22 bathrooms, and incorporated into its design are a 15th-century wood-paneled staircase and stained-glass windows dating from the 15th to 17th centuries. Guest rooms are, as you might expect, quite large, and if not quite as sumptuously appointed as the rest of the house, they are certainly grand in design. The mansion sits on the shore of American Lake, and the gardens were designed by the Olmsted Brothers. This is truly a one-of-a-kind inn. About the only drawback here is that nearby suburban homes dispel the fantasy that you are lord or lady of all you survey.

8601 N. Thorne Lane SW, Lakewood, WA 98498. ☎ **253/584-4393**. www.thornewoodcastle.com. 9 units. \$275-\$500 double. Rates include full breakfast. AE, DISC, MC, V. No children 11 or under. *In room:* TV/DVD, CD player, fridge, free Wi-Fi (some rooms).

Where to Dine

If too much time in museums leaves you sleepy, head to **Cutters Point**, 1936 Pacific Ave. (☎ **253/272-7101**; www.cutterspoint.com), a coffee shop across the street from the Washington State History Museum. Nearby, you can feed your sweet tooth with a cupcake from **Hello Cupcake**, 1740 Pacific Ave. (☎ **253/383-7772**; www.hello-cupcake.com).

Anthony's at Point Defiance ★ SEAFOOD Adjacent to the Vashon Island ferry landing on the edge of Point Defiance Park, this modern seafood restaurant, part of a very popular regional restaurant chain, has the best location of any of

Tacoma's many waterfront restaurants. When the skies are clear, it's possible to see Mount Rainier rising beyond the adjacent marina (although the best views of the mountain are from the bar area), and then, of course, there are the comings and goings of the ferries. The prices are surprisingly reasonable considering both the location and the contemporary decor, and Anthony's stays pretty busy as a result. You'll find everything from clam chowder and pan-fried oysters to alder-planked salmon and cioppino. For a light meal, try the fish tacos.

5910 N. Waterfront Dr. (C) **253/752-9700**. www.anthonys.com. Reservations accepted for 6 or more people. Main courses \$9–\$22. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11am–9:30pm; Fri–Sat 11am–10:30pm; Sun 10am–9:30pm.

Café Divino ★  **ITALIAN** This little hole-in-the-wall wine bar and restaurant is in the historic Old Town Tacoma neighborhood, which is north of present-day downtown Tacoma. The menu is short and the wines by the glass tend to be a bit pricey, but the food is good and the atmosphere is boisterously convivial. Some simple sandwiches (try the pesto chicken) and a few pasta dishes comprise the bulk of the menu, but there are also a half-dozen entrees. However, most people end up assembling meals from the excellent salads and appetizers. Try the crab cakes and seared ahi tuna. Because this restaurant is only 2 blocks from the Ruston Way waterfront, you should try to get in a stroll before or after a meal.

2112 N. 30th St. (C) **253/779-4226**. www.cafedivinotacoma.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$10–\$25. AE, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11:30am–10pm; Fri 11:30am–11pm; Sat noon–11pm.

Harmon Brewery & Restaurant **AMERICAN** In a renovated old commercial building across from the Washington State History Museum, this large pub is Tacoma's favorite downtown after-work hangout and business-lunch spot. The menu features primarily burgers and pizza, plus some interesting specials and, of course, plenty of good microbrews. The pub sports an outdoor-sports theme.

1938 Pacific Ave. (C) **253/383-2739**. www.harmonbrewing.com. Reservations not accepted. Main courses \$9–\$17. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11am–11pm; Fri 11am–midnight; Sat 10am–midnight; Sun 10am–9pm.

Tacoma After Dark

If you're looking for an interesting place to have a drink, check out **The Swiss**, 1904 S. Jefferson Ave. (C) **253/572-2821**; www.theswisspub.com), located uphill from the Washington State History Museum. The pub is at the top of a long flight of stairs that links the museum with the University of Washington Tacoma Campus. The pub not only has a great beer selection and decent food but also has a collection of Dale Chihuly glass sculptures. **The Spar**, 2121 N. 30th St. (C) **253/627-8215**; www.the-spar.com), another local favorite that has been around forever, is in a historic building in Old Town Tacoma.

OLYMPIA ★

60 miles S of Seattle, 100 miles N of Portland

At the southernmost end of Puget Sound, Olympia is the capital of Washington and a pleasant little city, though aside from the state capitol building and a few parks, it has little of interest to attract visitors. The city clings to the shores of Budd Inlet's

twin bays and is further divided by Capitol Lake, above which, on a high bluff, stands the capitol building. Olympia boasts a fairly lively downtown and an attractive waterfront, but, despite the political importance of being the state capital, still has the air of a small town. The downtown is compact and low-rise, and when the legislature isn't in session, the city can be downright ghostly. Keeping things alive, however, are the students of Evergreen State College, a very progressive liberal arts college.

The Olympia area has a long history, and near here, in what is now the city of Tumwater, the first pioneers settled in 1844. A historic district and historical park along the Deschutes River in Tumwater preserve a bit of this history.

Essentials

GETTING THERE Olympia is on I-5 at the junction with U.S. 101, which leads north around the Olympic Peninsula. Connecting the city to the central Washington coast and Aberdeen/Hoquiam is U.S. 12/Wash. 8.

The nearest airport with scheduled service is Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, 54 miles north. **Capital Aeroporter** (☎ 800/962-3579 or 360/754-7113; www.capair.com) provides a shuttle between the airport and Olympia.

There is **Amtrak** (☎ 800/872-7245; www.amtrak.com) rail service to Olympia; the station is at 6600 Yelm Hwy. SE, Lacey.

VISITOR INFORMATION Contact the **Olympia-Lacey-Tumwater Visitor & Convention Bureau**, 103 Sid Snyder Ave. SW (P.O. Box 7338), Olympia, WA 98507 (☎ 877/704-7500 or 360/704-7544; www.visitolympia.com).

GETTING AROUND Public bus service is operated by **Intercity Transit** (☎ 360/786-1881; www.intercitytransit.com), with free downtown shuttle buses.

The Capitol Campus

At 14th Avenue and Capitol Way, the neoclassical **Washington State Capitol building**, constructed between 1911 and 1928, is set amid a large and attractively landscaped campus known for its flowering cherry trees and rose gardens. At 287 feet tall, this is the fourth-tallest masonry dome in the world and bears a surprising resemblance to the Capitol in that other Washington. Around its campus, you'll see sculptures and the Tivoli fountain. The capitol is open daily with tours offered hourly between 10am and 3pm Monday through Friday and between 11am and 3pm on Saturday and Sunday. For more information on tours of the grounds, contact the **State Capitol Visitor Center** (☎ 360/586-3460; www.ga.wa.gov/visitor).

Other Area Attractions

In downtown Olympia, you'll find the **Olympia Farmers Market**, 700 Capitol Way N. (☎ 360/352-9096; www.olympiafarmersmarket.com), on the waterfront adjacent to Percival Landing Park. This is the second-largest open-air produce market in the state; it also has numerous prepared-food vendors and live music on the weekends. Between April and October, it's open Thursday through Sunday from 10am to 3pm; from November to December, it's open Saturday and Sunday only. The market is closed January through March.

If you'd like to learn more about the area's history, especially that of the Native Americans who have called this region home for thousands of years, stop by the



Land of the Giant Gophers?

Some 13 miles south of Olympia, near the town of Littlerock, you'll find the **Mima Mounds Natural Area Preserve**, which is an area of hundreds of small hills, each around 7 feet high. No one is sure how the mounds were formed, but their curious topography has produced

much speculation over the years. The preserve is open daily, and in spring the wildflower displays here are quite impressive. To reach the preserve, take the Littlerock exit off I-5 and drive west on Wash. 121 to Waddell Creek Road. Turn right and continue 1½ miles.

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SOUTH PUGET SOUND & WEST SOUND

Olympia

small **State Capital Museum & Outreach Center**, 211 SW 21st Ave. (☎ 360/753-2580; www.wshs.org/scmoc). However, the building itself, an Italian Renaissance mansion built in the 1920s for a former mayor of Olympia, is the most interesting part of a visit here. The museum is open Saturday from 10am to 4pm. Admission is \$2 for adults, \$1.75 for seniors, and \$1 for children ages 6 to 17; it's free for children 5 and under.

PRESERVES, PARKS & GARDENS

Lying at the edge of downtown Olympia, **Capitol Lake** and its surrounding parkland are favorites of area joggers, canoeists, and anglers. There is an excellent view of the Capitol from the west side of the lake. Also in downtown is the 1½-mile-long **Percival Landing** boardwalk, which wanders along the shore of Budd Inlet past marinas, restaurants, public art, and interpretive panels. Between these two parks, you'll find Heritage Park and the Heritage Park Fountain, which has 47 choreographed water jets that are fun to watch. In summer, the fountain is a popular spot with local children who run through the fountains.

On the north side of Olympia, along the East Bay of Budd Inlet, are formal gardens, several miles of hiking trails, nice water-views, and a beach at **Priest Point Park**, on East Bay Drive. The 3-mile round-trip Ellis Cove Trail provides beach access.

TWO NEARBY WILDLIFE ATTRACTIONS

Northwest Trek Wildlife Park ★ 😊 The animals of North America are the focus of Northwest Trek, a wildlife park covering more than 715 acres near the town of Eatonville. Bison roam, elk bugle, and moose munch contentedly knee-deep in the park's lake. Visitors are driven around the grounds in a naturalist-guided tram, and at certain spots, you can get out and walk to various enclosures. Residents include bears, wolves, cougars, lynx, and bobcats. There are also 5 miles of nature trails to wander after viewing the animals.

11610 Trek Dr. E., Eatonville. ☎ 360/832-6117. www.nwtrek.org. Admission \$16 adults, \$15 seniors, \$11 children 5-12, \$8 children 3-4. July-Aug daily 9:30am-6pm; call for hours and days in other months. Closed Thanksgiving and Christmas. To reach the park, take Wash. 510 southeast from I-5 (exit 111) to Yelm and continue west on Wash. 702.

Wolf Haven International ★ 😊 Dedicated to the preservation of wolves and the education of the general public on the subject, Wolf Haven has been a sanctuary for more than 100 wolves since it opened in 1982. During tours of the facility, you'll get to meet many of these canines, including a small pack that allows visitors to

observe wolf-pack behavior in action. Each year in August, there are Saturday night Howl-Ins that are particularly popular with families, featuring tours, storytelling, children's activities, and more. Advance reservations are required for Howl-Ins, which cost \$17 for adults, \$14 for seniors, and \$10 for children ages 3 to 12.

3111 Offutt Lake Rd. SE, Tenino. ☎ **800/448-9653** or 360/264-4639. www.wolfhaven.org. Admission \$9 adults, \$8 seniors, \$7 children 3-12, free for children 2 and under. Apr-Sept Mon and Wed-Sat 10am-3pm, Sun noon-3pm; Mar and Oct-Jan Sat 10am-3pm, Sun noon-3pm. Closed Feb.

Where to Stay

Great Wolf Lodge ★ 😊 While the name might lead you to believe this is a rugged mountain lodge, it's actually a family-oriented water park that lets you sleep over. Great Wolf Lodge, 15 miles south of Olympia in Grand Mound, is totally about kids, and there are endless options for keeping the young ones entertained. First, of course, there's the huge indoor water park that's open all year. Then there are the video-game arcade, the children's activities club, the kid-focused shops, and the rooms that are designed to impress the little ones. They can sleep in a cave, a cabin, or a tent, all of which are little rooms within larger suites, and all with bunk beds and TVs for playing video games in bed. While it can feel a bit like overnighting at a shopping mall, if I were 10, I would never want to leave.

20500 Old Hwy. 99 SW, Grand Mound, WA 98531. ☎ **800/640-9653** or 360/273-7718. Fax 360/273-8406. www.greatwolf.com/grandmound/waterpark. 398 units. \$200-\$630 suite. Rates include water-park admission. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants; lounge; children's programs; concierge; exercise room; spa; indoor water park w/waterslides, pools, and hot tubs. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

Phoenix Inn Suites 🍷 Within 2 blocks of the water, the Percival Landing boardwalk, several restaurants, and the Olympia Farmers Market, this downtown hotel is a great choice for vacationers who like to leave their cars parked. Although the hotel is geared toward business travelers, the great location, large guest rooms, and many amenities make this an especially good value. While the rooms are more junior suites than the sort of two-room suites you might find at an Embassy Suites hotel, they are quite large and well designed.

415 Capitol Way N., Olympia, WA 98501. ☎ **877/570-0555** or 360/570-0555. Fax 360/570-1200. www.phoenixinnsuites.com. 102 units. \$109-\$209 double. Rates include continental breakfast. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Exercise room; Jacuzzi; indoor pool; room service. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

Where to Dine

If you're interested in trying some local microbrews, drop by the **Fish Tale Brew-Pub**, 515 Jefferson St. SE (☎ **360/943-3650**; www.fishbrewing.com), which is very popular as an after-work gathering spot.

Budd Bay Cafe ★ SEAFOOD In downtown Olympia, the Budd Bay Cafe is the city's favorite waterfront restaurant, and its lavish Sunday seafood brunch is always popular. The views from both the dining room and large deck take in the waters of Budd Bay as well as the state capitol. Just outside, the Percival Landing Waterfront Park boardwalk stretches for 1½ miles, ideal for that postprandial promenade. The menu has such standards as seafood fettuccine, cedar-plank salmon, and pan-fried

oysters, as well as good steaks. For a great deal, come for the \$16 sunset dinner, which is served between 4 and 6pm Sunday through Thursday.

Percival Landing, 525 Columbia St. NW. ☎ **360/357-6963**. www.buddbaycafe.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$9-\$17 lunch, \$13-\$32 dinner. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon-Sat 6:30am-9:30pm; Sun 9:30am-9:30pm.

McMenamins Spar Café AMERICAN In business since 1935, this downtown diner is a Northwest classic and is part of the Portland-based McMenamins brew-pub empire. On the walls are old black-and-white photos of period logging activities (the café's name refers to the spar trees used for rigging cables and pulleys) and numerous colorful murals added when the spar became a McMenamins establishment. Breakfasts are some of the best in town (try the Fourth Avenue Mess). If it's genuine Olympia atmosphere you're looking for, this is the place.

114 Fourth Ave. E. ☎ **360/357-6444**. www.mcmenamins.com. Main courses \$6-\$17. AE, DISC, MC, V. Sun-Thurs 7am-midnight; Fri-Sat 7am-1am.

THE OLYMPIC PENINSULA

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There is something strangely captivating about the Olympic Peninsula. Perhaps it is the rugged, glacier-carved summits and wildflower meadows of the Olympic Mountains, or maybe it's the wild, wind-swept wilderness coastline, or, then again, it might be the mossy rainforest valleys. Whatever it is that so captures the imagination, this rugged and remote peninsula in the northwest corner of Washington exerts a powerful force on travelers from around the world and is one of Washington's most popular destinations.

The Olympic Peninsula hasn't always been the natural attraction it is today. For longer than almost any other region of the contiguous United States, it was an impenetrable and unexplored wilderness. In 1897, however, much of the peninsula was designated a national forest preserve that, in 1909, became a national monument. Then, in 1938, the heart of the peninsula—the jagged, snowcapped Olympic Mountains—became Olympic National Park. The region was originally preserved in order to protect the area's rapidly dwindling herds of Roosevelt elk, which are named for President Theodore Roosevelt (who was responsible for the area being designated a national monument). At the time, the elk herds were being decimated by commercial hunters.

Today, however, Olympic National Park, which is roughly the size of Rhode Island (the smallest of the states), is far more than an elk reserve. It is recognized as one of the world's most important wild ecosystems. The park is unique in the contiguous United States for its temperate rainforests, which are found in the west-facing valleys of the Hoh, Queets, Bogachiel, Clearwater, and Quinault rivers. In these valleys, rainfall can exceed 150 inches per year, trees (Sitka spruce, western red cedar, Douglas fir, and western hemlock) can grow more than 300 feet tall, and mosses enshroud the limbs of big-leaf maples.

Within a few short miles of the park's rainforests, the Olympic Mountains rise up to an alpine zone where no trees grow at all, and above these alpine meadows rises the 7,965-foot glacier-clad summit of Mount Olympus. The heavy rain that falls in the valleys becomes snow at higher

elevations, and is responsible for the numerous glaciers in the Olympic Mountains. It is these glaciers that have carved the jagged peaks that mesmerize visitors and beckon hikers and climbers. Rugged and spectacular sections of the coast have also been preserved as part of the national park, and the offshore waters are designated as the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary.

With fewer than a dozen roads, none of which leads more than a few miles into the park, Olympic National Park is, for the most part, inaccessible to the casual visitor. Only two roads penetrate the high country, and only one of these is paved. Likewise, only two paved roads lead into the park's famed rainforests. Although a long stretch of beach within the national park is paralleled by U.S. 101, the park's most spectacular beaches can be reached only on foot.

While the park is inaccessible to cars, it is a wonderland for hikers and backpackers. Its rugged beaches, rainforest valleys, alpine meadows, and mountaintop glaciers offer an amazing variety of hiking and backpacking opportunities. For alpine hikes, there are the trails at Hurricane Ridge and Deer Park. To experience the rainforest in all its drippy glory, there are the trails of the Bogachiel, Hoh, Queets, and Quinault valleys. Of these rainforest trails, the Hoh Valley has the more accessible (and consequently more popular) trails, including the trail that leads backpackers on the multi-day hike to the summit of Mount Olympus. Favorite hikes include the stretch of coast between La Push and Oil City and from Rialto Beach north to Lake Ozette and on to Shi Shi Beach.

The restored Victorian seaport of Port Townsend in the northeast corner of the peninsula offers a striking contrast to the wildness of Olympic National Park. A restored historic commercial district on the waterfront is packed with interesting shops and good restaurants, while on the bluff above, the streets are lined with stately Victorian homes (several of which are bed-and-breakfast inns). Together, the town's two historic neighborhoods have made Port Townsend one of the state's favorite weekend getaways.

The rural community of Sequim (pronounced *Skwim*) has also developed quite a regional reputation, although for a very different reason. The Sequim area lies in the rain shadow of the Olympic Mountains and receives fewer than 20 inches of rain per year (less than half the average of Seattle). Sure, the skies here are still cloudy much of the year, but anyone who has lived very long in the Northwest begins to dream of someplace where it doesn't rain quite so much. In Sequim, these dreamers are building retirement homes as fast as they can. The dry climate has also proven to be an ideal environment for growing lavender, and fields of purple blossoms now paint the landscape all over the Sequim area.

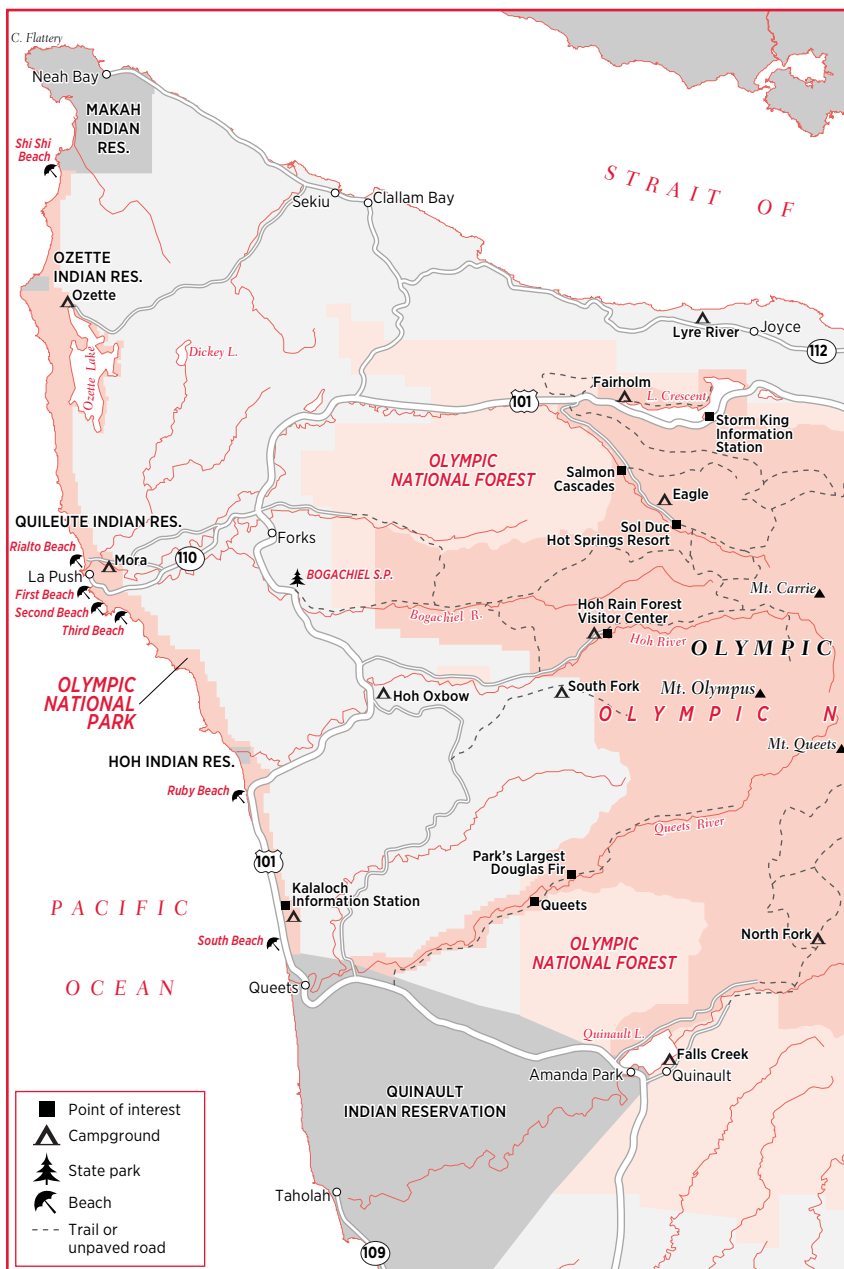
Long before the first European settlers arrived, various Native American tribes called the Olympic Peninsula home. The Makah, Quinault, Hoh, Elwha, and Skokomish tribes all inhabited different regions of the peninsula, but all stayed close to the coast, where they could harvest mollusks, fish, and whales. Today, there are numerous Indian reservations, both large and small, on the peninsula. On the Jamestown S'Klallam Reservation, you'll find a casino, and on the Makah Reservation, a museum of culture and history.

While at first it might sound as though the entire peninsula is a pristine wilderness, that just isn't the case. When the first white settlers arrived, they took one look at the 300-foot-tall trees that grew on the Olympic Peninsula and started sharpening

The Olympic Peninsula

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THE OLYMPIC PENINSULA





their axes. The supply of trees seemed endless, but by the 1980s the end was in sight for the trees that had not been preserved within Olympic National Park. Today, U.S. 101, which loops around the east, north, and west side of the peninsula is lined with clear-cuts and second- and third-growth forests for much of its length, a fact that takes many first-time visitors by surprise.

PORT TOWNSEND: A RESTORED VICTORIAN SEAPORT

60 miles NW of Seattle, 48 miles E of Port Angeles, 40 miles S of Anacortes

Named by English explorer Capt. George Vancouver in 1792, Port Townsend did not attract its first settlers until 1851. However, by the 1880s the town had become an important shipping port and was expected to grow into one of the most important cities on the West Coast. Port Townsend felt that it was the logical end of the line for the transcontinental railroad that was pushing westward in the 1880s, and based on the certainty of a railroad connection, real estate speculation and development boomed. Merchants and investors erected mercantile palaces along Water Street and elaborate Victorian homes on the bluff above the wharf district. However, the railroad never arrived. Tacoma got the rails, and Port Townsend got the shaft.

With its importance as a shipping port usurped, Port Townsend slipped into quiet obscurity. Progress passed it by, and its elegant homes and commercial buildings were left to slowly fade away. However, in 1976 the waterfront district and bluff-top residential neighborhood were declared a National Historic District and the town began a slow revival. Today the streets of Port Townsend are once again crowded with people. The waterfront district is filled with boutiques, galleries, and other interesting shops, and several of the Victorian homes atop the bluff have become bed-and-breakfast inns.

Essentials

GETTING THERE Port Townsend is on Wash. 20, off U.S. 101 in the northeast corner of the Olympic Peninsula. The Hood Canal Bridge, which connects the Kitsap Peninsula with the Olympic Peninsula and is on the route from Seattle to Port Townsend, sometimes closes due to high winds; if you want to be certain that it's open, call ☎ 511.

Washington State Ferries (☎ 800/843-3779 or 888/808-7977 within Washington, or 206/464-6400; www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries) operates a ferry between Port Townsend and Keystone (on Whidbey Island). The crossing takes 30 minutes and costs \$9.15 to \$11 for a vehicle and driver, \$2.65 per passenger (discounted fares for seniors and youths).

From mid-March to mid-October, passenger-boat service between Port Townsend and Friday Harbor (in the San Juan Islands) is offered by **P.S. Express** (☎ 360/385-5288; www.pugetsoundexpress.com), which will also carry bicycles and sea kayaks. One-way fares are \$50 to \$53 for adults and \$35 to \$43 for children; round-trip fares are \$69 to \$79 for adults and \$49 to \$54 for children.

VISITOR INFORMATION Contact the **Port Townsend Chamber of Commerce Visitor Information Center**, 440 12th St., Port Townsend, WA 98368 (☎ 888/365-6978 or 360/385-2722; www.ptguide.com).

GETTING AROUND Because parking spaces in downtown Port Townsend are hard to come by on weekends and anytime in summer, **Jefferson Transit** (☎ 800/371-0497 or 360/385-4777; www.jeffersontransit.com), the local public bus service, operates a shuttle into downtown Port Townsend from a park-and-ride lot on the south side of town. Jefferson Transit also operates other buses around Port Townsend. The fare is \$1.50.

FESTIVALS As a tourist town, Port Townsend schedules quite a few festivals throughout the year. The end of July brings the **Centrum's Jazz Port Townsend** (☎ 360/385-3102; www.centrum.org). The **Wooden Boat Festival** (☎ 360/385-3628; www.woodenboat.org), the largest of its kind in the United States, is on the first weekend after Labor Day. To see inside some of the town's many restored homes, schedule a visit during the **Homes Tour** (☎ 888/365-6978 or 360/385-2722; www.ptguide.com/history-a-attractions/historic-homes/homes-tour), on the third weekend in September. During the **Kinetic Sculpture Race** (www.ptkineticrace.org), held the first weekend in October, outrageous human-powered vehicles race on land, on water, and through a mud bog. In September, there's the **Port Townsend Film Festival** (☎ 360/379-1333; www.ptfilmfest.com).

Exploring the Town

With its abundance of restored Victorian homes and commercial buildings, Port Townsend's most popular activity is simply walking or driving through the historic districts. The town is divided into the waterfront commercial district and the residential uptown area. This latter neighborhood is atop a bluff that rises precipitously only 2 blocks from the water. Uptown Port Townsend developed in part so that proper Victorian ladies would not have to associate with the riffraff that frequented the waterfront. At the Port Townsend Visitor Information Center, you can pick up a guide that lists the town's many historic homes and commercial buildings.

Water Street is the town's main commercial district. It is lined for several blocks with restored 100-year-old brick buildings, many of which have ornate facades. Within these buildings are dozens of interesting shops and boutiques, several restaurants, and a handful of hotels and inns. To learn a little more about the history of this part of town and to gain a different perspective, walk out on **Union Wharf**, at the foot of Taylor Street. Here you'll find interpretive plaques covering topics ranging from sea grass to waterfront history. At the north end of the waterfront, you'll find Point Hudson Marina, which has a great view across the sound to Mount Baker and the North Cascades. Here at the marina, you can look around the **Northwest Maritime Center**, 431 Water St. (☎ 360/385-3628; www.nwmaritime.org), a facility dedicated to wooden boats and preserving Port Townsend's maritime history.

Make one of your first stops in town the **Jefferson County Historical Society Museum**, 540 Water St. (☎ 360/385-1003; www.jchsmuseum.org), where you can learn about the history of the area. Among the collections here are regional Native American artifacts and antiques from the Victorian era. The museum is open daily from 11am to 4pm. Admission is \$4 for adults and \$1 for children ages 3 to 12. June

through September, the museum sponsors guided history walks on Saturday and Sunday at 2pm. These tours cost \$10 for adults and \$5 for children ages 3 to 12.

The town's noted Victorian homes are in uptown Port Townsend, atop the bluff that rises behind the waterfront's commercial buildings. This is where you find stately homes, views, and the city's favorite park. To reach the uptown area, either drive up Washington Street (1 block over from Water St.) or walk up the stairs at the end of Taylor Street, which start behind the Haller Fountain.

At the top of the stairs, you'll see both an 1890 bell tower, which once summoned volunteer firemen, and the **Rothschild House**, at Taylor and Franklin streets (☎ 360/385-1003; www.jchsmuseum.org). Built in 1868, this Greek Revival house is one of the oldest buildings in town and displays a sober architecture compared to other area homes. The gardens contain a wide variety of roses, peonies, and lilacs. It's open May through September daily from 11am to 4pm. Admission is \$4 for adults and \$1 for children 3 to 12.

Also here in the uptown neighborhood, at the corner of Garfield and Jackson streets, is **Chetzemoka Park**, established in 1904 and named for a local S'Klallam Indian chief. The park is perched on a bluff overlooking Admiralty Inlet and has access to a pleasant little beach. However, most visitors head straight for the rose garden, arbor, and waterfall garden.

Shopping is just about the most popular activity in Port Townsend's old town, and of the many stores in the historic district, several stand out. **Earthenworks Gallery**, 702 Water St. (☎ 360/385-0328; www.earthenworksgallery.com), showcases colorful ceramics, glass, jewelry, and other American-made crafts. **Ancestral Spirits Gallery**, 701 Water St. (☎ 360/385-0078; www.ancestralspirits.com), is a large space with a great selection of Northwest Native American prints, masks, and carvings.

Fort Worden State Park

Fort Worden State Park (☎ 360/344-4400; www.parks.wa.gov), once a military installation that guarded the mouth of Puget Sound, is north of the historic district and can be reached by turning onto Kearney Street at the south end of town, or onto Monroe Street at the north end of town, and following the signs. Built at the turn of the 20th century, the fort is now a 360-acre state park where a wide array of attractions and activities ensure that it's busy for much of the year. Many of the fort's old wooden buildings have been restored and put to new use.

At the **Commanding Officer's Quarters** (☎ 360/385-1003; www.jchsmuseum.org/coq.html), you can see what life was like for a Victorian-era officer and his family. The home has been fully restored and is filled with period antiques. May through September, it's open daily from 11am to 5pm (closed other months). Admission is \$4 for adults and \$1 for children 3 to 12. Within the park, you'll also find the **Coast Artillery Museum** (☎ 360/385-0373), which is open daily from 11am to 4pm. Admission is \$3 for adults and \$1 for children ages 6 to 12.

Here at the park you can also learn about life below the waters of Puget Sound at the **Port Townsend Marine Science Center**, 532 Battery Way (☎ 800/566-3932 or 360/385-5582; www.ptmsc.org). The center has great tidepool touch tanks filled with crabs, starfish, anemones, and other marine life. A fascinating exhibit on the area's terrestrial natural history includes fossils from around the peninsula. Don't

miss the exhibit on the glaciers that once covered this region. Mid-June through Labor Day, the center is open Wednesday through Monday from 11am to 5pm; fall through spring hours are Friday through Sunday from noon to 4pm. Between November and March, only the natural history exhibit is open, and in January, the center is closed. Admission is \$5 for adults and \$3 for youths 6 to 17.

For many people, however, the main reason to visit the park is to hang out on the beach or at one of the picnic areas. Scuba divers also frequent Fort Worden, which has an underwater park just offshore. In spring the Rhododendron Garden puts on a colorful floral display. Throughout the year there is a wide variety of concerts and other performances at the **Centrum** (☎ 360/385-3102; www.centrum.org). Also on the premises are campgrounds, a restaurant, and restored officers' quarters that can be rented as vacation homes.

Port Townsend from the Water

If you'd like to explore this area from the water, you've got several options. Three-hour sailboat tours (\$75) are offered by **Brisa Charters** (☎ 877/412-7472 or 360/385-2309; www.olympus.net/brisa_charters). Several times a year, the **Port Townsend Marine Science Center** (☎ 800/566-3932 or 360/385-5582; www.ptmsc.org) operates boat tours (\$55) to nearby Protection Island, a wildlife refuge that is home to puffins, rhinoceros auklets, and other nesting seabirds. One trip a year is done on a 101-foot historic schooner (\$80).

From mid-March to mid-October, whale-watching cruises (\$69–\$79 for adults, \$49–\$54 for children 2–10) through the San Juan Islands are offered by **P.S. Express**, Point Hudson Marina, 227 Jackson St. (☎ 360/385-5288; www.pugetsoundexpress.com), which also operates passenger-ferry service to Friday Harbor.

You can rent sea kayaks in downtown Port Townsend from **PT Outdoors**, 1017-B Water St. (☎ 360/379-3608; www.ptoutdoors.com), which charges between \$20 and \$40 for a 1-hour rental. This company also offers guided kayak tours (\$60–\$150). At the nearby **Port Ludlow Marina** (☎ 877/344-6725; www.portludlowresort.com), south of Port Townsend, you can rent sea kayaks (\$15–\$20/hour) and motorboats (\$35/hour).

Other Area Activities

While you're visiting the area, you might want to check out some of Port Townsend's wineries and cideries, both south of town. **Sorensen Cellars**, 274 S. Otto St. (☎ 360/379-6416; www.sorensencellars.com), is open March through May and September through November, Friday through Sunday from noon to 5pm; June through August, it's open daily noon to 5pm. To find this winery, turn east off Wash. 20 onto Frederick Street and then south on Otto Street.

Fair Winds Winery, 1984 Hastings Ave. W. (☎ 360/385-6899; www.fairwindswinery.com), is one of the only wineries in the state producing Aligote, a French-style white wine. Memorial Day to Labor Day the winery is open daily from noon to 5pm; other months it's open Friday to Monday from noon to 5pm. To get here, drive south from Port Townsend on Wash. 20, turn west on Jacob Miller Road, and continue 2 miles to Hastings Avenue.

Cideries open on a regular basis include **Finnriver Farm**, Country Meadow Lane, Chimacum (☎ 360/732-4337; www.finnriver.com), which currently makes

two types of dry hard cider but has plans for making apple wine as well. To find Finnriver, drive south from Port Townsend to Chimacum and continue south 2¾ miles on Center Road. May to October, they're open Thursday to Monday from 1 to 5pm, and November through April, they're open Friday to Sunday from 2 to 5pm. A few miles away you can sample semi-sweet and sweet hard ciders at **Eaglemount Wine & Cider**, 2350 Eaglemount Rd. (☎ 360/732-4084; www.eaglemountwinery.com). To reach this cidery, drive south from Chimacum on Center Road and turn right on Eaglemount Road. Eaglemount is open Friday to Sunday from noon to 6pm.

Where to Stay

8 IN PORT TOWNSEND

Ann Starrett Mansion Boutique Hotel ★ Built in 1889 for \$6,000 as a wedding present for Ann Starrett, this Victorian jewel box is by far the most elegant and ornate historic hotel in Port Townsend (or the entire state, for that matter). The rose-and-teal-green mansion is a museum of the Victorian era: A three-story turret towers over the front door, and every room is exquisitely furnished with period antiques. Note that although this hotel seems as though it would be a bed-and-breakfast inn, it does not serve breakfast. However, you'll find plenty of good breakfast places in the area.

744 Clay St., Port Townsend, WA 98368. ☎ 800/321-0644. www.starrettmansion.com. 11 units. \$100–\$225 double. AE, MC, V. *In room:* No phone.

The Clam Cannery Hotel ★★ Housed within this brick clam cannery from 1885 are the most luxurious and upscale nightly rentals in Port Townsend. All four suites are on the second floor of this unusual old industrial building, and there is little besides the beautiful doors of the building to suggest that there might be luxurious guest suites inside. Within these spacious accommodations, you'll find kitchen cabinets made with wood salvaged from the old cannery, and even the cement countertops incorporate pieces of clam shells left over from when the cannery was active. To top it all off, the hotel is built on a pier over the water, so you just can't get much closer to the waterfront than this.

111 Quincy St., Port Townsend, WA 98368. ☎ 206/718-5401. Fax 206/547-2708. www.clamcannery.com. 4 units. \$295–\$425 suite. DISC, MC, V. Pets accepted (free). **Amenities:** Spa services. *In room:* A/C, TV, kitchen, free Wi-Fi.

F. W. Hastings House/Old Consulate Inn ★★ The Old Consulate Inn is another example of the Victorian excess so wonderfully appealing today. The attention to detail and quality craftsmanship, both in the construction and the restoration of this elegant mansion, are evident wherever you look. Despite its heritage, however, the Old Consulate avoids being a museum; it's a comfortable yet elegant place to stay. If you're here for a special occasion, consider splurging on one of the turret rooms. Of the other units, my favorite is the Parkside. For entertainment, you'll find a grand piano, a billiards table, and a VCR, as well as stunning views out most of the windows. A multi-course breakfast is meant to be lingered over, so don't make any early morning appointments. Afternoon tea and home-baked treats are served when you arrive.

313 Walker St., Port Townsend, WA 98368. ☎ 800/300-6753 or 360/385-6753. Fax 360/385-2097. www.oldconsulateinn.com. 8 units. June–Oct \$110–\$210 double; Nov–May \$99–\$189 double. Rates include full breakfast. MC, V. Children 11 and over welcome. **Amenities:** Free Wi-Fi. *In room:* Hair dryer, no phone.

Manresa Castle ★  Built in 1892 by the first mayor of Port Townsend, this reproduction of a medieval castle later became a Jesuit retreat and school. Today traditional elegance pervades Manresa Castle, and of all the hotels and B&Bs in Port Townsend, this place offers the most historic elegance for the money. The guest rooms have a genuine vintage appeal that manages to avoid the contrived feeling that so often sneaks into the room decor of B&Bs. The tower suite is my favorite room in the hotel and is worth a splurge. In this huge room, you get sweeping views from a circular seating area. An elegant lounge and dining room further add to the Grand Hotel feel of this unusual accommodation. Oh, and by the way, the hotel is haunted.

Seventh and Sheridan sts. (P.O. Box 564), Port Townsend, WA 98368.  **800/732-1281** or 360/385-5750. www.manresacastle.com. 40 units. \$109–\$119 double; \$169–\$229 suite. Rates include continental breakfast. DISC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge. *In room:* TV, free Wi-Fi.

Palace Hotel In the heart of the historic district, the Palace Hotel occupies a building that once served as a bordello, and today, Madame Marie's suite—a big corner room with a kitchenette—is the best room in the house. Most of the other rooms are named for former working girls. Miss Kitty's room is as nice as the Madame's and includes a cast-iron woodstove and the best views at the Palace. The Crow's Nest room is another interesting space, with a sleeping loft, nautical theme, and woodstove. **Note:** The hotel is up a steep flight of stairs from the street, and some rooms are up on the third floor. The bathroom shared by two rooms has a big claw-foot tub, so you won't do badly if you take one of them.

1004 Water St., Port Townsend, WA 98368.  **800/962-0741** or 360/385-0773. Fax 360/385-0780. www.palacehotelpt.com. 19 units, 2 with shared bathroom. \$59–\$69 double with shared bathroom; \$99–\$189 double or suite with private bathroom. Children 12 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DISC, MC, V. Pets accepted (\$10/day). *In room:* TV, fridge.

IN PORT LUDLOW

The Resort at Port Ludlow ★★ Set on a tiny peninsula jutting into Ludlow Bay, this luxurious inn is one of the finest in the Northwest. The setting rivals anything in the San Juan Islands, and the inn itself conjures up the image of a New England summer home at the shore. Designed for romantic getaways, the guest rooms are spacious and plush, with whirlpool tubs, fireplaces, and down-filled duvets on the beds. Rooms have views of the water, the Olympic Mountains, or the marina. Additional amenities include paved walking paths through the adjacent resort and a croquet lawn.

1 Heron Rd., Port Ludlow, WA 98365.  **800/732-1239** or 360/437-7000. Fax 360/437-7410. www.portludlowresort.com. 37 units. \$99–\$219 double; \$249–\$299 suite; \$299–\$399 condo. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, MC, V. Pets accepted (\$35 fee). **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; lounge; bikes; exercise room; 2 18-hole golf courses; tennis court; watersports equipment/boat rentals. *In room:* TV/VCR, hair dryer, minibar, free Wi-Fi.

Where to Dine

IN PORT TOWNSEND

When I need coffee, I like to head to **Better Living Through Coffee**, 100 Tyler St. ( **360/385-3388**; www.bltcoffee.com), which is right on the water and serves organic coffee with non-homogenized milk. Alternatively, on cold, dark days, the wine cellar–like underground vaults of **Undertown**, 211 Taylor St. ( **360/385-1410**; www.theundertown.com), are hard to beat for old Port Townsend

atmosphere. If you're a tea drinker, check out **Wild Sage**, 924 Washington St. (☎ 360/379-1222; www.wildsageteas.com). One place on nearly everyone's itinerary is **Elevated Ice Cream**, 627 Water St. (☎ 360/385-1156; www.elevatedicecream.com), which scoops up the best ice cream in town. For pastries, head to uptown Port Townsend and **Sweet Laurette's Café and Bistro**, 1029 Lawrence St. (☎ 360/385-4886; <http://sweetlaurette.com>), which has a patisserie that makes the best pastries in Port Townsend.

If you're heading out to Fort Worden State Park for a picnic, you can pick up supplies at **Aldrich's Market**, 940 Lawrence St. (☎ 360/385-0500; www.aldrichs.com), a wonderful little upscale market in the uptown neighborhood. Across the street from Aldrich's, you can stock up on artisan bread at **Pane d'Amore**, 617 Tyler St. (☎ 360/385-1199; www.panedamore.com), and south of downtown, at **Mt. Townsend Creamery**, 338 Sherman St. (☎ 360/379-0895; www.mttownsendcreamery.com), which is just off West Sims Way (Wash. 20), you can pick up some local cheese to put on your bread. Also south of downtown, you can stop by the **Port Townsend Food Co-Op**, 414 Kearney St. (☎ 360/385-2883; www.foodcoop.coop), which is at the turn-off for Fort Worden. If you happen to be in town on a Saturday between May and mid-December, be sure to stop by the **Port Townsend Farmers Market** (☎ 360/379-9098; www.ptfarmersmarket.org), held on the corner of Lawrence and Tyler streets. The market is open from 9am to 2pm. June through September, at the corner of Polk and Lawrence streets, there is also a Wednesday farmers market from 3 to 6pm.

Fountain Cafe ★🎁 INTERNATIONAL Housed in a narrow clapboard building, this funky little place has long been a favorite of Port Townsend locals and counterculture types on a tight budget. Eclectic furnishings decorate the room, which has a few stools at the counter. The menu changes seasonally, but you can rest assured that the simple fare will be utterly fresh and that the offerings will include plenty of shellfish and pasta. The Greek pasta is a mainstay that's hard to beat, and the clam chowder is excellent. The wide range of flavors here assures that everyone will find something to his or her liking.

920 Washington St. ☎ 360/385-1364. Reservations accepted only for parties of 5 or more. Main courses \$10-\$14 lunch, \$15-\$28 dinner. MC, V. Daily 11:30am-3pm and 5-9pm (Fri-Sat until 9:30pm).

Silverwater Cafe ★🍷 NORTHWEST Works by local artists, lots of plants, and New Age music on the stereo set the tone for this casual restaurant. Though the menu focuses on Northwest dishes, it includes preparations from around the world. You can start your meal with an artichoke-and-Parmesan pâté and then move on to ahi tuna with lavender pepper, prawns with cilantro-ginger-lime butter, or smoked chicken with brandy and apples. If you're a vegetarian, you'll find several options.

237 Taylor St. ☎ 360/385-6448. www.silverwatercafe.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$8-\$13 lunch, \$13-\$25 dinner. AE, DISC, MC, V. Mon-Thurs 11:30am-2:30pm and 5-8:30pm; Fri-Sat 11:30am-9:30pm; Sun 11:30am-8:30pm. Bar stays open later.

T's Restaurant ★★ ITALIAN In the Point Hudson Marina at the north end of downtown Port Townsend, this romantic, low-key place has long been my favorite restaurant in town. The menu usually features plenty of daily specials; local oysters, mussels, and clams show up frequently and are hard to resist. I always start with the creamy oyster stew, which is made with pancetta and fennel. You'll find a wide variety

of interesting pasta dishes from which to choose, but the rigatoni Gorgonzola is my favorite.

141 Hudson St. (C) 360/385-0700. www.ts-restaurant.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$10–\$19 lunch, \$12–\$29 dinner. AE, MC, V. Wed–Mon 11am–3pm and 4–9pm.

IN PORT HADLOCK

The Ajax Cafe ★★ (C) INTERNATIONAL With no two matching glasses and no two chairs the same, this long-time local favorite is as eclectic a place as you'll find—and a lot of fun, too. On the waterfront in Port Hadlock in an old wooden storefront, the restaurant is out of the way and funky, and that's exactly why it's so popular. Silly hats hang from the ceiling, the restroom walls are hung with loud ties, and patrons are encouraged to don silly garb while dining. To top it off, there's live music on weekends. The menu runs the gamut from local oysters on the half shell to ribs spiked with Jack Daniel's whiskey. However, the locals rave about the steaks. If you like good times and good food, this is a "don't miss." The perpetual party atmosphere makes this a great place for a celebration.

21 N. Water St., Port Hadlock. (C) 360/385-3450. www.ajaxcafe.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$16–\$26. MC, V. Tues–Sun 5–9pm. Closed Jan.

Port Townsend After Dark

If you're looking for someplace interesting to have a drink at the end of the day, check out **Water Street Brewing**, 639 Water St. (C) 360/379-6438; www.waterstreetbrewing.com), right in downtown Port Townsend. There's also the **Port Townsend Brewing Company**, 330 Tenth St. (C) 360/385-9967; www.porttownsendbrewing.com), which has a tasting room and beer garden south of downtown in the Port Townsend Boat Haven marina. For good beer and pub food, check out **The Public House**, 1038 Water St. (C) 360/385-9708; www.thepublichouse.com), which has the feel of a 19th-century tavern.

SEQUIM & DUNGENESS VALLEY

17 miles E of Port Angeles, 31 miles W of Port Townsend

In the rain shadow of the Olympic Mountains, Sequim (remember, it's pronounced *Skwim*) is the driest region of the state west of the Cascade range and sodden, moss-laden Northwesterners have taken to retiring here in droves. While the rains descend on the rest of the region, the fortunate few who call Sequim home bask in their own personal microclimate of sunshine and warmth.

The lack of rainfall and temperate climate also make this an almost perfect place to grow lavender plants, and today, parts of Sequim take on the look of Provence each summer when lavender plants are in bloom. There are U-pick farms, shops selling all kinds of lavender products, and, of course, an annual lavender festival.

Before this area became known for its lavender farms, it was famous for its hefty crustaceans. The nearby town of Dungeness is set at the foot of Dungeness Spit, which, at more than 6 miles in length, is the longest sand spit in the United States. However, it is for lending its name to the Northwest's favorite crab that Dungeness is most famous. The Dungeness crab is as much a staple of Washington waters as the blue crab is in the Chesapeake Bay region.

Essentials

GETTING THERE The Sequim-Dungeness Valley lies to the north of U.S. 101 between Port Townsend and Port Angeles. **Jefferson Transit** (☎ 800/371-0497 or 360/385-4777; www.jeffersontransit.com) has service from Port Townsend to Sequim, and **Clallam Transit** (☎ 800/858-3747 or 360/452-4511; www.clallamtransit.com) operates west from Sequim and around the peninsula to Lake Crescent, Clallam Bay, La Push, and Forks.

VISITOR INFORMATION For information, contact the **Sequim-Dungeness Chamber of Commerce**, 1192 E. Washington St. (P.O. Box 907), Sequim, WA 98382-0907 (☎ 800/737-8462 or 360/683-6197; www.visitsun.com).

FESTIVALS The **Irrigation Festival** (☎ 800/737-8462 or 360/683-6197; www.irrigationfestival.com), the oldest continuous festival in Washington, has been going on for more than 115 years and takes place in early May. In mid-July, when the lavender gardens are in full bloom, the town observes the season with its **Sequim Lavender Festival** (☎ 877/681-3035 or 360/681-3035; www.lavenderfestival.com).

Exploring the Area

In downtown Sequim, the **Museum & Arts Center**, 175 W. Cedar St., Sequim (☎ 360/683-8110; www.sequimmuseum.org), houses a pair of mastodon tusks that were found near here in 1977. The mastodon had been killed by human hunters, a discovery that helped establish the presence of humans in this area 12,000 years ago. The museum also has an exhibit on the much more recent culture of the region's Native Americans. It's open Tuesday to Saturday from 10am to 4pm; admission is free.

If you've got the kids with you, Sequim's **Olympic Game Farm** ★, 1423 Ward Rd. (☎ 800/778-4295 or 360/683-4295; www.olygamefarm.com), is a must. You'll get up close and personal with bison, Kodiak bears, zebras, wolves, elk, deer, and many other species of wild animals that have appeared in over 100 movies and TV shows. There are drive-through and walking tours as well as a petting farm. The farm is open daily from 9am; admission is \$11 to \$13 for adults, \$10 to \$12 for seniors and children 6 to 14, and free for children 5 and under.

The biggest local attraction is Dungeness Spit, which is protected as the **Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge** ★★ (☎ 360/457-8451; www.fws.gov/washingtonmaritime/dungeness/index.html). Within the refuge, there's a .5-mile trail to a bluff-top overlook, but the best reason to visit is to hike the spit, which leads for more than 5 miles to the historic New Dungeness Lighthouse. Along the way, you're likely to see numerous species of birds as well as harbor seals. There's a fee of \$3 per family to visit the spit.

Near the base of the Dungeness Spit, you'll also find the **Dungeness Recreation Area**, 554 Voice of America Rd. (☎ 360/683-5847; www.clallam.net/county_parks/html/parks_dungeness.htm), which has a campground, picnic area, and trail leading out to the spit. If you're not up for a 10-mile round-trip hike to the lighthouse, **Dungeness Kayaking**, 5021 Sequim-Dungeness Way (☎ 360/681-4190; www.dungenesskayaking.com), charges \$100 per person for a 4-hour kayak tour to the lighthouse.

Sequim has become well known around the Northwest for its many lavender farms, which paint the landscape with their colorful blooms each summer from late June through August. Sequim's climate is ideal for growing lavender, and you'll likely pass numerous large fields of this fragrant Mediterranean plant as you tour the area.

To find your way around the area's lavender farms, stop by the Sequim-Dungeness Chamber of Commerce visitor center (see above) or check out **www.lavendergrowers.org**. In mid-July, when the lavender gardens are in full bloom, the town observes the season with its **Sequim Lavender Festival** (see above).

If you'd like to wander through fragrant fields of lavender, you've got plenty of options. **Purple Haze Lavender Farm**, 180 Bell Bottom Rd. (☎ 888/852-6560 or 360/683-1714; www.purplehazelavender.com), an organic U-pick farm east of downtown Sequim off West Sequim Bay Road, is one of my favorites. In April, May, and September, the farm is open Friday to Sunday from 10am to 5pm; June through August, it's open daily from 10am to 5pm. The farm has a seasonal gift shop in a small barn as well as the year-round **Purple Haze Lavender Downtown Store**, 127 W. Washington St., in downtown Sequim. This latter shop is open Monday to Thursday from 9am to 5pm, Saturday from 10am to 5pm, and Sunday from noon to 4pm. North of here, don't miss **Graysmarsh Farm**, 6187 Woodcock Rd. (☎ 800/683-4367 or 360/683-0624; www.graysmarsh.com), which has both beautiful lavender fields and U-pick berry fields, where, in season, you can pick strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, and loganberries.

Up near the Dungeness Spit, a very pretty organic lavender farm, **Jardin du Soleil**, 3932 Sequim-Dungeness Way (☎ 877/527-3461; www.jardindusoleil.com), surrounds an old farmhouse and its Victorian gardens. From April to September the farm is open daily from 10am to 5pm; in October, November, December, February, and March, it's open Friday to Sunday from 10am to 4pm. In the same area, the **Olympic Lavender Farm**, 1432 Marine Dr. (☎ 360/683-4475; www.olympiclavender.com), is open mid-June to mid-August daily from noon to 5pm.

Off to the southwest of Sequim is **Lost Mountain Lavender**, 1541 Taylor Cut-off Rd. (☎ 888/507-7481 or 360/681-2782; www.lostmountainlavender.com). This farm is open daily from 10am to 6pm in June, July, and August; September through May, it's open Thursday through Monday from 10am to 5pm.

If you're interested in tasting some locally produced wine, you can also stop at **Olympic Cellars**, 255410 U.S. 101 (☎ 360/452-0160; www.olympiccellars.com), which is housed in a large barn on the west side of Sequim. April through October the tasting room is open daily from 11am to 6pm; November to March, it's open daily 11am to 5pm.

The Sequim-Dungeness Valley is also one of the best areas in the state for **bicycle touring**. The roads are flat, there are great views, and you don't have to worry as much about getting rained on. Also, the **Olympic Discovery Trail**, a partly paved and partly gravel bike path, crosses much of the Sequim Dungeness Valley and links Sequim to Port Angeles.

If you'd like to do some bird-watching while you're in Sequim, the **Dungeness River Audubon Center**, Railroad Bridge Park, 2151 Hendrickson Road (☎ 360/681-4076; www.dungenessrivercenter.org), has guided 2-hour bird walks on Wednesday mornings at 8:30am. The center is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10am to 4pm and Sunday from noon to 4pm (Sat noon–4pm and closed Sun

in winter). The center is on the west side of Sequim (from U.S. 101, take River Rd. north to Priest Rd. to Hendrickson Rd.).

Where to Stay

Dungeness Bay Cottages ★ This pretty little collection of cottages is set on a bluff overlooking the Strait of Juan de Fuca and is located across the street from the waters of Dungeness Bay. Great views and economical accommodations make this an outstanding getaway. Most units actually have views of both the water and the Olympic Mountains. My favorite is the large San Juan Suite, which comes complete with a fireplace. The summer sunsets here simply cannot be beat.

140 Marine Dr., Sequim, WA 98382. ☎ **888/683-3013** or 360/683-3013. www.dungenessbay.com. 6 units. Apr 16–Oct 14 \$120–\$180 double; Oct 15–Apr 15 \$100–\$155 double. 2- to 3-night minimum. DISC, MC, V. *In room:* TV/DVD, hair dryer, kitchen, free Wi-Fi.

Juan de Fuca Cottages ★ Right across the street from the water and surrounded by wide green lawns, these well-tended cottages have excellent views. While most face the water, the best views are actually from the one cottage that faces the Olympic Mountains to the south. This cabin has skylights and a long wall of windows. Other units have skylights as well, and all have whirlpool tubs and kitchenettes. The cottages also have their own private beach. Each cottage sleeps at least four people. Kayaks can be rented here and massages can be arranged.

182 Marine Dr., Sequim, WA 98382. ☎ **866/683-4433** or 360/683-4433. www.juandefuca.com. 11 units. July–Sept \$165–\$260 double; Oct–June \$99–\$230 double. 2-night minimum July–Aug. Children under 2 stay free in parent's room. DISC, MC, V. Pets accepted (\$20/day). **Amenities:** Concierge; sauna; water-sports equipment/boat rentals. *In room:* TV/VCR/DVD, CD player, hair dryer, kitchen, free Wi-Fi.

Sunset Marine Resort ★ 🎁 On the east shore of Sequim Bay, this collection of waterfront cabins is a secluded little retro hideaway that's decorated in shabby-chic style. Cabins include a renovated ranger station and a boathouse that sits on pilings over the water. Other cabins date from the 1930s and 1940s. Five of the cabins have full kitchens. You can spend your day paddling around the bay or touring the north Olympic Peninsula, or, better yet, just kick back and wait for sunset. Because these cabins are distinctive and relatively economical, they book up months in advance.

40 Buzzard Ridge Rd., Sequim, WA 98382. ☎ **360/591-4303**. www.sunsetmarineresort.com. 7 units. June–Sept \$170–\$250 double; Oct–May \$150–\$225 double. Children 2 and under stay free in parent's room. MC, V. Pets accepted (\$20/day). **Amenities:** Watersports equipment/boat rentals. *In room:* CD player, kitchen.

Where to Dine

For the best breakfast in Sequim, head to **The Oak Table Café**, 292 W. Bell St. (☎ **360/683-2179**; www.oaktablecafe.com). If you're in need of a light lunch, don't miss **Lippert's** ★, 134 S. Second St. (☎ **360/683-6727**; www.lippertsrestaurant.com). This restaurant is located in a historic church building a block off Sequim's main street. For a retro diner experience, try **Hiway 101 Diner**, 392 W. Washington St. (☎ **360/683-3388**). My brother's family won't let him drive through Sequim without stopping here for burgers and milkshakes.

For a caffeine fix, head to the **Buzz**, 128 N. Sequim Ave. (☎ **360/683-2503**; www.thebuzzbeedazzled.com), which is just north of Washington Street in downtown Sequim. Pick up tasty picnic fare at **Sunny Farms Country Store**, 261461

U.S. 101 (☎ 360/683-8003), on the west side of Sequim. If you need a pastry or artisan bread for a picnic, stop by **Bell Street Bakery**, 173 W. Bell St. (☎ 360/681-6262; www.bellstreetbakery.com).

Alder Wood Bistro ★ NEW AMERICAN With a menu that changes seasonally and incorporates lots of local, organic, and sustainably produced ingredients, the casual little Alder Wood Bistro is a local's favorite here in Sequim. The wood-fired oven turns out great pizzas as well as various other dishes. At lunch, don't miss the savory tart, which is made with a delicious butter crust. At dinner, you'll find the likes of polenta lasagna, pesto-chicken pizza, and grilled lamb with oat risotto. Lunch or dinner, you might want to get a side of the truffled french fries. For dessert? Try the apple pie warmed in the wood oven.

139 W. Alder St. ☎ 360/683-4321. www.alderwoodbistro.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$8–\$18 lunch, \$12–\$25 dinner. AE, DISC, MC, V. Tues–Sat 11am–2pm and 5–9pm.

The 3 Crabs SEAFOOD The 3 Crabs is an Olympic Peninsula institution—folks drive from miles around to enjoy the fresh seafood and sunset views at this friendly waterfront restaurant overlooking the Strait of Juan de Fuca and the New Dungeness Lighthouse. For more than 50 years, this place has been serving up Dungeness crabs in a wide variety of styles. You can order your crabs as a cocktail, in a sandwich, cracked, or as crab Louie salad. Clams and oysters also come from the local waters and are equally good. There's great bird-watching here, too, especially in winter.

11 Three Crabs Rd. ☎ 360/683-4264. www.the3crabs.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$8–\$26. DISC, MC, V. Summer daily 11:30am–9pm; shorter hours other months.

OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK NORTH & ENVIRONS

Port Angeles park entrance: 48 miles W of Port Townsend, 57 miles E of Forks

The northern portions of Olympic National Park are both the most accessible and most popular. It is here, south of Port Angeles, that two roads lead into the national park's high country. Of the two areas reached by these roads, Hurricane Ridge is the more accessible. Deer Park, the other road-accessed high-country destination, is at the end of a harrowing gravel road and is little visited. West of Port Angeles within the national park's lowlands lie two large lakes, Lake Crescent and Lake Ozette, that attract boaters and anglers. Also in this region are two hot springs—the developed Sol Duc Resort and the natural Olympic Hot Springs.

Outside the park boundaries, along the northern coast of the peninsula, are several campgrounds, a beautiful stretch of coastline that is popular with kayakers, and a couple of small sportfishing ports, Sekiu and Neah Bay, that are also popular with scuba divers. Neah Bay, which is on the Makah Indian Reservation, is also the site of one of the most interesting little museums in the state. This reservation encompasses Cape Flattery, which is the northwesternmost point in the contiguous United States.

Port Angeles, primarily a lumber-shipping port, is the largest town on the north Olympic Peninsula and serves as a base for people exploring the national park and as a port for ferries crossing the Strait of Juan de Fuca to Victoria, British Columbia. Here you'll find the region's greatest concentration of lodgings and restaurants.

Essentials

GETTING THERE U.S. 101 circles Olympic National Park, with main park entrances south of Port Angeles, at Lake Crescent, and at the Hoh River south of Forks.

Kenmore Air Express (☎ 866/435-9524; www.kenmoreair.com) flies between Seattle's Boeing Field and Port Angeles's William Fairchild Airport (with a free shuttle from Seattle-Tacoma International Airport to Boeing Field). Rental cars are available in Port Angeles from **Budget** (☎ 800/527-0700; www.budget.com).

There is a **bus shuttle** to Port Angeles from Seattle and Sea-Tac Airport on **Olympic Bus Lines** (☎ 800/457-4492 or 360/417-0700; www.olympicbuslines.com). Reservations are recommended. **Jefferson Transit** (☎ 800/371-0497 or 360/385-4777; www.jeffersontransit.com) has service from Port Townsend to Sequim, where you can transfer to **Clallam Transit** (☎ 800/858-3747 or 360/452-4511; www.clallamtransit.com), which operates from Sequim around the peninsula to Lake Crescent, Clallam Bay, La Push, and Forks.

Two **ferries**, one for foot passengers only and the other for vehicles and foot passengers, connect Port Angeles and Victoria, British Columbia. The ferry terminal for both ferries is at the corner of Laurel Street and Railroad Avenue. **Victoria Express** (☎ 360/452-8088 or 250/361-9144; www.victoriaexpress.com) is the faster of the two ferries (1 hr. btw. Port Angeles and Victoria) and carries foot passengers only. This ferry runs between Memorial Day weekend and mid-September. One-way fares are \$10 per person (children under age 5 ride free). **Black Ball Transport** (☎ 360/457-4491, or 250/386-2202 in Victoria; www.cohoferry.com) carries vehicles as well as walk-on passengers. The crossing takes slightly more than 1½ hours. One-way fares are \$15 for adults and \$7.25 for children ages 5 to 11; it costs \$53 for a vehicle and driver.

VISITOR INFORMATION For more information on the national park, contact **Olympic National Park**, 600 E. Park Ave., Port Angeles, WA 98362-6798 (☎ 360/565-3130 or 565-3131; www.nps.gov/olym). For information on Port Angeles and the rest of the northern Olympic Peninsula, contact the **Olympic Peninsula Visitor Bureau**, 338 W. First St., Ste. 104 (P.O. Box 670), Port Angeles, WA 98362 (☎ 800/942-4042 or 360/452-8552; www.olympicpeninsula.org), or the **Port Angeles Regional Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center**, 121 E. Railroad Ave., Port Angeles, WA 98362 (☎ 360/452-2363; www.portangeles.org).

FESTIVALS Each year in late August, **Makah Days** are celebrated in Neah Bay (on the Makah Indian Reservation) with canoe races, Indian dancing, a salmon bake, and other events. For information, visit www.makah.com.



Don't Leave Home Without It

You may not be planning on taking an international vacation, but spend any time in the Port Angeles area, and you'll be tempted to hop a ferry to Victoria, British Columbia. Just in case,

bring along your passport on your Olympic vacation. You are now required to show either a passport or other government-approved form of identification in order to return from Canada.

PARK ADMISSION Park admission is \$15 per vehicle. Another option, if you plan to visit several national parks in a single year, is the **America the Beautiful—National Park and Federal Recreational Lands Pass**, an annual pass good at all federal recreation sites administered by the National Park Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Bureau of Reclamation. The pass costs \$80 and is available at national park visitor centers. If you're over 62, you can get a Senior Pass for \$10, and if you have a disability, you can get a free Access Pass.

Exploring the Park's North Side

Port Angeles is the headquarters for the park, and here you'll find the **Olympic National Park Visitor Center**, 3002 Mount Angeles Rd. (☎ 360/565-3130; www.nps.gov/olym). Mount Angeles Road is on the south edge of town and leads up to **Hurricane Ridge**. The center has lots of information, maps, and books about the park, as well as exhibits on the park's flora and fauna and old-growth forests. It's open throughout the year with hours varying with the seasons.

From the main visitor center, continue another 17 miles up Mount Angeles Road to Hurricane Ridge, which on clear days offers the most breathtaking views in the park. In summer the surrounding subalpine meadows are carpeted with wildflowers, and you're likely to see deer grazing on wildflowers and marmots lazing on rocks. (Marmots are large members of the squirrel family; if you get too close to one, it's likely to let out an ear-piercing whistle.)

Several trails lead into the park from here, and several day hikes are possible. The 3-mile **Hurricane Hill Trail** and the 1-mile **Meadow Loop Trail** are the most scenic. Stop by the **Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center** to see its exhibits on plants and wildlife; this is a good place to learn about the fragile nature of this beautiful alpine landscape.

A few miles east of Port Angeles, another road heads south into the park to an area called **Deer Park**. The narrow, winding gravel road to Deer Park is a real test of nerves and consequently is not nearly as popular a route as the road to Hurricane Ridge. However, the scenery once you reach the end of the road is just as breathtaking as that from Hurricane Ridge. As the name implies, deer are common in this area. For the best easily accessible mountaintop view on the Olympic Peninsula, continue driving uphill from the Deer Park Campground to the end of the road. Here you'll find the .5-mile **Rainshadow Trail**, a loop that leads through meadows to the summit of 6,007-foot Blue Mountain. The views of the Olympic Mountains and expanses of the Strait of Juan de Fuca are breathtaking. For a longer hike, follow **Grand Ridge Trail** toward Obstruction Peak. To reach Deer Park, turn south at the Deer Park movie theater.

West of Port Angeles a few miles, up the Elwha River, you'll find the short trail (actually an abandoned road) that leads to **Olympic Hot Springs ★**. These natural hot pools are in a forest setting and are extremely popular and often crowded, especially on weekends. For more developed hot springs soaking, head to Sol Duc Resort, west of Lake Crescent.

Also west of Port Angeles, on U.S. 101, is **Lake Crescent**, a glacier-carved lake surrounded by steep forested mountains that give the lake the feel of a fiord. This is one of the most beautiful lakes in the state and has long been a popular summer getaway. Near the east end of the lake, you'll find both the 1-mile trail to 90-foot-high

Marymere Falls and the **Storm King Ranger Station** (☎ 360/928-3380), which is usually open in the summer and at other seasons when a ranger is in the station. From the Marymere Falls Trail, you can hike the steep 2 miles up **Mount Storm King** to a viewpoint overlooking Lake Crescent (climbing above the viewpoint is not recommended). On the north side of the lake, the **Spruce Railroad Trail**, one of the only trails in the park open to mountain bikes, parallels the shore of the lake and crosses a picturesque little bridge. As the name implies, this was once the route of a railroad built to haul spruce out of these forests during World War I. Spruce was the ideal wood for building biplanes because of its strength and light weight. By the time the railroad was completed, the war was over and the demand for spruce had dwindled.

You can rent various types of small boats during the warmer months at a couple of places on the lake. **Lake Crescent Lodge** rents rowboats (\$9/hour, \$25 for a half-day, and \$40 for a full day), while **Fairholme General Store** (☎ 360/928-3020), at the lake's west end, rents kayaks (\$9/hour).

Continuing west from Lake Crescent, watch for the turnoff to **Sol Duc Hot Springs** (☎ 866/297-7367; www.olympicnationalparks.com). For 14 miles the road follows the Soleduck River, passing the Salmon Cascades along the way. Sol Duc Hot Springs were for centuries considered healing waters by local Native Americans, and after white settlers arrived in the area, the springs became a popular resort. In addition to the hot swimming pool and soaking tubs, you'll find cabins, a campground, a restaurant, and a snack bar. The springs are open daily from late March to late October; admission is \$12 for adults, \$9 for seniors and children ages 4 to 12. A 4.5-mile loop trail leads from the hot springs to **Sol Duc Falls**, which are among the most photographed falls in the park. Alternatively, you can drive to the end of the Sol Duc Road and make this an easy 1.5-mile hike. Along this same road, you can hike the .5-mile **Ancient Groves Nature Trail**. Note that Sol Duc Road is one of the roads on which you have to pay an Olympic National Park entry fee.

Exploring the Peninsula's Northwest Corner

Continuing west on U.S. 101 from the junction with the road to Sol Duc Hot Springs brings you to the crossroads of Sappho. Heading north at Sappho will bring you to Wash. 112, an alternate route from Port Angeles. It's 40 miles from this road junction to the town of **Neah Bay** on the Makah Indian Reservation.

Between Clallam Bay and Neah Bay, the road runs right alongside the water and there are opportunities to spot seabirds and marine mammals, including gray, orca, humpback, and pilot whales. Between February and April, keep an eye out for the dozens of bald eagles that gather along this stretch of coast. In Clallam Bay, at the county day-use park, you can hunt for agates and explore tidepools. Near Slip Point Lighthouse, there are fossil beds that are exposed at low tides.

Neah Bay is a busy commercial and sportfishing port, and is also home to the impressive **Makah Cultural and Research Center** ★★, Bayview Avenue (☎ 360/645-2711; www.makah.com), which displays artifacts from a Native American village that was inundated by a mudslide 500 years ago. This is the most perfectly preserved collection of Native American artifacts in the Northwest; part of the exhibit includes reproductions of canoes the Makah once used for hunting whales. There's also a longhouse that shows the traditional lifestyle of the Makah

people. From Memorial Day to mid-September, the museum is open daily from 10am to 5pm; other months, it is closed on Monday and Tuesday. Admission is \$5 for adults, \$4 for students and seniors, and free for children 5 and under.

The reservation land includes **Cape Flattery ★★★**, which is the northwesternmost point of land in the contiguous United States. Just off the cape lies Tatoosh Island, site of one of the oldest lighthouses in Washington. Cape Flattery is one of the most dramatic stretches of Pacific coastline in the Northwest, and is a popular spot for hiking and ocean viewing. The 1.5-mile round-trip trail to the tip of the cape is one of my favorite hikes in the entire state and includes not only great views but also boardwalks, stairs, and viewing platforms atop the cliffs overlooking Tatoosh Island. Keep an eye out for whales and sea otters. Bird-watchers will definitely want to visit Cape Flattery, which is on the Pacific Fly Way. More than 250 species of birds have been spotted here, and in the spring, raptors gather here before crossing the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Before heading out to Cape Flattery, stop by the Makah Museum for directions and to get a \$10 Recreational Use Permit that will allow you to park at the Cape Flattery trailhead. Permits can also be purchased at the Makah Marina, Washburn's General Store, the Makah Tribal Center, Neah Bay Charter & Tackle, Makah Fuel Co., and the Makah Smoke shop. **Note:** Be aware that car break-ins are not uncommon here, so take your valuables with you.

A turnoff 16 miles east of Neah Bay leads south to **Ozette Lake**, where there are boat ramps, a campground, and, stretching north and south, miles of beaches only accessible on foot. A 3.25-mile trail on a raised boardwalk leads from the Ozette Lake trailhead to **Cape Alava ★★**, one of two places claiming to be the westernmost point in the contiguous United States (the other is Cape Blanco, on the Oregon coast). The large rocks offshore are known as haystack rocks or sea stacks and are common along the rocky western coast of the Olympic Peninsula. Aside from five coastal Indian reservations, almost all this rugged northern coastline is preserved as part of the national park.

OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

BIKING If you're interested in exploring the region on a bike, you can rent one at **Sound Bikes & Kayaks**, 120 E. Front St., Port Angeles (☎ 360/457-1240; www.soundbikeskayaks.com), which can recommend good rides in the area and also offers bicycle tours. Bikes are \$30 per day or \$9 per hour. **Adventures Through Kayaking Outfitters**, 2358 U.S. 101 W., Port Angeles (☎ 888/900-3015 or 360/417-3015; www.atkayaking.com), also leads tours (\$75 for a half-day tour and \$115 for a full-day) and rents mountain bikes (\$10/hour, \$35 for a half-day, and \$55 for a full day).

HIKING & BACKPACKING For several of the most popular backpacking destinations in Olympic National Park (the Ozette Coast Loop, Grand Valley, Royal Basin, Badger Valley, Flapjack Lakes, Lake Constance, and a few others), advance-reservation hiking permits are required or highly recommended between May 1 and September 30 and can be made up to 30 days in advance. Reservations can be made by contacting the **Wilderness Information Center**, 3002 Mount Angeles Rd., Port Angeles (☎ 360/565-3100; www.nps.gov/olym/planyourvisit/wic.htm). Both a Wilderness Use Fee (\$5 for a group of up to 12 people) and a nightly camping fee (\$2/person/night) are charged. For most other overnight hikes, you can pick up a permit at a ranger station or at the trailhead. If in doubt, check with a park ranger

before heading out to a trailhead for a backpacking trip. Also keep in mind that some trails start at trailheads on national forest land; to park at these trailheads, you'll need a Northwest Forest Pass. Also, should you be planning to backpack along the coast, keep in mind that some headlands can only be rounded at low tide, and others cannot be rounded at all. These latter headlands have marked (though often steep, muddy, and difficult) trails over them. In some cases, these "trails" consist of cable ladders or handhold ropes. Be aware that you'll have to ford quite a few creeks and even a river depending on which section of the coast you hike. Always carry a tide table.

LLAMA TREKKING If you want to do an overnight trip into the backcountry of the national park, but don't want to deal with all the gear, consider letting a llama carry your stuff. **Deli Llama**, 17045 Llama Lane, Bow, WA 98232 (☎ 360/757-4212; www.delillama.com), does trips of 4 to 7 days in Olympic National Park (\$155–\$195/person/day).

SEA KAYAKING & CANOEING Sea-kayaking trips on nearby Lake Aldwell, at Freshwater Bay, and at Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge are offered by **Olympic Raft & Kayak** (☎ 888/452-1443 or 360/452-1443; www.raftandkayak.com), which charges between \$45 and \$95 per person. **Adventures Through Kayaking Outfitters**, 2358 U.S. 101 W., Port Angeles (☎ 888/900-3015 or 360/417-3015; www.atkayaking.com), offers similar trips (\$55 for 2 hr., \$75 for a half-day, and \$115 for a full day). This latter company also rents sea kayaks to experienced paddlers.

SKIING/SNOWBOARDING/SNOWSHOEING Cross-country skiing, downhill skiing and snowboarding, and snowshoeing are all possible in the winter at **Hurricane Ridge**. Here you'll find a tiny ski area with two rope tows and a Poma lift for downhill skiing and snowboarding. There are also many miles of marked, though ungroomed, cross-country ski trails here. For more information, contact **Hurricane Ridge Winter Sports Club** (☎ 360/457-2879, or 565-3131 for road conditions; www.hurricaneridge.net).

There are 90-minute ranger-led **snowshoe walks** on Saturdays and Sundays (and holiday Mon) from mid-December through March (conditions permitting). Snowshoes are provided, although a \$5 donation is requested. Call the park visitor center for details.

WHITEWATER RAFTING The steep mountains and plentiful rains of the Olympic Peninsula are the source of some great whitewater rafting on the Elwha and Hoh rivers. Contact **Olympic Raft & Kayak** (☎ 888/452-1443 or 360/452-1443; www.raftandkayak.com). Rates start at \$54 (\$44 for children 5–11) for a 2- to 2½-hour rafting trip. Alternatively, get in touch with **Adventures Through Kayaking Outfitters**, 2358 U.S. 101 W., Port Angeles (☎ 888/900-3015 or 360/417-3015; www.atkayaking.com), which operates rafting trips on the Selduc (\$75) and Hoh (\$55) rivers. Trips in inflatable kayaks are also offered on both of these rivers.

Exploring Around Port Angeles

If you're curious about the general history of this area, you may want to check out exhibits at the Clallam County Historical Society's **Museum at the Carnegie**, 207 S. Lincoln St. (☎ 360/452-2662; www.clallamhistoricalsociety.com), which is housed in a former Carnegie Library. It's open Wednesday through Saturday from 1 to 4pm and admission is by donation.



Lose Yourself in a Labyrinth

At the Port Angeles Fine Arts Center, you can lose yourself in a labyrinth hidden in a little glade in the art center's sculpture-filled woods. Mind you, this is not a maze, and the objective isn't to

get physically lost. A labyrinth is a convoluted pathway that is meant to be used as a path for walking meditations. So, go on, get lost.

The **Port Angeles Fine Arts Center** ★, 1203 E. Lauridsen Blvd. (☎ 360/417-4590 or 457-3532; www.pafac.org), is the town's only other museum and hosts changing exhibits of contemporary art. The museum also maintains an unusual sculpture park in the woods surrounding the center. Sculptures within the park are often barely discernible from natural objects and are often quite fascinating. Between March and October, the gallery is open Wednesday through Sunday from 11am to 5pm; from November through February, it closes at 4pm. Admission is free.

If you'd like to get a close-up look at some of the peninsula's aquatic inhabitants, stop by the **Arthur D. Feiro Marine Life Center**, Port Angeles City Pier, 315 N. Lincoln St. (☎ 360/417-6254; www.feiromarinelifecenter.org). In the center's tanks, you may spot a wolf eel or octopus, and at a touch tank, you can pick up a starfish or sea cucumber. Memorial Day through Labor Day, the center is open daily from 10am to 5pm; other months, it's open Saturday and Sunday from noon to 4pm. Admission is \$3 for adults, \$2 for seniors, \$1 for children ages 4 to 17, and free for children 3 and under.

If you'd like to taste some local wine, stop by **Black Diamond Winery**, 2976 Black Diamond Rd. (☎ 360/457-0748; www.blackdiamondwinery.com), which produces both fruit and grape wines and is open June through September, Friday to Sunday from 11am to 4pm; October, November, December, March, April, and May it's open Saturday and Sunday from 11am to 5pm. To reach the winery, drive south from U.S. 101 on Pine Street, which becomes Black Diamond Road. It's 3 miles to the winery. You can also visit **Camaraderie Cellars**, 334 Benson Rd. (☎ 360/417-3564; www.camaraderiecellars.com). The winery's tasting room is open May to October Friday to Sunday from 11am to 5pm. This winery gets its grapes from eastern Washington and makes a range of red and white wines. To reach this winery, follow U.S. 101 to the west side of Port Angeles, and drive south on Benson Road. The turnoff is 2 miles from the Lincoln Street intersection with U.S. 101. Continuing west on U.S. 101, you will come to **Harbinger Winery**, 2358 U.S. 101 W. (☎ 360/452-4262; www.harbingerwinery.com), which is the area's newest winery and produces a wide range of wines from grapes brought in from eastern Washington. The tasting room is open Monday to Saturday from 11am to 6pm, and Sunday from 11am to 5pm.

Where to Stay

Beyond Port Angeles, accommodations are few and far between, and those places worth recommending tend to be very popular. Try to have room reservations before heading west from Port Angeles.

IN PORT ANGELES

The Downtown Hotel This little hotel in downtown Port Angeles isn't fancy, but it sure is comfortable and a real bargain. Also, if you're planning on taking the ferry to Victoria, it's very convenient. On the second and third floors of a building with shops on the ground floor, this place is a lot like European hotels. Some of the rooms have shared bathrooms, but these are quite large and attractively furnished. Guest rooms with private bathrooms are equally comfortable. One room has a kitchenette.

101½ E. Front St., Port Angeles, WA 98362. ☎ **866/688-8600** or 360/565-1125. www.portangelesdowntownhotel.com. 17 units. \$45-\$75 double with shared bathroom; \$65-\$120 double with private bathroom. DISC, MC, V. *In room:* TV, free Wi-Fi.

Red Lion Hotel Port Angeles ★ If you're on your way to or from Victoria, there's no more convenient hotel than the Red Lion. This is Port Angeles's only waterfront hotel, and it's steps from the Victoria ferry terminal. Rooms are large, and most have balconies and large bathrooms. However, you'll pay a premium for a room with a view of the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

221 N. Lincoln St., Port Angeles, WA 98362. ☎ **800/733-5466** or 360/452-9215. Fax 360/452-4734. www.redlion.com/portangeles. 186 units. Mid-June to late Sept \$165-\$217 double (lower rates off season). Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DISC, MC, V. Pets accepted (\$20/day). **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge; exercise room; Jacuzzi; outdoor pool; room service. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

The Tudor Inn ★ In a quiet residential neighborhood not far from the waterfront, this 1910 Tudor home is surrounded by a large yard and pretty gardens and is my favorite Port Angeles B&B. On the ground floor you'll find a living room and library; in one, there's a gas fireplace, and in the other, a wood-burning fireplace. Either is a great spot for warming yourself if the weather should turn cold and damp. Upstairs there are five rooms furnished with European antiques, including sleigh beds and four-posters. Several rooms have good views of the Olympic Mountains, and these are worth requesting.

1108 S. Oak St., Port Angeles, WA 98362. ☎ **866/286-2224** or 360/452-3138. www.tudorinn.com. 5 units. Mid-May to mid-Oct \$135-\$160 double; mid-Oct to mid-May \$125-\$150 double. Rates include full breakfast. 2-night minimum on July-Aug weekends. AE, DISC, MC, V. Children over age 12 are welcome. *In room:* No phone.

EAST OF PORT ANGELES

Colette's Bed & Breakfast ★★ Set at the end of a long and winding driveway, this elegant and luxurious inn is set on 10 forested acres and is surrounded by gorgeous perennial gardens. The bluff-top setting overlooking the Strait of Juan de Fuca will take your breath away every time you glance out the window of your room and see the strait stretching across to Victoria, British Columbia. Guest accommodations are exceedingly luxurious, the perfect retreat at the end of a day exploring the wilds of Olympic National Park. With fireplaces and two-person tubs, rooms here are also deliciously romantic. Big windows let you take in the views even on rainy days. In the evening, hors d'oeuvres and wine are available.

339 Finn Hall Rd., Port Angeles, WA 98362. ☎ **877/457-9777** or 360/457-9197. www.colettes.com. 5 units. \$195-\$395 suite (lower rates Nov-Apr). Rates include full breakfast. MC, V. No children. *In room:* A/C, TV/DVD, CD player, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

Domaine Madeleine ★★ Seven miles east of Port Angeles, this contemporary B&B is set on 5 wooded acres and has a very secluded feel. Big windows take in the views, while inside you'll find lots of Asian antiques and other interesting touches. Combine this with the waterfront setting and you have a fabulous hideaway—you may not even bother exploring the park. The guest rooms are in several different buildings surrounded by colorful gardens. All rooms have fireplaces and views of the Strait of Juan de Fuca and of the mountains beyond. Some have whirlpool tubs; some have kitchens or air-conditioning. For added privacy, there is a separate cottage.

146 Wildflower Lane, Port Angeles, WA 98362. ☎ **888/811-8376** or 360/457-4174. www.domainemadeleine.com. 5 units. \$140–\$310 double. Rates include full breakfast. 2-night minimum mid-Apr to mid-Oct, holidays, and weekends throughout the year. AE, DISC, MC, V. Children over 11 welcome.

Amenities: Access to nearby health club. *In room:* TV/VCR/DVD, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

George Washington Inn ★★ This is Washington state, so it doesn't seem too unusual to find a reproduction of George Washington's Mount Vernon home perched on a bluff looking out across the Strait of Juan de Fuca to Canada. After all, old George was at war with the British, who once claimed Canada. While Washington may never have slept at his namesake inn on the Olympic Peninsula, you can, and you'll be very comfortable in any of the large luxury suites at this inn outside Port Angeles. Set at the back of a long, straight driveway lined with lavender plants and white rail fences, this is one of the most distinctive inns in the state.

939 Finn Hall Rd., Port Angeles, WA 98362-8499. ☎ **360/452-5207**. www.georgewashingtoninn.com. 4 units. \$175–\$300 suite. Rates include full breakfast. 2-night minimum on weekends May–Sept. MC, V. No children under 16. *In room:* A/C, TV/DVD, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

Sea Cliff Gardens Bed & Breakfast ★ For the ultimate in luxury, book a room at this modern Victorian farmhouse on a bluff overlooking the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The inn is located on the west side of the Sequim Dungeness Valley and is surrounded by 2 acres of flower gardens, and the views stretch all the way to Victoria on the far side of the straits. All the rooms have double Jacuzzi tubs, fireplaces, and water-views, and are furnished with European antiques. There are also showers for two and fluffy down comforters to make the rooms both romantic and cozy.

397 Monterra Dr., Port Angeles, WA 98362. ☎ **800/880-1332** or 360/452-2322. www.seacliffgardens.com. 5 units. \$130–\$250 double. Rates include full breakfast. AE, DISC, MC, V. *In room:* TV/DVD/VCR, CD player, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

WEST OF PORT ANGELES

Lake Crescent Lodge ★ This historic property, 20 miles west of Port Angeles on the south shore of picturesque Lake Crescent, is the lodging of choice for national-park visitors wishing to stay on the north side of the park. Wood paneling, hardwood floors, a stone fireplace, and a sunroom make the lobby a popular spot for just sitting and relaxing. The guest rooms in this main lodge building have the most historical character but have shared bathrooms. Other rooms are mostly aging motel-style rooms that lack the character of the lodge rooms. The best accommodations are the Roosevelt cabins, which have fireplaces. However, a couple of the Singer cabins (nos. 20 and 21) do have great views. All but the main lodge rooms have views of the lake or the mountains. From mid-October to early May, the lodge is open only on weekends. The dining room is not open in winter.

416 Lake Crescent Rd., Port Angeles, WA 98363. ☎ **866/297-7367**. www.lakecrescentlodge.com. 52 units, 5 with shared bathroom. \$105 double without bathroom; \$159–\$169 double with bathroom; \$229–\$239 cottage. Children 5 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DISC, MC, V. Pets accepted in cottages (\$25/day). **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge; watersports equipment/boat rentals; free Wi-Fi. *In room:* No phone.

Sol Duc Hot Springs Resort ☺ The Sol Duc Hot Springs have for decades been a popular family vacation spot, with campers, day-trippers, and resort guests spending their days soaking and playing in the hot-water swimming pool. The grounds of the resort are grassy and open, and the forest is kept just at arm's reach. Unfortunately, the cabins have very little character and are basically free-standing motel rooms. Don't come expecting a classic mountain cabin experience. There's a restaurant here, as well as a poolside deli and grocery store. Three hot-spring-fed soaking pools and a large swimming pool are the focal point and are open to the public for a small fee.

12076 Sol Duc Hot Springs Rd. (P.O. Box 2169), Port Angeles, WA 98363. ☎ **866/297-7367**. Fax 360/327-3593. www.olympicnationalparks.com. 33 units. \$151–\$184 cabin; \$320 suite. Rates include full breakfast. Children 3 and under stay free in parent's room. 2-night minimum on holiday weekends. AE, DISC, MC, V. Closed late Oct to early Mar. Pets accepted (\$15/day). **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; outdoor pool and 3 hot-spring-fed soaking pools. *In room:* Hair dryer, no phone.

Where to Dine IN PORT ANGELES

For great espresso and the best pastries on the peninsula, don't miss downtown's **Itty Bitty Buzz**, 110 E. First St. (☎ **360/565-8080**; www.thebuzzbeedazzled.com), which is affiliated with The Buzz in Sequim. If you're thinking of having a picnic, you might want to pick up some smoked salmon at **Sunrise Meats**, 1325 E. First St. (☎ **800/953-3211** or 360/457-3211; www.sunrisemeats.com).

Bella Italia ★ ITALIAN This downtown Port Angeles restaurant is only a couple of blocks from the terminal for ferries to and from Victoria, which makes it very convenient for many travelers. Dinners start with a basket of delicious bread accompanied by a garlic-and-herb dipping sauce. Local seafood makes it onto the menu in the form of smoked-salmon fettuccine, steamed mussels and clams, crab cakes and other dishes, and these are among your best choices on the menu. There are also some interesting individual pizzas and a good selection of wines, as well as a wine bar, an espresso bar, and plenty of excellent Italian desserts. Oh, and for all you *Twilight* fans, this is where Bella and Edward had their first date.

118 E. First St. ☎ **360/457-5442**. www.bellaitaliapa.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$9–\$30. AE, DISC, MC, V. Sun–Thurs 4–9pm; Fri–Sat 4–10pm.

C'est Si Bon ★ FRENCH Four miles south of town just off U.S. 101, C'est Si Bon is a brightly painted roadside building that, from the exterior, you might not think would be serving delicious traditional French food. Inside, the building's colorful exterior paint job gives way to more classic decor: reproductions of European works of art, crystal chandeliers, and old musical instruments used as wall decorations. The restaurant serves deftly prepared Gallic standards such as French onion soup or escargot for starters. Follow that with *coquille Saint Jacques* or a Dungeness crab soufflé, finish with a rich and creamy *mousse au chocolat*, and *voilà!* You have the perfect French meal. Specials feature whatever is fresh.



Muh-muh-muh-muh-muh My Madrona

Madrona trees, with their glossy green leaves and smooth, coppery bark are among the prettiest native trees in this region, and here in Port Angeles, at Bob's Tree Park on the corner of East

Eighth Street and Oak Avenue, you can see Washington's largest madrona tree, which is estimated to be between 300 and 400 years old.

23 Cedar Park Rd. ☎ **360/452-8888**. www.cestsibon-frenchcuisine.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$30–\$35. AE, DISC, MC, V. Tues–Sun 5–11pm.

Michael's Divine Dining ★★ NORTHWEST/MEDITERRANEAN In the basement of a building in downtown Port Angeles, Michael's is a great place for a meal whether you're in the mood for small plates and a cocktail, a designer pizza, or a big dish of paella. This latter dish is the house specialty and shouldn't be missed. For dessert, be sure to try the banana fritter and caramelized banana with chocolate sauce, and also keep an eye out for the lavender ice cream.

117B E. First St. ☎ **360/417-6929**. www.michaelsdining.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$13–\$36. AE, DISC, MC, V. Sun–Wed 4–10pm; Thurs–Sat 4–11pm.

Sabai Thai ★🍱 THAI Set away from the waterfront and not a tourist haunt, this cozy little Thai restaurant serves delicious food redolent of exotic spices. If you're feeling adventurous, start with the savory fried banana appetizer. The *chu chee pla* is a house specialty and features cod in a rich and spicy red-curry sauce. The pad Thai is also excellent. To find the restaurant, drive away from downtown on U.S. 101 and turn right on Eighth Street.

903 W. Eighth St. ☎ **360/452-4505**. www.sabaithai.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$12–\$18. DISC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 4–9pm.

WEST OF PORT ANGELES

Outside of Port Angeles, the restaurant choices become exceedingly slim. Your best options are the dining rooms at a couple of the area's more popular lodges. **Lake Crescent Lodge** (see above), on the shore of Lake Crescent, is open from early May to mid-October. Continuing west, you'll find food at the dining room of **Sol Duc Hot Springs Resort**, open early March through late October. If you've worked up an appetite hiking or just need some fortification to get you out to the far side of the Olympic Peninsula, you can tuck into a logger's breakfast, a 1-pound burger, or just a good slice of pie at the **Hungry Bear Café**, U.S. 101 at milepost 206, Beaver (☎ **360/327-3225**; www.hungrybearcafemotel.com), which is just east of the turnoff for Neah Bay. Way out in the peninsula's northwest corner, at Lake Ozette, you can get breakfast, lunch, and espresso at **The Lost Resort**, 20860 Hoko-Ozette Rd. (☎ **800/950-2899** or 360/963-2899; www.lostresort.net).

OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK WEST

Forks: 57 miles W of Port Angeles, 50 miles S of Neah Bay, 77 miles N of Lake Quinalt

The western regions of Olympic National Park can be roughly divided into two distinct sections—the rugged coastal strip and the famous rainforest valleys. Of course,

these are the rainiest areas within the park, and many a visitor has cut short a vacation here due to the rain. Well, what do you expect? It is, after all, a rainforest. Come prepared to get wet.

The coastal strip can be divided into three segments. North of La Push, which is on the Quileute Indian Reservation, the 20 miles of shoreline from Rialto Beach to Cape Alava are accessible only on foot. The northern end of this stretch of coast is accessed from Lake Ozette off Wash. 112 in the northwest corner of the peninsula. South of La Push, the park's coastline stretches for 17 miles from Third Beach to the Hoh River mouth and is also accessible only on foot. The third segment of Olympic Park coastline begins at Ruby Beach just south of both the Hoh River mouth and Hoh Indian Reservation and stretches south to South Beach. This stretch of coastline is paralleled by U.S. 101.

Inland of these coastal areas, which are not contiguous with the rest of the park, lie the four rainforest valleys of the Bogachiel, Hoh, Queets, and Quinault rivers. Of these valleys, only the Hoh and Quinault are penetrated by roads, and it is in the Hoh Valley that the rainforests are the primary attraction.

Located just outside the northwest corner of the park, the town of Forks serves as the gateway to Olympic National Park's west side. In recent years, this remote town has become famous the world over as the setting for the *Twilight* series of teen vampire/romance novels and the movies made from the books. All over town you'll find references to the immensely popular series.

Essentials

GETTING THERE The town of Forks is the largest community in the northwest corner of the Olympic Peninsula and is on U.S. 101, which continues south along the west side of the peninsula to the town of Hoquiam.

Bus service from Sequim to Lake Crescent, Clallam Bay, La Push, and Forks is operated by **Clallam Transit** (☎ 800/858-3747 or 360/452-4511; www.clallamtransit.com). Bus service between Forks and Lake Quinault is provided by **Jefferson Transit** (☎ 800/371-0497 or 360/385-4777; www.jeffersontransit.com). There is service to Quinault Lake from Olympia and Aberdeen on **Grays Harbor Transit** (☎ 800/562-9730 or 360/532-2770; www.ghtransit.com).

VISITOR INFORMATION For more information on the Forks area, contact the **Forks Chamber of Commerce**, 1411 S. Forks Ave. (P.O. Box 1249), Forks, WA 98331 (☎ 800/443-6757 or 360/374-2531; www.forks-wa.com).

FESTIVALS Each year in mid-July, **Quileute Days** are celebrated in La Push (on the Quileute Indian Reservation) with canoe races, traditional dancing, a salmon bake, and other events.

Exploring the Park's West Side

If you want to learn more about the area's logging history, stop by the **Forks Timber Museum**, 1411 Forks Ave. S. (☎ 360/374-9663), which is south of town on U.S. 101. The museum chronicles the history of logging in this region, but it also has displays on Native American culture and pioneer days. It's open from May through October, Tuesday through Saturday from 10am to 4pm; admission is by donation.

West of Forks lie miles of pristine beaches and a narrow strip of forest (called the Olympic Coastal Strip) that are part of the national park, but are not connected to

TWILIGHT TIME IN forks

If the names Bella and Edward mean anything to you, then you or your children must be a fans of the *Twilight* teen vampire novels. Set on the Olympic Peninsula, the young-adult romance novels feature real locales in Forks and Port Angeles, and promoting *Twilight* has become big business on the peninsula.

In Port Angeles, you can dine at Bella Italia (p. 244), where characters Bella and Edward went on their first date; you can even order the same thing they ordered. Luckily, Bella Italia also happens to be one of my favorite restaurants on the peninsula.

In Forks, outside the Forks Chamber of Commerce visitor center (see above), you'll find an old red pickup truck just like the one Bella drives in the books. Inside the visitor center, you can pick up a map of the town's *Twilight* locations. Among the places you'll want to visit are Forks High School, where Bella and Edward go to school; Forks Hospital where Dr. Cullen works (look for his

reserved parking space); and Forks Police Station where Police Chief Charlie Swan works. You can also visit the Thriftway where Bella does her shopping and Forks Outfitters, where she works. More settings from the book can be found west of Forks in the Native American community of La Push. In Forks, the **Miller Tree Inn** (see below), has been designated the official Cullen house. There are also vampire-themed *Twilight* rooms at the **Dew Drop Inn Motel**, 100 Fern Hill Rd. (☎ **888/433-9376** or 360/374-4055; www.dewdropinnmotel.com) and at the **Pacific Inn Motel**, 352 S. Forks Ave. (☎ **800/235-7344** or 360/374-9400; www.pacificinnmotel.com). Of course, shops around town are full of *Twilight* and vampire souvenirs. If you want to be sure you see it all, book a tour with **Dazzled by Twilight Tour Company**, 11 N. Forks Ave., Forks (☎ **360/374-8687**; www.dazzledbyt看light.com), which is affiliated with the Dazzled by Twilight gift shop.

the inland mountainous section. The first place where you can actually drive right to the Pacific Ocean is just west of Forks. At the end of a spur road, you come to the Quileute Indian Reservation and the community of **La Push**. Right in town there's a beach at the mouth of the Quillayute River; however, before you reach La Push, you'll see signs for **Third Beach ★★** and **Second Beach ★★**, which are two of the prettiest beaches on the peninsula. Third Beach is a 1½-mile walk and Second Beach is just over half a mile from the trailhead. **Rialto Beach ★★**, just north of La Push, is another beautiful and rugged beach; it's reached from a turnoff east of La Push. From here, you can backpack north for 24 miles to Cape Alava; this is also a very popular spot for shorter day hikes. One mile up the beach is a spot called **Hole in the Wall**, where ceaseless wave action has bored a large tunnel through solid rock. On any of these beaches, keep an eye out for bald eagles, seals, and sea lions.

Roughly 8 miles south of Forks is the turnoff for the Hoh River Valley. It's 17 miles up this side road to the **Hoh Rain Forest Visitor Center** (☎ **360/374-6925**), campground, and trailheads. This valley receives an average of 140 inches of rain per year—and sometimes as much as 200 inches—making it the wettest region in the continental United States. At the visitor center, you can learn all about the natural forces that cause this tremendous rainfall.

To see the effect of so much rain on the landscape, walk the .8-mile **Hall of Mosses Trail**, where the trees (primarily Sitka spruce, western red cedar, and western hemlock) tower 200 feet tall. Here you'll also see big-leaf maple trees with limbs draped in thick carpets of mosses. If you're up for a longer walk, try the **Spruce Nature Trail**. If you've come with a backpack, there's no better way to see the park and its habitats than by hiking the **Hoh River Trail**, which is 17 miles long and leads to Glacier Meadows and Blue Glacier on the flanks of Mount Olympus. A herd of elk live in the Hoh Valley and can sometimes be seen along these trails.

On your way up the Hoh Valley, you might want to stop in at **Peak 6 Adventure Store**, 4883 Upper Hoh Rd. (☎ 360/374-5254), an outfitter that sells not only any outdoors gear you might have forgotten but also Native American baskets and art by local artists. Right beside this store, you'll find **Rainforest Paddlers** (☎ 866/457-8398 or 360/374-5254; www.rainforestpaddlers.com), which offers easy rafting trips on the Hoh River (\$44/person for a half-day and \$79 for a full day). You can also opt to do this trip in an inflatable kayak. The season runs from mid-February through September. More exciting rafting trips on the Elwha and Solduc rivers are also offered. This company also does guided sea-kayak paddles on the Quillayute Estuary. These latter trips cost \$59 to \$69 for adults and \$49 to \$59 for children ages 5 to 10. Tours last 3½ to 4½ hours. Kayaks and bikes can also be rented from this company.

Continuing south on U.S. 101, but before crossing the Hoh River, you'll come to a secondary road (Oil City Rd.) that heads west from the Hoh Oxbow campground. From the end of the road, it's a hike of less than a mile to a rocky beach at the **mouth of the Hoh River**. You're likely to see sea lions or harbor seals feeding just offshore here, and to the north are several haystack rocks that are nesting sites for numerous seabirds. Primitive camping is permitted on this beach, and from here backpackers can continue hiking for 17 miles north along a pristine wilderness of rugged headlands and secluded beaches.

South of the Hoh River off U.S. 101, you can drive to one of the **world's largest western red cedars**. Known as the Duncan cedar, this tree stands 178 feet tall and is almost 20 feet in diameter. You'll find the tree about 4 miles off the highway on Nolan Creek Road. Near milepost 170, watch for the signed road to the big cedar on the east side of U.S. 101. Follow this road to a signed right fork onto N1100, a second signed right fork, and, then, one more signed right turn.

U.S. 101 finally reaches the coast at **Ruby Beach**. This beach gets its name from its pink sand, which is composed of tiny grains of garnet. With its colorful sands, tidepools, sea stacks, and driftwood logs, Ruby Beach is the prettiest of the beaches along this stretch of coast.

For another 17 miles or so south of Ruby Beach, the highway parallels the wave-swept coastline. Along this stretch of highway are turnoffs for four beaches that have only numbers for names. The Beach 6 overlook is a good place to look for whales and sea lions and also to see the effects of erosion on this coast (the trail that used to lead down to the beach has been washed away). At low tide the northern beaches offer lots of tidepools to explore. Near the south end of this stretch of road, you'll find Kalaloch Lodge, which has a gas station, and the adjacent **Kalaloch Ranger Station** (☎ 360/962-2283), which is usually open from late May to late September, daily from 9am to 5pm.

After driving through a long stretch of clear-cut areas and tree farms, mostly on the Quinalt Indian Reservation, you will reach **Quinalt Lake**. Surrounded by forested mountains, this deep lake is the site of the rustic Lake Quinalt Lodge and offers boating and freshwater fishing opportunities, as well as more rainforests to explore on a couple of short trails (there are about 10 miles of trails on the south side of the lake). On the north shore of the lake, across from the Lake Quinalt Resort, a short trail leads to another of the world's largest western red cedar trees, and on the south shore, just past the Rain Forest Village Resort, you'll find another short trail that leads to the largest Sitka spruce in the world. This is also a good area for spotting Roosevelt elk.

For more information on guided tours and other outdoor recreational possibilities throughout the park's west side, see "Outdoor Adventures" earlier in this chapter.

Where to Stay IN THE FORKS AREA

The town of Forks has several inexpensive motels and is a good place to look for cheap lodgings if you happen to be out this way without a reservation. These include the **Forks Motel**, 351 S. Forks Ave. (☎ 800/544-3416 or 360/374-6243; www.forksmotel.com), which has a pool; and the **Pacific Inn Motel**, 352 S. Forks Ave. (☎ 800/235-7344 or 360/374-9400; www.pacificinnmotel.com).

Manitou Lodge ★ This secluded B&B on 10 private acres is only minutes from some of the most beautiful and remote beaches in the Northwest. The best room in the house is the Sacagawea, which has a fireplace and king-size bed. A separate cabin houses two of the rooms, and there are two tiny, and inexpensive cabins that share a bathroom. Guests tend to gravitate to the comfortable living room, where a huge stone fireplace is the center of attention (fires help chase away the chill and damp of this rainy corner of the Olympic Peninsula). Breakfasts are hearty.

813 Kilmer Rd., Forks, WA 98331. ☎ 360/374-6295. Fax 360/374-7495. www.manitoulodge.com. 9 units. \$60-\$99 double with shared bathroom; \$99-\$179 double with private bathroom. Rates include full breakfast. AE, MC, V. Take Wash. 110 west from north of Forks; turn right on Mora Rd. and then right on Kilmer Rd. Pets accepted (\$10/day). Children over age 5 welcome. *In room:* Hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

Miller Tree Inn ★ Just a few blocks east of downtown Forks, this large farmhouse B&B is surrounded by pastures and large old trees. With its classic styling, it feels very civilized compared to the wilds of the Olympic Peninsula and is a welcome sight at the end of the long drive out to Forks. Best of all, there are rooms with jetted tubs and fireplaces. One room also has a kitchenette (a definite bonus in this neck of the woods). There's nothing fussy or pretentious about this place—just a comfortable, friendly inn catering primarily to outdoors enthusiasts. At the end of a long day of hiking, the hot tub on the back deck is very welcome.

654 E. Division St. (P.O. Box 1565), Forks, WA 98331. ☎ 800/943-6563 or 360/374-6806. Fax 360/374-6807. www.millertreeinn.com. 8 units. June–Sept \$125–\$205 double; Oct–May \$105–\$175 double. 2-night minimum on holiday weekends. Rates include full breakfast. AE, DISC, MC, V. Pets accepted (\$10/day). **Amenities:** Jacuzzi. *In room:* No phone, free Wi-Fi.

Ocean Park Resort at La Push ★ Right on the sands of First Beach on the Quileute Indian Reservation, this rustic resort has a very wide range of accommodations. The basic cabins don't even have hot water, but the deluxe oceanfront cabins have the best rooms anywhere on this stretch of coast. These cabins have whirlpool

tubs, walls of glass, lots of cedar accents, full kitchens, and carved wood furniture with Northwest Coast Native American designs. These latter cabins make this place worth recommending. Other older units are passable at best and are most popular with surfers and fishermen.

330 Ocean Dr. (P.O. Box 67), La Push, WA 98350. ☎ **800/487-1267** or 360/374-5267. Fax 360/374-4153. <http://quileutenation.org/resort-home>. 70 units. \$80–\$160 double; \$80–\$280 cabin. 2-night minimum summer and weekends year-round. AE, DISC, MC, V. Pets accepted (\$10/day). **Amenities:** Bikes; exercise room; watersports equipment/boat rentals; free Wi-Fi. *In room:* Hair dryer, kitchen, no phone.

Olympic Suites Inn Just off U.S. 101 at the north end of Forks and back in the forest a bit, this modern motel is your best bet in the area if you don't want to stay at a B&B. The motel has the look and feel of an apartment complex (which it once was), and most of the rooms are suites with full kitchens, although there is an additional charge if you want to use the kitchen in your suite. The Calawah River and a boat ramp are just downhill from the motel. Some rooms have limited river views and others look into the forest.

800 Olympic Dr., Forks, WA 98331. ☎ **800/262-3433** or 360/374-5400. www.olympicsuitesinn.com. 32 units. Mid-June to mid-Sept \$89 double, \$94–\$129 suite; Sept and May to mid-June and mid-Sept to mid-Oct \$69 double, \$74–\$104 suite; mid-Oct to Apr \$59 double, \$59–\$84 suite. Children 4 and under stay free in parent's room. DISC, MC, V. Pets accepted (\$5/day). *In room:* TV, CD player, fridge, free Wi-Fi.

Quillayute River Resort ★★🎁 Set on the banks of the Quillayute River just a few miles from La Push and some of Olympic National Park's prettiest beaches, this former fishing lodge has been beautifully transformed into the area's most distinctive lodging. Accommodations here are two-room suites with wooden floors, Scandinavian-modern furnishings, and kitchenettes that even have vintage appliances for that 1950s retro feel. All the rooms have unobstructed views of the river. Be sure to bring some food with you so you won't have to leave the beautiful surroundings at the end of the day.

473 Mora Rd., Forks, WA 98331. ☎ **360/374-7447**. www.qriverresort.com. 5 units. Late May to Sept \$170 double; mid-Mar to late May and Oct \$145 double; Nov to mid-Mar \$110–\$145 double. Children 12 and under stay free in parent's room. 2-night minimum on holidays and weekends June–Aug. AE, DISC, MC, V. *In room:* TV/DVD, kitchen, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

BETWEEN FORKS & LAKE QUINALT

Kalaloch Lodge ★★ These are the national park's only oceanfront accommodations, comprising a rustic, cedar-shingled lodge and a cluster of cabins perched on a grassy bluff above the thundering Pacific Ocean. Wide sand beaches stretch north and south from the lodge, and huge driftwood logs are scattered at the base of the bluff like so many twigs. The rooms in the old lodge are the least expensive, and the ocean-view bluff cabins the most in demand. The log cabins across the street from the bluff cabins don't have the knockout views. For modern comforts, the Sea Crest House has motel-like rooms. The dining room serves three meals a day, and there's a casual coffee shop as well. The lodge also has a general store and a gas station. Because this place is popular throughout the year, you should make reservations well in advance.

157151 U.S. 101, Forks, WA 98331. ☎ **866/297-7367**. Fax 360/962-3391. www.visitkalaloch.com. 64 units. Late May to mid-Oct \$171–\$193 double, \$308 suite, \$213–\$311 bluff cabin, \$188–\$210 log cabin; lower rates other months. Children 12 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DISC, MC, V. Pets accepted in cabins (\$15/day). **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge. *In room:* Hair dryer, no phone.

IN THE LAKE QUINAUT AREA

Lake Quinault Lodge ★★ On the shore of Lake Quinault in the southwest corner of the park, this imposing grande dame of the Olympic Peninsula wears an ageless tranquillity. Huge old firs and cedars shade the rustic lodge, and Adirondack chairs on the deck command a view of the lawn. The accommodations include small rooms in the historic main lodge, modern rooms with TVs and small balconies, and rooms with fireplaces. These latter rooms were recently renovated, as were many of the lakeside rooms. The annex rooms are the least attractive, but they do have large bathtubs. The dining room has the most creative menu this side of the peninsula. For diversion, the lodge offers lawn games and rainforest tours.

345 S. Shore Rd. (P.O. Box 7), Quinault, WA 98575. ☎ **800/562-6672** or 360/288-2900. Fax 360/288-2901. www.visitlakequinault.com. 91 units. Mid-June to late Sept and winter holidays \$130–\$228 double, \$256 suite; late Sept to mid-June \$90–\$175 double, \$200 suite. Children 12 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DISC, MC, V. Pets accepted (\$15/day). **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge; children's programs; indoor pool; sauna; seasonal watersports equipment/boat rentals; free Wi-Fi. *In room:* Hair dryer, MP3 docking station, no phone.

Lake Quinault Resort ★★ 🏡 On the north shore of Lake Quinault, this little lodge offers some of the most comfortable and luxurious accommodations this side of the peninsula. Because this “resort” is on the sunny side of the lake, you can catch great sunsets after a day of hiking the rainforest or paddling a canoe around the lake. Adirondack chairs on the long covered veranda or out on the lakeside lawn are perfect places to kick back and enjoy those sunsets. Accommodations are in suites and town houses, and it is these latter units that are your best choice for comfortable, spacious accommodations. The one- and two-bedroom suites have kitchenettes and are good for families, but they are not as modern as the town houses.

314 N. Shore Rd., Amanda Park, WA 98526. ☎ **800/650-2362** or 360/288-2362. www.lakequinault.com. 9 units. Mid-June to mid-Oct \$169–\$199 double; mid-Oct to mid-June \$79–\$149 double. AE, DISC, MC, V. Children 15 and over allowed May–Oct; all ages allowed Nov–Apr. **Amenities:** Concierge; free Wi-Fi. *In room:* TV, fridge, hair dryer.

Rain Forest Resort Village ☺ Although the cabins and motel rooms here are, for the most part, pretty basic, they are comfortable enough (and actually as nice as some of the rooms at the Lake Quinault Lodge). All the cabins have fireplaces and some have either a kitchen or a Jacuzzi tub. The Parkside suites are the best units. Wide lawns slope down to the lake, and most rooms and cabins have water-views. A short trail leads from the resort to the world's largest Sitka spruce tree.

516 S. Shore Rd., Lake Quinault, WA 98575. ☎ **800/255-6936** or 360/288-2535. www.rainforestresort.com. 28 units. Mid-June to mid-Sept \$105–\$130 double, \$150–\$220 cabin; lower rates other months. Children 6 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DISC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge; 9-hole golf course. *In room:* TV.

Where to Dine

IN THE FORKS AREA

Although there are a handful of restaurants in Forks, none are really worth recommending. However, if you just want a burger, stop by **Sully's Drive-In**, 220 N. Forks Ave. (☎ **360/374-5075**), a classic burger joint popular with local high-school students. *Twilight* fans can get a Bella burger here. About halfway between Forks and La Push, you can get a good burger at **Three Rivers Resort**, 7765 La Push Rd.

(☎ 360/374-5300; www.forks-web.com/threeriver), which also plays up *Twilight* with its werewolf burger and a sign marking the treaty boundary separating vampires from werewolves.

River's Edge Restaurant AMERICAN Operated by the Quileute Tribal Enterprises in a renovated, converted old boathouse, this place has great water-views. While the food is not particularly memorable, you won't find anything better out this way. The lunch menu features sandwiches, burgers, tacos, and salads, and there's a minimal salad bar. At night, you can opt for fresh salmon, which sometimes comes from native fishermen who can often be seen unloading their catch from boats at the adjacent marina. Keep an eye out for sea lions, bald eagles, and brown pelicans.

41 Main St., La Push. (☎ 360/374-0777. Main courses \$5–\$21. MC, V. Daily 8am–8pm (in summer until 9pm).

BETWEEN FORKS & LAKE QUINAULT

South of Forks, your best bet is the dining room at **Kalaloch Lodge** (see above). If you happen to be hungry up the Hoh River, don't miss the juicy burgers at the **Hard Rain Cafe**, 5763 Upper Hoh Rd. (☎ 360/374-9288; www.hardraincafe.com).

IN THE LAKE QUINAULT AREA

Your best bet if you staying on Lake Quinalt is the **Roosevelt Room** at Lake Quinalt Lodge (see above). You can also get three meals a day at a walk-up window inside the **Quinalt Mercantile**, 352 S. Shore Rd. (☎ 360/288-2620), a meagerly stocked little store across the street from Lake Quinalt Lodge. Meals here are the most economical in the area.

Salmon House Restaurant AMERICAN With an excellent smoked salmon appetizer and four different salmon entrees available nightly, this restaurant with big windows overlooking the waters of Lake Quinalt more than lives up to its name. The salmon is caught by local Quinalt tribal fishermen and is as fresh as it gets. If you love salmon as much as I do, start with the smoked salmon and then order one of the four salmon entrees (baked, broiled, blackened, or with dill sauce). There are also a couple of steak options, chicken dishes, and a few pastas.

At Rain Forest Resort Village, 516 S. Shore Rd. (☎ 360/288-2535. www.rainforestresort.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$12–\$24. AE, DISC, MC, V. Mid-Feb to late Nov daily 4–9pm; late Nov to mid-Feb Thurs–Sat 4–9pm.

OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK EAST & HOOD CANAL

Hoodport: 35 miles NW of Olympia, 75 miles S of Port Townsend, 100 miles E of Lake Quinalt

The east side of Olympic National Park is the least visited side of the park. There are no wild beaches, no roads up into alpine meadows, no rainforests—and no crowds of tourists. However, there are many miles of rugged hiking trails that lead intrepid hikers to some of the best mountaintop viewpoints on the peninsula. There are also rushing rivers, state parks, and the wide salt waters of Hood Canal, which isn't a canal at all, but rather a fiordlike body of water off Puget Sound. Long, narrow, and hook-shaped, Hood Canal has miles of pristine shoreline and has long been a popular spot for summer homes. Fishing and clamming are among the most popular activities along Hood Canal.

Essentials

VISITOR INFORMATION For information on hiking in the area, contact **Hood Canal Ranger District**, 295142 U.S. 101 S. (P.O. Box 280), Quilcene, WA 98376 (☎ 360/765-2200; www.fs.fed.us/r6/olympic).

FESTIVALS The **Olympic Music Festival**, 7360 Center Rd. (☎ 360/732-4800; www.olympicmusicfestival.org), held in an old barn near the town of Quilcene, is the area's most important music festival. This series of weekend concerts takes place between mid-June and mid-September.

Driving the Shores of Hood Canal

In Union, at the south end of Hood Canal, you can rent kayaks from **Kayak Hood Canal** (☎ 360/898-2628; www.hoodcanaladventures.com), and paddle around in the vicinity of the luxurious Alderbrook Resort. This company rents kayaks at both the Hood Canal Marina, 5101 E. Wash. 106, and at Alderbrook Resort, 10 E. Alderbrook Dr. Kayaks rent for \$30 to \$45 for 1 hour or \$80 to \$125 for the whole day. This company also rents many other types of boats, as well as bicycles. Guided tours are also available.

In Hoodsport, a few miles north of Union, you can pick up some locally made wine at the **Hoodsport Winery**, 23501 N. U.S. 101 (☎ 800/580-9894 or 360/877-9894; www.hoodsport.com), best known in Washington for its fruit wines, including raspberry, blackberry, and rhubarb wine. The tasting room is open daily, 10am to 6pm.

If the tides are right, there's no red-tide warning in effect, the season is open, and you've got the proper fishing license, you can dig for clams on the wide beach at **Dosewallips State Park** (☎ 360/902-8844), which has a campground. The park is 25 miles north of Hoodsport on U.S. 101.

If you're a gardener and happen to be in the area in late spring or early summer, be sure to stop in at **Whitney Gardens & Nursery**, 306264 U.S. 101, Brinnon (☎ 800/952-2404 or 360/796-4411; www.whitneygardens.com), which has been in business for more than 50 years and is considered the premier rhododendron garden and nursery in the Northwest. The springtime floral displays produced by the gardens' 2,500 rhodies are enchanting.

Hiking Olympic Peninsula East

Off U.S. 101 south of Port Townsend are several dead-end roads that lead to trailheads in Olympic National Forest. These trailheads are the starting points for many of the best day hikes on the Olympic Peninsula and lead into several different wilderness areas, as well as into Olympic National Park. Many of these hikes lead to the summits of mountains with astounding views across the Olympic Mountains and Puget Sound.

West of Hoodsport are the popular **Lake Cushman** and the trailheads for the 2-mile round-trip hike along the scenic **Staircase Trail**, the 4.5-mile round-trip hike to the summit of **Mount Ellinor**, and the 16-mile round-trip hike to the **Flapjack Lakes**, which are a very popular overnight destination. Up the Hamma Hamma River Road, just north of Eldon, you'll find the trailhead for the hike to the beautiful **Lena Lakes** area. Two miles south of Quilcene, you'll find Penny Creek/Big Quilcene River Road, which leads to the trailheads for both **Marmot Pass** and

Mount Townsend—two of the best day-hike destinations on the peninsula. Both of these trails are between 10- and 11-mile round-trip hikes. Because floods frequently wash out trail bridges and sections of access road and trails, you should always check to see if a trail is open before heading out on a hike.

Where to Stay & Dine

Alderbrook Resort & Spa ★★☆☆☺ This modern lodge on the southern shore of Hood Canal is an absolute classic. Deliciously luxurious, yet with rugged mountain-lodge styling, it conjures up simple lakeside summer camps of the past. It is this melding of classic comfort and contemporary luxury that makes this one of my favorite lodges in the state. Cedar shingles, log beams, slate floors, and big walls of glass all add up to rustic grandeur. Sure, it's a long way from most tourist attractions, but the setting is so picture-perfect and the lodge so classic that you can't help thinking this is what national park lodges should be like. Rooms have a classic beach-cottage feel and are decorated with old Hood Canal photos. Many have cozy window seats overlooking the water, but my favorite rooms are those with balconies. Families should consider the cottages.

10 E. Alderbrook Dr., Union, WA 98592. ☎ **360/898-2200**. Fax 360/898-4610. www.alderbrookresort.com. 93 units. Summer \$170-\$399 double, \$240-\$390 suite, \$260-\$529 cottage; other months \$120-\$240 double, \$190-\$290 suite, \$210-\$330 cottage. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Pets accepted (\$25/day). **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; lounge; bikes; exercise room and access to nearby health club; 18-hole golf course; Jacuzzi; indoor pool; room service; sauna; small spa; 2 tennis courts; watersports equipment/boat rentals. *In room:* A/C, TV/DVD, CD player, fridge, hair dryer, kitchen (in cottages), minibar, free Wi-Fi.

SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON

Southwest Washington, which I have defined as the area west of I-5 and south of U.S. 12, is sparsely populated, and its economy is heavily dependent on the timber industry. However, the region also has the state's busiest beach resort areas—the Long Beach Peninsula and the Central Coast area. While the often-overlooked city of Vancouver, which shares a name with the far more famous Canadian city to the north, is little more than a bedroom community for Portland, it abounds in pioneer history.

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Aside from two last rocky headlands at the mouth of the Columbia River, the coastline of southwest Washington is a tame strip of sandy beaches and wind-swept dunes. Grays Harbor and Willapa Bay divide this stretch of coast into three distinct strips of sand: North Beach, South Beach, and the Long Beach Peninsula. These three strands have far more in common with one another than with the wild, rock-strewn beaches to the north. Although they are far less spectacular than those to the north, the abundance of tourist accommodations along this coastal stretch makes these the favored beach-vacation destinations of many Washingtonians.

Summers along the coast tend to be short and often wet or foggy, and the coastal waters are too cold and rough for swimming (although surfing is fairly popular). Consequently, the traditional beach pursuits of swimming and sunning aren't high on vacation priority lists. Instead, these beaches rely on other activities to attract visitors. All up and down this coast, digging for razor clams is a popular pastime, though open seasons are short and as closely regulated as the salmon-fishing seasons. The towns of Westport, at the north end of the South Beach area, and Ilwaco, at the south end of the Long Beach Peninsula, have become the region's main charter-boat ports, with Westport charter boats also doing double duty as whale-watching excursion boats. South Beach and the Long Beach Peninsula are also among the few regions in the country where cranberries are grown commercially. Long Beach, a beach resort town for more than 100 years, bills itself as the kite-flying capital of America and boasts the longest drivable beach in the country. While vacationing families fuel the local economy, oysters still reign supreme in Willapa Bay, one of the cleanest estuaries in the country.

This coast is also home to a few pockets of wildness. The Willapa National Wildlife Refuge and the Long Beach Peninsula's Leadbetter Point together host a vast number of bird species each year. Combined with the Grays Harbor National Wildlife Refuge to the north, these areas offer some of the best bird-watching in the state.

THE CENTRAL COAST: OCEAN SHORES TO WILLAPA BAY

67 miles W of Olympia, 67 miles S of Lake Quinault, 92 miles N of Long Beach

Washington's central coast, composed of the North and South Beach areas and the Grays Harbor towns of Aberdeen and Hoquiam, is something of an anomaly. Though far from being the most scenic stretch of Washington coast, it has the state's most popular beach destination, Ocean Shores, a modern beach development with numerous oceanfront hotels and hundreds of vacation homes. Although not as scenic as the Olympic Peninsula coastline, this area is easy to access from the cities of Puget Sound—Ocean Shores is less than an hour east of Olympia—and is a popular weekend getaway spot.

The most scenic stretch of this coastline is known as North Beach, the beach north of the mouth of Grays Harbor. The farther north you go on this stretch of coast, the more spectacular is the scenery, even rivaling the beauty of the Olympic Peninsula's shoreline in some places. The South Beach area, so named because it occupies the south side of Grays Harbor, is an 18-mile stretch of flat beach. At the north end of this section of coast is the town of Westport, Washington's busiest sportfishing and whale-watching port. At the south end lies Willapa Bay, across the mouth of which lies the northern tip of the Long Beach Peninsula.

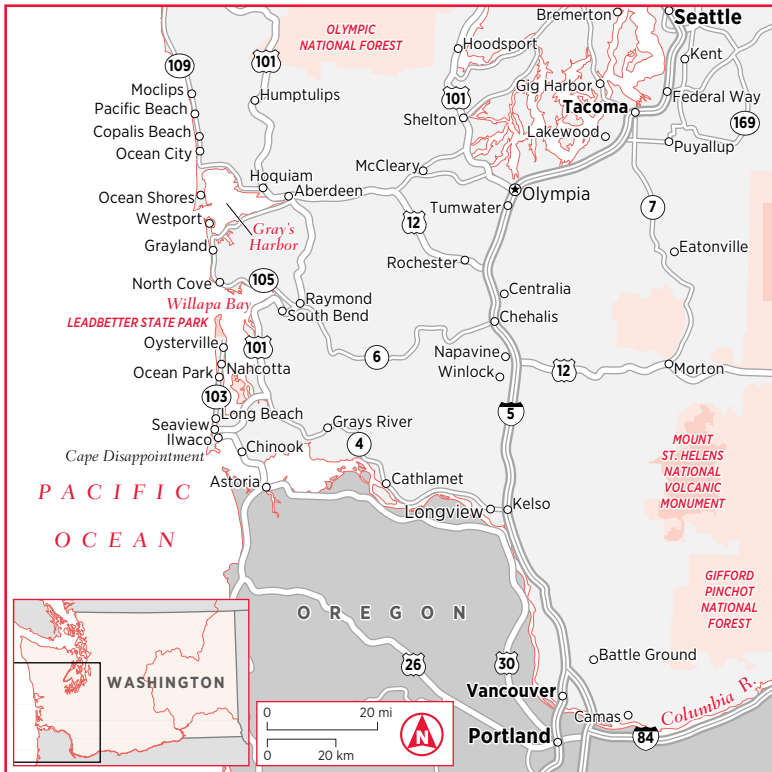
Separating North Beach and South Beach is the large bay known as Grays Harbor, on whose shores are the two lumber-mill towns of Aberdeen and Hoquiam. These towns were once some of the most prosperous in the state, as their stately Victorian mansions and imposing commercial buildings attest. Unfortunately, they have yet to benefit from the prosperity that has overtaken the Puget Sound region, and historic commercial buildings stand empty and abandoned. Still, history is to be seen in these towns, though most people visit this region for the beaches, fishing, and clamming.

Essentials

GETTING THERE U.S. 12 and Wash. 8 together connect Aberdeen with Olympia to the east, while U.S. 101 connects Aberdeen with Forks and Port Angeles to the north and Long Beach and Astoria to the south. Ocean Shores and the North Beach area are 20 miles west of Aberdeen on Wash. 109. The South Beach area is 20 miles west of Aberdeen on Wash. 105.

VISITOR INFORMATION For more information on this area, contact **Grays Harbor Tourism**, P.O. Box 1229, Elma, WA 98541 (☎ 800/621-9625; www.graysharbortourism.com); **Ocean Shores/North Beach Chamber of Commerce**, 873 Point Brown Ave. NW (P.O. Box 382), Ocean Shores, WA 98569 (☎ 800/762-3224 or 360/289-2451; www.oceanshores.org); the **Westport-Grayland Chamber**

Southwest Washington



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SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON

The Central Coast: Ocean Shores to Willapa Bay

of Commerce, 2985 S. Montesano Ave. (P.O. Box 306), Westport, WA 98595 (☎ 800/345-6223 or 360/268-9422; www.westportgrayland-chamber.org); or the Willapa Harbor Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 1249, South Bend, WA 98586 (☎ 360/942-5419; www.willapaharbor.org).

Learning About the Region's History

Aberdeen and Hoquiam together comprise the largest urban area on the Washington coast and have long been dependent on the lumber industry that once made this a very prosperous part of the state. If you're interested in the region's history, stop by the **Polson Museum**, 1611 Riverside Ave., Hoquiam (☎ 360/533-5862; www.polsonmuseum.org), which has rooms full of antique furnishings and also houses various collections of dolls, vintage clothing, Native American artifacts, and logging memorabilia. The museum is open April through December, Wednesday to Saturday from 11am to 4pm, and Sunday from noon to 4pm; in other months, it's open Saturday and Sunday from noon to 4pm. Admission is \$4 for adults, \$2 for students, and \$1 for children 11 and under. The **Aberdeen Museum of History**, 111 E.



Pirates of the Caribbean North?

The wind in the rigging, the smell of the salt air. If you long for the life of a pirate, then plan to visit Gray's Harbor on one of the rare occasions when the *Lady Washington* is here in her home port of Aberdeen. This tall ship, a replica of one of the ships Capt. Robert Gray sailed when he first explored the Northwest coast in 1788, was used in the *Pirates of the Caribbean* movies. To find out when the *Lady Washington* will be

in port, contact the **Grays Harbor Historical Seaport Authority**, 712 Hagara St. (☎ 800/200-5239; www.historicalseaport.org). When in port, dockside tours are scheduled, and 3-hour sail excursions are also sometimes available. A second tall ship, the *Hawaiian Chieftain*, often accompanies the *Lady Washington* and also offers tours and excursions.

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The Central Coast: Ocean Shores to Willapa Bay

Third St., Aberdeen (☎ 360/533-1976; www.aberdeen-museum.org), has similar displays and is open Tuesday to Saturday from 10am to 5pm (Mar–Oct, also open Sun noon–4pm); admission is by donation.

If you aren't here during the whale-watching season, you can at least have a look at a couple of whale skeletons at the **Westport Maritime Museum**, 2201 Westhaven Dr., Westport (☎ 360/268-0078; www.westportwa.com/museum). Housed in a 1939 Coast Guard station, the museum contains Coast Guard exhibits, displays on early pioneer life in the area, and, in a glass-enclosed building outside, the skeletons of a minke whale, a gray whale, and part of a blue whale. April through September, the museum is open daily from 10am to 4pm; October through March, it's open Friday to Monday from noon to 4pm. Admission is \$5 for adults and \$2 for children ages 5 to 14, free for children 4 and under. Nearby, you'll find the **Grays Harbor Lighthouse**, which was built in 1898 and is the tallest lighthouse in Washington. Tours of the lighthouse are operated by the Westport Maritime Museum and cost \$5. The lighthouse is open Friday through Monday from noon to 4pm (closed Dec–Jan). From the museum, you can walk the Maritime History Trail to reach the lighthouse.

Whale-Watching & Other Outdoor Activities

The stretch of coast known as North Beach begins in the vacation and retirement community of Ocean Shores and stretches north for 30 miles to Taholah, on the Quinault Indian Reservation. In the southern section of North Beach, in Ocean Shores, low wind-swept dunes covered with beach grass back the wide, sandy beach. Kite flying and horseback riding are among the favorite activities here.

The 18 miles of coastline between Westport and Tokeland is called both South Beach and the Cranberry Coast, and along this stretch of beach are plenty of places to access the sand and surf. Four state parks provide the best facilities and easiest access. **Twin Harbors State Park** is 2 miles south of Westport and has more than 3 miles of beach. **Grayland Beach State Park** is south of the town of Grayland and has a campground and more than a mile of beach. Both of these parks have interpretive trails, picnic areas, and campgrounds. Just outside the marina area of Westport is **Westhaven State Park**, and just south of town is **Westport Light**

State Park, where you'll find the popular Dune Trail, a paved 1.3-mile concrete boardwalk that parallels the beach and links Westport and Westhaven state parks. These latter two parks are day-use areas only.

Each year between February and May, gray whales migrating to the calving grounds off Baja California, Mexico, pass by the Washington coast. The whales sometimes come so close to the mouth of Grays Harbor that they can be seen from the observation tower at the marina in Westport. However, for a closer look, you might want to head out on a **whale-watching** boat trip. Deep Sea Charters, 2319 N. Westhaven Dr., Westport (☎ 800/562-0151 or 360/268-9300; www.deepseacharters.net) has trips in March and April, and rates are \$35 for adults and \$25 for children.

All along the South Beach area between Grayland and Tokeland, you'll see **cranberry bogs** beside the highway. The cranberry harvest begins around Labor Day and continues on through October. To harvest the tart berries, the bogs are flooded, which causes the ripe berries to float on the surface of the water, where they can be easily scooped up mechanically.

Each year in late April and early May, Bowerman Basin in **Grays Harbor National Wildlife Refuge** ★ (☎ 360/753-9467; www.fws.gov/graysharbor) becomes a staging ground for tens of thousands of Arctic-bound shorebirds. This is one of the largest gatherings of such birds on the West Coast and one of the state's biggest annual events for bird-watchers. If you're a birder, don't miss this impressive event. The refuge is adjacent to the Aberdeen/Hoquiam Airport on the west side of Hoquiam.

Driving Around Willapa Bay

Though it's only about 5 miles across the mouth of Willapa Bay to the northern tip of the Long Beach Peninsula, it's about 85 miles around to the town of Long Beach by road. Along the way you skirt the shores of Willapa Bay. There aren't too many towns on this bay, which is why this is one of the least polluted estuaries in the country and is a great place to raise oysters. Punctuating the miles of unspoiled scenery are oyster docks and processing plants.

As you pass through the town of Raymond, keep an eye out for the 200 steel-plate sculptures that comprise the **Raymond Wildlife-Heritage Sculpture Corridor**. The majority of these sculptures are silhouettes that can be seen along U.S. 101 in the most unexpected places. Included are sculptures of Native Americans, modern sea kayakers, bicyclists, and dozens of wild animals. Also here in Raymond, you'll find the **Willapa Seaport Museum** ★, 310 Alder St. (☎ 360/942-4149; www.willapaseaport.org), a fascinating little museum dedicated to all things nautical. This is the best-designed museum on the coast and is well worth a visit. The museum is open Wednesday through Saturday from noon to 4pm; admission is by donation.

Next door to the Willapa Seaport Museum, the **Northwest Carriage Museum**, 314 Alder St. (☎ 360/942-4150; www.nwcarriagemuseum.org), is home to a large collection of immaculately restored antique carriages. Among the carriages on display are a wicker carriage, a hearse, and a carriage that was used in *Gone With the Wind*. For the most part, these are luxury carriages once owned by the wealthy. The museum is open Wednesday to Saturday from 10am to 4pm (Apr–Sept, it's also open Sun noon–4pm). Admission is \$3 for adults, \$1 for children ages 6 to 18, and free for children 5 and under.

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Where to Stay

IN OCEAN SHORES & THE NORTH BEACH AREA

If you can't get a room at any of the hotels listed below, contact **Ocean Shores Reservations** (☎ 800/562-8612; www.oceanshoresreservation.com), which handles reservations at many area hotels, motels, resorts, and condominiums.

Ocean Crest Resort ★★ 😊 You simply won't find a more spectacular spot anywhere on the Washington coast. Perched high on a forested bluff and straddling a forested ravine, this hotel seems poised to go plummeting into the ocean below. The accommodations vary from small studios with no view to two-bedroom apartments with full kitchens and fireplaces. However, my vote for best rooms goes to the large, third-floor, oceanview studios. These have cathedral ceilings, fireplaces, and balconies. The hotel's restaurant has one of the resort's best views, and the adjacent lounge is a great spot for a sunset drink. In addition to other amenities, the resort also has a playground. A wooden staircase winds down through the ravine to the beach.

4651 Wash. 109 (P.O. Box 7), Modlips, WA 98562. ☎ 800/684-8439 or 360/276-4465. Fax 360/276-4149. www.oceancrestresort.com. 45 units. \$69–\$189 double. Children 12 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DISC, MC, V. Pets accepted (\$18/day). **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge; health club; Jacuzzi; indoor pool; sauna; free Wi-Fi. *In room:* TV, hair dryer.

Quinault Beach Resort and Casino ★★ This large casino resort is a bit north of the rest of the Ocean Shores developments and thus feels a bit more secluded. The most luxurious resort anywhere on the Washington coast, its modern Northwest lodge styling gives it a far more contemporary feel than other area resorts. However, despite the attractive design and the miles of ocean beaches, the in-house casino remains the main attraction. Don't worry, though—even if you aren't a fan of slot machines, you can actually stay here and almost not even notice the casino. All rooms have gas fireplaces and are designed so that the fireplace separates the bed from the seating area.

78 Wash. 115 (P.O. Box 2107), Ocean Shores, WA 98569. ☎ 888/461-2214 or 360/289-9466. www.quinaultbeachresort.com. 150 units. \$89–\$179 double; \$349–\$549 suite. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; lounge; concierge; exercise room; Jacuzzi; indoor pool; room service; spa. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

By some accounts, one out of every six oysters consumed in the United States comes from Willapa Bay, and in the town of **South Bend**, oystering reaches its zenith. If you just must have some oysters while in town, drop by **East Point Seafood**, 313 E. Robert Bush Dr., South Bend (☎ 888/317-8459 or 360/875-5419; www.eastpointseafood.com), at the north end of town.

South Bend's other claim to fame is its **county courthouse**. Back in 1893 it took a possibly rigged vote and an armed force to wrest the title of county seat from Oysterville, across the bay on the Long Beach Peninsula. Construction of the new courthouse began 18 years later, and upon completion, the imposing structure was dubbed a “gilded palace of extravagance.” The majestic courthouse, quite out of place in such a quiet backwater, stands on a hill overlooking town. The copper dome is lined inside with stained glass, and murals decorate interior walls. It's definitely worth a look.

IN THE SOUTH BEACH AREA

Tokeland Hotel ★ 🏠 On the north shore of Willapa Bay, the Tokeland Hotel has been welcoming guests since 1889. With its remote setting and simple interior decor, it feels like a genuine step back in time. Lawns surround the wood-frame inn, and beyond these lies the water. The first floor is taken up by a large open lobby and dining room, off which is a small library with a fireplace. Up on the second floor, rooms are arranged on either side of a long hall and have painted wood floors. Antique furnishings lend an air of authenticity to the inn. Two of the shared bathrooms have claw-foot tubs. The inn's moderately priced dining room is the most popular restaurant for miles around and is particularly noteworthy for its Sunday dinner, which includes a delicious cranberry pot roast (daily 8am–8pm; winter hours vary).

100 Hotel Rd., Tokeland, WA 98590. ☎ **360/267-7006**. Fax 360/267-7006. www.tokelandhotel.com. 18 units, all with shared bathroom. \$65–\$95 double (lower rates in winter). AE, DISC, MC, V. Pets accepted (free). **Amenities:** Restaurant. *In room:* No phone, free Wi-Fi.

Where to Dine

IN THE OCEAN SHORES & NORTH BEACH AREA

The best restaurants in this region are the dining rooms at the Ocean Crest Resort and the Quinault Beach Resort (see above for details).

Front Street Café ★ AMERICAN When you come around a curve on a remote and little-visited stretch of the Washington coast, and spot this classic old red clapboard cafe building, you might think you're hallucinating. The beautiful New England village behind the cafe might suggest that too much rain has driven you around the bend, but in fact, it's all real. The village of Seabrook is a gorgeous modern rendition of a 19th-century New England village, and the Front Street Café is the village eatery. Don't pass it by; there's nothing else like it on the Washington coast. The award-winning clam chowder, made with local razor clams, should not be missed. Razor clams are also available as an entree at dinner. The menu isn't fancy (burgers, sandwiches, fish and chips), but you can get a steak or ratatouille at dinner.

Front St., Seabrook. ☎ **360/276-4884**. www.frontstreetcafe.wordpress.com. Reservations accepted for parties of 8 or more. Main courses \$7–\$12 lunch, \$10–\$16 dinner. AE, DISC, MC, V. Sun–Wed 10am–4pm; Thurs–Sat 10am–10pm.

Galway Bay IRISH There aren't too many places in Washington where you can get a Limerick sausage roll, a Forfar bridie, or a chicken-and-mushroom pasty, so it is a bit surprising that all of these traditional Irish dishes can be had at this pub in Ocean Shores. On cold, rainy days, the potato soup, white Irish stew, and beef-in-Guinness stew all hit the spot. Wash it all down with a pint of Guinness or a Washington microbrew. There's live music at night on the weekends.

880 Point Brown Ave. NE., Ocean Shores. ☎ **360/289-2300**. www.galwaybayirishpub.com. Main courses \$7–\$30. AE, DISC, MC, V. Daily 11am–10pm.

IN THE SOUTH BEACH AREA

Tokeland Hotel Dining Room ★ 🏠 AMERICAN With its painted wood floors and wall of old wavy-glass windows looking out to the salt marsh, this restaurant has a more historical feel than almost any restaurant in the state. If you're anywhere on the central coast, be sure to have a meal here. Sunday suppers of cranberry pot roast are legendary, but any day of the week, you can get a sandwich made from the same

tender pot roast. Plenty of good seafood dishes are made with local fish and shellfish. Also, save room for some blackberry cobbler.

100 Hotel Rd., Tokeland. ☎ **360/267-7006**. www.tokelandhotel.com. Main courses \$7–\$13 lunch, \$13–\$23 dinner. AE, DISC, MC, V. Tues–Thurs 8am–2pm; Fri–Sat 8am–8pm; Sun 8am–6pm.

THE LONG BEACH PENINSULA

110 miles NW of Portland, 180 miles SW of Seattle, 80 miles W of Longview/Kelso

With 28 uninterrupted miles of sand, the Long Beach Peninsula, a long, narrow strip of forests and sand dunes, claims to be the world's longest beach open to vehicles. For more than a century, all those miles of sand have been attracting vacationers from the Portland area and parts of southwestern Washington, and today the Long Beach Peninsula is Washington's most developed stretch of coast. There are dozens of resorts, motels, rental cabins, vacation homes, and campgrounds up and down the peninsula.

Each of the peninsula's towns has its own distinct personality. In Seaview, there are restored Victorian homes. In Long Beach, go-cart tracks and family amusements hold sway. Klipsan Beach and Ocean Park are quiet retirement communities, while Nahcotta is still an active oystering port, albeit in a very attractive setting. Last is the community of Oysterville, a National Historic District of restored homes and hands-down the prettiest little village on the peninsula (and perhaps in the entire state).

While kite flying, horseback riding, and beachcombing are the most popular beach activities here, digging for razor clams ranks right up there, too. Razor clams (and the area's oysters) also show up on plenty of area restaurant menus. Bivalves aren't the only seafood that attracts folks here, either. In Ilwaco, south of Long Beach, a fleet of charter fishing boats can take you out in search of salmon, tuna, or bottom fish.

Essentials

GETTING THERE The Long Beach Peninsula begins just off U.S. 101 in southwest Washington. U.S. 101 leads north to Aberdeen and south to Astoria, Oregon. Wash. 4 leads to Long Beach from Longview.

GETTING AROUND **Pacific Transit System** (☎ 360/642-9418; www.pacifictransit.org) operates public buses that serve the area from Astoria in the south to Aberdeen in the north.

VISITOR INFORMATION Contact the **Long Beach Peninsula Visitors Bureau**, 3914 Pacific Way (P.O. Box 562), Long Beach, WA 98631 (☎ 800/451-2542 or 360/642-2400; www.funbeach.com), which has its visitor center at the intersection of U.S. 101 and Pacific Avenue in Seaview.

FESTIVALS Annual events on the Long Beach Peninsula include the **Northwest Garlic Festival** on the third weekend in June, the **SandSations** sand-sculptures tournament in late July, the **Washington State International Kite Festival** in mid-August, the **Cranberrian Fair** in early October, and the **Water Music Festival** (chamber music) in mid-October.

Seeing the Sights

Fort Columbia State Park (☎ 360/642-3029; www.parks.wa.gov), a former military base that guarded the mouth of the Columbia River from 1896 until the end

of World War II, is 9 miles east of Ilwaco on Wash. 103 near the Astoria-Megler Bridge, which is a 4½-mile-long span that connects Washington with Oregon. The views from the park's wooded bluff are breathtaking, and there are picnic tables from which you can soak up the views. The park also has 5 miles of hiking trails. Its 1903-vintage buildings have been restored and house an interpretive center with displays on the history of the fort. There are also exhibits on the local Chinook Indian tribe. July and August, an interpretive center is open Sunday through Thursday from 11am to 4pm and Friday and Saturday from 11am to 5pm (in Sept, the center is open Fri–Mon from 11am–4pm), and the old commanding officer's home is open in July and August Friday through Monday from 11am to 4pm. There are also a couple of vacation rental homes here. For reservations, contact Washington State Parks (☎ 888/226-7688; www.parks.wa.gov/reservations).

The **Columbia Pacific Heritage Museum**, 115 SE Lake St., Ilwaco (☎ 360/642-3446), has displays on the history of southwest Washington and an excellent collection of Native American baskets and other artifacts. A railroad exhibit has a model railroad of Long Beach's Clamshell Railroad, with an actual passenger car. The museum is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10am to 4pm and Sunday from noon to 4pm. Admission is \$5 for adults, \$4 for seniors, \$3 for youths 12 to 17, and free for children 11 and under.

Anchoring the south end of the peninsula is forested **Cape Disappointment State Park ★★** (☎ 360/902-8844; www.parks.wa.gov), at the mouth of the Columbia River. The park is a former military installation that once guarded the river mouth, and many bunkers and batteries are still visible. Also within the boundaries of the park are the North Head and Cape Disappointment lighthouses. The North Head Lighthouse is open for tours (\$2.50/adult; call for hours). This lighthouse is subject to some of the highest winds on the West Coast—as high as 160 mph. The Cape Disappointment Lighthouse was built in 1856 and is the oldest lighthouse on the West Coast. The park is also home to the **Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center ★★** (☎ 360/642-3029), which chronicles the 1805-to-1806 journey of the two famous explorers; it's open daily from 10am to 5pm, and admission is \$5 for adults and \$2.50 for children 7 to 17. Cape Disappointment, here in the park, was the end of the westward trail for Lewis and Clark. The park has several picnic areas, hiking trails, a campground, and **Waikiki Beach**, the prettiest little beach between here and Moclips. This tiny cove backed by steep cliffs is named for several Hawaiian sailors who lost their lives nearby.

At Waikiki Beach, you'll find one of the park's two **Confluence Project** installations by celebrated artist Maya Lin. The installations were envisioned as part of the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark expedition. The Cedar Circle, in a grove of trees near the beach, is a circle of four large pieces of driftwood that were found nearby. On the Columbia River side of Cape Disappointment, adjacent to the park's boat ramp, stands Lin's basalt fish-cleaning station, which is engraved with a Chinook origin legend. These installations are part of a larger project that includes installations at six other locations along Lewis and Clark's route. For more information, visit www.confluenceproject.org.

In the past 300 years, more than 2,000 vessels and 700 lives have been lost in the treacherous waters at the mouth of the Columbia River. Consequently, the U.S. Coast Guard has its **National Motor Life Boat School** here. Lifeboat drills can



Believe It or Not!

Children and other fans of the bizarre won't want to miss **Marsh's Free Museum ★**, 409 S. Pacific Ave., Long Beach (☎ 360/642-2188; www.marshsfreemuseum.com), a beachy gift shop filled with all manner of antique arcade games, oddities a la Ripley's Believe It

or Not!, and, best of all, Jake the alligator man, who has been made famous by tabloids that rank this half-man, half-alligator creature right up there with aliens, Bigfoot, and the latest Elvis sighting.

sometimes be observed from observation platforms on the North Jetty. This jetty, completed in 1917, was built to improve the channel across the Columbia Bar. A side effect of the 2-mile-long jetty was the creation of a much wider beach to the north. This widening of the beach accounts for the town of Long Beach's current distance from the waves.

If you're a kite flyer, definitely plan to visit the **World Kite Museum ★**, 303 Sid Snyder Dr., Long Beach (☎ 360/642-4020; www.worldkitemuseum.com), which has displays on kites from around the world. May through September, it's open daily from 11am to 5pm; October through April, it's open Friday through Tuesday from 11am to 5pm; admission is \$5 for adults, \$4 for seniors, and \$3 for children.

Toward the north end of the peninsula, **Oysterville ★★**, an old oystering community that is a National Historic District, is the quaintest village on the peninsula. Old homes with spacious lawns cling to the edge of the marsh, creating a timeless scene. Oysterville's heyday came during the California gold rush, when the village shipped tons of oysters to San Francisco, where people paid as much as \$50 a plate for fresh oysters. Today, Oysterville is a sleepy little community of restored homes. The town's white clapboard church hosts occasional music performances. **Oysterville Sea Farms** (☎ 360/665-6585; www.willabay.com) has a seafood and cranberry-products shop on the waterfront at the north end of the village.

The peninsula is also a major producer of cranberries, and if you take a drive down almost any side road north of Long Beach, you'll pass acres of **cranberry bogs**. If you're curious about how cranberries are grown, visit the **Pacific Coast Cranberry Research Foundation Museum ★**, 2907 Pioneer Rd., Long Beach (☎ 360/642-5553; www.cranberrymuseum.com), which is located on a demonstration cranberry farm and has exhibits on all stages of cranberry growing, both past and present. It's open from April to December 15, daily from 10am to 5pm. Admission is free.

Area Activities: Kite Flying, Bird-Watching & Clamming

Active vacations are the norm here on the Long Beach Peninsula, with plenty of activities to keep you busy. However, you won't be doing much swimming in the ocean. Although it gets warm enough in summer to lie on the beach, the waters never warm up much. Add to this the unpredictable currents, riptides, undertows, and heavy surf, and you have an ocean that's just not safe for swimming.

Instead of swimming, the beach's number-one activity is **kite flying**. Strong winds blow year-round across the Long Beach Peninsula, and with 28 miles of

beach, you won't have to worry about kite-eating trees. You'll find several kite shops in Long Beach. Beachcombing is another very popular Long Beach activity. The most sought-after treasures are hand-blown-glass fishing floats used by Japanese fishermen.

Beach access is available up and down the peninsula, but the best beaches are at the peninsula's various state parks. The beaches of **Cape Disappointment State Park**, at the south end of the peninsula, are the most dramatic, while those at **Leadbetter Point State Park**, at the north end of the peninsula, are the most secluded. Just north of Ocean Park, there is beach access at the small **Pacific Pines State Park**, and south of Ocean Park, additional beach access at the west section of **Loomis Lake State Park**. This latter park is named for a popular fishing lake in the park's east section.

If you've ever dreamed of riding a horse down the beach, you can make your dream come true here in Long Beach. On Sid Snyder Drive, just in from the beach, you'll find both **Skippers Equestrian Center** (☎ 360/642-3676; <http://skippers.equestrian.tripod.com>) and **Back Country Wilderness Outfitters** (☎ 360/642-2576; www.backcountryoutfit.com). A 1-hour ride will cost you \$25.

Walking the dunes is a favorite Long Beach pastime. Between 17th Street South and 26th Street North, a pleasant 2-mile paved stretch of the **Discovery Trail** parallels the beach. The trail winds through grassy dunes that separate the town of Long Beach from the stretch of sand for which the town is named. For a half-mile, the Discovery Trail parallels an elevated boardwalk that provides views of the beach and ocean over the tops of the dunes. In celebration of the Lewis and Clark bicentennial in 2005, the trail was extended from Long Beach south to Ilwaco, a distance of 8 miles. Along the stretch of trail in Long Beach are monuments that were erected to commemorate Lewis and Clark's long-ago visit to this area: a whale skeleton, William Clark with a 10-foot sturgeon, a basalt column, and a bronze statue of the gnarled tree on which Lewis and Clark carved their names.

If you'd just like to get away from the crowds and find your own piece of isolated shoreline, head to Leadbetter Point at the peninsula's northern tip. Here you'll find both **Leadbetter Point State Park** and a portion of the **Willapa National Wildlife Refuge Complex** (☎ 360/484-3482; www.fws.gov/willapa). This area is well known for its variety of birds, and more than 100 species have been seen, including the snowy plover that nests at the point. Because the plovers nest on the sand, a portion of the point is closed to all visitors from March through September. However, you can still hike the trails, use the beach, and explore the marshes.

At Ilwaco, charter boats will take you out fishing for salmon, halibut, sturgeon, or bottom fish. Try **Pacific Salmon Charters** (☎ 800/831-2695 or 360/642-3466; www.pacificsalmoncharters.com) or **Coho Charters** (☎ 800/339-2646; www.cohocharters.com).

Where to Stay

If you're heading this way with the family and need a vacation home, contact **Pacific Realty Property Management**, 102 NE Bolstad St. (P.O. Box 397), Long Beach, WA 98631 (☎ 888/879-5479 or 360/642-4549; www.pacificrealtyrentals.com).

Among the most interesting accommodations in the area are the two former **lighthouse-keepers' homes** at the North Head Lighthouse in Cape Disappointment State Park. These homes sleep up to six people each, and can be rented

through Washington State Parks (☎ 888/226-7688; www.parks.wa.gov/vacation-houses) for between \$212 and \$400 per night, depending on the season and day of the week. The two houses are in a clearing in the woods about 100 yards from the old lighthouse, and hiking trails lead from the grounds to the beach and through the park. Two more restored historic homes are available for rent at nearby Fort Columbia State Park. One rents for \$131 to \$175 per night and sleeps four people and the other rents for \$213 to \$284 per night and sleeps 12 people. Call the number above for reservations.

Boreas Bed & Breakfast Inn ★★ This inn is housed in a renovated 1920s beach house, but you'd never guess it from the contemporary styling both outside and within. The inn is only a few blocks from downtown Long Beach and is separated from the ocean by grassy dunes. The upstairs rooms have the best views, but, with their spaciousness and private decks, the two downstairs rooms are also very comfortable. The downstairs Dunes Suite was formerly a sunroom and has two walls of windows. This suite also has a whirlpool tub in the bathroom. On the grounds, an enclosed gazebo houses a whirlpool spa. Mornings start with a wonderful three-course breakfast.

607 N. Ocean Beach Blvd. (P.O. Box 1344), Long Beach, WA 98631. ☎ 888/642-8069 or 360/642-8069. www.boreasinn.com. 5 units. \$179–\$199 double. Rates include full breakfast. Children 12 and over welcome. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Concierge; Jacuzzi. *In room:* CD player, hair dryer, no phone, free Wi-Fi.

Shelburne Country Inn ★★ This inn's tone perfectly captures that of a country inn. Step through the front door and you enter rooms filled with a pale light that is filtered by walls of stained-glass windows salvaged from an English church. In the main lobby, dark fir-paneled walls and a fire crackling on the hearth all extend a classic country welcome. Most guest rooms are on the second floor, but on the ground floor, a couple of suites overlook the gardens and have their own decks. All the guest rooms are filled with antiques and, even if sometimes a bit cramped, all feel very luxurious and old-fashioned. The owners of this inn also operate the nearby China Beach Retreat, which is on a salt marsh outside the town of Ilwaco.

4415 Pacific Hwy. (P.O. Box 250), Seaview, WA 98644. ☎ 800/466-1896 or 360/642-2442. Fax 360/642-8904. www.theshelburneinn.com. 15 units. \$139–\$179 double; \$199 suite. Rates include full breakfast. AE, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge. *In room:* Hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

Where to Dine

For smoked salmon, tuna, sturgeon, and oysters, as well as fresh seafood, stop in at **Sportsmen's Cannery**, 1215 35th St., Seaview (☎ 360/642-2335), or, during the summer, in the port of Ilwaco, at 211 SE Howerton Way (☎ 360/642-3340). If you're up at the north end of the peninsula feeling peckish, try **Bailey's Bakery & Café**, 26910 Sandridge Rd., Nahcotta (☎ 360/665-4449; www.baileysbakerycafe.com), which is housed in the same classic old building as the Nahcotta post office. The bakery's delightfully old-fashioned.

The Depot Restaurant ★★ NEW AMERICAN This is the just the sort of restaurant you dream of finding on vacation: small, out of the way, and casual, yet with excellent food. Located in the old Seaview train depot, this restaurant abounds in vintage character, from its linoleum floors to its wooden counter to its old-fashioned hanging lights. The menu is short and varied, and includes Willapa Bay oysters

(of course) and clam chowder made with local clams. However, the more unusual preparations, such as scallops on spicy mango salsa, are the real stars here. No matter what you order for an entree, be sure to start with the house salad made with mixed greens, candied walnuts, blue cheese, and slices of pear.

1208 38th Place (at L St.), Seaview. 📞 **360/642-7880**. www.depotrestaurantdining.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$19–\$29. MC, V. Wed–Mon 5–9pm.

Nanci and Jimella's Market Cafe ★★ 🎁 NEW AMERICAN Unless I told you, you would never guess that the owners of this little roadside cafe/seafood market have cooked for Bill Clinton and James Beard. However, Nanci Main and Jimella Lucas for decades owned the famed Ark restaurant a few miles farther up the peninsula in Nahcotta. Oysters were the specialty at the Ark, as they are here, so you should be sure to get the pan-fried oysters, which are available both at lunch and dinner. If you aren't a fan of oysters, go for the Scotch salmon, which has a sauce made of Scotch, orange juice, cream, and Drambuie. Start with the Boston clam chowder if it's on the menu. There's also a good ratatouille. As much as possible, ingredients are organic and sustainably grown.

21712 Pacific Way, Ocean Park. 📞 **360/665-4847**. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$8–\$15 lunch, \$18–\$27 dinner. DISC, MC, V. Wed 11am–2:30pm; Thurs–Sat 11am–2:30pm and 5:30–8:30pm; Sun 11am–3pm.

Pelicano ★ MEDITERRANEAN Simple, traditional elegance in a surprising location overlooking the Ilwaco charter-boat marina is what you'll find here at the Pelicano. As at other area restaurants, the menu emphasizes fresh, local seafood (nearly half the menu offerings feature fish or shellfish). The menu changes monthly, but in the spring, you might find a delicious pairing of pan-fried oysters served with asparagus and smoked-paprika aioli or a seafood chowder jammed with salmon, halibut, and clams. One of the things I like most about this restaurant is that all the entrees are available in two portion sizes, and unless you're really hungry, the more economical smaller portions are plenty big enough, especially if you hope to save room something like vanilla-caramel custard with macadamia nuts and passion-fruit sauce.

177 Howerton Way, Ilwaco. 📞 **360/642-4034**. www.pelicanorestaurant.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$12–\$25. AE, DISC, MC, V. Wed–Sun 5–8 or 9pm.

VANCOUVER & VICINITY

6 miles N of downtown Portland, 120 miles SE of Long Beach, 40 miles S of Longview

Because Vancouver, Washington, is part of the Portland metropolitan area, and bears the same name as both a large island and a city in Canada, it is often overlooked by visitors to the Northwest. However, the city has several historic sites and other attractions that make it worth a stop. At Fort Vancouver, a Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) trading fort, much of the Northwest's important early pioneer history unfolded.

Essentials

GETTING THERE Vancouver is located on I-5 just north across the Columbia River from Portland, Oregon. I-205 bypasses the city to the east, while Wash. 14 heads east through the Columbia River Gorge.

With the Portland International Airport just across the river, Vancouver is also well connected to the rest of the world via numerous airlines, and it's served by Amtrak trains.

VISITOR INFORMATION For more information on this area, contact the **Southwest Washington Convention & Visitors Bureau**, 101 E. Eighth St., Ste. 240, Vancouver, WA 98660-3294 (☎ 877/600-0800 or 360/750-1553; www.southwestwashington.com).

Vancouver's Historical Attractions

The city of Vancouver, Washington, was one of the first settlements in the Northwest and consequently has a long pioneer and military history. After the British gave up Fort Vancouver, it became the site of the Vancouver Barracks U.S. military post, and stately homes were built for the officers of the post. The buildings of Officers' Row and their attractive, tree-shaded surroundings are now preserved as the **Fort Vancouver National Site ★★** (☎ 360/992-1800; www.fortvan.org). Within the historic site, just east of I-5 (take the E. Mill Plain Blvd. exit just north of the I-5 Interstate Bridge), you'll find not only Officers' Row, Fort Vancouver, and the Pearson Air Museum, but also the **Land Bridge**, a circular pedestrian bridge that connects the fort with the **Waterfront Renaissance Trail** by way of **Old Apple Tree Park**, which is home to the oldest apple tree in the Northwest. The tree was planted in 1826.

Fort Vancouver National Historic Site ★★ It was here at Fort Vancouver, a trading post operated by the British Hudson's Bay Company, that much of the Northwest's important early pioneer history unfolded. The HBC came to the Northwest in search of furs and, for most of the first half of the 19th century, was the only authority in this remote region. Fur trappers, mountain men, missionaries, explorers, and settlers all made Fort Vancouver their first stop in the Oregon country, which at that time also encompassed present-day Washington. Today, Fort Vancouver houses several reconstructed buildings furnished as they might have been in the mid-19th century. Throughout the year, there are a variety of living-history programs.

1501 E. Evergreen Blvd. ☎ 360/816-6200 or 816-6230. www.nps.gov/fova. Admission \$3 (\$5/family). Mid-Mar to early Nov daily 9am–5pm; early Nov to mid-Mar daily 9am–4pm. Closed Jan 1, Thanksgiving, Dec 24–25 and 31.

Pearson Air Museum ★ A different piece of history is preserved at this small air museum on the far side of Fort Vancouver from Officers' Row. Established in 1905, this is the oldest operating airfield in the U.S. Dozens of vintage aircraft, including World War I-era biplanes, are displayed in a large hangar. There's also an exhibit on the Russian plane that made the first transpolar flight.

1115 E. Fifth St. ☎ 360/694-7026. www.pearsonairmuseum.org. Admission \$7 adults, \$5 seniors and students, free for children 5 and under. Wed–Sat 10am–5pm.

Exploring Outside of Town

In the town of Washougal, 16 miles east of Vancouver on Wash. 14, you can visit the **Pendleton Woolen Mills Store**, 2 Pendleton Way, Washougal (☎ 800/568-2480 or 360/835-1118; www.pendleton-usa.com), and see how its famous wool blankets and classic wool fashions are made. The store is open Monday through

Friday from 8am to 5pm, Saturday from 9am to 5pm, and Sunday from 11am to 5pm, with free mill tours offered Monday through Friday at 9, 10, and 11am, and 1:30pm. The mill closes for 2 weeks in both August and December.

Driving north from Vancouver to exit 14 off I-5 will bring you to **Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge**, 28908 NW Main Ave. (☎ 360/887-3883; www.fws.gov/ridgefieldrefuges/ridgefield), where, in winter, you can observe wintering waterfowl from a 4¼-mile auto tour route. There are also hiking trails, and on summer weekends, you can visit the **Cathlapotle Plankhouse** (www.ridgefieldfriends.org/plankhouse.php), a reconstructed Chinook-style plank house similar to structures Lewis and Clark observed when they passed through this region.

Twenty-three miles north of Vancouver, in the town of Woodland, are the **Hulda Klager Lilac Gardens**, 115 S. Pekin Rd., Woodland (☎ 360/225-8996; www.lilacgardens.com). Between mid-April and mid-May, these gardens burst into color and the fragrance of lilacs hangs in the air. The gardens are open daily from 10am to 4pm. Admission is \$2.

East of Woodland is the **Cedar Creek Grist Mill**, Grist Mill Road (☎ 360/225-5832; www.cedarcreekgristmill.com), the only remaining 19th-century gristmill in Washington. Built in 1876, the mill was restored over a 10-year period, and in 1989, once again became functional. When the mill is open, volunteers demonstrate how wheat is ground into flour. Hours of operation are Saturday from 1 to 4pm and Sunday from 2 to 4pm. Admission is by donation. Adjacent to the mill is one of Washington's two historic covered bridges. To reach the mills from I-5, take exit 21, head east, and make an immediate right turn. Cross the North Fork Lewis River bridge, turn left on NW Hayes Road, which becomes Cedar Creek Road, and drive 8 miles east. Watch for sign to the mill.

Where to Stay

The Heathman Lodge ★

Mountain lodge meets urban chic at this suburban Vancouver hotel adjacent to the Vancouver Mall. Just 20 minutes by car from downtown Portland, the hotel is well placed for exploring both the Columbia Gorge and Mount St. Helens. With its log, stone, and cedar-shingle construction, this hotel conjures up the Northwest's historic mountain lodges. As at Timberline Lodge on Oregon's Mount Hood, the Heathman Lodge is filled with artwork and embellished with rugged Northwest-inspired craftwork, including totem poles, Eskimo kayak frames, and Pendleton blankets. Guest rooms feature a mix of rustic pine and peeled-hickory furniture, as well as rawhide lampshades and Pendleton-inspired bedspreads. Most rooms also have Tempur-Pedic mattresses.

7801 NE Greenwood Dr., Vancouver, WA 98662. ☎ 888/475-3100 or 360/254-3100. Fax 360/254-6100. www.heathmanlodge.com. 182 units. \$79-\$149 double; \$159-\$350 suite. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge; concierge; exercise room and access to nearby health club; Jacuzzi; indoor pool; room service; sauna. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

Where to Dine

I have a weakness for old burger joints, so whenever I visit Fort Vancouver, I also head a mile east to the **Igloo Restaurant**, 3128 E. Evergreen Blvd. (☎ 360/690-0803), for a burger and fries or a milkshake. This place has been in business since 1948, and back in the 1960s, a friend of mine who grew up in the neighborhood used to stop by for 10¢ cherry Cokes with extra cherry syrup. When it's time for a

pint of craft ale, head to **McMenamins on the Columbia**, 1801 SE Columbia River Dr. (☎ 360/699-1521; www.mcmenamins.com), a brewpub with a view of the river, or downtown to **Salmon Creek Brewery & Pub**, 108 W. Evergreen Blvd. (☎ 360/993-1827; www.salmoncreekbrewpub.com). **Hudson's**, the dining room at The Heathman Lodge (see above for details), is one of the city's best restaurants and serves three meals a day.

Beaches Restaurant & Bar ★ ☺ INTERNATIONAL Sure, it's a long way to the beach, but why let that stop you from having a good time? That seems to be the attitude of this waterfront restaurant. The gardens are full of sand, and a party atmosphere prevails most of the time. The menu is long and includes everything from good burgers to pizzas. With big walls of glass overlooking the Columbia River, sunset dinners are very popular. Despite the large size, service is usually good. To reach the restaurant from I-5, take Wash. 14 east and then take exit 1.

1919 SE Columbia River Dr. ☎ 360/699-1592. <http://beaches.simplehelix.com>. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$7-\$20. AE, DISC, MC, V. Sun-Mon 11am-9pm; Tues-Sat 11am-10pm.

Roots Restaurant and Bar ★★ NEW AMERICAN Although it is located in a shopping center a few miles east of Vancouver on the outskirts of the town of Camas, Roots is by far the best restaurant in the Vancouver area. With its stylish interior, creative cocktails, and emphasis on seasonal ingredients, this place is so hip it could hold its own in Portland's trendy Pearl District. The menu changes with the seasons but always includes creative dishes for foodies (house-cured duck ham with pickled vegetables, pickled shrimp salad with apple and cucumber, asparagus and pea pasta with arugula pesto) and, for the less adventurous, well-prepared comfort foods (shrimp-and-lobster macaroni-and-cheese, smoked beef brisket with barbecued beans, a trio of pork preparations with grits and green beans). If you're staying in Vancouver, don't miss Roots.

Riverstone Marketplace, 19215 SE 34th St., Camas. ☎ 360/260-3001. www.rootsrestaurantandbar.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$10-\$14 lunch, \$19-\$25 dinner. AE, MC, V. Sun-Thurs 11:30am-10pm; Fri-Sat 11:30am-11pm.

THE CASCADES

Cloaked in places by dark forests of towering old-growth conifers and stripped bare by logging clear-cuts in others, the Washington Cascades are a patchwork quilt of narrow valleys, rolling foothills, snow-capped volcanic peaks, and rugged mountain ranges. Lakes of the deepest blue are cradled beneath emerald forests. Glaciers carve their way inexorably from peaks that experience some of the heaviest snowfalls in the nation. And, of course, the appropriately named Cascades send countless waterfalls cascading from the heights.

The I-5 corridor from the Canadian border south more than 150 miles to Olympia is the most densely populated region of Washington, yet for millions of people who live here, gazing at mountain wilderness merely requires a look eastward on a clear day. Dominating the eastern skyline of the northern Puget Sound region are volcanic Mount Baker and the North Cascades. In the southern Puget Sound, Mount Rainier, another dormant volcano, looms grandly on the horizon. The easy accessibility of these mountains is, in large part, what makes the cities of Puget Sound so livable. With two national parks, a national volcanic monument, a half-dozen major ski areas, one of the largest networks of cross-country ski trails in the country, hundreds of lakes (including the third-deepest lake in the United States), a Bavarian village, and a false-fronted Wild West frontier town, these mountains offer a diversity of recreational and sightseeing activities.

Whatever the season, in good weather and bad, active Washingtonians head for the hills whenever they get the chance. Summer and winter are, however, the most popular seasons here. In summer, people come for the wildflowers and to go hiking, and in winter, they come for the skiing and snowboarding.

MT. BAKER & N. CASCADES SCENIC HWY. ★★★

Diablo Lake: 66 miles E of Burlington (I-5), 65 miles W of Winthrop; Mount Baker Ski Area: 62 miles E of Bellingham

Wolves and grizzly bears still call this wilderness home, and names such as Mount Fury, Mount Terror, and Forbidden Peak are testament to the rugged and remote nature of this terrain. Much of the region is preserved within the two units of North Cascades National Park, one of the least visited national parks in the country. This lack of visitors is easy to understand when you realize there is but one gravel road within the park boundaries, and it originates in the community of Stehekin on the north shore of Lake Chelan. Stehekin can only be reached by hiking trail, floatplane, or boat, which severely limits the number of vehicles that use this road. While there is very little road access in this area, there are plenty of hiking trails, and day hikers and backpackers can explore vast wilderness areas in this region.

Though numerous attempts were made over the years to build a road through the craggy, glacier-sculpted North Cascade mountains, it was not until 1972 that Wash. 20 finally connected the Skagit Valley communities on the west side of the North Cascades with Winthrop on the east side. Today the road is known as the North Cascades Scenic Highway, and it's one of the most breathtakingly beautiful stretches of road anywhere in the United States. Unfortunately, because of heavy winter snows and avalanches, the road is open only from April to November (depending on the weather). The scenic highway begins east of Sedro-Woolley, with more than a dozen campgrounds along its length.

Lying just outside the northwestern corner of North Cascades National Park is 10,778-foot Mount Baker, which on a clear day dominates the skyline to the east of Bellingham and the San Juan Islands. This is the northernmost of Washington's Cascade Range volcanoes, and, as such, rises high above the surrounding North Cascade peaks, which are geologically unrelated to Mount Baker. Because it is open to the winter storms that sweep up the Strait of Juan de Fuca from the Pacific Ocean, Mount Baker usually receives more snow than any other Cascades peak, and in the winter of 1998 to 1999, a world record of 1,140 inches fell at the Mount Baker Ski Area.

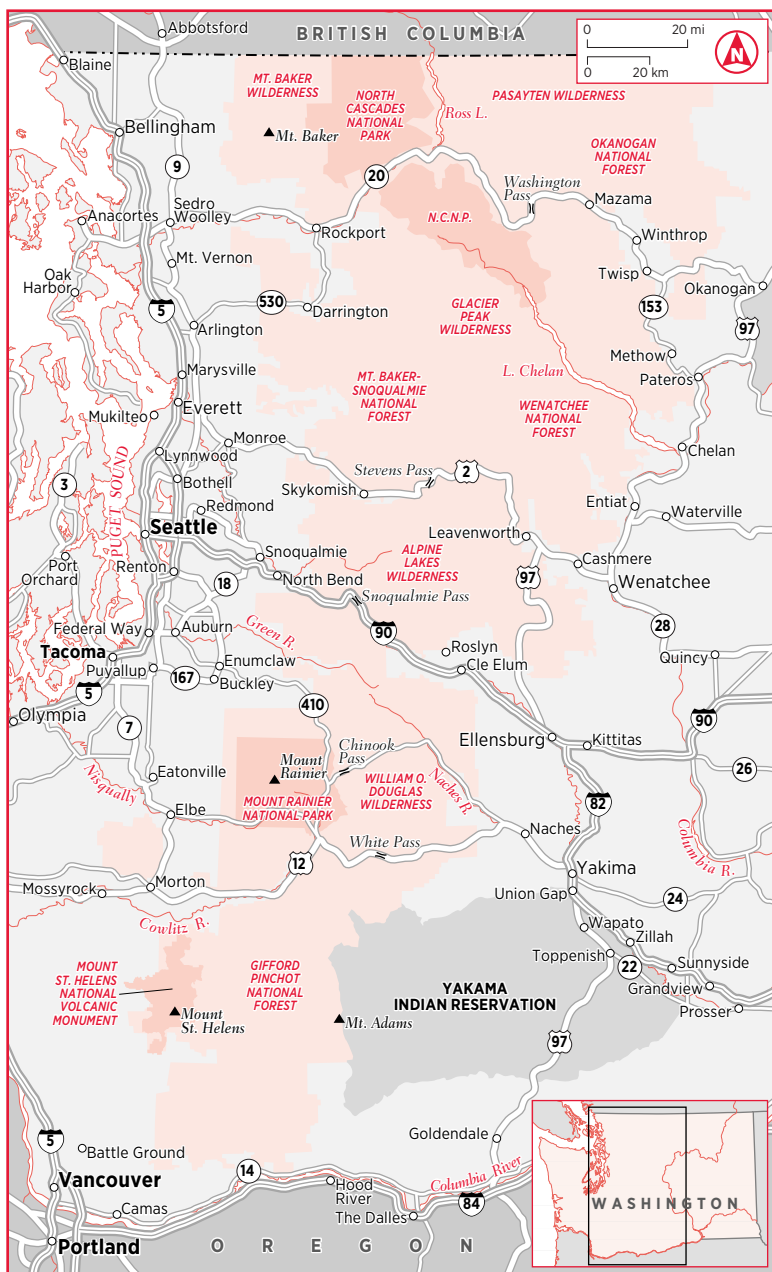
The North Cascades Scenic Highway, with its mountain vistas and excellent hiking, attracts most people to this area, but Mount Baker's slopes are equally rewarding (and actually much more accessible than mountain slopes along the North Cascades Scenic Hwy.). In summer, hikers explore alpine meadows, and in winter, skiers and snowboarders sample some of the most legendary snows in the country.

Essentials

GETTING THERE To reach Mount Baker ski area (and Heather Meadows and Artist Point in the summer), head east from Bellingham on Wash. 542 (the Mount Baker Hwy.). The North Cascades Scenic Highway is Wash. 20, and it leaves I-5 at Burlington.

VISITOR INFORMATION For information on the Mount Baker area, contact the **Glacier Public Service Center**, 10091 Mount Baker Highway, Glacier (☎ 360/599-2714). For information on the North Cascades National Park Complex, Mount Baker National Recreation Area, and Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, contact the jointly operated **Forest/Park Service Information Office**, 810 Wash.

The Washington Cascades



10

THE CASCADES

Mt. Baker & N. Cascades Scenic Hwy.

20, Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284 (☎ 360/854-7200 or 856-5700, ext. 515; www.nps.gov/noca or www.fs.fed.us/r6/mbs).

Visiting the Mount Baker Area

Wash. 542, known as the Mount Baker Highway, is a dead-end road that climbs to 5,140 feet in elevation at a ridge between 10,778-foot Mount Baker and 9,038-foot Mount Shuksan. The road ends at the aptly named **Artist Point ★★**, an area of rugged beauty nearly unequaled in the state. Rising directly above Artist Point is flat-topped Table Mountain, up which there is a short but precipitous trail. Three miles before you reach Artist Point, you'll come to **Heather Meadows** and Picture Lake, in which the reflection of Mount Shuksan can be seen when the waters are still. Each year in July and August, the meadows of this area burst into bloom and attract crowds of weekend hikers who tramp the many miles of trails that radiate out from here. The 7.5-mile **Chain Lakes Loop Trail ★★** is by far the most rewarding of the hikes in the area. It circles Table Mountain, passing numerous beautiful little lakes along the way. From July through September, the **Heather Meadows Visitor Center**, milepost 56 on Mount Baker Highway (no phone), has trail maps for the area and information on this region's unusual geology.

Two of the most rewarding hikes in the Mount Baker area actually originate not in the Heather Meadows/Artist Point area, but off side roads 1 mile east of the town of Glacier. These are the 5-mile round-trip **Heliotrope Ridge Trail ★★** (off Forest Service Rd. 39) and the 7-mile round-trip **Skyline Divide Trail ★★** (off Forest Service Rd. 37). Both of these trails climb up through meadows with excellent views of Mount Baker, and, from the Heliotrope Ridge Trail, there are also impressive glacier views. Near Glacier, at milepost 41, a short trail leads to 100-foot Nooksack Falls.

To park at Heather Meadows, Artist Point, and other area trailheads, you'll need a National Forest Recreation Pass. These permits cost \$5 per day (\$30 for an annual pass) and can be purchased at ranger stations and national forest visitor centers.

While Kodak-moment meadows of colorful wildflowers are a big attraction throughout the summer, Mount Baker is better known as one of the nation's top snowboarding areas. Each winter, Mount Baker receives an average of more than 500 inches of snow, and in the winter of 1998 to 1999, set a world record with 1,140 inches. All this snow, combined with lots of extreme terrain, produces outstanding skiing and snowboarding conditions. Consequently, **Mount Baker Ski Area ★★** (☎ 360/671-0211; www.mtbaker.us) at Heather Meadows, is well known throughout the region for being the first ski area to open and the last to close each year. All-day lift tickets range from \$41 to \$48. Ski and snowboard rentals are available at the ski area, and snowboards can also be rented in the town of Glacier at **Mt. Baker Snowboard Shop**, 9996 Forest St. (☎ 888/466-7392 or 360/599-2008; www.mtbakersnowboardshop.com). Cross-country skiers will find a few miles of groomed trails at Mount Baker ski area, and more miles at the **Salmon Ridge Sno-Park** farther down the mountain. Telemark skiers and backcountry snowboarders enjoy terrain adjacent to Mount Baker Ski Area.

En route to or from Mount Baker, you can sample local wines at **Mount Baker Vineyards**, 4298 Mt. Baker Hwy., Everson (☎ 360/592-2300; www.mountbakervineyards.com). Stock up on gourmet picnic foods at the unexpectedly hip **Everybody's Store**, 5465 Potter Rd., Van Zandt (☎ 866/832-4695 or 360/592-2297; www.everybodys.com), which is open Sunday through Thursday from 7:30am to 7pm and Friday and Saturday from 8am to 8pm.

The North Cascades Scenic Highway

Wash. 20, the North Cascades Scenic Highway, is a bit slow in sharing its beauties. Though it runs along the Skagit River on the west side of the Cascades, not until the Ross Lake area does the scenery become truly grand. However, there are several distractions along the way before you reach the most scenic stretch of the highway.

North of Concrete, named for the cement it once produced, lie Lake Shannon and Baker Lake, the latter a popular summer camping and boating destination. From the road leading to **Baker Lake**, you can also access the **Mount Baker National Recreation Area**, which lies on the south side of Mount Baker. Several trails lead through lovely alpine meadows. The Railroad Grade–Paul Scott Trail is breathtaking.

Between Concrete and Marblemount, the highway parallels the Skagit River, and from December to February each year, hundreds of bald eagles descend on this stretch of the river to feed on dying salmon. Highway turnouts at the prime eagle-watching sites along this stretch of road provide opportunities to observe the eagles. To learn more about them, stop by Rockport's **Skagit River Interpretive Center**, Howard Miller Steelhead Park, 52809 Rockport Park Rd. (☎ 360/853-7626; www.skagit-eagle.org). The center is staffed 10am to 4pm Friday to Sunday from early December to mid-February (eagle-watching season). The best way to do your eagle-watching is from a raft floating slowly down the river (no whitewater here). **Eagle-watching float trips** are offered by **Alpine Adventures** (☎ 800/723-8386 or 360/863-6505; www.alpineadventures.com) and **Wildwater River Tours** (☎ 800/522-9453 or 253/939-2151; www.wildwater-river.com). Trips cost \$69 to \$74 per adult.

Right in the middle of the eagle-viewing area, you'll come to the town of Rockport. On its west side is **Rockport State Park**, where you can hike through a stand of old-growth Douglas firs, some more than 300 years old. Note that November through March this park is closed Wednesday and Thursday. Three miles east of Rockport, keep an eye out for **Cascadian Farm Roadside Stand**, 55749 Wash. 20 (☎ 360/853-8173; www.cfarm.com), which is open May through October and sells fresh organic berries, blueberry muffins and shortcake, homemade ice cream, organic produce, and sandwiches.

Along this highway, you can also do a bit of wine tasting. East of milepost 85, near the town of Concrete, you can drop in at **Challenger Ridge Vineyards and Cellars**, 43095 Challenger Rd. (☎ 360/853-7360; www.challengerridge.com), which makes pinot noir from its own vineyard, as well as wines from vineyards in eastern Washington. The tasting room is open Saturday and Sunday from 11am to 5pm. May through October, you can also stop in at **Glacier Peak Winery**, 58575 Wash. 20 (☎ 360/873-4073; www.glacierpeakwinery.com), which is east of Rockport near milepost 104. The tasting room is open June through September Monday to Thursday from noon to 5pm and Friday to Sunday from 10am to 5pm.

In Marblemount, the next town you come to, the North Cascades National Park Service Complex **Wilderness Information Center**, Ranger Station Road (☎ 360/854-7245), provides backcountry permits and information.

In the town of Newhalem, a picturesque Seattle City Light company town at the foot of the Gorge Dam, you'll find the **North Cascades Visitor Center** (☎ 206/386-4495, ext. 11; www.nps.gov/noca), the main visitor center for the North Cascades National Park Complex, which includes North Cascades National Park, Ross Lake National Recreation Area, and Lake Chelan National Recreation Area. The visitor center is filled with interesting exhibits on this remote national

Natural History Seminars

Want some training in how to track wildlife? Want to learn about Lummi Indian basketry? Want to delve into the mysteries of mycology? You can do any of these things if you sign up for the right class at the **North Cascades Institute**. Offering dozens of natural history field seminars each year, the North Cascades Institute, 810 Wash. 20, Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284 (☎ **360/854-2599**;

www.ncascades.org), is a nonprofit educational organization that offers a wide range of courses each year. While these seminars—many of which involve camping out—focus on the North Cascades region, there are programs throughout the state. The institute has a beautiful environmental learning center on the shore of Diablo Lake.

park. There are several short hikes in the area, and in the autumn, you can see spawning salmon at the base of the hydropower plant on the edge of town. Continuing east from Newhalem, the road passes through a deep, narrow gorge, where you can glimpse **Gorge Creek Falls** before reaching **Gorge Dam**, the first and smallest of the dams along this stretch of the Skagit River.

Beyond the Gorge Dam, Diablo, another Seattle City Light company town, stands at the base of Diablo Dam and is the starting point for one of the most fascinating excursions in this corner of the state—the 2-hour boat tour on turquoise-colored Diablo Lake. In places, steep cliffs rise directly from the lake waters and stunted conifers cling to rock walls. At times, this scenery looks as if it were lifted from a Chinese scroll painting. Diablo Lake Adventure tours are offered on Saturday and Sunday in June and September, and Friday to Sunday in July and August. Tours cost \$25 for adults, \$20 for seniors, and \$12 for children ages 6 to 12. For information, or to make a reservation (highly recommended), call **Skagit Tours** (☎ **206/684-3030**; www.skagittours.com). Dinner tours (\$55 for adults, \$50 for seniors, \$45 for ages 13–17, and \$40 for ages 6–12) are offered Monday and Thursday in July and August.

Continuing on past Diablo, you cross the Thunder Arm of Diablo Lake and climb up to the spectacular **Diablo Lake Overlook** ★★. When the sun shines, the glacier-fed lake displays an astounding turquoise color due to suspended particles of glacial silt in the water. High above the lake, you can see glaciated Colonial and Pyramid peaks.

At the **Ross Lake Overlook**, several miles farther east, the dammed waters of the huge Ross Lake reservoir come into view. The lake, and in fact this entire stretch of highway from east of Marblemount to east of Ross Lake, is designated the **Ross Lake National Recreation Area**. The lake itself extends 24 miles north, with its northern shores lying 1½ miles inside Canada. The only access to the lake from the U.S. is by trail or water, and with its many shoreline backcountry campsites and East Bank Trail, it's a popular backpacker destination. Boaters in sea kayaks and canoes also frequent these remote waters. See "Where to Stay," below, for information on the Ross Lake Resort, which rents canoes and kayaks and has both a water-taxi service and a shuttle that will haul your kayak or canoe around Ross Dam. Trails lead down to the lake both at the dam (before the Ross Lake Overlook) and east of the overlook (access to the East Bank Trail).

Hikers in search of mountain vistas and wildflower-filled meadows should hold out for **Rainy Pass** ★★ (and hope that the pass is not living up to its name). Here you'll

find an easy 1-mile paved trail to **Rainy Lake**, which can be combined with the strenuous, but astoundingly soul-satisfying, 7.5-mile **Maple Pass Loop**. The view from Maple Pass is one of the finest in the Northwest. The Pacific Crest Trail also crosses the highway at Rainy Pass. If you head north along the Pacific Crest Trail, you will climb to Cutthroat Pass, with more superb views. A few miles farther east, you'll find the trailhead for the short, but steep, hike to picturesque **Blue Lake**.

Roughly 20 miles before reaching the Wild West town of Winthrop, you come to the most breathtaking stretch of the North Cascades Scenic Highway. Here, at **Washington Pass** ★★ (5,447 ft. in elevation), the granite peak of Liberty Bell Mountain rises 2,200 feet above the pass. Across the valley are the jagged Early Winter Spires, a full 200 feet taller than Liberty Bell Mountain. Below the pass, the road has been blasted out of a steep cliff face in one huge switchback. The Washington Pass Overlook, with its short walking trail, provides an opportunity to enjoy these last awesome vistas of the North Cascades. With its in-your-face view of craggy peaks, this is the North Cascade Scenic Highway's big payoff, and this sight alone makes the drive over the mountains worthwhile.

Where to Stay

IN THE MOUNT BAKER AREA

The best accommodations at the foot of Mount Baker are to be had through **Mt. Baker Lodging**, 7463 Mt. Baker Hwy. (P.O. Box 2002), Maple Falls, WA 98266-2002 (☎ 800/709-7669 or 360/599-2453; www.mtbakerlodging.com), which rents out dozens of cabins, houses, and condos in a wide range of rates.

The Inn at Mt. Baker ★★ High on a hill at the end of a steep, 3,000-foot-long gravel driveway (don't worry, the inn really is up there), this B&B is by far the best place to stay along the Mt. Baker Highway. A head-on, jaw-dropping view of Mount Baker is the inn's focal point, and all five of the guest rooms have mountain views, as does the Jacuzzi out on the patio. The inn is a large modern home, and all the rooms are spacious, with superb beds and oversize soaking tubs.

8174 Mt. Baker Hwy. (P.O. Box 5150), Glacier, WA 98244. ☎ 877/567-5526 or 360/599-1776. Fax 360/599-3000. www.theinnatmtbaker.com. 5 units. \$149-\$165 double. Rates include full breakfast. AE, DISC, MC, V. Children 15 and over welcome. **Amenities:** Jacuzzi; outdoor pool. *In room:* A/C, hair dryer, no phone, free Wi-Fi.

ALONG THE NORTH CASCADES SCENIC HIGHWAY

Ross Lake Resort ★ 🎁 If you're looking to get away from it all, this is the place—there's not even a road to Ross Lake Resort. To get here, you must first take a ferry up Diablo Lake, then ride around Ross Dam in a truck, then take a speedboat to the resort. Alternatively, you can hike in on a 2-mile trail. This is primarily a fishing resort, but the fact that accommodations are in floating cabins makes it unusual enough that even non-anglers will enjoy a stay here. Most cabins are small and rustic, but two large cabins have vaulted ceilings and modern amenities. There's no grocery store or restaurant, so be sure to bring enough food for your stay. Once you get here you can rent a boat and go fishing, rent a kayak or canoe and go paddling, do some hiking, or simply sit and relax.

503 Diablo St., Rockport, WA 98283. ☎ 206/386-4437. www.rosslakeresort.com. 15 units. \$135-\$280 cabin for 2. Boat rental required on weekends. Children 3 and under stay free in parent's room. MC, V. Closed Nov to mid-June. **Amenities:** Watersports equipment/boat rentals. *In room:* Kitchen.

Skagit River Resort/Clark's Cabins ★ Fun theme cabins are what keep people coming back to this rustic little resort. Western, nautical, Victorian, Native American, Adirondack, and hacienda are among the choices of interior decor in these cabins. Other cabins are equally comfortable, but the theme cabins make this place just a bit different. These cabins are especially popular in winter when folks flock to the area to watch the bald eagles congregate on the Skagit River. There is also a bed-and-breakfast lodge here.

58468 Clark Cabin Rd., Rockport, WA 98283. ☎ **800/273-2606** or 360/873-2250. Fax 360/873-4077. www.northcascades.com. 39 units. \$69–\$149 double. Rates include continental breakfast. AE, DISC, MC, V. Pets accepted (\$20/day). **Amenities:** Restaurant. *In room:* TV, kitchen (in some), free Wi-Fi.

Where to Dine

IN THE MOUNT BAKER AREA

For microbrews and pizza, try **The North Fork**, 6186 Mt. Baker Hwy., Deming (☎ **360/599-2337**; www.northforkbrewery.com).

Milano's Pasta Fresca ★ 🍷 ITALIAN This casual Italian eatery has long been a favorite of snowboarders and skiers coming down off the mountain after a day on the slopes. Fresh pasta dishes are the specialty here, and the menu includes a delicious spinach ravioli with walnut-cream sauce, plus four other types of ravioli (smoked salmon, mushroom, cheese, and meat) prepared with your choice of sauce. There are plenty of other fresh pasta dishes as well. The desserts are all big hits with the hungry downhill crowd.

9990 Mt. Baker Hwy., Glacier. ☎ **360/599-2863**. www.milanorestaurant.us. Main courses \$7–\$20. DISC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 9am–8:30pm; Sat–Sun 9am–9pm.

ALONG THE NORTH CASCADES SCENIC HIGHWAY

In addition to the restaurant listed here, you can get decent, simple meals at **The Eatery Restaurant** at the Skagit River Resort, which is also in Marblemount.

Buffalo Run Restaurant ★ 🍷 AMERICAN From the outside, this looks like any other roadside diner, but once you see the menu, it's obvious this place is unique. The restaurant's owners have a buffalo ranch and feature buffalo meat on the menu. There are buffalo burgers, buffalo hot dogs, buffalo steaks, and even buffalo stroganoff. You'll also find elk and ostrich on the menu. Of course, there's a buffalo head (and hide) on the wall. You'll find the restaurant right in Marblemount across from an inn run by the restaurant's owners.

60084 Wash. 20 (milepost 106), Marblemount. ☎ **360/873-2461**. www.buffalorunrestaurant.com. Main courses \$8–\$40. AE, DISC, MC, V. Summer daily 11am–9pm (shorter hours other months).

WINTHROP & THE METHOW VALLEY ★★

193 miles (summer) or 243 miles (winter) E of Seattle, 53 miles N of Chelan

Driving into Winthrop, you may think you've stumbled onto a movie set. A covered wooden sidewalk lines the town's main street, which is lined with weather-beaten, false-fronted buildings. You half expect desperadoes to be shooting it out with local law men, but this isn't a movie set—it's the real Winthrop.

Well, not *exactly* the real Winthrop. Back in 1972, when the North Cascades Scenic Highway opened, Winthrop needed a way to stop a few of the cars that started crossing the mountains on the new highway. Someone suggested that the town cash in on its Wild West heritage and put up some old-fashioned cow-town false fronts (based on old photos of the town). This rewriting of history worked and now Winthrop gets plenty of cars to stop. In fact, it has become a destination in its own right, known for its cross-country skiing in winter and mountain biking, hiking, and horseback riding in summer.

Winthrop and the Methow River Valley in which it is located really do have a Wild West history. Until 1883, there were no white settlers in this picturesque valley. The only inhabitants were Native Americans who annually migrated into the valley to harvest camas bulbs and fish for salmon. The Native Americans felt it was just too cold to live in the Methow Valley, but when the first white settlers showed up, they refused to listen to the Native Americans' weather reports and built their drafty log cabins anyway. Gold was discovered in the late 1800s and fueled a short-lived boom, but it was apple-growing that kept the valley alive until the advent of tourism in the 1970s.

Why an Old West theme town? Possibly because Owen Wister, author of *The Virginian*, a Western novel that became a popular television series, was inspired to write his novel after coming to Winthrop to visit his former Harvard University roommate who ran a trading post here. You won't find trading posts anymore, but you will find two of the finest mountain lodges in the state.

Essentials

GETTING THERE In summer, you can take Wash. 20, the North Cascades Scenic Highway, from I-5 at Burlington. However, in winter this road is closed and it's necessary to cross from north of Seattle on U.S. 2 to Wenatchee and then drive north on U.S. 97 to Wash. 153 at Pateros. If you're coming from north-central or eastern Washington, head east on Wash. 20 at Okanogan.

VISITOR INFORMATION For more information on the Methow Valley, contact the **Winthrop Chamber of Commerce**, 202 Hwy. 20 (P.O. Box 39), Winthrop, WA 98862 (☎ 888/463-8469 or 509/996-2125; www.winthropwashington.com), which has its office at Winthrop's main intersection.

Sports & Outdoor Activities

If you're here for the outdoors, then sooner or later you're going to need the **Mazama Store**, 50 Lost River Rd. (☎ 509/996-2855), a general store for the multi-sport crowd. Not only are outdoor gear and clothing for sale, but there are also gourmet groceries, Washington wines and microbrews, an espresso bar, and a deli.

FISHING Fly-fishing is particularly popular in the Methow Valley, and if you'd like to hire a guide to take you out where the fish are biting, contact **Flyfishers Pro Shop**, 611 Wash. 20, Winthrop (☎ 509/996-2832; www.methowfishing.com), which charges \$250 to \$395 per day for one or two anglers.

HIKING Hikers will find miles of trails, including the **Pacific Crest Trail**, within a few miles of Winthrop, although the best hiking trails are farther west off the North Cascades Scenic Highway. For information, contact the **Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests**, Methow Valley Ranger District, Methow Valley

Visitor Center, 24 W. Chewuch Rd., Winthrop, WA 98862 (☎ 509/996-4003; www.fs.fed.us/r6/okanogan).

If you want to head for the hills for a few days, but don't want to carry a pack, consider a llama trek. These can be arranged through **Deli Llama Wilderness Adventures**, 17045 Llama Lane, Bow, WA 98232 (☎ 360/757-4212; www.deli-llama.com), which charges \$155 to \$195 per person per day.

HORSEBACK RIDING If you've come to Winthrop because you're a cowboy at heart, you'll probably be interested in doing some horseback riding. **Early Winters Outfitting** (☎ 509/996-2659; www.earlywintersoutfitting.com) in Mazama offers rides ranging from an hour (\$30) to overnight (\$190) or longer.

HOT-AIR BALLOONING If you'd like to see the Methow Valley from the air, a hot-air balloon flight with **Morning Glory Balloon Tours** (☎ 509/997-1700; www.balloonwinthrop.com) costs \$195 per adult and \$150 per child age 6 to 12 for a 1-hour flight with a champagne picnic at the end of the flight.

MOUNTAIN BIKING With its many miles of gravel and dirt roads, and both national forest and **Methow Valley Sport Trails Association (MVSTA)** trails that are open to bikes in the snow-free months, the Methow Valley ranks as one of the best mountain-biking areas in the state. Mountain-bike rentals and trail recommendations are available from **Methow Cycle and Sport**, 29 Wash. 20, Winthrop (☎ 509/996-3645; www.winthropmountainsports.com), which charges \$30 to \$40 per day for rentals.

ROCK CLIMBING The best rock climbing in the state surrounds the Methow Valley, and if you'd like to hire a guide to lead you (or are interested in taking some climbing lessons), contact **North Cascades Mountain Guides**, 2 Country Rd., Mazama (☎ 509/996-3194; www.ncmountainguides.com), which charges \$130 to \$300 per person per day for a day of guided climbing.

WHITEWATER RAFTING May through August is whitewater-rafting season on the Methow River. If you're interested, contact **Blue Sky Outfitters** (☎ 800/228-7238 or 206/938-4030; www.blueskyoutfitters.com), a Seattle rafting company that has regularly scheduled trips on the Methow River. Trips cost \$92 for adults and \$82 for seniors and children.

WINTER SPORTS ★★ With its sunshine and powdery winter snows, the Methow Valley is legendary in the Northwest for its cross-country skiing. The **Methow Valley Sport Trails Association** (☎ 509/996-3287, or for trail conditions and pass information 800/682-5787; www.mvsta.com) maintains approximately 125 miles of groomed ski trails, which makes this one of the most extensive groomed trail systems in the country. Trail passes are \$20 for 1 day (\$10 for children ages 13–17), \$15 for a half-day, or \$51 for 3 days. Children 12 and under ski free. Snowshoe passes are also available (\$5/day). The greatest concentration of trails for all skill levels is in the vicinity of Sun Mountain Lodge, while the trails around Mazama offer plenty of easy miles for distance skiing. The Rendezvous area trails are long and strenuous, but have huts that can be rented for overnight stays. For information on renting one of these huts, contact **Rendezvous Huts** (☎ 509/996-8100; www.rendezvous-huts.com). Rental rates start at \$35 per person.

You can pick up trail maps and rent equipment at **Sun Mountain Lodge**, 604 Patterson Lake Rd. (☎ 509/996-4735; www.sunmountainlodge.com); **Winthrop**

Mountain Sports, 257 Riverside Ave. (☎ 800/719-3826 or 509/996-2886; www.winthropmountainsports.com), in downtown Winthrop; **Mazama Country Inn**, 15 Country Rd. (☎ 800/843-7951 or 509/996-2681; www.mazamacountryinn.com); or **Jack's Hut at the Freestone Inn**, 33 Early Winters Dr. (☎ 509/996-2752). All of these locations offer a variety of lessons or can point you in the right direction for instruction.

If you happen to be out here with downhill skis or maybe want to do a little telemark skiing, try the small ski hill at **Loup Loup Ski Bowl** (☎ 866/826-2720 or 509/557-3405; www.skitheloup.com), 20 minutes east of Twisp on Wash. 20. It's open Wednesday and Friday to Sunday from 9:15am to 3:45pm, and daily lift passes are \$38. Although this ski area is small, it does have a quad chairlift. Experienced downhill skiers in search of virgin powder can, if they can afford it, do some heli-skiing with **North Cascade Heli-Skiing** (☎ 800/494-4354 or 509/996-3272; www.heli-ski.com). A day of skiing that includes seven runs costs \$850 per person. However, most people coming here for heli-skiing opt for a 3-day package (\$2,400). Overnight yurt tours are also available.

If you're interested in taking a backcountry skiing course, contact **North Cascades Mountain Guides**, 2 Country Rd., Mazama (☎ 509/996-3194; www.ncmountainguides.com), which offers 2-day courses for \$300 per person.

Other Area Attractions

Though Winthrop is primarily a base for skiers, hikers, and mountain bikers, it also has a few interesting shops. For a glimpse of the town's history, visit the **Shafer Museum**, 285 Castle Ave. (☎ 509/996-2712; www.shafermuseum.com), which consists of a collection of historic buildings from around the area. It's open the Memorial Day weekend to the Labor Day weekend, daily from 10am to 5pm. Admission is by donation. To find the museum, go up Bridge Street from the junction of Wash. 20 and Riverside Drive and turn right on Castle Avenue. You can check out artwork by local artists at the **Winthrop Gallery**, 237 Riverside Ave. (☎ 509/996-3925; www.winthropgallery.com), in Winthrop, or the **Confluence Gallery**, 104 Glover St. (☎ 509/997-2787; www.confluencegallery.com).

The Methow Valley may not be wine country, but it does have a good little winery that is worth a stop. **Lost River Winery**, 26 Wash. 20, Winthrop (☎ 509/996-2888; www.lostriverwinery.com), is open for tastings Thursday through Monday from 11am to 5pm.

Where to Stay

If you're interested in renting a cabin or vacation house, contact **Central Reservations** (☎ 800/422-3048 or 509/996-2148; www.methowreservations.com).

IN WINTHROP

Hotel Rio Vista ★ As with other buildings in downtown Winthrop, the Rio Vista looks as if it has been built for a Hollywood Western movie set. Behind its false front are modern rooms with pine furnishings and an understated country decor. Step out onto your balcony for a view of the confluence of the Chewuch and Methow rivers and you may see deer and bald eagles and other species of birds. A hot tub overlooks the river. The Rio Vista also rents out a loft cabin up the valley near Mazama.

285 Riverside Ave. (P.O. Box 815), Winthrop, WA 98862. ☎ **800/398-0911** or 509/996-3535. www.hotelrivista.com. 29 units. Summer \$90–\$145 double; other months \$60–\$105 double. Children 6 and under stay free in parent's room. MC, V. **Amenities:** Jacuzzi. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

River Run Inn ★ Only a few hundred yards from downtown Winthrop, this motel on the bank of the Methow River feels as if it is miles from town. Its rooms all have balconies overlooking the river, with the mountains visible across the valley. Rustic peeled-log furniture made by a local craftsman gives the large rooms a Western feel. Aside from the riverside location, the best reason to stay here is the small indoor swimming pool and hot tub. The River Run Inn also rents out cabins and a large house.

27 Rader Rd., Winthrop, WA 98862. ☎ **800/757-2709** or 509/996-2173. www.riverrun-inn.com. 15 units. \$75–\$145 double; \$115–\$200 cabin; \$340–\$500 house. MC, V. Pets accepted (\$15/day). **Amenities:** Jacuzzi; indoor pool. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge.

River's Edge Resort ★ Located in town and set on the banks of the Chewuch River, the modern cabins of this little riverside resort are a great bet if you need space and a kitchen but want to be within walking distance of restaurants and shopping. The cabins have decks with hot tubs and gas fireplaces and are comfortable and modern. I like the riverside suites and chalets; you can sit on your deck and listen to the river.

115 Riverside Ave. (P.O. Box 968), Winthrop, WA 98862. ☎ **800/937-6621** or 509/996-8000. www.riversedgewinthrop.com. 15 units. May–Oct and mid-Dec to Feb \$140–\$205 double; Mar–Apr and Nov to mid-Dec \$112–\$164 double. Children 3 and under stay free in parent's room. 2-night minimum high-season weekends, 3-night minimum holiday weekends. MC, V. *In room:* A/C, TV/DVD, CD player, kitchen, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

Sun Mountain Lodge ★★ ★ ☺ For resort luxuries and proximity to hiking, cross-country skiing, and mountain-biking trails, Sun Mountain Lodge should be your first choice in the region. Perched on a mountaintop with grand views of mountains and valley, this luxurious lodge captures the spirit of the West, in both its breathtaking setting and its rustic design. In the lobby, flagstone floors and stone fireplaces lend a classically Western style. Most guest rooms have rustic Western furnishings and views of the mountains. The rooms in the Gardner wing have balconies and slightly better views than those in the main lodge. If seclusion is what you're after, opt for one of the Patterson Lake cabins. The lodge's main dining room serves superb Northwest cuisine (see "Where to Dine," below). In winter, the resort is on the ski-trail system, and in summer, there are horseback rides, lawn games, and a playground.

604 Patterson Lake Rd. (P.O. Box 1000), Winthrop, WA 98862. ☎ **800/572-0493** or 509/996-2211. Fax 509/996-3133. www.sunmountainlodge.com. 112 units. Mid-June to late Oct \$220–\$445 double, \$400–\$855 suite, \$365–\$925 cabin; mid-Dec to mid-June \$160–\$360 double, \$270–\$705 suite, \$265–\$705 cabin. Children 12 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. Closed late Oct to mid-Dec. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; lounge; babysitting; bikes; children's programs; concierge; exercise room; 2 Jacuzzis; 2 seasonal outdoor pools; room service; full-service spa; 4 tennis courts; watersports equipment/boat rentals. *In room:* A/C, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

IN MAZAMA

Freestone Inn ★★ ★ At the upper end of the Methow Valley outside the community of Mazama, the Freestone Inn is second only to Sun Mountain Lodge in its luxury and many amenities. The inn's main building, which has a superb view of the

mountains, is a huge log lodge complete with a massive stone fireplace. Guest rooms are thoughtfully designed with gas fireplaces and, in some rooms, double whirlpool tubs from which you have a view of the fireplace. All in all, these are some of the most memorable rooms in the state. For more privacy, opt for one of the cabins. Families may want to rent one of the large lakeside lodges. The restaurant is one of the finest in the valley (see “Where to Dine,” below). The inn is on the valley’s ski trails and offers ski rentals and lessons. A small lake provides opportunities for swimming and fly-fishing.

31 Early Winters Dr., Mazama, WA 98833. ☎ **800/639-3809** or 509/996-3906. Fax 509/996-3907. www.freestoneinn.com. 36 units. Summer/winter \$215–\$265 double, \$265–\$295 suite, \$265–\$395 cabin, \$540–\$720 lodge; lower rates in spring and fall. Children 12 and under stay free in parent’s room. AE, MC, V. Pets accepted in cabins (\$30/day). **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge; bikes; access to nearby health club; Jacuzzi; outdoor pool. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge, hair dryer, kitchen (in some), free Wi-Fi.

Rolling Huts While these unusual accommodations are, in a literal sense, truly huts, with plywood interior walls, portable toilets outside on a deck, and no running water, they are also the most boldly contemporary accommodations anywhere in the state. Designed by an architect with an eye to the future, each hut is sided with rusted steel, and inside all the modular furniture is made from plywood. Walls of glass and decks nearly as large as the interior spaces take in great mountain views. If you’re a skier or mountain biker with an appreciation for contemporary architecture, this place is a must. Oh, and by the way, while the huts are built on wheels and could theoretically be rolled, the wheels are giant circles of steel that don’t seem exactly street legal.

18381 Wash. 20, Winthrop, WA 98862. ☎ **877/223-1137** or 509/996-4442. www.rollinghuts.com. 6 units (all with shared bathroom). Dec 15–Mar 15 \$115–\$125 double; Mar 16–Dec 14 \$95–\$105 double. Children 11 and under stay free in parent’s room. DISC, MC, V. Pets accepted (\$25 fee). **Amenities:** Restaurant. *In room:* Fridge, Wi-Fi.

Where to Dine

In the town of Twisp, you’ll find great baked goodies at **Cinnamon Twisp Bakery**, 116 N. Glover St. (☎ **509/997-5030**; www.cinnamontwisp.com), and fresh-roasted coffee at **Blue Star Coffee Roasters**, 3 Twisp Airport Rd. (☎ **509/997-2583**; www.bluestarcoffee-roasters.com). For pastries, fresh bread for picnics, take-and-bake pizzas, or just a good latte in Winthrop, stop in at the **Rocking Horse Bakery**, 265 Riverside Ave. (☎ **509/996-4241**). In Mazama, you can get gourmet groceries, decent deli food, and espresso drinks at the **Mazama Store**, 50 Lost River Rd. (☎ **509/996-2855**).

Arrowleaf Bistro ★★ NEW AMERICAN If the dining room at Sun Mountain Lodge is a little too expensive for you but you’re not in the mood for a burger and a beer, this is the place. The menu changes regularly, but you might find scallops served with wild mushrooms and a red-wine risotto, grilled cider-brined pork chops with savory bread pudding and cider sauce, or herb-rubbed lamb chops with wild-mushroom ragout. In the summer, be sure to sit out back on the deck overlooking the Methow River.

253 Riverside Ave., Winthrop. ☎ **509/996-3919**. www.arrowleafbistro.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$18–\$30. AE, DISC, MC, V. Wed–Sat and Mon 5–9pm; Sun 9am–1pm and 5–9pm.

The Dining Room at Sun Mountain Lodge ★★★ NORTHWEST The dining room at this mountaintop resort offers the best meals and best views in the Winthrop area. Consequently, whether you stay here or not, your visit to the valley

won't be complete without a meal here, preferably when the sun is shining so that you can enjoy the view. The menu changes regularly, but the chicken curry soup is a perennial favorite that always seems to be on the menu and the mushroom strudel is also a good bet for a starter. Wild game such as antelope and chukar partridge frequently shows up on the menu, and these entrees are usually a good bet. For the less adventurous, there are excellent steaks.

604 Patterson Lake Rd. ☎ **509/996-4707**. www.sunmountainlodge.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$22–\$38 dinner. AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 8–11am and 5:30–8 or 9pm.

Freestone Inn Dining Room ★★ NORTHWEST The Freestone Inn is one of the two luxury lodges in the valley and its restaurant is the best place for a meal at this end of the valley. Located in the lobby of the lodge, the dining room has a classic mountain-lodge feel, with rustic styling and a cathedral ceiling. The menu is short, changes weekly, and sticks primarily to familiar comfort foods including burgers, pasta, and steaks.

31 Early Winters Dr. ☎ **800/639-3809** or 509/996-3906. www.freestoneinn.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$13–\$29. AE, MC, V. Mid-June to Oct daily 5:30–9pm (call for hours other months).

Old Schoolhouse Brewery ★ AMERICAN In a tiny, wedge-shaped old schoolhouse in downtown Winthrop, this local watering hole is Winthrop's favorite gathering spot. There's a deck out back overlooking the river and in summer, a beer garden. On Friday nights, there's usually some kind of live music going on. The beers are some of the best (and most unusual) in the state, and the menu is typical pub fare—burgers, fish and chips, and sandwiches.

155 Riverside Dr. ☎ **509/996-3183**. Main courses \$8–\$14. DISC, MC, V. Spring–fall daily noon–10pm; winter Fri–Sun noon–10pm.

Twisp River Pub ★ PUB FOOD Set on the banks of the Methow River at the west end of Twisp, this big pub is a favorite hangout of locals, including families. Good beers and hard cider are made on the premises, and there's plenty of decent pub food, including good burgers and soups. In summer, there is live music on the deck overlooking the river, and the rest of the year, there's usually live music at least 1 night a week. If you come down here from Winthrop for dinner, be sure to keep an eye out for deer crossing the highway. You'll find the pub beside the bridge at the Winthrop end of town.

201 N. Methow Valley Hwy., Twisp. ☎ **888/220-3360** or 509/997-6822. www.twispriverpub.com. Main courses \$9–\$23. AE, DISC, MC, V. Wed–Thurs 11:30am–8:30pm; Fri–Sat 11:30am–9pm; Sun 10am–8:30pm.

LAKE CHELAN ★

166 miles E of Seattle, 37 miles N of Wenatchee, 59 miles S of Winthrop

Formed when a glacier-carved valley flooded, Lake Chelan is 1,500 feet deep, 55 miles long, and less than 2 miles wide in most places. This landlocked fiord is the third-deepest lake in the U.S. (reaching 400 ft. below sea level) and the longest natural lake in Washington. Only the southern 25 miles of the lake are accessible by road, yet at the northern end, the community of Stehekin (reachable only by boat, plane, or on foot) has managed to survive for more than 100 years, despite not being connected to the outside world by road. Plenty of summer sunshine, clear water, and blue skies have made the lake one of the top summer-vacation destinations in

eastern Washington, and the town of Chelan has a beach-town feel, despite rugged mountain views all around.

At the lake's southern end, apple orchards and vacation-home developments cover the foothills, and ski boats and personal watercraft zoom around the lake. In contrast, at the northern end, forests and rugged, rocky slopes come right to the water's edge, and mountain goats and black bears can often be seen along the shoreline. At the southern end of the lake, you'll be one of the summer hordes, while at the remote northern end of the lake—as idyllic a locale as you could wish for—you'll feel completely cut off from the outside world.

Essentials

GETTING THERE Chelan is on U.S. 97, the main north-south highway in central Washington. From Seattle, take U.S. 2 to Wenatchee and then head north.

GETTING AROUND Although not very convenient for visitors, the Link bus system (☎ 509/662-1155; www.linktransit.com) services the Lake Chelan, Wenatchee, Leavenworth, and Lake Wenatchee areas.

VISITOR INFORMATION For more information on this area, contact the **Lake Chelan Chamber of Commerce**, 102 E. Johnson St. (P.O. Box 216), Chelan, WA 98816 (☎ 800/424-3526 or 509/682-3503; www.lakechelan.com). For information on Stehekin on the Web, check out www.stehekin.com.

Exploring Chelan & Lower Lake Chelan

Downtown Chelan's **Riverwalk Park**, which stretches along both shores of the lake, has a 1-mile paved path and is a pleasant spot for a walk. The park is also home to the **Riverwalk Pavilion**, where outdoor concerts are sometimes held during the summer. Lake Chelan history is on display at the **Chelan Museum**, 204 E. Woodin Ave. (☎ 509/682-5644; www.chelanmuseum.com). June through September, the museum is open Monday to Friday from 10am to 4pm and Saturday from 10am to 3pm; in other months, the museum closes between noon and 1pm on weekdays. Admission is \$2 for adults and \$1 for students and seniors.

Chelan has long been one of Washington's main apple-growing regions, but with low prices for apples in the past decade, local farmers have sought other ways to make money. Many have set up farm stands, while others have planted vineyards and are now making wine. In downtown Chelan, be sure to stop by **Culinary Apple**, 109 E. Woodin Ave. (☎ 800/568-6062; www.culinaryapple.com), a shop dedicated almost exclusively to apples and apple products. At **Blueberry Hills Farms**, 1315 Washington St., Manson (☎ 509/687-2379; www.wildaboutberries.com), you can pick blueberries or sit down to a slice of pie.

WINE TOURING

Chelan is one of Washington's fastest-growing wine regions. In recent years, wineries and vineyards have been popping up faster than champagne corks on New Year's Eve. The following are my current favorite wineries in the area. For more information on area wineries, contact the **Columbia Cascade Winery Association**, 301 Angier Ave., #B, Cashmere, WA 98815 (☎ 509/782-0708; www.columbiacascadewines.com), or **Lake Chelan Wine Valley** (www.lakechelanwinevalley.com), which publishes a map to area wineries. You can pick up a copy of this map at any area winery.

Benson Vineyards Estate Winery About midway between Chelan and Manson, this winery has an impressive tasting room and barrel-aging cave. With the area's most established vineyards, this winery produces plenty of estate wines. The views here are the best in the area.

754 Winesap Ave., Manson. ☎ **509/687-0313**. www.bensonvineyards.com. Daily 11am–5pm.

C.R. Sandidge Winery This is the winery of Ray Sandidge, one of Washington's most respected winemakers. Syrahs get much of the attention here, but the winery also produces viognier and a cab-merlot blend.

145 E. Wapato Way, Ste. 1, Manson. ☎ **509/682-3704**. www.crsandidgewines.com. Fri–Sat 11am–6pm.

Nefarious Cellars Sure the name is a bit odd, but the wines certainly are not. Husband-and-wife winemakers Dean and Heather Neff together are crafting some of my favorite Chelan wines (Dean makes the red wines and Heather makes the whites). The winery is high on a hill on the south shore of the lake and has a great view.

495 S. Lakeshore Rd., Chelan. ☎ **509/682-9505**. www.nefariouscellars.com. Mid-June to mid-Oct daily 11am–6pm; mid- to late Oct and May to mid-June Wed–Sun noon–5pm; mid- to late Apr Sat–Sun noon–5pm. Closed Nov to mid-Apr.

Tsillan Cellars On the south shore of Lake Chelan, this is the area's most impressive winery, although it doesn't necessarily produce the most impressive wines. Built to resemble a Tuscan villa, the winery has a gorgeous view of the lake. There's an Italian restaurant here at the winery, and during the summer, concerts are held in the small amphitheater.

3875 U.S. 97A. ☎ **877/682-8463** or 509/682-9463. www.tsillancellars.com. Daily noon–6pm.

Vin du Lac/Chelan Wine Company This winery on the north shore of the lake produces a variety of very well balanced wines under the Vin du Lac label. The tasting room is in a little yellow house, set amid vineyards and orchards, and artisan cheeses from around the region are available. A bistro serves sandwiches and light meals.

105 Wash. 150, Chelan. ☎ **866/455-9463** or 509/682-2882. www.chelanwine.com. Daily noon–5pm. Bistro Thurs–Sun noon–5pm.

Wapato Point Cellars Right in Manson on the grounds of a condominium development, this winery may not produce the most memorable wines in the area, but it doubles as a wine bar/bistro that's one of the best places in the area for a light meal.

200 Quetilquasoon Rd., Manson. ☎ **509/687-4000**. www.wapatopointcellars.com. Summer daily noon–9pm; call for hours other months.

UP THE LAKE TO STEHEKIN ★★★

If you have time for only one activity while in the Lake Chelan area, it should be an all-day boat ride up the lake to Stehekin, a community located within the Lake Chelan National Recreation Area of the North Cascades National Park Complex and accessible only by boat, floatplane, or hiking trail. This remote community has been a vacation destination for more than 100 years and is set amid rugged, glacier-carved mountains at the far north end of Lake Chelan.

The **Lake Chelan Boat Company**, 1418 W. Woodin Ave., Chelan (☎ **509/682-4584**; www.ladyofthelake.com), with its dock 1 mile west of downtown Chelan on South Shore Road (U.S. 97A), operates two passenger ferries between Chelan and Stehekin. The trip encompasses some of the most spectacular scenery in the Northwest as you travel from gentle rolling foothills to deep within the rugged North

Cascades mountains. Wildlife such as deer, mountain goats, and even bears are frequently seen from the boats.

The *Lady of the Lake II* takes 9½ hours for the round-trip (including a 90-min. layover) and costs \$39 per person, while the *Lady Express* takes about 6 hours (including a 60-min. layover) and costs \$59. Children ages 2 to 11 pay half-fare, and children age 1 and under ride free. Unless you plan to stay overnight, you won't have more than 90 minutes to look around Stehekin unless you book a combination ticket that allows you to go up on the *Lady Express*, spend 3 hours in Stehekin, and return on the *Lady of the Lake II*. This combination ticket is only available in summer.

If you want to get to Stehekin in a hurry, you can make the trip by floatplane on **Chelan Seaplanes** (☎ 509/682-5555; www.chelanairways.com), which leaves from the dock next to the ferries. The fare is \$158 round-trip. This company also offers flightseeing trips for between \$49 and \$199.

A Stehekin day trip is operated in conjunction with the passenger ferries of the **Lake Chelan Boat Company** (☎ 509/682-4584; www.ladyofthelake.com). The popular bus tour goes up the Stehekin Valley to 312-foot Rainbow Falls (\$7 adults, \$4 children ages 6–11, free for children 5 and under).

Although a road (paved for the first 4 miles) once led 23 miles up the Stehekin Valley to Cottonwood Campground, a flood in 1995 damaged much of the road toward the upper end of the valley and another flood in 2003 did more damage. Between mid-June and early October, a shuttle bus runs four times a day between Stehekin Landing and High Bridge, which is 11 miles up the valley near the end of the road. The cost is \$5 (\$2.50 for children). If you just want to ride as far as the Stehekin Pastry Company, the fare is only \$2. From mid-May to mid-June, the shuttle bus operates Friday through Sunday only (and on Memorial Day), with limited shuttles on Friday, Sunday, and Memorial Day. From early to mid-October, the shuttle runs twice a day.

A wide range of recreational activities in Stehekin can be arranged through **Stehekin Outfitters** (☎ 509/682-4677; www.stehekinoutfitters.com). Horseback rides, which head out from Stehekin Valley Ranch, cost \$50 for a 2½-hour ride. For the same price (or \$40 for children 12 and under), you can also go whitewater rafting on the Stehekin River. Sea-kayak tours (\$35 for adults; \$20 for children) are also offered. Mountain bikes can be rented for \$20 per day from **Discovery Bikes** (no phone; www.stehekindiscoverybikes.com), which is located a 5-minute walk up the valley from the ferry landing. Discovery Bikes also does a very fun Ranch Breakfast Ride (\$30) that includes a hearty breakfast at Stehekin Valley Ranch and use of your bike until 1:30pm.

Along the length of the Stehekin Valley are many miles of excellent hiking trails, ranging from easy strolls along the river to strenuous climbs high into the mountain wilderness surrounding the valley. Many of the valley's trailheads can be accessed from the bus that usually runs up the valley, which makes this an excellent place for doing a variety of day hikes over several days. Also, many longer trails originate in Stehekin, making it a popular starting point for backpacking trips. For information on hiking trails and to pick up permits for overnight backpacking trips, stop by the **Golden West Visitor Center** (☎ 360/854-7365, ext. 14; www.nps.gov/noca), which is operated by the National Park Service and is near the boat landing. It's open daily between April and mid-October (3–5 days a week in other months). Fly-fishing on the Stehekin River is also very popular and usually very productive.

Sports & Outdoor Activities in the Lower Lake Area

FISHING Fishing is one of the top recreational activities at Lake Chelan, and in this deep lake's clear waters, you'll find chinook and kokanee salmon, lake (mackinaw) trout, rainbow trout, smallmouth bass, and freshwater lingcod. Although there is bank fishing for stocked rainbows in the lower lake, most other fishing requires a boat. Up in Stehekin, there is good fly-fishing for native cutthroat and rainbow trout. If you want to make sure you come home from Lake Chelan with some good fish stories, get in touch with Terry Allan of **Allan's Fishing Guide Service** (☎ 509/687-3084; www.fishlakechelan.com). Guided fishing trips cost \$195 for a day of fishing.

GOLF Right on the edge of town, golfers will find the municipal **Lake Chelan Golf Course**, 1501 Golf Course Dr. (☎ 800/246-5361 or 509/682-8026; www.lakechelan golf.com), where greens fees range from \$26 to \$37. However, anyone out this way with golf clubs is probably headed to **Desert Canyon Golf Resort**, 1201 Desert Canyon Blvd., Orondo (☎ 800/258-4173 or 509/784-1111; www.desertcanyon.com), just 17 miles south of Chelan and voted the best public course in Washington. Greens fees range from \$35 to \$99.

HIKING Beyond the ends of the roads at the south end of Lake Chelan lie thousands of acres of unspoiled forests and many miles of hiking trails. Access to the trails is from trailheads at road ends or from flagstops along the route of the *Lady of the Lake II*. However, the best trails begin in the Stehekin area. For more information on hiking opportunities, contact the **Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest's Chelan Ranger District**, 428 W. Woodin Ave., Chelan, WA 98816 (☎ 509/682-4900; www.fs.fed.us/r6/wenatchee).

MOUNTAIN BIKING During snow-free months, the extensive network of cross-country ski trails at Echo Ridge becomes a mountain-bikers' playground. The area has 20 miles of dirt roads and trails that are open to mountain bikes. The trailhead for this trail system is just under 10 miles from downtown Chelan. Take the Manson Highway (Wash. 150) west to Boyd Road, turn right and follow signs for Echo Valley Ski Area. From the ski area, continue on Forest Service Road 1821-100. You can rent bikes from **Lake Rider Sports Chelan**, 510 E. Woodin Ave. (☎ 509/885-4767; www.lakeridersports.com), which charges \$40 to \$55 for a half-day rental. This company also rents kayaks.

WATERSPORTS Opportunities for aquatic activities abound on Lake Chelan. Good places to swim include **Lakeside Park** on the South Shore Road, **Don Morse Memorial Park** on the edge of downtown Chelan, and **Manson Bay Park** in Manson. **Lake Chelan State Park** and **25-Mile Creek State Park**, both on South Shore Road, offer swimming, picnicking, and camping.

You can rent powerboats and personal watercraft from **Shoreline Watercraft Rentals** (☎ 800/682-1561 or 509/682-1515; www.shorelineofchelan.com). During the summer, expect to pay \$165 to \$195 per day for personal watercraft and \$280 to \$380 for a ski boat.

If you've got the kids along, you'll find it impossible not to spend some time at **Slidewaters**, 102 Waterslide Dr. (☎ 509/682-5751; www.slidewaters.com), which has eight waterslides, an inner-tube river ride, a 60-person hot tub, and a swimming pool. Admission is \$17 for adults, \$14 for children under 4 feet tall. You'll find this water park just outside town off the South Shore Road.

Where to Stay

IN CHELAN

Best Western Lakeside Lodge ★😊 With lake views from most rooms, indoor and outdoor pools, a whirlpool, and a public park with a beach adjacent to the property, this comfortable motel on the south shore of the lake is a good choice, especially for families. The guest accommodations range from standard motel rooms to spacious suites with full kitchens. All rooms have balconies or patios. If you're up for a splurge, request one of the large suites, preferably a high-ceilinged one on the top floor.

2312 W. Woodin Ave., Chelan, WA 98816. ☎ **800/468-2781** or 509/682-4396. Fax 509/682-3278. www.bestwestern.com. 93 units. Late June to late Aug \$210-\$330 double; late Aug to Oct \$120-\$210 double; Nov to late June \$90-\$180 double. Children 12 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Pets accepted (\$10/day). **Amenities:** Indoor and outdoor pools; 2 Jacuzzis. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge, free Wi-Fi.

Campbell's Resort on Lake Chelan ★★ The Campbell Hotel first opened in 1901 and has remained Chelan's most popular lodging ever since. On the banks of the lake in downtown Chelan, Campbell's today has 1,200 feet of sandy beach and 8 acres of lawns, which you wouldn't guess by looking at it from the less-than-appealing street side of the resort. The main building's deluxe rooms (with furnishings and styling to equal any Seattle luxury hotel) are the best rooms. Fortunately, every room has a lake view, and many, including several cottages, have a kitchen or kitchenette. The resort's restaurant is in the original 1901 hotel, and is one of the best places to eat in Chelan. There's a pub upstairs from the restaurant and a pool-side beach bar in summer.

104 W. Woodin Ave., Chelan, WA 98816. ☎ **800/553-8225** or 509/682-2561. Fax 509/682-2177. www.campbellsresort.com. 170 units. Mid-June to Aug \$260-\$345 double, \$355-\$500 suite, \$270-\$345 2-bedroom family unit; lower rates off season. AE, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; lounge; babysitting; children's programs; concierge; exercise room and access to nearby health club; 2 Jacuzzis; 2 outdoor pools; spa. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge, hair dryer, MP3 docking station, free Wi-Fi.

IN STEHEKIN

If you're heading up to Stehekin and plan to do any cooking during your stay, bring your own food. Only limited groceries are available here.

Silver Bay Inn & Resort ★★ Situated on the banks of both the lake and the Stehekin River, Silver Bay rents out two cabins and a house. The views are superb, and should you stay in the Lake View House, a spacious Northwest contemporary home, you'll find antiques, a big sunroom, and a deck with a view of the river. This house also has a separate room with a river view (the least expensive of accommodations). Be sure to bring your own food to cook. Bicycles, canoes, rowboats, and kayaks for guest use are free of charge and allow you to explore the lake and the Stehekin environs.

10 Silver Bay Rd. (Box 85), Stehekin, WA 98852. ☎ **800/555-7781**. www.silverbayinn.com. 4 units. \$165-\$365 double or cabin for 4; lower rates off season. Minimum stay 2 nights (5 nights for cabins in summer). MC, V. Children 13 and over welcome. **Amenities:** Bikes; Jacuzzi; watersports equipment/boat rentals. *In room:* Kitchen, hair dryer, no phone, free Wi-Fi.

Stehekin Landing Resort Right at Stehekin Landing, this resort is not fancy or luxurious, but is shaded by tall conifers and overlooks the lake. The variety of accommodations ranges from basic rooms with no lake view to large apartments. The studio apartments, all of which have lake views and kitchens, are the best deal. Between

mid-June and the end of September, the lodge's restaurant serves three meals a day; the rest of the year, hours are limited. This Stehekin Landing Resort also rents two large tents that are set up in the upper reaches of the valley. These tents allow you to do overnight tent-to-tent hikes without having to carry all your gear.

P.O. Box 3, Stehekin, WA 98852. ☎ **509/682-4494**. Fax 360/856-2579. www.stehekinlanding.com. 28 units. Mid-June to mid-Oct \$112-\$185 double, \$398 house; Apr to mid-June and mid-Oct to Oct 31 \$82-\$145 double, \$325 house. Children 5 and under stay free in parent's room. MC, V. Closed Nov-Mar.

Amenities: Restaurant. *In room:* Kitchen (some rooms), no phone.

Stehekin Valley Ranch ★ 😊 If you're a camper at heart, then the tent cabins at the Stehekin Valley Ranch may appeal to you. With canvas roofs, screen windows, and no electricity or plumbing, these "cabins" are basically just large, well-outfitted tents, albeit with wooden walls. Bathroom facilities are in the nearby main building. For slightly more comfortable accommodations, opt for one of the permanent cabins. Activities available at additional cost include horseback riding, river rafting, sea kayaking, and mountain biking. The ranch is accessible by ferry or floatplane to Stehekin Landing; from there, you're taken 9 miles up the valley to the ranch in a Stehekin Valley Ranch shuttle bus. Note that although meals are not included with the kitchen cabins, a vehicle is provided for your use during your stay.

P.O. Box 36, Stehekin, WA 98852. ☎ **800/536-0745** or 509/682-4677. <http://stehekinvalleyranch.com>. 14 units. Tent cabins \$85-\$95 adult, \$55-\$65 child 4-12, \$15-\$25 child 1-3; cabins \$105-\$115 adult, \$75-\$85 child 4-12, \$30-\$40 child 1-3; kitchen cabins (meals not included) \$130-\$170 double. Rates include all meals and transportation in lower valley. MC, V. Closed mid-Oct to mid-June. **Amenities:** Restaurant. *In room:* No phone.

Where to Dine

IN CHELAN & MANSON

If you're looking for a good cup of coffee, try **The Vogue**, 117 E. Woodin Ave. (☎ **509/888-5282**; www.thevoguelounge.com), in downtown Chelan. This espresso bar also sells local wines. For light lunches, the patio at **Vin du Lac/Chelan Wine Company**, 105 Wash. 150, Chelan (☎ **866/455-9463** or 509/682-2882; www.chelanwine.com), is the prettiest spot for a meal and also has the best view.

Café Manson ★★ NEW AMERICAN The menu is short (usually only four entrees) and the casual dining room isn't very big, but this little restaurant has a big reputation around the Lake Chelan area. The ribs, rubbed with Asian five-spice powder are a must-have dish, as are pork sliders that are made with pork that is cooked for 10 hours in banana leaves. To start things off, I like the shaved salad, which is made with thinly sliced celery, radishes, red onions, and lettuce with a blue cheese dressing. There are always good soup specials, too. Just be sure to save room for the wonderful bread pudding. You'll find this place a half-block off the main street through Manson near the C.R. Sandidge Wines tasting room.

33 Green Ave., Manson. ☎ **509/888-4197**. www.cafemanson.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$16-\$18. MC, V. Fri-Mon 5-9pm.

Campbell's Bistro ★ AMERICAN Housed in the original 1901 Campbell Hotel, this is one of the only upscale restaurants in Chelan, and as such, it stays pretty busy in the summer months. While the menu is not overly creative, it has more imaginative offerings than most places in town. The steaks here are your best

bets. If you prefer burgers to horseradish-crusted ahi, then you're better off upstairs at the casual pub.

104 W. Woodin Ave., Chelan. ☎ **509/682-4250**. www.dineatcampbells.com. Main courses \$9–\$16 lunch, \$10–\$31 dinner. AE, MC, V. Mon–Sat 7–11am, 11:30am–1:30pm, and 5–9pm; Sun 7am–noon and 5–9pm (shorter hours in winter).

Sorrento's Ristorante ★ ITALIAN Tsillan Cellars is the most impressive winery in Lake Chelan and has not only an amphitheater that stages summer concerts but also this excellent Italian restaurant. I can never resist caprese salad, with its creamy mozzarella and basil, but there are also tasty prawns with pesto on the appetizers menu. Because wineries around here make plenty of big, bold red wines, you might want to splurge on the New York strip steak with mushroom-brandied-peppercorn sauce. Eggplant Parmesan and Tuscan-style cannelloni also pair nicely with local red wines.

At Tsillan Cellars, 3875 U.S. 97A, Chelan. ☎ **509/682-5409**. www.tsillancellars.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$16–\$26. AE, DISC, MC, V. Wed–Fri 5–8pm; Sat–Sun noon–3pm and 5–9pm.

IN STEHEKIN

The dining options in Stehekin are slim, and if you plan to stay in a cabin or camp out, be sure to bring all the food you'll need. Otherwise, simple meals are available at **Stehekin Landing Resort** (☎ **509/682-4494**; www.stehekinlanding.com), which is right at the ferry landing in Stehekin. Note that during the winter, the restaurant here is only open Monday, Wednesday, and Friday (boat days) from 11:30am to 1:30pm. When you just must have something sweet, you're in luck; the **Stehekin Pastry Company** (☎ **509/682-4677**), just 2 miles up valley from the boat landing, serves pastries, ice cream, and espresso. Note that this bakery is only open from late May to mid-October.

LEAVENWORTH ★★ & THE WENATCHEE VALLEY

108 miles E of Everett, 22 miles W of Wenatchee, 58 miles SW of Chelan

You're out for a Sunday drive through the mountains, just enjoying the views, when you come around a bend and find yourself in the Bavarian Alps. Folks in lederhosen and dirndls dance in the streets, a polka band plays the old oompah-pah, and the buildings look like alpine chalets. Have you entered the Twilight Zone? No, it's just Leavenworth, Washington's Bavarian village.

Many an unsuspecting traveler has had this experience, but this section will help you be prepared for the sight of a Bavarian village transported to the middle of the Washington Cascades. Whether you think it's the most romantic town in the state, a great place to go shopping, the perfect base for hiking and skiing, or just another example of *über*-kitsch, there's no denying that Leavenworth makes an impression.

Essentials

GETTING THERE From I-5, take U.S. 2 from Everett, or if you're coming from the south, take I-405 to Bothell and then take Wash. 522 northeast to Monroe, where you pick up U.S. 2 heading east. From U.S. 97, the main north-south route east of the Cascades in the central part of the state, head west on U.S. 2. Wenatchee

is at the junction of U.S. 2 and U.S. 97. Wash. 28 connects Wenatchee to the eastern part of the state.

Wenatchee's **Pangborn Memorial Airport**, 1 Pangborn Dr., East Wenatchee (☎ 509/884-2494; www.pangbornairport.com), is served by **Horizon Air** from Seattle. Amtrak trains stop in Wenatchee en route between Spokane and Seattle.

VISITOR INFORMATION For more information on this area, contact the **Leavenworth Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center**, 940 U.S. 2 (P.O. Box 327), Leavenworth, WA 98826 (☎ 509/548-5807; www.leavenworth.org). For more information on the Wenatchee area, contact the **Wenatchee Valley Visitors Bureau**, 5 S. Wenatchee Ave., Ste. 100, Wenatchee, WA 98801 (☎ 800/572-7753; www.wenatcheevalley.org).

GETTING AROUND Car rentals are available in Wenatchee from Budget, Enterprise, and Hertz. Although it is not very convenient for exploring this area, the Link bus system (☎ 509/662-1155; www.linktransit.com) services the Leavenworth, Wenatchee, Lake Wenatchee, and Lake Chelan areas.

FESTIVALS During the annual **Maifest** (mid-May) and **Washington State Autumn Leaf Festival** (late Sept), Leavenworth rolls out the barrel and takes to the streets and parks with polka bands, Bavarian dancing, and plenty of crafts vendors. In June, more music hits town with the **Leavenworth International Accordion Celebration** (www.accordioncelebration.com). In mid-September, the **Wenatchee River Salmon Festival** (www.salmonfest.org) celebrates the return of salmon to the river, and in October there's **Oktoberfest** (www.leavenworth-oktoberfest.com), which is held over 3 consecutive weekends. In December, the whole town gets lit up in perhaps the most impressive **Christmas Lighting Festival** in the Northwest.

Nearby Wenatchee celebrates its apples each year with the **Washington State Apple Blossom Festival** (www.appleblossom.org), with more than a week of festivities in late April and early May.

Exploring Leavenworth

Leavenworth's main attraction is the town itself. Back in the early 1960s, this was just another mountain town struggling to get by on a limited economy. Sure, the valley was beautiful, but beauty wasn't enough to bring in the bucks. A few years after a motel with alpine architecture opened in town, Leavenworth decided to give itself a complete makeover. Today nearly every commercial building in town, from the gas station to the Safeway, looks as if it were built by Bavarian gnomes. What may come as a surprise is that they did a good job! Stroll around town and you'll convince yourself that you've just had the world's cheapest trip to the Alps. People here even speak German.

Anytime of year, the town's most popular tourist activity seems to be shopping for genuine Bavarian souvenirs in the many gift shops—you'll find cuckoo clocks, Hummel figurines, imported lace, and nutcrackers. In fact, if nutcrackers are your passion, don't miss the **Leavenworth Nutcracker Museum**, 735 Front St. (☎ 509/548-4573; www.nutcrackermuseum.com), which has more than 6,000 nutcrackers of all shapes and sizes. May through October, the museum is open daily from 2 to 5pm; November through April, it's open on weekends only. Admission is \$2.50 for adults and \$1 for children ages 6 to 17. The **Upper Valley Museum**, 347

Division St. (☎ 509/548-0728; www.uppervalleymuseum.org), in a beautiful historic home, showcases the history of the valley. There are small exhibits in the old house, and the grounds are open to the public. The museum is open Thursday through Sunday from 11am to 5pm.

Classical music fans should be sure to see what's happening at the **Icicle Creek Music Center** ★ (☎ 877/265-6026 or 509/548-6347; www.icicle.org), which is adjacent to the Sleeping Lady resort and has programs throughout the year. There are also many musical performances and festivals in the small Front Street Park in downtown Leavenworth, where a large gazebo serves as a bandstand.

Although Leavenworth itself is not in a wine grape-growing region, the town does have numerous tasting rooms for wineries that are located both within the Wenatchee Valley and in other parts of the state. You can now wander from one tasting room to the next and sample wines from all over the state. **Kestrel Vintners**, 843B Front St. (☎ 509/548-7348; www.kestrelwines.com), is best known for its easy-drinking Lady in Red wine. The tasting room is open Sunday to Thursday from 11am to 5pm and Friday and Saturday from 11am to 8pm. **A Taste of Icicle Ridge Winery**, 821 Ste. B Front St. (☎ 509/548-6156; www.icicleridgewinery.com), is the in-town tasting room of a winery down the valley in Peshastin. This tasting room is open Monday to Thursday from 11am to 5pm, Friday and Saturday from 11am to 9pm, and Sunday from 11am to 8pm. On the second floor of the Masterpiece Gallery, 939 Front St., you can taste the wines of **Willow Crest Winery** (☎ 509/548-5166; www.willowcrestwinery.com)—one of the Yakima Valley's more reliable wineries—and **Pasek Cellars** (☎ 509/548-5166; www.pasekcellars.com), which is known for its fruit wines. This tasting room is open daily from 11am to 6pm. At this same address, you can also taste the wines of **Bergdorf Cellars** (☎ 509/548-7638; www.bergdorfcellars.com), which is open Sunday to Thursday from 11:30am to 6pm and Friday and Saturday from 11:30am to 8pm. Downstairs from Visconti's restaurant, you can stop at **Ryan Patrick Vineyards**, 636 Front St. (☎ 509/888-2236; www.ryanpatrickvineyards.com), which does an inexpensive, un-oaked chardonnay called Naked that's great on a warm summer evening. The tasting room is open daily Monday through Friday from noon to 6pm and Saturday and Sunday from 11am to 6pm. Across from Visconti's you'll find **Okanogan Estate & Vineyards**, 633 Front St. (☎ 509/548-9883; www.okanoganwine.com), which has its winery in Oroville near the Canadian border. This tasting room is open daily from 11am to 5pm.

Exploring the Lower Wenatchee Valley

As you drive east down the Wenatchee Valley from Leavenworth, you begin to see the valley's many apple and pear orchards. In summer and fall, you can taste the fruit of the valley at farmstands along U.S. 2. **Smallwood's Harvest** (☎ 509/548-4196; www.smallwoodsharvest.com) and **Prey's Fruit Barn** (☎ 509/548-5771; www.preysfruitbarn.com) are the biggest and best farmstands along this stretch of road. Next door to Prey's, you can get fresh bread at **Homefires Bakery**, 11007 U.S. 2 (☎ 509/548-7362; www.homefiresbakery.com).

Because apple prices have been so low in recent years, some orchards have planted vineyards, and wineries are proliferating in the area. On the hill above the Smallwood's Harvest fruit stand, 2 miles east of Leavenworth, you'll find **Silvara Vineyards**, 77 Stage Rd., Peshastin (☎ 509/548-1000; www.silvarawine.com), the valley's prettiest tasting room. This is one of the region's newest wineries, and

although it only makes chardonnay, cabernet sauvignon, and Riesling, it does a good job with all of them. Heading farther down the valley, you'll come to **Icicle Ridge Winery**, 8977 North Rd., Peshastin (☎ 509/548-7019; www.icicleridgewinery.com), with its tasting room in a log cabin surrounded by a pear orchard (daily noon–5pm). This winery also has a tasting room in downtown Leavenworth (see above). In summer, the winery hosts jazz concerts. In Peshastin, you'll find **Wedge Mountain Winery**, 9534 Saunders Rd., Peshastin (☎ 509/548-7068; www.wedgemountainwinery.com), which makes a wide range of wines. The tasting room is open Thursday to Monday from 10am to 6pm. For more information on area wineries, contact **Columbia Cascade Wines and Wineries** (☎ 509/782-0708; www.columbiacascadewines.com).

CASHMERE: AN EARLY AMERICAN TOWN

Just west of Wenatchee, you'll find the town of **Cashmere**, which has adopted an Early American theme. The town's main attraction is the **Aplets & Cotlets Candy Factory and Country Store**, 117 Mission Ave. (☎ 800/231-3242 or 509/782-2191; www.libertyorchards.com), where you can tour the kitchens that produce these unusual fruit-and-nut confections. Between April and December, the factory and store are open Monday to Friday from 8am to 5:30pm and Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 4pm; between January and March, they're open Monday to Friday from 8:30am to 4:30pm.

For a different sort of sweet treat, don't miss **Anjou Bakery**, 3898 Old Monitor Hwy. (☎ 509/782-4360; www.anjoubakery.com), just off U.S. 2 in the middle of a pear orchard on the outskirts of Cashmere. The ovens here produce great pastries and rustic breads. The bakery is open Thursday to Monday from 7am to 5pm.

Also worth a visit in Cashmere is the **Chelan County Historical Society Historic Museum and Pioneer Village**, 600 Cotlets Way (☎ 509/782-3230). Nearly 20 old log buildings have been assembled here and are filled with period antiques. Inside the main museum building, you'll find exhibits on the early Native American cultures of the region, pioneer history, and natural history. March through October, the museum is open daily from 9:30am to 4:30pm. Admission is \$5.50 for adults, \$4.50 for seniors, \$4 for students ages 12 to 18, and \$3 for children ages 6 to 11.

WENATCHEE

Apple-industry displays are part of the focus of the **Wenatchee Valley Museum & Cultural Center**, 127 S. Mission St. (☎ 509/888-6240; www.wvmcc.org), but there are also interesting exhibits on local Native American cultures and the first transpacific flight. Model-railroading buffs will enjoy the HO-scale Great Northern Railway. The museum also hosts traveling exhibitions and occasional concerts on the museum's 1919 Wurlitzer organ. The museum is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10am to 4pm (until 7pm on first Fri of each month). Admission is \$5 for adults, \$4 for seniors, and \$2 for children ages 6 to 12 (free for all on first Fri of each month).

Though it's only a dozen or so miles from the lush forests of the Cascades, Wenatchee is on the edge of central Washington's arid shrub-steppe region. To bring a bit of the mountains' greenery into this high desert, Herman Ohme and his family spent 60 years creating **Ohme Gardens** ★★, 3327 Ohme Rd., Wenatchee (☎ 509/662-5785; www.ohmegardens.com), a lush alpine garden covering 9 cliff-top acres north of Wenatchee. The gardens wind along the top of a rocky outcropping that overlooks the Wenatchee Valley, Columbia River, and Cascade peaks. Rock

gardens, meadows, fern grottoes, and waterfalls lend a naturalistic feel similar to that of a Japanese garden. The gardens are open from April 15 to October 15, daily from 9am to 6pm (until 7pm in summer). Admission is \$7 for adults and \$3.50 for children ages 6 to 17.

North of Wenatchee on the north side of the town of Entiat, watch for the **Columbia Breaks Fire Interpretive Center** (www.wildfirecenter.org), which has two old fire lookouts and the .5-mile Trail of Fire and Forest that explains the role of fires in western forests.

Outdoor Activities: From Golf to Whitewater Rafting

If your interests tend more toward hiking than to Hummel figurines, you'll find plenty to do around Leavenworth. The town is on the valley floor at the confluence of the Wenatchee River and Icicle Creek, and rising all around are the steep, forested mountainsides of the Stuart Range and Entiat Mountains. Spring through fall, there is rafting, hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding, and, in winter, there is downhill and cross-country skiing and snowmobiling.

Just 25 miles north of town is **Lake Wenatchee**, a year-round recreation area with hiking and cross-country ski trails, horseback riding, canoe and kayak rentals, windsurfing, swimming, fishing, mountain biking, camping, and snowmobiling. **Lake Wenatchee State Park** (☎ 509/763-3101) is the center of recreational activity.

FISHING Icicle Creek, which runs through Leavenworth, has a short summer salmon season for fish headed upstream to the Leavenworth Fish Hatchery. Lake Wenatchee, at 5 miles in length, is the area's largest lake and holds kokanee, as well as Dolly Varden and rainbows. To fish for kokanee, you'll need a boat. Several of the rivers and streams in the Leavenworth area are open to fly-fishing only.

GOLF Golfers can play 18 holes at the **Leavenworth Golf Club**, 9101 Icicle Rd. (☎ 509/548-7267; www.leavenworthgolf.com), which charges \$30 to \$46 for a round of golf and is located on the outskirts of town. North of Leavenworth near Lake Wenatchee, there's **Kahler Glen Golf Course**, 20700 Clubhouse Dr. (☎ 509/763-4025; www.kahlerglen.com), which charges \$29 to \$40 (a golf cart is an additional \$15). However, the **Highlander Golf Club**, 2920 Eighth St. SE, East Wenatchee (☎ 509/884-4653; www.highlandergolfclub.com), with its Scottish links styling and awesome big-sky views, is the most talked-about course in the region. Greens fees range from \$25 to \$59. If you want to practice your putting, the **Enzian Falls Championship Putting Course** (☎ 509/548-5269; www.enzianfalls.com), located across from the Enzian Inn, is a beautiful, bent-grass 18-hole putting course (not a tacky miniature golf course).

HIKING Right in town, you'll find a pleasant paved walking path in **Waterfront Park**. Out at the **fish hatchery** on Icicle Road, there is also a mile-long interpretive trail with information on the hatchery. In winter, both of these areas have cross-country ski trails. In Tumwater Canyon, the narrow gorge that serves as the western gateway to Leavenworth, there is an easy hiking trail along the Wenatchee River banks. Called the Tumwater Pipeline Trail, this path starts out by crossing the river on an old pipeline. The trailhead is 1.5 miles outside of town.

Just outside Leavenworth, in the **Alpine Lakes Wilderness** ★★★, lies some of the most spectacular mountain scenery in the state, and the trails that lead into this wilderness are among the most popular. They're so popular that backpackers must reserve camping permits months in advance to stay overnight in such heavily visited areas as the Enchantment Lakes basin. Most trails are best suited for overnight backpacking trips as they climb steeply and steadily for many miles before reaching the more scenic areas. For information on trails in Wenatchee National Forest, contact the Leavenworth office of the **Wenatchee River Ranger District**, 600 Sherbourne St., Leavenworth, WA 98826 (☎ 509/548-2550; www.fs.fed.us/r6/wenatchee). Reservations for backpacking permits are accepted starting February 1; to apply, call the ranger station or visit its website. Permits go fast, so do apply early.

If you're on your way to Leavenworth from the west side of the Cascades and are driving over Stevens Pass, you might want to get out and stretch your legs on the easy **Iron Goat Trail**. This newly constructed trail follows the route of a railroad line that once followed much the same route as today's U.S. 2. An interpretive center, complete with old rail cars, is at milepost 58.3 on U.S. 2 (10 miles east of Skykomish). From here, several hikes of different lengths are possible. For more information, go to www.irongoat.org.

HORSEBACK RIDING If you'd like to go horseback riding, contact **Eagle Creek Ranch** (☎ 800/221-7433 or 509/548-7798; www.eaglecreek.ws), which charges \$26 for a 1-hour ride and \$45 for a 2-hour ride. **Icicle Outfitters & Guides** (☎ 800/497-3912 or 509/669-1518 in Leavenworth or 763-3647 at Lake Wenatchee; www.icicleoutfitters.com), offers a similar variety of rides, with stables at Lake Wenatchee State Park and in Leavenworth on Icicle Road near the fish hatchery. A 1¼-hour ride will cost you \$50.

MOUNTAIN BIKING From easy rides on meandering dirt roads to grueling climbs up mountaintops with spectacular views, the Leavenworth area has some of the best mountain-biking routes in the state. Mountain bikes can be rented at **Der Sportsmann**, 837 Front St. (☎ 800/548-4145 or 509/548-5623), and **Das Rad Haus**, 1207 Front St. (☎ 509/548-5615; www.dasradhaus.com). Expect to pay \$25 to \$40 per day for a mountain bike. Inquire at either of these shops about ride recommendations.

ROCK CLIMBING Two miles west of Cashmere on U.S. 2, you'll find **Peshastin Pinnacles State Park**, Washington's only state park created exclusively for rock climbing. The **Snow Creek Wall**, about a mile up the trail to the Enchantment Lakes area, is another great climbing spot. The trailhead is located about 4 miles up Icicle Creek Road. Over on the west side of Stevens Pass, the **Index Town Walls** outside the tiny community of Index is the area's other great climbing site. For climbing gear and advice, stop by **Leavenworth Mountain Sports**, 220 Wash. 2 (☎ 509/548-7864; www.leavenworthmtnsports.com).

WHITEWATER RAFTING & TUBING The Wenatchee River flows right through Leavenworth and, just downstream from town, becomes one of the best whitewater-rafting rivers in the state. Rafting season runs from April to July. If you're interested, contact **Osprey Rafting Co.** (☎ 800/743-6269 or 509/548-6800; www.ospreyrafting.com), or **River Riders** (☎ 800/448-7238 or 206/448-7238; www.riverrider.com). A half-day trip on the Wenatchee costs \$50 to \$65 per person, and a full day is \$70 to \$90.

When there isn't enough water for rafting, a couple of local companies rent big inner tubes and will shuttle you to or from the river. **Let's Go Tubing**, 321 Ninth St. (☎ 866/712-8823 or 509/548-8823; www.letsготubing.com), and **River Rider Tubing**, 10860 U.S. 2 (☎ 800/448-RAFT [7238]; www.rivertubers.com), both charge \$15 for tube rentals and a shuttle. This latter company is located a couple of miles east of town. Tubing the river is loads of fun for the whole family. Keep an eye out for trout in the river.

WINTER SPORTS Some of the best downhill skiing and snowboarding in the state is available 40 miles west of Leavenworth at **Stevens Pass** ★★ (☎ 206/812-4510 for general information, or 634-1645 for snow conditions; www.stevenspass.com). Adult all-day lift tickets are \$63. There are plenty of intermediate and advanced runs, but not many beginner runs.

Head down the valley from Leavenworth and then up into the hills outside Wenatchee to find **Mission Ridge** ski area ★★ (☎ 509/663-3200 for snow reports, or 663-6543; www.missionridge.com), known for its powder snow (a rarity in the Cascades) and sunny weather. Adult lift ticket prices are \$50.

Cross-country skiers can find plenty of groomed trails in the area. **Stevens Pass Nordic Center** (☎ 206/812-4510; www.stevenspass.com) has mostly intermediate- and expert-level trails, generally open Thursday to Sunday and on holidays. A trail pass costs \$19 for adults and rentals are available. The **Leavenworth Winter Sports Club** (☎ 509/548-5477; www.skileavenworth.com) maintains 16 miles of groomed trails at several locations around Leavenworth, and 3 miles of trails are even lit for night skiing. A trail pass runs \$15. This ski club also operates the beginner-level **Leavenworth Ski Hill**, a mile outside of town. Although small, this little ski hill does have a ski-jumping facility.

Skis can be rented at **Der Sportsmann**, 837 Front St. (☎ 800/548-4145 or 509/548-5623), which charges \$14 to \$22 per day for cross-country skis. Snowshoes (\$12/day) can also be rented. Rental equipment is also available at **Leavenworth Mountain Sports**, 220 U.S. 2 (☎ 509/548-7864; www.leavenworthmntnsports.com).

If you'd rather experience the snow from a horse-drawn sleigh, you can do that, too. Sleigh rides are offered by **Red-Tail Canyon Farm**, 11780 Freund Canyon Rd., Leavenworth (☎ 800/678-4512 or 509/548-4512; www.redtailcanyonfarm.com); and **Eagle Creek Ranch**, Eagle Creek Road (☎ 800/221-7433 or 509/548-7798; www.eaglecreek.ws). Rides cost \$15 to \$16 for adults, and \$7.50 to \$8 for children.

Where to Stay

EXPENSIVE

Mountain Home Lodge ★★ Set 2½ miles up a steep, narrow road that is only paved in its lower stretch, this mountain lodge is surrounded by a 20-acre meadow and has a spectacular view of the craggy Stuart Range. In winter, the road up here is not plowed and guests are brought to the lodge by Snowcat. At that time of year, 40 miles of cross-country ski trails are the main attraction (backcountry skis and snowshoes are provided), but there are also guided snowmobile tours. In summer, hiking and mountain biking are the big draws. Guest rooms vary in size, and each is individually decorated with themes that reflect the area's activities. However, The Hide Away, atop the lodge, is the best room in the house (excluding the suite).

During the summer, when rates include only breakfast, gourmet lunches (\$15) and dinners (\$49) are available.

8201 Mountain Home Rd. (P.O. Box 687), Leavenworth, WA 98826. ☎ **800/414-2378** or 509/548-7077. Fax 509/548-5008. www.mthome.com. 12 units. Summer \$130–\$180 double, \$250 suite, \$360 cabin; winter \$300–\$370 double, \$420 suite, \$530 cabin. Summer rates include full breakfast; winter rates include 3 meals daily. 2-night minimum weekends and winter; 3-night minimum holidays. Children 15 and under not accepted. DISC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; concierge; Jacuzzi; outdoor pool; room service; tennis court. *In room:* A/C, CD player, hair dryer, MP3 docking station, free Wi-Fi.

Run of the River Inn & Refuge ★★ Tranquil, luxurious, rustic, sophisticated—you simply won't find a more idyllic B&B anywhere in Washington. This contemporary log inn is set on 3 acres at a bend of Icicle Creek and has spectacular mountain views. With its hand-hewn log roof beams, rustic peeled-log furniture, and exposed stones, the inn has a timeless, mountain-lodge feel. All the accommodations are large suites, and there are fireplaces and double whirlpool tubs, balconies overlooking the river, and porch swings for quiet moments. Walking sticks, day packs, and picnic hampers are always ready for a day's outing, and the innkeepers provide tips on where to go and what to do in the area. This is the ideal base for exploring the nearby mountains. If you need lots of space, there is the inn's Ravenwood Lodge, a separate log cabin for two.

9308 E. Leavenworth Rd. (P.O. Box 285), Leavenworth, WA 98826. ☎ **800/288-6491** or 509/548-7171. www.runoftheriver.com. 7 units. \$220–\$255 double; \$425 cabin. 2-night minimum; 3-night minimum Dec 17–Jan 4 and 3-day holiday weekends. DISC, MC, V. Children 17 and under not encouraged. **Amenities:** Bikes; concierge; Jacuzzi. *In room:* A/C, TV/DVD, fridge, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

Sleeping Lady ★★★ Sleeping Lady (the name comes from a nearby mountain) is one of the best-designed mountain retreats in the state. Set amid ponderosa pines and granite boulders, the small resort with red-roofed cabins looks much like the summer camp it once was. Guest rooms are done in a rustic contemporary style, abound in natural wood, and have high ceilings with exposed beams. The grounds, including a meadow on the bank of Icicle Creek, are beautifully landscaped and a delight to wander. Meals include produce from the resort's large organic vegetable garden, and throughout the year, classical music performances and plays are staged. The boulder-lined swimming pool is one of the most memorable pools in the state.

7375 Icicle Rd., Leavenworth, WA 98826. ☎ **800/574-2123** or 509/548-6344. Fax 509/548-6312. www.sleepinglady.com. 58 units. May–Oct \$300–\$360 double; Nov–Apr \$190–\$310 double. Rates include 3 meals. Children 4 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DISC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; lounge; bikes; exercise room; Jacuzzi; outdoor pool; sauna. *In room:* A/C, hair dryer, MP3 docking station, free Wi-Fi.

MODERATE

Abendblume Inn ★★  This alpine chalet, complete with flower boxes overflowing with blossoms, is a luxurious and romantic B&B overlooking Leavenworth and the surrounding mountains. From the hand-carved front door to the wrought-iron stair railing, an eye for detail is apparent throughout the inn. The large rooms with balconies overlooking the valley are the ones to book. In these, you'll find fireplaces, DVD players, and wonderfully luxurious beds and linens, but the bathrooms are the real attractions. My favorite has a triangular tub for two, a pair of sinks, and heated marble floors. Nowhere in Leavenworth is there a more romantic room. Guests also have use of both indoor and outdoor spas.

12570 Ranger Rd., Leavenworth, WA 98826. ☎ **800/669-7634** or 509/548-4059. www.abendblume.com. 7 units. \$145–\$298 double. Rates include full breakfast. 2-night minimum on weekends. DISC, MC, V. Children 11 and under not accepted. **Amenities:** Concierge; Jacuzzi. *In room:* A/C, TV/DVD, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

INEXPENSIVE

Hotel Pension Anna ★ 🎁 Though the guest rooms in the Pension Anna's main building are attractively appointed with pine furniture, including a four-poster bed in the honeymoon suite, the annex building contains the inn's two most outstanding rooms. This annex is a renovated church built in 1913 (and later moved to this site), and the Old Chapel Suite is a grand space that includes part of the old choir loft (now a sleeping loft). Ceilings 15 feet high give the room an expansive feel, and in the bedroom, you'll find an ornately carved headboard framed by draperies that reach to the ceiling. Though considerably smaller, the Parish Nook Room has an ornate king-size bed, marble-top bedside stands, and the original arched windows. Only slightly more expensive than a regular room, the Parish Nook is the inn's best deal.

926 Commercial St., Leavenworth, WA 98826. ☎ **800/509-2662** or 509/548-6273. Fax 509/548-4656. www.pensionanna.com. 17 units. \$145–\$230 double; \$269–\$330 suite. Rates include full breakfast. Children 5 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DISC, MC, V. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

Where to Dine

IN LEAVENWORTH

If all the Bavarian kitsch has you craving a bratwurst, you can grab one at the **München Haus**, 709 Front St. (☎ **509/548-1158**; www.munchenhaus.com), an outdoor sausage stand. For tasty crepes and cakes, check out **Pavz**, 833 Front St. (☎ **509/548-2103**; www.pavzcafe.com). If it's hot out, head to **Via Dolce Gelato**, 636 Front St. (☎ **509/548-1213**). If you need some picnic food for a hike in the mountains, stop by **The Cheesemonger's Shop**, 819 Front St. (☎ **509/548-9011**;

www.cheesemongersshop.com), for cheese, and **Cured**, 636 Front St. (☎ **509/888-0424**; www.curedbyvisconti.com), for salami and other cured meats, as well as cheese.

Andreas Keller ★ 😊 GERMAN In a *keller* (cellar) opposite the gazebo on Front Street is one of Leavenworth's true German experiences. From the waitresses shouting across the restaurant in German to the accordionist who plays in the evening, everything about this place is

Bavarian. Take a seat and you'll be surrounded by *Gemütlichkeit*. Rotisserie chicken and wursts are the staples, washed down with Bavarian beer. Be sure to get something with the wine kraut; it's delicious (so is the German potato salad). It's casual and fun enough for even your kids to enjoy.

829 Front St. ☎ **509/548-6000**. www.andreaskellerrestaurant.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$6–\$29. AE, MC, V. Sun–Thurs 11am–9pm; Fri–Sat 11am–10pm (may close earlier in off season).



Leavenworth's Polka Spot

If you happen to be in Leavenworth on one of those rare weekends when there is no festival, you can still take in some polka music at **King Ludwig's Restaurant**, 921 Front St. (☎ **360/548-6625**; www.kingludwigs.com), which features live Bavarian music on Friday and Saturday nights.

10

THE CASCADES

Leavenworth & the Wenatchee Valley

Cafe Mozart Restaurant ★★ GERMAN/CONTINENTAL Upstairs from the ever-popular Andreas Keller, this restaurant serves upscale German and Austrian food, as well as French and American favorites, in a refined atmosphere. The cold-smoked Norwegian salmon and Dungeness crab cakes make good non-German starters. Follow this with Wiener schnitzel or Munich-style sauerbraten for a gourmet German meal, but I prefer to start with the fondue. Mozart is played on the stereo, and on Friday and Saturday nights, there's live harp music.

829 Front St. ☎ **509/548-0600**. www.cafemozartrestaurant.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$11–\$18 lunch, \$19–\$43 dinner. AE, DISC, MC, V. Daily 11:30am–2:30pm and 4:30–9pm (Nov–May closed for lunch Mon–Thurs).

Visconti's Ristorante Italiano ★★ ITALIAN If you think wurst is the best you can do in Leavenworth, think again. This classy Italian restaurant serves some of the best food in Leavenworth. For a totally Tuscan experience, try the panzanella (bread salad) followed by an 18-ounce rib-eye *bistecca*. The lemon chicken, spit roasted over apple wood, is another good bet. To start things out, be sure to have the pancetta-wrapped prawns. There's also a wine bar that's a great place to hang out if you aren't into hefting steins of hefeweizen.

636 Front St. ☎ **509/548-1213**. www.viscontis.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$11–\$26 lunch, \$14–\$37 dinner. AE, DISC, MC, V. Sun–Thurs 11am–9:30pm; Fri–Sat 11am–11pm.

THE SNOQUALMIE PASS ROUTE ★★

Snoqualmie Pass: 50 miles E of Seattle, 53 miles W of Ellensburg

While Seattle has become a sprawling city of congested highways and high housing prices, there is a reason so many put up with such drawbacks. Less than an hour east of the city lie mountains so vast and rugged that you could hike for a week without ever crossing a road. The Summit at Snoqualmie ski area is so close to the city that people head up after work during winter for a bit of night skiing.

Between the city and this wilderness lies the Snoqualmie Valley, the Seattle region's last bit of bucolic countryside. Here you'll find small towns, pastures full of spotted cows, U-pick farms, and even a few unexpected attractions, including an impressive waterfall and, in summer, a medieval fair. While driving the back roads of the Snoqualmie Valley, keep an eye out for historic markers with old photos and details about the valley's past.

Essentials

GETTING THERE Snoqualmie Pass is on I-90 between Seattle and Ellensburg.

VISITOR INFORMATION For more information on the area, contact the **Snoqualmie Pass Visitor Center** (☎ **425/434-6111**), just off I-90 at Snoqualmie Pass and operated by the National Forest Service. Information is also available through the **Cle Elum/Roslyn Chamber of Commerce**, 401 W. First St., Cle Elum, WA 98922 (☎ **509/674-5958**; www.cleelumroslyn.org).

Exploring the Snoqualmie Valley

Snoqualmie Falls ★★, the valley's biggest attraction, plummets 270 feet into a pool of deep blue water. The falls are surrounded by a park owned by Puget Power,

which operates a hydroelectric plant inside the rock wall behind the falls. The plant, built in 1898, was the world's first underground electricity-generating facility. Within the park you'll find two overlooks near the lip of the falls and a .5-mile trail down to the base of the cascade. The river below the waterfall is popular both for fishing and for whitewater kayaking. To reach the falls, take I-90 east from Seattle for 35 to 45 minutes and get off at exit 27. If you're hungry for lunch, try the restaurant at **Salish Lodge**, the hotel at the top of the falls.

Snoqualmie Falls is located just outside the town of **Snoqualmie**, which is where you'll find the restored 1890 railroad depot that houses the **Northwest Railway Museum**, 38625 SE King St. (☎ 425/888-3030; www.trainmuseum.org). The museum, an absolute must for anyone with a child who is a fan of Thomas the Tank Engine or *The Polar Express*, operates the **Snoqualmie Valley Railroad** on weekends from April through October. The 65- to 75-minute railway excursions run between here and the town of **North Bend**. Fares are \$12 for adults, \$10 for seniors, and \$8 for children 2 to 12. Be sure to check the current schedule. The museum displays railroad memorabilia and has a large display of rolling stock. It's a big hit with kids!

Between North Bend and the town of **Carnation**, you'll pass several U-pick farms, where, throughout the summer, you can pick your own berries.

The Snoqualmie Valley is also the site of **Camlann Medieval Village**, 10320 Kelly Rd. NE (☎ 425/788-8624; www.camlann.org), located north of Carnation off Wash. 203. On weekends between late July and late August, this reproduction medieval village stages numerous medieval festivals and becomes home to knights and squires and assorted other costumed merrymakers. There are crafts stalls and food booths, and medieval clothing is available for rent if you forgot to pack yours. Throughout the year, the village stages a wide variety of banquets, seasonal festivals, and weekend living-history demonstrations. Ye Bors Hede Inne restaurant is open Tuesday through Sunday for traditional dinners (\$19/person). Fair admission is \$10 for adults and \$6 for seniors and children 6 to 12. Admission to both the fair and a banquet is \$45.

Thirty miles to the east of Snoqualmie Pass, you'll find the remote town of **Roslyn**, which was just a quietly decaying old coal-mining town until television turned it into Cicely, Alaska, for the hit TV show *Northern Exposure*. Although Cicely is but a fading memory now, visitors still wander up and down the town's 2-block-long main street soaking up the mining-town atmosphere. To learn more about the town's history, drop by the **Roslyn Museum**, 203 W. Pennsylvania Ave. (☎ 509/649-2355; www.roslynmuseum.com). The museum is open Friday from 9am to 2pm, Saturday from 1 to 5pm, and Sunday from 11am to 3pm. About the only other activity is wandering through the town's 25 cemeteries up the hill from the museum. These cemeteries contain the graves of miners who lived and died in Roslyn.

Sports & Outdoor Activities

HIKING Outside of North Bend rises **Mount Si**, one of the most frequently climbed mountains in the state. This mountain, carved by glaciers long ago, rises abruptly from the floor of the valley outside North Bend and presents a dramatic face to the valley. If you are the least bit athletic, it's hard to resist the temptation to hike to the summit, where awesome views are the payoff. Be forewarned, however, that it's a strenuous 8-mile round-trip hike, and you'll need to carry lots of water. To reach the trailhead, drive east of downtown North Bend on North Bend Way, turn left on Mount Si Road, turn right after crossing the Snoqualmie River, and continue another 2 miles.

Farther east on I-90, at Snoqualmie Pass and before you reach the pass, are several trailheads. Some trails lead to mountain summits, others to glacier-carved lakes, and still others past waterfalls deep in the forest. Due to their proximity to Seattle, these trails can be crowded, and you need a National Forest Recreation Pass to park at national forest trailheads. Passes are available at the ranger station in North Bend. A National Forest Recreation Pass is not necessary for parking at the Mount Si trailhead, which is on state land. For more information, contact the **Snoqualmie Ranger District, North Bend Office**, 902 SE North Bend Way, North Bend, WA 98045 (☎ 425/888-1421; www.fs.fed.us/r6/mbs).

HORSEBACK RIDING If you're interested in spending a few hours or a few days in the saddle, contact **High Country Outfitters** (☎ 888/235-0111 or 509/674-9554; www.highcountry-outfitters.com), which charges \$90 for a half-day ride and \$110 for a full-day ride. Overnight and multi-day trips are also available.

SKIING While much of the terrain is not very interesting and the snow can be frustratingly unreliable due to winter rains, **The Summit at Snoqualmie** (☎ 425/434-7669 or 206/236-1600 for the snow report; www.summitat-snoqualmie.com) is the closest ski area to Seattle and consequently sees a lot of business both on weekends and for after-work night skiing. There are four ski areas (Alpentel, Summit West, Summit Central, and Summit East) and 1,916 acres of skiable slopes. Rentals and lessons are available. Adult all-day lift tickets are \$57. Call for hours of operation.

The Snoqualmie Pass area has many miles of groomed and ungroomed cross-country ski trails. **Summit Nordic Center** (☎ 425/434-6708; www.summitatsnoqualmie.com) offers rentals, instruction, and miles of groomed trails. An adult day pass is \$17.

There are also several Sno-Parks (designated cross-country ski areas) along I-90 at Snoqualmie Pass. Some have groomed trails; others have trails that are marked, but not groomed. Be sure to get a **Sno-Park permit** (\$20–\$21 for a 1-day pass; \$40–\$41 for a season pass), which is required if you want to park at a cross-country ski area. Sno-Park permits are available at ski shops; pick one up when renting your skis.

Where to Stay

ON THE WEST SIDE

Salish Lodge & Spa ★★ ★ Set at the top of 270-foot Snoqualmie Falls and only 30 minutes east of Seattle on I-90, the Salish Lodge & Spa is a popular weekend getaway spot for Seattle residents. With its country-lodge atmosphere, the Salish aims for casual comfort and hits the mark, though the emphasis is clearly on luxury. Guest rooms are designed for romantic weekend escapes, with wood-burning fireplaces, oversize whirlpool tubs, feather beds, and down comforters. A full-service spa makes this getaway even more attractive. The lodge's country breakfast is a legendary feast that will likely keep you full right through to dinner, and at night you can choose from one of the most extensive lists of Washington wines at any restaurant in the state. The lounge has a view of the falls.

6501 Railroad Ave. SE (P.O. Box 1109), Snoqualmie, WA 98065. ☎ 800/272-5474 or 425/888-2556. Fax 425/888-2420. www.salishlodge.com. 89 units. \$219–\$399 double; \$499–\$999 suite. All rates plus \$15 resort fee. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; lounge; access to nearby health club; room service; full-service spa. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, minibar, MP3 docking station, free Wi-Fi.

ON THE EAST SIDE

The Lodge at Suncadia ★★ This beautiful, contemporary mountain lodge is one of Washington's finest mountain retreats and is at the heart of a huge master-planned resort community at the eastern end of Snoqualmie Pass. The setting in the east-side pine forests fairly shouts "summer vacation," and the view from the lodge takes in the rugged mountains of this region (be sure to ask for a mountain-view room). Many guest rooms have balconies and gas fireplaces, and suites have full kitchens. However, my favorite rooms are those with outdoor wooden hot tubs. As beautiful as the mountain surroundings are, the golf course is the main attraction here, but with miles of paved bike paths, this is also a good place to bring the whole family.

3600 Suncadia Trail, Cle Elum, WA 98922. ☎ **866/904-6301**. Fax 509/649-6400. www.suncadiaresort.com. 254 units. \$245-\$275 double; \$320-\$355 suite (all rates plus \$20 resort fee). Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Pets accepted (\$50 fee). **Amenities:** Restaurant; 2 lounges; bikes; concierge; 2 18-hole golf courses; health club; Jacuzzi; 2 outdoor pools and 1 indoor pool; room service; sauna; spa; watersports equipment/boat rentals. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi, minibar, MP3 docking station.

Iron Horse Inn ★ Railroad buffs won't want to miss an opportunity to stay at this restored Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul, and Pacific Railroad bunkhouse. The inn is filled with railroading memorabilia and each of the guest rooms is named for a railroad worker who once lived here. The rooms vary in size and are simply furnished with antiques. However, the most popular rooms here are the four cabooses on short lengths of track beside the inn. Two of the cabooses will sleep families with two or three kids.

526 Marie Ave. (P.O. Box 629), South Cle Elum, WA 98943. ☎ **800/22-TWAIN** (89246) or 509/674-5939. www.ironhorseinnbb.com. 11 units, 8 with private bathroom. \$80 double with shared bathroom; \$95-\$115 double with private bathroom; \$145 suite or caboose. Rates include full breakfast. Children 2 and under stay free in parent's room. 2-night minimum on holiday weekends. MC, V. **Amenities:** Jacuzzi; free Wi-Fi. *In room:* A/C, hair dryer, no phone.

Where to Dine

IN THE SNOQUALMIE VALLEY

The dining room at the **Salish Lodge** (see above) is by far the best restaurant on the west side of Snoqualmie Pass.

IN ROSLYN & CLE ELUM

For a simple meal, don't miss **The Brick Bar & Grill ★**, 1 Pennsylvania Ave., Roslyn (☎ **509/649-2643**), which claims to be the oldest operating saloon in Washington and has a unique flowing-water spittoon under the bar. This place is an absolute classic. If you just want to get some good microbrewed beer, wander up the street to the **Roslyn Brewery**, 208 Pennsylvania Ave. (☎ **509/649-2232**; www.roslynbrewery.com), a more modern place. It's open Friday and Saturday from 1 to 7pm and Sunday from noon to 6pm. In summer, the brewery is also open on Friday. If you're heading to the hills and want to pack some great jerky, stop by **Carek's Meat Market ★**, 510 S. A St., Roslyn (☎ **509/649-2930**). On summer Sundays, you might want to stop by the **Roslyn Sunday Market**, Pennsylvania Avenue (www.roslynmarkets.com). In Cle Elum, you should be sure to stop at **Glondo's Sausage Company & Italian Market**, 216 E. First St. (☎ **509/674-5755**; www.glondossausage.com), which makes some of the best Italian sausage in the state.

They also make good salami, beef jerky, and other cured and smoked meats. If it's coffee you need, try the **Pioneer Coffee Roasting Company**, 121 N. Pennsylvania Ave., Cle Elum (☎ 509/674-3864; www.pioneercoffeeco.com).

MOUNT RAINIER NATIONAL PARK ★★★ & ENVIRONS

Paradise: 110 miles SE of Seattle, 70 miles SE of Tacoma, 150 miles NE of Portland, 85 miles NW of Yakima

At 14,410 feet, Mount Rainier is the tallest mountain in Washington, and to the sun-starved residents of Seattle and south Puget Sound, the dormant volcano is a giant weather gauge. When the skies clear over Puget Sound, the phrase "The mountain is out" is often heard around the region. And when the mountain is out, all eyes turn to admire its broad, snow-covered slopes. Those slopes remain snow-covered throughout the year due to the region's infamous moisture-laden air, which has made Mount Rainier one of the snowiest spots in the country.

Snow and glaciers notwithstanding, Rainier has a heart of fire. Steam vents at the mountain's summit are evidence that, though this volcanic peak has been dormant for more than 150 years, it could erupt again at any time. However, scientists believe that Rainier's volcanic activity occurs in 3,000-year cycles—and luckily, it's another 500 years before there's another big eruption.

Known to Native Americans as Tahoma, Mount Rainier received its current name in 1792 when British explorer Capt. George Vancouver named the mountain for a friend (who never even visited the region). The first ascent to the mountain's summit was made in 1870 by Gen. Hazard Stevens and Philemon Van Trump, and it was 14 years later that James Longmire built the first hotel on the mountain's flanks. In 1899, Mount Rainier became the country's fifth national park.

Essentials

GETTING THERE If you're coming from Seattle and your destination is Paradise (the park's most popular area), head for the southwest (Nisqually) park entrance. Take I-5 south to exit 127 and then head east on Wash. 512. Take the Wash. 7 exit and head south toward Elbe. At Elbe, continue east on Wash. 706.

If you're coming from Seattle and are heading for the northeast (White River) park entrance en route to Sunrise or Crystal Mountain, take I-90 to I-405 south. At Renton, take Wash. 169 south to Enumclaw, then pick up Wash. 410 heading east. Note that in winter, only the road from the Nisqually entrance to Paradise is open.

From the south, head north on I-5 to exit 68 and then take U.S. 12 east to the town of Morton. From Morton, head north on Wash. 7 to Elbe and then turn east on Wash. 706, which will bring you to the Nisqually (southwest) park entrance.

At whichever park entrance you choose, you'll be handed a comprehensive map of the park, including all trails and facilities.

If you don't have a car, but still want to visit Mount Rainier National Park, book a tour through **Tours Northwest** (☎ 888/293-1404 or 206/768-1234; www.toursnorthwest.com), which charges \$97 for adults and \$69 for children ages 3 to 12 for a 10-hour tour starting in Seattle. These tours, which operate between late April and

early November, spend most of the day in transit, but you get to see the mountain up close and can do a couple of hours of hiking at Paradise.

VISITOR INFORMATION For more park information, contact **Mount Rainier National Park**, 55210 238th Ave. E., Ashford, WA 98304 (☎ 360/569-2211; www.nps.gov/mora). For general information on the area, contact **Visit Rainier** (☎ 877/270-7155; www.visitrainier.com).

PARK ADMISSION The park entrance fee is \$15 per vehicle. Another option, if you plan to visit several national parks in a single year, is the America the Beautiful Pass, an annual pass good at national parks, national recreation areas, and other public recreation areas. The pass costs \$80 and is available at all national park visitor centers. If you're over 62, you can get an America the Beautiful Senior Pass for \$10, and if you have a disability, you can get a free America the Beautiful Access Pass. See chapter 3 for details about these annual passes.

Seeing the Highlights

Just past the **main southwest entrance (Nisqually)**, is Longmire, site of the National Park Inn, the Longmire Museum (with exhibits on the park's natural and human history), a hiker information center that issues backcountry permits, and a ski-touring center that rents cross-country skis and snowshoes in winter.

The road then climbs to **Paradise** (elevation 5,400 ft.), the aptly named mountainside aerie that affords a breathtaking close-up view of the mountain. Paradise is the park's most popular destination, so expect crowds. During July and August, the meadows are ablaze with wildflowers, which is why this is such a great place for day hikes. The **Henry M. Jackson Memorial Visitor Center at Paradise** provides panoramic views, and a short walk away is a spot from which you can view Nisqually Glacier. Many miles of other trails lead out from Paradise, looping through meadows and up onto snowfields above the timberline. It's not unusual to find plenty of snow at Paradise as late as July.

In summer, you can continue beyond Paradise to the **Ohanapecosh Visitor Center** (☎ 360/569-6046), open daily from late May through early October. Not far from this visitor center, you can walk through the **Grove of the Patriarchs** (see "Hiking & Backpacking," below). Continue around the mountain to reach the turn-off for Sunrise.

Driving counterclockwise around the mountain, you'll come to Cayuse Pass. A short detour from this pass brings you to the picturesque **Chinook Pass** area, where there is a good 4.5-mile day-hike loop trail that begins at Tipsoo Lake and circles Naches Peak.

Continuing around the mountain, you'll come to the turnoff for the park's **White River entrance**. This road leads to **Sunrise**, which at 6,400 feet high, is the highest spot in the park accessible by car and is the site of some of the park's best day hikes. A spur road leads to the White River Campground. A beautiful old log lodge serves as the **Sunrise Visitor Center** (☎ 360/663-2425), which is open daily from late June through early September. From here you can see not only Mount Rainier, seemingly at arm's length, but also Mount Baker and Mount Adams. During July and August, the alpine meadows here are ablaze with wildflowers. Some of the park's most scenic trails begin at Sunrise. Because this area is usually less crowded than Paradise, it is my favorite spot for an alpine hike.

Outdoor Activities In & Near the National Park

After a long day of taking advantage of the park's outdoor activities, you may like to soak in a hot tub or get a massage. Contact the little woodland spa called **Wellspring Spa & Retreat**, 54922 Kernahan Rd. E. (☎ 360/569-2514; www.wellspringspa.com), in Ashford, not far from the Nisqually park entrance. An hour in the hot tub costs \$15 per person, while an hour massage costs \$75. Alternatively, you can soak in a hot tub and get a massage, wrap, or body polish at nearby **Stormking**, 37311 Wash. 706 E., Ashford (☎ 360/569-2964; www.stormkingspa.com). Both places have cabins available for overnight guests.

HIKING & BACKPACKING Hikers have more than 240 miles of trails to explore within the park, though the vast majority of park visitors do their hiking at only two places—Paradise and Sunrise. However, despite the crowds, these two alpine areas do offer the most scenic day-hiking opportunities.

At **Paradise ★★**, the 5-mile **Skyline Trail ★★★** is the highest trail and climbs through beautiful meadows above the tree line. Unfortunately, the meadows, among the park's most beautiful, have been heavily damaged by hikers' boots over the past century, and now there are signs everywhere telling hikers to stay on the trails. Along the route of this trail are views of Mount Adams, Mount St. Helens, and the Nisqually Glacier. The **Lakes Trail**, of similar length, heads downhill to the Reflection Lakes, which have picture-perfect views of the mountain reflected in their waters. However, be forewarned that these lakes lie right alongside the road through the park, and are very popular with people who park by the roadside and get out of their cars for a brief stroll by the lakes.

At **Sunrise ★★★** there are also numerous trails of varying lengths. Among these, the 5-mile **Burroughs Mountain Trail** and the 5.5-mile **Mount Fremont Trail** are both very rewarding—the latter even provides a chance to see mountain goats. The **Summerland Trail**, which starts 3 miles from the White River park entrance (the road to Sunrise), is another very popular day hike. This trail starts in forest and climbs 2,000 feet up into meadows with a great view of the mountain.

If you'd rather avoid most of the crowds, try the 2.5-mile round-trip trail to **Snow Lake**, set at the foot of Unicorn Peak. This trail involves only a few hundred feet of elevation gain. The trailhead is between Paradise and Ohanapecosh. For a longer day hike, try the 11-mile round-trip hike to **Indian Henry's Hunting Ground**, which involves more than 2,000 feet of elevation gain. This trail starts from the Kautz Creek turnout east of Longmire. In 1947, a huge mudflow swept down Kautz Creek and buried the road here under 30 feet of mud. In the northwest corner of the park, the 6-mile round-trip trail from Mowich Lake to **Spray Park** is a breathtaking route that starts in the forest and climbs a little over 2,000 feet into beautiful alpine meadows.

The park's single most memorable low-elevation hike is the **Grove of the Patriarchs Trail ★★**. This 1.5-mile round-trip trail is fairly flat (good for kids) and leads through a forest of huge old trees to a grove of 1,000-year-old red cedars on an island in the Ohanapecosh River. The trailhead for this hike is near the Stevens Canyon park entrance (southeast entrance).

Another interesting and easy, low-elevation walk is the **Trail of the Shadows**, a .75-mile loop trail in Longmire. This trail, which circles a wet meadow, leads past bubbling mineral springs.

There are also naturalist-led programs and walks throughout the spring, summer, and fall, and on winter weekends, there are guided snowshoe walks. Check the park newspaper for schedules.

The 95-mile-long **Wonderland Trail ★★**, which circles the mountain, is the quintessential Mount Rainier backpacking trip. This trail takes 10 days to 2 weeks to complete and offers spectacular scenery. However, there are also many shorter overnight hikes. Before heading out on any overnight backpacking trip, you'll need to pick up a permit at the Longmire Wilderness Information Center (☎ 360/569-4453; fax 360/569-3131). For stays in May through September, reservations for backcountry campsites can be made beginning on March 15 (although reservation requests are not processed until Apr 1). Backcountry reservations cost \$20 per party and can be made only by mail or fax.

MOUNTAINEERING Among climbers, Mount Rainier has a reputation as a training ground for making attempts on higher peaks, such as Mount Everest. If you're interested in taking a mountain-climbing class, contact **Rainier Mountaineering Inc.**, P.O. Box Q, Ashford, WA 98304 (☎ 888/892-5462 or 360/569-2227; www.rmiguide.com), which operates inside Mount Rainier National Park and offers 1-day classes for \$180, 4-day summit climbs for \$926, and a 5-day climbs for \$1,254 to \$1,575.

WHITEWATER RAFTING The Tieton River, which flows down the eastern slopes of the Cascades to the east of the national park, is one of the state's most popular rafting rivers. However, the rafting season lasts for only about 3 weeks during the annual August/September drawdown of water from Rimrock Reservoir. Rafting companies offering trips on this river include **Alpine Adventures** (☎ 800/723-8386; www.alpineadventures.com) and **River Riders** (☎ 800/448-7238 or 206/448-7238; www.river rider.com). Expect to pay \$70 to \$80.

WINTER SPORTS In winter, there's good cross-country skiing at Paradise, and at Longmire, you'll find a ski touring and rental shop at the National Park Inn (☎ 360/569-2411). Daily between mid-December and early January and on winter weekends through March, there are 2-hour **guided snowshoe walks** at Paradise, with snowshoes provided (\$4 suggested donation). Snowshoes can also be rented in Longmire, should you want to explore on your own. Snowboarding is popular throughout the year, though there is no lift to get you up the slope, and it's about a 1½-hour climb to the best snowboarding area.

Outside the park, near the town of Packwood, you can ski cross-country from hut to hut on a 50-mile trail system. For more information, contact the **Mount Tahoma Trails Association**, P.O. Box 206, Ashford, WA 98304 (☎ 360/569-2451; www.skimtta.com). Unfortunately, many of these trails are at such low elevations that snow cover is unreliable.

Just outside the park's northeast corner, off Wash. 410, is **Crystal Mountain** (☎ 360/663-3050 for general information, or 888/754-6199 for snow conditions; www.skicrystal.com), and most Washingtonians agree it's the state's best all-around ski area due to the variety of terrain. You'll pay \$60 for an all-day adult lift ticket.

You'll also find downhill and cross-country skiing less than 20 miles from the southeast corner of the park on U.S. 12 at the small **White Pass Ski Resort ★** (☎ 509/672-3100; www.skiwhitepass.com). Rental equipment is available. An all-day weekend lift ticket costs \$50 for adults. Nordic track passes are \$12.

Other Activities & Attractions Outside the Park

From Memorial Day through October, the **Mt. Rainier Scenic Railroad** (☎ 888/783-2611 or 360/492-5588; www.mrsr.com) operates vintage steam and diesel locomotives and both enclosed and open passenger cars between the town of Elbe and the southwest entrance to the park. The trips last 1½ to 2 hours and cost \$20 for adults, \$18 for seniors, \$15 for children ages 4 to 12, and are free for children 3 and under.

Where to Stay

INSIDE THE PARK

National Park Inn ★ Located in Longmire, in the southwest corner of the park, this rustic lodge opened in 1920 and is set in the dense forests that blanket the lower slopes of Mount Rainier. The inn's front veranda has a good view of the mountain, and it is here that guests often gather at sunset on clear days. The lounge, with its river-rock fireplace, is the perfect place to relax on a winter's night. Guest rooms vary in size and contain rustic furnishings but are definitely not the most memorable part of a stay here. The inn's restaurant manages to have something for everyone. The National Park Inn is popular in winter with cross-country skiers and snowshoers, and equipment can be rented at the gift shop inside the National Park Inn.

Mount Rainier National Park, Longmire, WA 98397. ☎ 360/569-2275. Fax 360/569-2770. www.mtrainierguestservices.com. 25 units, 7 with shared bathroom. \$113 double with shared bathroom; \$148–\$223 double with private bathroom. Children 12 mos. and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant. *In room:* Hair dryer, no phone.

Paradise Inn ★★ Built in 1917 high on the flanks of Mount Rainier in an area aptly known as Paradise, this rustic lodge should be your first choice of accommodations in the park (book early). Cedar-shake siding, huge exposed beams, cathedral ceilings, and a gigantic stone fireplace make this the quintessential mountain retreat. Offering breathtaking views of the mountain, the inn is also the starting point for miles of trails that in summer wander through flower-filled meadows. Guest rooms vary in size.

Mount Rainier National Park, Paradise, WA 98398. ☎ 360/569-2275. Fax 360/569-2770. www.mtrainierguestservices.com. 121 units (33 with shared bathroom). \$106 double with shared bathroom; \$158–\$240 double with private bathroom; \$275 suite. Children under 2 stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Free parking. Closed early Oct to mid-May. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants. *In room:* No phone.

OUTSIDE THE SOUTHWEST (NISQUALLY) ENTRANCE

Alexander's Country Inn ★★ Just outside the park's Nisqually entrance, this large B&B first opened as an inn back in 1912. Today, as then, it is one of the preferred places to stay in the area, offering not only comfortable rooms, but also some of the best food for miles around. The first floor is taken up by the dining room, and on the second floor is a large parlor where you can sit by the fire on a cold night. By far the best rooms in the house are the tower suites, which are in a turret and have plenty of windows looking out on the woods. After a hard day of playing on the mountain, there's no better place to relax than in the hot tub overlooking the inn's trout pond. The inn also rents two three-bedroom houses.

37515 Wash. 706 E., Ashford, WA 98304. ☎ 800/654-7615 or 360/569-2300. Fax 360/569-2323. www.alexanderscountryinn.com. 12 units. May–June and winter holidays \$135 double, \$165 suite, \$225 house; July–Oct \$150 double, \$179 suite, \$235 house; Nov–Apr \$110 double, \$135 suite, \$185 house.

Rates in the inn include full breakfast and evening wine. Children 3 and under stay free in parent's room. DISC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; Jacuzzi; day spa. *In room:* No phone, free Wi-Fi.

Stormking Cabins and Day Spa ★🎁 With four modern cabins, Stormking is a secluded and romantic getaway not far from the national park's main entrance. All four cedar cabins have private outdoor hot tubs and gorgeous showers, some with flagstone floors, double shower heads, and rock walls. One cabin is set on the far side of a footbridge over a tiny pond and has a slate-floored entry hall, parquet floors, a woodstove, a stereo system with plenty of relaxing music, and a high ceiling. At the end of a day of hiking, you can get a massage or other spa treatment.

37311 Wash. 706 E. (P.O. Box 126), Ashford, WA 98304. ☎ **360/569-2964**. www.stormkingspa.com. 4 units. \$160–\$205 cabin. Rates include continental breakfast. 2-night minimum in summer, and on weekends and holidays. MC, V. **Amenities:** Spa; free Wi-Fi. *In room:* TV/DVD, CD player, fridge, hair dryer, no phone.

Wellspring ★★💧 This little retreat is the most unique of the area's accommodations. Private hot tubs and wood-fired saunas take the chill off even the coldest night, and massages are available to soothe aching muscles. Accommodations are an eclectic and fanciful mix. In the modern log cabins, you'll find feather beds, woodstoves, and vaulted ceilings. In The Nest, there's a queen-size bed suspended from the ceiling by ropes and situated under a skylight. In the Tatoosh Room, you'll find a large stone fireplace, a whirlpool tub, and a waterfall shower. Hot tubs and saunas are an additional \$10 to \$15 per person per hour. Several spa treatments are also available.

54922 Kernahan Rd. E., Ashford, WA 98304. ☎ **360/569-2514**. www.wellspringspa.com. 17 units. \$95–\$195 double. Rates for most rooms include continental breakfast. Children 11 and under stay free in parent's room. MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 Jacuzzis; 2 saunas. *In room (except tent cabins):* Fridge.

Whittaker's Historic Bunkhouse Motel ★ Though it definitely is nothing fancy, this lodge, a former millworkers' bunkhouse built in 1912, is the lodging of choice for climbers headed to or from the summit of Mount Rainier. The Bunkhouse is owned by Lou Whittaker, one of Mount Rainier's most famous climbers (and owner of Rainier Mountaineering), and in the lodge's espresso shop, you'll find many climbing photos and certificates received by Whittaker for climbing Mount Everest. The guest rooms are small and spartan, but have private bathrooms.

30205 Wash. 706 E. (P.O. Box E), Ashford, WA 98304. ☎ **360/569-2439**. www.whittakersbunkhouse.com. 19 units. \$65–\$115 double; \$125–\$145 cottage; \$35 dorm. AE, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant (espresso bar); Jacuzzi. *In room:* No phone, free Wi-Fi.

OUTSIDE THE NORTHEAST (WHITE RIVER) ENTRANCE

Alta Crystal Resort at Mt. Rainier ★ This is the closest lodging to the northeast (White River) park entrance and the Sunrise area, and the resort, with its wooded grounds surrounded by the national forest, stays busy both summer and winter (when skiers flock to Crystal Mountain's nearby slopes). After spending the day hiking or skiing, you can go for a swim in the 90-degree pool or soak your body in a hot tub in the woods. Accommodations are in one-bedroom and loft chalet suites, as well as a little cabin in the woods. All of the condos here have fireplaces.

68317 Wash. 410 E., Greenwater, WA 98022. ☎ **800/277-6475** or 360/663-2500. Fax 360/663-0728. www.altacrystalresort.com. 24 units. \$139–\$269 chalet for 1–6 people. Children 11 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, MC, V. Pets accepted (\$50 fee). **Amenities:** Bikes; children's programs; Jacuzzi; year-round outdoor pool; room service. *In room:* TV/DVD, CD player, kitchen, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

Where to Dine

Within the national park, your first choice for meals should be the dining room at the Paradise Inn. There's also a dining room in Longmire at the National Park Inn. For quick meals, there are snack bars at the Jackson Visitor Center, at Paradise Inn, and at Sunrise Lodge. In Ashford, the **Copper Creek Restaurant**, 35707 Wash. 706 E., Ashford (☎ 360/569-2326; www.coppercreekinn.com), makes good berry pies, and breakfast and espresso are served at **Whittaker's Bunkhouse Cafe**, 30205 Wash. 706 E. (☎ 360/569-2439; www.whittakersbunkhouse.com). In summer, you can get pizza, burgers, and beer at **Rainier Basecamp Bar & Grill**, 30027 Wash. 706 E. (☎ 360/569-2727; www.basecampgrill.com), which is next door to Whittaker's. In Elbe, you can get big, juicy burgers from a little white log cabin called **Scale Burgers**, 54109 Mountain Hwy. E. (☎ 360/569-2247). If you're heading up to the mountain from Seattle, be sure to stop in Eatonville at **Truly Scrumptious Bakery & Café**, 212 Washington Ave. (☎ 360/832-2233; www.trulyscrumptiousbakery.com), where you can get a slice of pie, some bread for a picnic, or a sandwich to go.

Alexander's ★ AMERICAN Alexander's, which is also a popular B&B, is the best place to dine outside the Nisqually entrance to the park. Fresh trout from the inn's pond is the dinner of choice, but you'll also find salmon, lamb chops, steaks, pork loin, and pastas on the menu. Whatever you order, save room for the wild blackberry pie.

37515 Wash. 706 E., Ashford. ☎ 360/569-2323. www.alexanderscountryinn.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$9-\$25. DISC, MC, V. Summer Mon-Thurs 4-9:30pm, Fri-Sun 11am-3pm and 4-9pm; shorter hours other months.

MT. ST. HELENS NATIONAL MONUMENT ★★★

Johnston Ridge Visitor Center: 100 miles N of Portland, 178 miles S of Seattle

Named in 1792 by Capt. George Vancouver for his friend Baron St. Helens, Mount St. Helens was once considered the most perfect of the Cascade peaks, a snow-covered cone rising above lush forests. However, on May 18, 1980, all that changed when Mount St. Helens erupted with a violent explosion that was previously unknown in modern times. The eruption blew out the side of the volcano and removed the top 1,300 feet of the peak, causing the largest landslide in recorded history. The volcanic explosion is estimated to have traveled at up to 650 mph, with air temperatures of up to 800°F (425°C). The eruption also sent more than 540 million tons of ash nearly 16 miles into the atmosphere. This massive volume of ash rained down on an area of 22,000 square miles and could be measured as far away as Denver.

The volcano and 110,000 acres of both devastated and undisturbed forests have been preserved as Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument. Several visitor centers provide information on the eruption and the subsequent changes that have taken place here. In the fall of 2004, the volcano awoke from many years of relative quiet and the lava dome inside the volcano's crater began growing again. Plumes of ash were once again seen billowing from the volcano on an irregular basis, and this

increased activity tended to attract lots of curious visitors. In response to the volcanic activity within the crater of the volcano, summit climbs were sometimes halted and parts of the monument were occasionally closed to the public. Although by 2009 the volcano was once again quiet, the monument continues to closely monitor the volcano's activity, and if things heat up again, you can count on more closures.

Essentials

GETTING THERE Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument is accessed by three different routes. The one with the main information centers is Wash. 504, the Spirit Lake Highway, which heads east from I-5 at Castle Rock. The southern section of the monument is reached via Wash. 503 from I-5 at Woodland. The east side of the monument is reached via U.S. 12 from I-5 at exit 68.

VISITOR INFORMATION For more information on the national monument, contact **Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument**, 42218 NE Yale Bridge Rd., Amboy, WA 98601 (☎ 360/449-7800; www.fs.fed.us/gpnm/mshnmv). For more general information, check out www.mountsthelens.com.

ADMISSION Admission to the monument is \$8 for adults and free for children 15 and under. If you just want to park at one of the monument's trailheads and go for a hike, all you need is a valid Northwest Forest Pass, which costs \$5 per day. If it's winter, you'll need a Sno-Park Permit (\$20–\$21/day).

Exploring the National Monument

MOUNT ST. HELENS WEST

The best place to start exploring the monument is the **Mount St. Helens Visitor Center at Silver Lake** (☎ 360/274-0962; www.parks.wa.gov/interp/mountsthelens), operated by Washington State Parks and located at Silver Lake, 5 miles east of Castle Rock on Wash. 504. The visitor center houses extensive exhibits on the eruption and its effects on the region. May through September, it's open daily from 9am to 5pm (until 4pm in other months). Admission is \$3 for adults, \$1 for children 7 to 17, and free for children 6 and under. A family pass is \$8.

Continuing east from the visitor center, at milepost 27, you'll come to the **Hoffstadt Bluffs Visitor Center**, 15000 Spirit Lake Hwy. (☎ 360/274-5200; www.hoffstadtbluffs.com). This is primarily a snack bar and takeoff site for 30-minute helicopter flights over Mount St. Helens (\$149/person), but it also has great views. In summer, this visitor center is open daily from 9am to 7pm; other months it's open Thursday through Monday from 9am to 4pm.

A few miles farther, just past milepost 33, is the **Mount St. Helens Forest Learning Center** (☎ 360/274-7750; www.mountsthelens.com/Forest-Learning-Center.html), open mid-May through mid-October daily from 10am to 5pm. This is primarily a promotional center for the timber industry, but, in a theater designed to resemble an ash-covered landscape, you can watch a short, fascinating video about the eruption. From outside both the Hoffstadt Bluffs Visitor Center and the Forest Learning Center, you can usually see numerous elk on the floor of the Toutle River Valley far below.

Of the many visitor centers, none offers a more awe-inspiring view than that from the **Johnston Ridge Observatory** (☎ 360/274-2140), at the eastern end of Wash. 504. Built into the mountainside and designed to blend into the landscape,

this observatory houses the equipment that is still used to monitor activity within Mount St. Helens. The observatory is open from mid-May to October, daily from 10am to 6pm. If you're up for a bit of hiking, the best choice on this side of the monument is the **Boundary Ridge Trail**, which heads east from the Johnston Ridge Observatory, with a jaw-dropping view of the blast zone the entire way. This trail leads for many miles across the monument, so you can hike as much or as little as you want. There is a good turnaround point about 1 mile out from the observatory.

MOUNT ST. HELENS EAST

For a different perspective on the devastation wrought by Mount St. Helens's eruption, drive around to the mountain's east side and take the road up to Windy Ridge. Although it takes a couple of hours longer to get to this side of the mountain, you will be rewarded with equally amazing views, better hiking opportunities, and smaller crowds. To reach the east side of the mountain, take U.S. 12 east from exit 68 off I-5. In Randle, head south on Forest Road 25 and watch for Forest Road 99, the road to the Windy Ridge Viewpoint. This road crosses many miles of blown-down trees that were felled by a single blast, a reminder of the awesome power of nature. More than a quarter-century after the eruption, life is slowly returning to the devastated forest. At the **Windy Ridge Viewpoint**, visitors get one of the best close-up views of the crater. A long staircase climbs more than 200 feet up the hill above the parking area for even better views. Below Windy Ridge lies Spirit Lake, once one of the most popular summer vacation spots in the Washington Cascades. Today the lake is desolate and lifeless. The 1-mile **Harmony Trail** leads down to the shore of Spirit Lake and is a very worthwhile hike; just keep in mind that it's a 600-foot climb back up to the trailhead parking lot.

MOUNT ST. HELENS SOUTH

The south side of the monument was the least affected by the eruption, and consequently does not offer the dramatic scenes of devastation that are seen on the east and west sides. However, this area offers some good hiking and two very interesting volcanic features. **Ape Cave** is a lava tube that was formed 1,900 years ago when lava poured from the volcano. When the lava finally stopped flowing, it left a 2-mile-long cave that is the longest continuous lava tube in the Western Hemisphere. At the Ape's Headquarters, you can join a regular ranger-led exploration of the cave or rent a lantern (\$5) for exploring the cave on your own. This center is open daily from 10am to 5pm between mid-June and Labor Day. **Lava Canyon Trail**, the south side's other interesting volcanic feature, is the most fascinating trail on this side of the monument. It follows a canyon that was unearthed by a mudflow that swept down from the summit of the mountain after the eruption.

On Wash. 503, the road leading to the south side of the monument, you'll find, in the town of Ariel, the **Lelooska Foundation ★★**, 165 Merwin Village Rd. (☎ 360/225-9522; www.lelooska.org). Something of a Native American cultural center, this combination museum and art gallery features Native American arts and crafts from around the country, though the emphasis is on the work of Northwest artists. This is one of the finest Native American galleries in the state and is open on Saturdays from 11am to 3pm between Memorial Day weekend and Labor Day weekend. Additionally, one Saturday evening each month in the spring and fall,

there are performances of traditional Northwest Coast Native American masked dances, accompanied by traditional storytelling. The performances are held in a reproduction of a traditional cedar longhouse. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$7 for children ages 12 and under, and advance reservations are required.

Climbing the Mountain

If you're an experienced hiker in good physical condition, the climb to the summit of Mount St. Helens is a must. From the trailhead on the south side of the mountain, the hike takes 8 to 10 hours and can require an ice ax. Climbing permits, which cost \$22 between April and October and are free other months, are required and are only available through the **Mount St. Helens Institute**, 42218 NE Yale Bridge Rd., Amboy, WA 98601 (☎ 360/891-5107 or 448-7861 for current conditions; www.mshinstitute.org). Because the climb is very popular, you'll need to make a reservation. Reservations are taken beginning on February 1, and summer weekends book up fast. Between November 1 and March 31, no reservation is necessary—but expect lots of snow. Due to volcanic activity in recent years, the rim is sometimes closed to hikers, so check the current status before planning this climb.

A Few Unique Ways to See the National Monument

For a bird's-eye view of the volcano, take a helicopter flight with **Mount St. Helens Helicopter Tours** (☎ 360/274-7750; www.mountsthelens.com), which leaves from milepost 24 on Wash. 504 and charges \$159 to \$249 per person. Rides operate between June and September (sometimes in May) and last about 30 minutes. You can turn a volcano visit into a learning experience by signing up for a 1-day field seminar through the **Mount St. Helens Institute**, 42218 NE Yale Bridge Rd., Amboy, WA 98601 (☎ 360/449-7883; www.mshinstitute.org). Seminars cover everything from the geology of the blast zone to the resident elk herds to guided summit climbs.

Where to Stay

Blue Heron Inn Bed & Breakfast ★★ This modern inn on the road to the Johnston Ridge Observatory is an excellent choice if you're searching for comfortable, modern accommodations in this area. Set on 5 acres of land across the highway from Silver Lake, the inn has an excellent view of Mount St. Helens. Lots of decks provide plenty of places for relaxing and soaking up the view, and during cooler weather, you can sit by the fire in the parlor. This inn is the best bet for accommodations in the area.

2846 Spirit Lake Hwy., Castle Rock, WA 98611. ☎ 360/274-9595. www.blueheroninn.com. 7 units. \$159–\$205 double. Rates include full breakfast. MC, V. Children 6 and older welcome. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

Where to Dine

There aren't a whole lot of dining options in the vicinity of the monument, so you would be well advised to pack a picnic lunch when you come up here. There is, however, a cafe at the Hoffstadt Bluffs Visitor Center (Spirit Lake Hwy. milepost 27).

THE COLUMBIA GORGE & THE MOUNT ADAMS AREA

Stevenson: 45 miles E of Vancouver, 25 miles W of White Salmon

The Columbia Gorge, which begins a few miles east of Vancouver, Washington, and extends eastward for nearly 70 miles, cuts through the Cascades and connects the rain-soaked west-side forests with the sagebrush scrublands of eastern Washington. This change in climate is caused by moist air condensing into snow and rain as it passes over the crest of the Cascades. Most of the air's moisture falls on the western slopes, so the eastern slopes and the land stretching for hundreds of miles beyond lie in what is called a rain shadow. Perhaps nowhere else on earth can you witness this rain-shadow effect so clearly. Between the two extremes lies a community of plants that's unique to the Columbia Gorge, and springtime in the gorge sees colorful displays of wildflowers, many of which occur naturally only here in the Columbia Gorge.

The Columbia River is older than the hills. It's older than the mountains, too, and this great age accounts for the river's dramatic gorge through the Cascades. The mountains have actually risen up *around* the river. Although the river's geologic history dates back 40 million years or so, it was a series of recent events, geologically speaking, that gave the Columbia Gorge its very distinctive appearance. About 12,000 to 15,000 years ago, toward the end of the last Ice Age, in what is now Montana, huge glacial ice dams burst and sent floodwaters racing down the Columbia River. As the floodwaters swept through the Columbia Gorge, they were as much as 1,200 feet high. Ice and rock carried by the floodwaters helped the river scour out the sides of the once gently sloping valley, leaving behind the steep-walled gorge that we know today. The waterfalls that elicit so many oohs and aahs are the most dramatic evidence of these great floods. In 1986, much of this area was designated the **Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area** to preserve its spectacular and unique natural beauty.

As early as 1915, a scenic highway was built through the gorge on the Oregon side. However, while the Oregon side of the gorge has the spectacular waterfalls and scenic highway and gets all the publicity, it is actually from the Washington side, along **Wash. 14**, that you get the best views. From this highway, the views take in both the southern wall of the Columbia Gorge and the snowcapped summit of Mount Hood. It is also on the Washington side of the gorge, in Stevenson, that you'll find the informative Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center.

Roughly 45 miles north of the Columbia Gorge rises Mount Adams, which, at 12,276 feet in elevation, is the second-highest peak in Washington. However, because it is so inaccessible from Puget Sound and can't be seen from most of Portland (the nearest metropolitan area), it remains one of the least visited major peaks in the state. Though few get to this massive peak, those who do often make the strenuous, though non-technical, climb to the mountain's summit.

Essentials

GETTING THERE Wash. 14 parallels the Columbia River from Vancouver through the Columbia Gorge and into eastern Washington. Mount Adams lies to the north of the gorge and is accessed via Wash. 141 from White Salmon.

VISITOR INFORMATION For more information on the Columbia Gorge, contact the **Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area**, 902 Wasco Ave., Ste. 200, Hood River, OR 97031 (☎ 541/308-1700; www.fs.fed.us/r6/columbia), which also operates the **Skamania Lodge Visitor Center** in the lobby of **Skamania Lodge**, 1131 SW Skamania Lodge Way (☎ 509/427-2528), in Stevenson, Washington. Information is also available from the **Skamania County Visitor Information Center**, 167 NW Second St. (P.O. Box 1037), Stevenson, WA 98648 (☎ 800/989-9178 or 509/427-8911; www.skamania.org). For detailed information on the Oregon side of the Columbia Gorge, see *Frommer's Oregon* (Wiley Publishing, Inc.).

An Introduction to the Gorge

Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center Museum ★★ Focusing on the Gorge's early Native American inhabitants and the development of the area by white settlers, this museum is your single best introduction to the Columbia Gorge. Exhibits contain historical photographs by Edward Curtis and others that illustrate the stories of the portage companies and paddle-wheelers that once operated along this stretch of the Columbia River. A 37-foot-high replica of a 19th-century fish wheel gives an understanding of how salmon runs have been threatened in the past and the present. Displays also frankly discuss other problems that the coming of settlers brought to this area. A slide program tells the history of the formation of the Gorge. When it's not cloudy, the center has an awesome view of the south side of the Gorge.

990 SW Rock Creek Dr., Stevenson. ☎ 800/991-2338 or 509/427-8211. www.columbiagorge.org. Admission \$7 adults, \$6 seniors and students, \$5 children 6-12, free for children 5 and under. Daily 10am-5pm. Closed New Year's Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

Exploring the Gorge

Heading east from Vancouver, Wash. 14 passes through the industrial towns of Camas and Washougal before finally breaking free of the Portland/Vancouver metropolitan area. For much of the way, the highway stays close to the river, but at Cape Horn, an area where basalt cliffs rise straight out of the water, the highway climbs high above the river, providing one of the best views along this stretch of the highway. Several pull-offs let you stop and enjoy the views. East of the viewpoints, where the road descends from the cliffs, there is a trailhead parking lot for accessing the **Cape Horn Trail**. This loop trail is just under 7 miles long and involves hiking a quiet Cape Horn Road for 1.3 miles. The cliff-top views from the trail are breathtaking, but the steep drop-offs can be daunting for anyone with a fear of heights. Don't attempt this in winter when there is ice on the trail.

Roughly 35 miles east of Vancouver, you come to **Beacon Rock ★★**, an 800-foot-tall monolith that has been preserved as a state park and has a 1-mile trail to its summit. The trail, which for much of the way consists of metal stairways and catwalks, was built between 1915 and 1918 by Henry Biddle, who saved Beacon Rock from being blasted into rubble for a jetty at the mouth of the Columbia River. Continuing east, you'll come to Stevenson, home to the Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center.

In the town of North Bonneville, a few miles west of Stevenson, you can swim in the mineral-water pool and soak in the hot tubs at **Bonneville Hot Springs Resort**, 1252 E. Cascade Dr. (☎ 866/459-1678 or 509/427-7767; www.bonneville-resort.com). It costs \$15 for a soak in a tub or \$15 to use the pool and soaking pools

for 3 hours. The public is welcome daily from 8am to 9pm, with limited hours for anyone under 16 years of age. Massages and other spa services are also available. East of Stevenson, in the town of Carson, you can soak in the therapeutic waters of the **Carson Hot Springs Resort** (☎ 800/607-3678 or 509/427-8292). This rustic “resort” has been in business since 1897 and has one building that looks every bit its age. However, it’s just this old-fashioned appeal that keeps people coming back. A soak and post-soak wrap costs \$20, and an hour’s massage is \$60. Call for hours.

If you’re up for a strenuous but rewarding hike, the 3-mile trail to the summit of 2,948-foot **Dog Mountain** provides views up and down the gorge. In spring, the wildflower displays in the meadows on Dog Mountain’s slopes are some of the finest in the gorge. You’ll find the trailhead on Wash. 14, 12 miles east of the Bridge of the Gods, a bridge that now spans the river at a site where a huge landslide once blocked the Columbia, creating a natural “bridge” across the river.

For a less strenuous, though no less scenic hike, drive 5 miles east of Bingen and turn left onto Rowland Lake Road. In just over a mile, you’ll come to the roadside parking lot for the **Catherine Creek** area. On the south side of the road is a 1.25-mile paved path that leads to several viewpoints. On the north side, an unpaved trail leads along Catherine Creek and connects to trails that climb up into the hills. **Warning:** Keep an eye out for poison oak. Also in this area is the gravel **Klickitat Trail**, a former railroad bed that stretches for 31 miles up the Klickitat River and a side canyon of the river. A 10.5-mile portion of the trail parallels the designated “Wild and Scenic” section of the river. There’s a trailhead at the west end of Lyle adjacent to the bridge across the Klickitat River. Across the river and a short way up Old Hwy. 8, you’ll find the **Balfour Klickitat Day Use Site**, where there are several picnic tables overlooking the river and a .75-mile paved trail.

THE MOUNT ADAMS AREA

While Mount Adams’s summit is popular with mountain climbers, at lower elevations there are also excellent trails for hikers and backpackers. The favorite summer spot for a hike is **Bird Creek Meadows** on the Yakama Indian Reservation north of the town of Trout Lake. These meadows are ablaze with wildflowers in July. Eight miles west of Trout Lake, you can explore several **ice caves**. The caves were formed by lava flows centuries ago, and year-round cool temperatures allow ice to build up within the caves. For more information on hiking on Mount Adams, contact the **Gifford Pinchot National Forest**, Mt. Adams Ranger District, 2455 Wash. 141, Trout Lake, WA 98650 (☎ 509/395-3400; www.fs.fed.us/r6/gpnf).

THE EAST END OF THE GORGE

Wine Touring

Between Bingen and Goldendale (north of Wash. 14 on U.S. 97), a few unusual attractions and several wineries are well worth a visit if you’re exploring the eastern end of the gorge. A couple of miles west of Lyle, **Syncline**, 111 Balch Rd. (☎ 509/365-4361; www.synclينewine.com), is a small winery that produces some outstanding wines, with an emphasis on Rhone varietals. Between February and November, the winery tasting room is open Thursday to Sunday from 11am to 6pm, and in December it’s open Saturday and Sunday from 11am to 5pm. In the same general area, you’ll also find **Domaine Puillon**, 170 Lyle-Snowden Rd. (☎ 509/365-2795; www.domainepuillon.com), which is open March through Thanksgiving weekend Thursday to Sunday from 11am to dusk. This winery

produces soft, easy-drinking reds and whites with a floral nose from the addition of viognier. Just across the road is **Memaloose/McCormick Family Vineyards**, 101 Lyle-Snowden Rd. (☎ 360/635-2887; www.winesofthegorge.com), which is open March through November Thursday to Sunday from 11am to dusk.

East of Lyle, **Cascade Cliffs Vineyard & Winery**, 8866 Wash. 14, Wishram (☎ 509/767-1100; www.cascadecliffs.com), is set at the foot of 400-foot-tall basalt cliffs and is most noteworthy for its Piedmont-style wines, including dolcetto, barbera, and nebbiolo. The tasting room is open daily from 10am to 6pm. **Maryhill Winery**, 9774 Wash. 14, Maryhill (☎ 877/627-9445 or 509/773-1976; www.maryhillwinery.com), has the best view of any winery in the Northwest and also produces some very good wines. In the summer, concerts are held in winery's amphitheater, which has spectacular views. The tasting room is open daily from 10am to 6pm.

Other Attractions

Columbia Hills State Park ★🎁 Between The Dalles Dam and Wishram on Wash. 14, Columbia Hills is the site of Horsethief Lake, a popular fishing area and campground. However, long before the area was designated a state park, this was a gathering ground for Native Americans, who fished for salmon at nearby Celilo Falls. The park isn't far from the famous Celilo Falls, which were, before being inundated by the waters behind The Dalles Dam, the most prolific salmon-fishing spot in the Northwest. Each year for thousands of years, Native Americans would gather here from all over the Northwest. These Native Americans created petroglyphs on rocks that are now protected within this park. The most famous of these is Tsagaglalal ("she who watches"), a large face that gazes down on the Columbia River. The only way to see the park's petroglyphs is on ranger-led walks on Friday and Saturday mornings at 10am between April and October. Reservations for these walks should be made at least 2 to 3 weeks in advance.

Milepost 85, Wash. 14. ☎ 509/767-1159. www.parks.wa.gov. Free admission. Late Mar to late Oct daily 6:30am–dusk. Closed late Oct to late Mar.

Maryhill Museum of Art/Stonehenge Monument ★★🎁 Between 1914 and 1926, in Washington state atop a remote, wind-swept bluff overlooking the Columbia River, eccentric entrepreneur Sam Hill built a grand mansion he called Maryhill. Today the mansion is one of the finest, most eclectic, and least visited museums in Washington. There are sculptures and drawings by Auguste Rodin; an extensive collection of Native American baskets and other artifacts; furniture, jewelry, and other items that once belonged to Hill's friend, Queen Marie of Romania; and a collection of post–World War II miniature French fashion mannequins. There's a sculpture park here, and both a cafe and picnic tables. A few miles east of Maryhill stands Hill's concrete reproduction of Stonehenge, which he built as a memorial to local men who died in World War I. Note that the Rodins and fashion mannequins are sometimes loaned out to other museums.

35 Maryhill Museum Dr. (Wash. 14). ☎ 509/773-3733. www.maryhillmuseum.org. Admission \$7 adults, \$6 seniors, \$2 children 6–16. Mar 15–Nov 15 daily 9am–5pm. Closed Nov 16–Mar 14.

Sports & Outdoor Activities

The Columbia Gorge is one of the nation's top windsurfing and kite-boarding spots, and if you're here to ride the wind, or just want to watch others as they race back and forth across the river, head to the **fish hatchery**, west of the mouth of the

White Salmon River, or **Swell City**, a park about 3 miles west of the Hood River Bridge. **Bob's Beach**, in downtown Stevenson, is another popular spot.

When there isn't enough wind for sailing, there's still the option to go **rafting** on the White Salmon River. Companies offering raft trips on this river include **Zoller's Outdoor Odysseys** (☎ 800/366-2004 or 509/493-2641; www.zooraft.com), **Wet Planet Whitewater** (☎ 877/390-9445; www.wetplanetrafting.com), and **All Adventures Rafting** (☎ 800/743-5628; www.alladventures.net). Although the White Salmon can be rafted anytime of year, the most popular season runs from April through September. A half-day trip will cost around \$60 or \$65 per person. All three of these companies also offer raft trips on the Klickitat River at the east end of the Columbia River Gorge.

If you're interested in a bit of horseback riding, contact **Northwestern Lake Riding Stables**, 126 Little Buck Creek Rd. (☎ 509/493-4965; www.nwstables.com), at Northwestern Lake off Wash. 141 north of White Salmon. A 1-hour ride is \$40.

Where to Stay

IN NORTH BONNEVILLE, STEVENSON & CARSON

Bonneville Hot Springs Resort ★ Although this hot-springs resort doesn't have any views to speak of and is not nearly as impressive as the nearby Skamania Lodge, it is still one of the more interesting places to stay in the Columbia Gorge. Unfortunately, the decor felt dated and uninspired from the moment the resort opened, so don't come expecting gorgeous spaces. There is, however, an 80-foot-long, mineral-water indoor pool, a full-service spa, and a big outdoor hot tub in a courtyard with an unusual stone-wall waterfall. Guest rooms have balconies (ask for one overlooking the courtyard), and some have their own mineral-water soaking tubs.

1252 E. Cascade Dr. (P.O. Box 356), North Bonneville, WA 98639. ☎ 866/459-1678 or 509/427-7767. Fax 509/427-7733. www.bonnevilleresort.com. 78 units. \$199-\$279 double; \$499 suite. Children 3 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DISC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge; access to nearby health club; 2 Jacuzzis; indoor pool; room service; sauna; full-service spa. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge, hair dryer, MP3 docking station, free Wi-Fi.

Carson Ridge Bed & Breakfast ★★ Carson, still an active lumber-mill town, is not one of the Columbia Gorge's prettiest towns, but the cabins of this B&B are absolutely gorgeous. Done in a modern mountain-rustic style, the spacious cabins have peeled-log beds, comfortable leather chairs, jetted spa tubs, and gas fireplaces. Front porches look onto a pasture where you might see deer or maybe even a bear.

1261 Wind River Rd. (P.O. Box 777), Carson, WA 98610. ☎ 877/816-7908 or 509/427-7777. www.carsonridgecabins.com. 11 units. \$210-\$325 double. Rates include full breakfast. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. 2-night minimum on weekends. Children 17 and older welcome. **Amenities:** Concierge; spa services; free Wi-Fi. *In room:* A/C, TV, CD player, hair dryer, kitchen, MP3 docking station.

Skamania Lodge ★★★ Boasting the most spectacular vistas of any hotel in the gorge, Skamania Lodge is also the only golf resort around. However, it is also well situated, whether you brought your sailboard, hiking boots, or mountain bike. The decor is classically rustic, with lots of rock and natural wood, and throughout the hotel, Northwest Indian artworks and artifacts are displayed. Huge windows in the lobby have superb views of the gorge. Of course, the river-view guest rooms are more expensive than the forest-view rooms (which overlook more parking lot than forest), but these rooms are well worth the extra cost. There are also rooms with fireplaces.

1131 Skamania Lodge Way, Stevenson, WA 98648. ☎ **800/221-7117** or 509/427-7700. Fax 509/427-2547. www.skamania.com. 254 units. \$119-\$279 double; \$229-\$279 suite. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Pets accepted (\$50/day). **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; lounge; bikes; concierge; exercise room; 18-hole golf course; Jacuzzi; indoor pool; room service; sauna; full-service spa; 2 tennis courts. *In room:* A/C, TV/DVD, hair dryer, minibar, free Wi-Fi.

IN BINGEN & LYLE

Lyle Hotel ★ 🎁 At the east end of the gorge in the tiny town of Lyle, this old-fashioned hotel first opened for business in 1905. Today the rooms, though small and lacking private bathrooms, have a cozy, traditional feel, with quilts on the old wood or brass beds. Large windows let in lots of light. Best of all, there is an excellent restaurant on the ground floor, which makes this your best base for exploring the eastern end of the gorge.

100 Seventh St., Lyle, WA 98635. ☎ **800/447-6310** or 509/365-5953. www.lylehotel.com. 10 units, all with shared bathrooms. \$65-\$75 double. Rates include continental breakfast. AE, DISC, MC, V. Pets accepted (\$20 fee). **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge. *In room:* A/C, no phone, free Wi-Fi.

Where to Dine

The dining rooms of **Skamania Lodge** in Stevenson and the **Lyle Hotel** in Lyle are by far the best restaurants on the Washington side of the gorge. See above for details.

IN STEVENSON & CARSON

Walking Man Brewery ★ 🎁 AMERICAN Two blocks toward the river from Stevenson's main street, this little brewpub is a favorite hangout of windsurfers, hikers, and cross-country skiers. After a hard day of working your muscles, you owe it to yourself to have a good beer and some pizza. The beer here is some of the best in the state, and the food isn't bad, either.

240 SW First St. ☎ **509/427-5520**. www.walkingmanbrewing.com. Main courses \$10. DISC, MC, V. Wed-Fri 4-9pm; Sat 3-9pm; Sun 3-8pm.

IN BINGEN & LYLE

Solstice Wood Fire Café PIZZA With picnic tables out front and garage doors that roll up to let even those eating indoors feel like they're outside, this pizza place is a great place for lunch or dinner on a warm day. Solstice pulls tasty pizzas from its wood oven and is immensely popular with local families and outdoors types. You can opt for one of the creative pizzas (I like the country girl cherry pizza made with chorizo sausage, goat cheese, and cherries) or build your own. There are also a few sandwiches and other dishes on the menu. The wine list is all local wines, and there are Northwest microbrews on tap as well. All in all, this is a great place to eat after a day of hiking, biking, or windsurfing.

415 W. Steuben St., Bingen. ☎ **509/493-4006**. www.solsticewoodfirecafe.com. Reservations accepted for parties of 6 or more. Main courses \$9-\$20. AE, DISC, MC, V. Wed-Fri and Mon 11am-8:30pm; Sat-Sun 11:30am-8:30pm.

10

THE CASCADES

The Columbia Gorge & the Mount Adams Area

EASTERN WASHINGTON

For many people who live on the wet west side of the Cascades, life in Washington would be nearly impossible if it were not for the sunny east side of the mountains. Eastern Washington lies in the rain shadow of the Cascades, and many parts of the region receive less than 10 inches of rain per year. This lack of rain is also accompanied by plenty of sunshine—an average of 300 days annually. These statistics prove irresistible to folks from Puget Sound, who often head to eastern Washington to dry out.

There's little rainfall, but the region's rivers, including the Columbia, have been dammed and now provide sufficient irrigation water to make eastern Washington a major agricultural area. Apples, pears, cherries, wine grapes, wheat, and potatoes are staple crops of a land where only sagebrush and bunchgrass once grew.

Thousands of years ago, massive floods on the Columbia River created the region's fascinating geological wonders—a dry waterfall four times larger than Niagara Falls and abandoned riverbeds known as coulees. One of these dry riverbeds now lends its name to the state's largest dam—Grand Coulee Dam.

Down in the southeastern corner of the state, near the college and wheat-farming town of Walla Walla, the desert gives way to the Blue Mountains. It was near here that the region's first white settlers, Marcus and Narcissa Whitman, set up a mission in order to convert Native Americans to Christianity. The Whitmans were later killed by Cayuse Indians angered by the Whitman's inability to cure a fatal measles epidemic that swept through the native population. In recent years, Walla Walla has become one of Washington's fastest-growing winery regions. North of Walla Walla lie the Palouse Hills, a scenic region of rolling hills blanketed with the most productive wheat farms in the U.S.

Though Yakima attracts sun-seekers from the western part of the state, it is Spokane at the far east side of the state near the Idaho state line that is the region's largest city. With proximity to forests and mountains and a setting on the banks of the Spokane River, it appeals to outdoors

enthusiasts. The city's far easterly location, however, makes it seem more a part of the Rocky Mountain states than of the Northwest.

ELLENSBURG: THE OLD WILD WEST

110 miles SE of Seattle, 36 miles N of Yakima, 75 miles S of Wenatchee

Ellensburg, which lies on the edge of cattle- and sheep-ranching country just east of the last Cascade foothills, is a town with a split personality. On the one hand, it is a small college town, site of Central Washington University. However, it is also a classic cow town best known as the site of the Ellensburg Rodeo, one of the West's top rodeos. A downtown full of historic commercial buildings further adds to the character of this town, and proximity to the mountains and ski area at Snoqualmie Pass make it a good base for summer hiking or winter skiing. Although the town isn't really a destination per se, its proximity to Seattle and a sunny climate make it a quick escape from the Puget Sound rains.

Most of the buildings in the downtown historic district, one of the most attractive in the state, date from 1889, the year in which most of the town's commercial buildings were destroyed by a Fourth of July fire. If not for that, the town would likely have become the state capital (due to its central location). But with only one commercial building remaining, how could the government set up business in Ellensburg? Instead of becoming the capital, the town became the site of the state college that is now Central Washington University.

While the Ellensburg Rodeo is responsible for perpetuating this town's Wild West image, the Clymer Museum, devoted to the works of John Clymer, who illustrated more than 80 *Saturday Evening Post* magazine covers, does its share as well. Adding one last unusual ingredient to the eclectic milieu of Ellensburg is the Chimpanzee and Human Communication Institute, where chimps have been taught to use American Sign Language.

Essentials

GETTING THERE Ellensburg is on I-90. Just east of town, I-82 leads southeast to Yakima and the Tri-Cities area (Wash. 821 is a scenic route south to Yakima). U.S. 97 leads north over Blewett Pass to Leavenworth and Wenatchee.

VISITOR INFORMATION Contact the **Ellensburg Chamber of Commerce**, 609 N. Main St., Ellensburg, WA 98926 (☎ 888/925-2204 or 509/925-3137; www.visitellen.com).

FESTIVALS The third weekend of May, the Western Art Association holds the **Ellensburg Art Show & Auction** (☎ 509/962-2934; www.westernartassociation.org), which showcases works by some of the nation's top Western artists. On the last weekend in July, the city stages its **Jazz in the Valley** festival (☎ 888/925-2204 or 509/925-3137; www.jazzinthevalley.com). The **Ellensburg Rodeo**, held on Labor Day weekend, is the town's biggest event and is one of the top 10 rodeos in the United States. For more information, contact the Ellensburg Rodeo (☎ 800/637-2444 or 509/962-7831; www.ellensburgrodeo.com).

Exploring the Town

Ellensburg's most unusual attraction is at the university's **Chimpanzee and Human Communication Institute**, 400 E. University Way (☎ 509/963-2244; www.cwu.edu/~cwuchci), a research facility that stages what it calls "**Chimp-ossiums**." At these programs, visitors learn about the primate communication project and get to observe several chimpanzees that have learned to use American Sign Language (ASL). The programs, held March through November on Saturday and Sunday, cost \$11 for adults and \$8.50 for students; reservations are required.

The Western art of Ellensburg native John Clymer is displayed at the **Clymer Museum of Art**, 416 N. Pearl St. (☎ 509/962-6416; www.clymermuseum.com). A member of the prestigious Cowboy Artists of America, Clymer is best known for producing more than 80 *Saturday Evening Post* covers. The museum is open Monday to Friday from 10am to 5pm; Saturday from 10am to 4pm; and, May through December, Sunday from noon to 4pm; admission by donation. Downtown, the **Kit-titas County Historical Museum**, 114 E. Third Ave. (☎ 509/925-3778; www.kchm.org), has an interesting collection of Native American artifacts, and a large rock and mineral collection focusing on petrified wood. It's open Monday to Saturday, 10am to 4pm. Admission is by donation.

Some 4 miles southeast of town, you'll find **Olmstead Place State Park** (☎ 509/925-1943), a heritage site that preserves a pioneer homestead of the 1870s. Northwest of Ellensburg at exit 101 off I-90, in the town of Thorp, is the **Thorp Mill** (☎ 509/964-9640; www.thorp.org), an 1880s gristmill open for tours from Memorial Day to Labor Day, Thursday to Sunday, from 11am to 3pm.

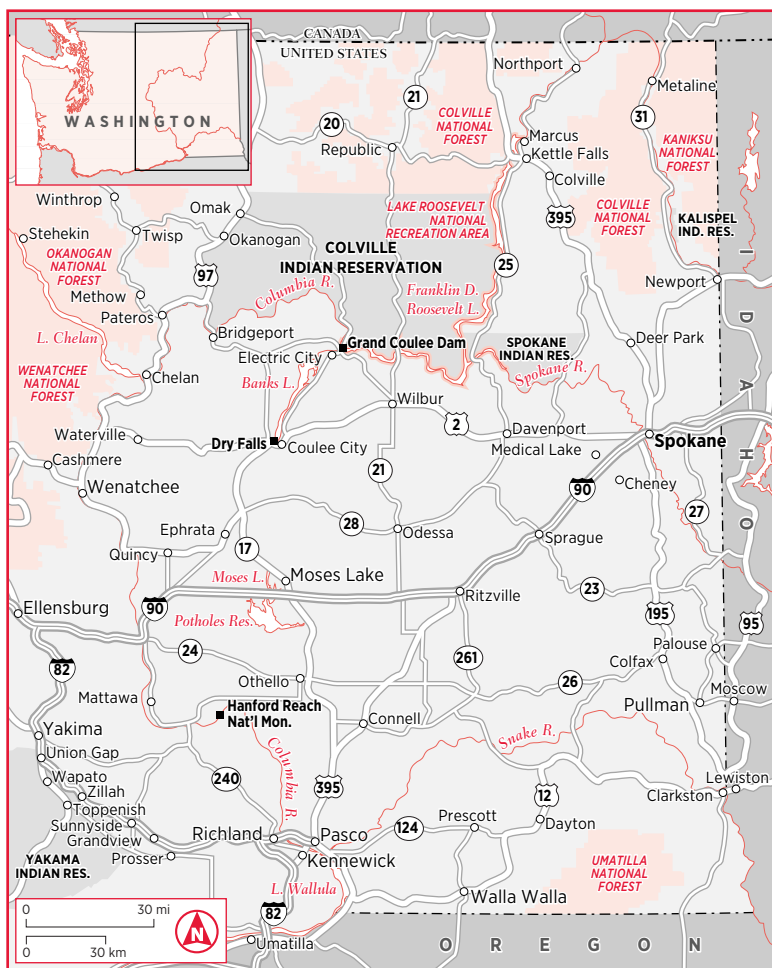
Anyone wanting to cool off on a hot summer day should head for the waters of the nearby Yakima River, which allows for easy floating. **Rill Adventures** (☎ 888/281-1561 or 509/964-2520; www.rillsonline.com) rents inflatable kayaks and rafts, with prices ranging from \$35 to \$118 per day. The section of this river south of town, through Yakima Canyon, is popular with tubers and canoeists, and is a favorite of fly anglers as well.

Where to Stay

Cave B Inn at Sagecliffe ★★ ★ Just 40 minutes east of Ellensburg, this luxurious lodge boasts the most dramatic setting of any hotel in the state. Perched on the edge of basalt cliffs 900 feet above the Columbia River, Cave B Inn makes the most of its location with huge walls of glass in the lobby and dining room and floor-to-ceiling windows in the guest rooms. Set in the middle of a large vineyard, the inn consists of several stone buildings constructed with rock quarried on the property. Guest rooms range from large lodge rooms to one- and two-bedroom "cliffhouses." While the rooms are all richly appointed, the gorgeous gorge views really steal the show. A winery serves as one of the main focuses at Cave B, but there are also a spa and a swimming pool. Right next door is the Gorge Amphitheatre, which draws big crowds to summertime concerts.

344 Silica Rd. NW, Quincy, WA 98848. ☎ 888/785-2283 or 509/785-2283. Fax 509/785-3670. www.cavebinn.com. 30 units. Mid-May to mid-Oct \$250-\$425 double, \$350-\$625 cliffhouse; other months \$195-\$250 double, \$225-\$350 cliffhouse. AE, MC, V. Pets accepted (\$30 fee). **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge; bikes; exercise room; pool; full-service spa; free Wi-Fi. *In room:* A/C, TV/DVD, CD player, hair dryer, Internet, minibar.

Eastern Washington



Where to Dine

If you're in need of some espresso, stop by **D&M Coffee**, 301 N. Pine St. (☎ 509/962-9333; www.dmcoffee.com), in a building that was once a gas station. At **Ellensburg Wine Works**, 606 N. Main St. (☎ 509/962-8463; www.ellensburgwineworks.com), a small wine bar in a classic old farmhouse, you can sample wines from Washington and around the world.

Tendrils Vineyard Restaurant ★★★ NEW AMERICAN The view from this cliff-top restaurant rocks! Well, more precisely, the view is of rocks, basalt cliffs that

is, that rise 900 feet from the Columbia River. With food as impressive as the views, this is one of the best restaurants in the state, and even if you are not staying here at Cave B Inn, you should make it a point to dine here if you are anywhere remotely close. The menu is always highly creative, changes seasonally, and features the freshest of ingredients. You might start with fennel-leek soup with duck confit or warm lobster with brandy cream and a lemon popover and then move on to beef tenderloin with smoked-onion marmalade or fennel-dusted chicken breast with oyster mushrooms, almonds, and leek risotto. Pair your meal with wines from Cave B Estate Winery for a meal you won't soon forget.

At Cave B Inn, 344 Silica Rd. NW, Quincy. ☎ **509/785-2283**. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$12–\$18 lunch, \$19–\$35 dinner; \$39–\$49 tasting menu. AE, MC, V. Apr–Oct Sun–Thurs 7:30am–2pm and 5–8pm, Fri–Sat 7:30am–2pm and 5–9pm; Nov–Mar Thurs 5–8pm, Fri 5–9pm, Sat 7:30am–2pm, Sun 5–8pm.

Valley Café ★ INTERNATIONAL Behind the shining black glass facade of this easily overlooked vintage cafe, you'll find a classic 1930s diner straight out of an Edward Hopper painting. Take a seat in one of the wooden booths and you'll swear you've stepped back in time. The menu, however, is quite contemporary, with dishes like roasted rack of lamb with a port-balsamic reduction, seafood coconut curry, and cioppino. Lots of local wines are available.

105 W. Third Ave. ☎ **509/925-3050**. www.valleycafeellensburg.com. Main courses \$10–\$26. AE, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11am–3pm and 5–9pm; Fri–Sun 11am–9pm.

The Yellow Church Cafe ★ AMERICAN Though primarily an inexpensive college lunch place, this restaurant is well worth checking out for its setting in a little yellow church built in 1923. Saturday and Sunday breakfasts are among the most popular meals here, and the pastries are favorite items. Salads are good, and the dinner menu includes plenty of steaks and pasta dishes that are usually good bets. If you can't find a table on the main floor, check up in the choir loft.

111 S. Pearl St. ☎ **509/933-2233**. www.yellowchurchcafe.com. Main courses \$8–\$14 lunch, \$10–\$22 dinner. AE, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11am–8pm; Sat–Sun 8am–8pm.

YAKIMA & THE WINE COUNTRY

150 miles SE of Seattle, 92 miles NW of Richland, 195 miles SW of Spokane

Considering the fact that Washington is well known for its plentiful rainfall, it may seem hard to believe that eastern Washington's Yakima Valley receives only about 8 inches of rain per year. Located 3 hours from Seattle, Yakima is in another world—the sunny side of the Cascades. Despite the lack of rainfall, the area has become one of Washington's main apple-growing regions. Hops, used in making beer, are another important crop in the Yakima Valley, but it is grapes and the wines produced from those grapes that have been bringing the valley international attention for many years.

The city of Yakima lies at the western end of the Yakima Valley winery region, while at the eastern end is the Tri-Cities area comprising Richland, Kennewick, and Pasco. Although the Tri-Cities area has its share of wineries, it is best known for the Hanford Site, the huge military reservation where the first nuclear bomb was developed. Today, Hanford is notorious for its many nuclear contamination sites, which luckily are well removed from any towns or vineyards, so there's no need to worry about glow-in-the-dark wine.

Despite the many wineries in the Yakima Valley, the region has never really caught on as a wine-touring destination and it has very few B&Bs or memorable restaurants. This is due to several factors. First, the wineries begin more than 20 miles away from Yakima, and so the city isn't exactly an ideal base for exploring this wine country. Also, the small towns scattered along the length of the Yakima Valley are basically farm towns and not what you would call quaint. In fact, Sunnyside has stockyards and their stench permeates the town. Vineyards are just part of the picture here, and you'll have to drive through a lot of unattractive scenery to reach the wineries. Nevertheless, a visit to the Yakima Valley is worthwhile to familiarize yourself with Washington wine.

Essentials

GETTING THERE Yakima is on I-82 at the junction with U.S. 12, which connects to I-5 south of Centralia. You can also get to Yakima on U.S. 97 (from Ellensburg from the north and just east of The Dalles, Oregon, from the south).

The Yakima Air Terminal/McAllister Field, 2400 W. Washington Ave. (☎ 509/575-6149; www.yakimaairterminal.com), on the southern outskirts of town, is served by Horizon Air from Seattle.

VISITOR INFORMATION Contact the **Yakima Valley Visitors & Convention Bureau**, 10 N. Eighth St., Yakima, WA 98901 (☎ 800/221-0751 or 509/575-3010; www.visityakima.com), or stop by their **Visitor Information Center**, 101 N. Fair Ave. For information on Toppenish, contact the **Toppenish Chamber of Commerce**, 504 S. Elm St. (P.O. Box 28), Toppenish, WA 98948 (☎ 800/863-6375 or 509/865-3262; www.toppenish.net).

FESTIVALS **Red Wine and Chocolate**, held each year over the Presidents' Day weekend, marks the start of the wine-tasting season at Yakima Valley wineries. The annual **Spring Barrel Tasting** on the last weekend in April is Yakima's biggest wine festival. During this event, the previous year's vintages are often tasted before being bottled. The **Catch the Crush** event, in late September, and **Thanksgiving in Wine Country**, in November, are both big wine-tasting weekends. On the fourth full weekend in September, the skies over Prosser fill with hot-air balloons in the **Great Prosser Balloon Rally** (www.prosserballoonrally.org).

Wine-Country Touring

On the same latitude as France's main wine-producing districts, the **Yakima Valley** is Washington's premier wine region. The valley sees sunshine on about 300 days of the year, which, combined with the rich volcanic soil, provides near-perfect grape-growing conditions. The only thing missing is rain. Central Washington is virtually a desert, but irrigation long ago overcame this minor inconvenience, and today the area produces award-winning chardonnay, Riesling, chenin blanc, sauvignon blanc, semillon, gewürztraminer, cabernet sauvignon, merlot, lemerger, and muscat wines. Because of the clear weather here at harvest, and because freezing weather sometimes arrives when grapes are still on the vines, a few wineries in the valley produce limited amounts of sweet, delicious ice wine made from frozen grapes. Quite a few wineries also produce port-style wines.

The Yakima Valley wine country stretches roughly from Zillah (about 20 miles east of Yakima) to the Tri-Cities area (Richland, Pasco, and Kennewick), although the



Texas Tea?

While in Zillah, don't miss the Teapot Dome gas station, 14691 Yakima Valley Hwy., a national historic building constructed in 1922 in the shape of a giant

teapot to call attention to a scandal in the administration of President Warren G. Harding. You'll find the teapot on the south side of I-82.

Tri-Cities area is officially in the Columbia Valley AVA (American Viticultural Area). You can get a guide and map of the wine country from the Yakima Valley Visitors & Convention Bureau (see above) or **Wine Yakima Valley**, 5808A Summitview Ave. #325, Yakima, WA 98908 (☎ 800/258-7270 or 509/965-5201; www.wineyakimavalley.org). However, even if you don't have a map, you can follow signs throughout the valley that point the way to various vineyards and wineries, or you can just follow Yakima Valley Highway/Wine Country Road (U.S. 12) between Zillah and Prosser, dropping in at whichever wineries strike your fancy. There are more than 50 wineries in the valley, and you could easily spend a week here visiting them all. However, most people spend no more than a weekend in the area. I suggest picking no more than four or five to visit during a day of wine tasting. It's also advisable to have a designated driver.

The **Rattlesnake Hills Wine Trail** (☎ 888/375-7498 or 509/965-4521; www.rattlesnakehills.com) is an association of 17 Yakima Valley wineries that have issued a "Wine Trail Passport." This pass costs \$10 and provides you with free tastings of reserve wines, as well as discounts on bottle purchases.

Yakima

Kana Winery With a tasting room in a historic building in downtown Yakima, this is my favorite in-town winery. Kana produces a wide range of white wines, including a couple of Rhone-style blends. You'll also find plenty of red blends and some rarely seen red varietals, including lemlberger and tempranillo.

10 S. Second St., Yakima. ☎ 509/453-6611. www.kanawinery.com. Mon-Sat noon-6:30pm; Sun noon-5pm.

The Tasting Room Yakima ★★ Housed in an early-1900s farmhouse and representing Harlequin Wine Cellars, Mountain Dome, Naches Heights Vineyards, and Wilridge Winery, this tasting room is in one of the most beautiful settings of any tasting room in the state. The fact that these wineries make some very good wines makes it a real treat to venture out this way for some wine tasting. Be sure to ask about the trail to the nearby Cowiche Canyon natural area.

At Wilridge Winery, 250 Ehler Rd., Yakima. ☎ 509/966-0686. www.tastingroomyakima.com. Thurs-Mon 11am-7pm. Take I-82 west to U.S. 12 toward Naches, exit on Ackley Rd., turn left on N. Powerhouse Rd. and then turn right onto Naches Heights Rd. Continue 2½ miles to a left onto Ehler Rd.

The Zillah Area

Pick up some fresh Yakima Valley fruit or indulge in a fresh peach sundae (in season, of course) at **Donald Fruit & Mercantile**, 2560 Donald-Wapato Rd., Wapato (☎ 509/877-3115), which first opened in 1911 and is reached by driving north from exit 44 off I-82. This country store is also the tasting room for Piety Flats Winery.

Cultura ★★ This husband-and-wife winery is one of the smallest wineries in the area, but it produces some of the biggest wines. Fat, jammy bordeaux-style reds are the specialty here, and while they don't produce a lot, they do make very distinctive wines.

3601 Highland Dr., Zillah. ☎ **509/829-0204**. www.culturawine.com. Thurs-Sat 11am-5pm; Sun 11am-4pm.

Knight Hill Winery ★ With reliably drinkable wines made by the same wine-maker who makes wines for Steppe Cellars (another of my favorite little area wineries), Knight Hill is a great place to look for outstanding values, especially in red wines.

5330 Lombard Loop Rd., Zillah. ☎ **509/952-9976**. www.knighthillwinery.com. Apr-Nov Wed-Sun 11am-5pm; other months by appointment.

Portteus Vineyards ★★ This winery produces some of the best reds in the Yakima Valley. Bold, full-bodied wines are the hallmark here. Many of the wines here go for less than \$20 a bottle, and some are under \$15. The winery has great views across the valley.

5201 Highland Dr., Zillah. ☎ **509/829-6970**. www.portteus.com. Daily 10am-5pm. Take exit 50 off I-82, go north, and then follow Highland east almost as far as it goes.

Silver Lake at Roza Hills ★ This is one of the state's larger wineries, with tasting rooms here and in Woodinville (near Seattle). Producing a wide range of wines, Silver Lake keeps prices reasonable and often has great sales and discounts. The tasting room set in the hills on the north side of the valley has good views.

1500 Vintage Rd., Zillah. ☎ **509/829-6235**. www.silverlakewinery.com. Apr-Nov daily 10am-5pm; Dec-Mar Thurs-Mon 11am-4pm. Take exit 52 off I-82 and go north over the freeway, turn left on Cheyne Rd., right on Highland Rd., and left on Vintage Rd.

Wineglass Cellars ★★ ★ This small husband-and-wife winery may be the most underrated and little-known winery in the state. Owners/winemakers David and Linda Lowe don't produce a lot of wine each year, but almost everything they make is deliciously complex and cellar-worthy. Be sure to sample the reserve wines. The cabernet sauvignons and merlots are the highlights here.

260 N. Bonair Rd., Zillah. ☎ **509/829-3011**. www.wineglasscellars.com. Fri-Sun 10:30am-5pm. Closed Dec to Presidents' Day weekend. Take exit 50 off I-82, go north to Highland Dr., turn left on Bonair Rd.

Sunnyside

Steppe Cellars ★ This is just about the most remote of the Yakima Valley's wineries, and though Steppe Cellars is quite small and thoroughly unpretentious, it's well worth searching out. Expect to find dry Riesling and off-dry gewürztraminer, as well as full-bodied red wines. I've found some excellent deals on wines here.

1991 Chaffee Rd., Sunnyside. ☎ **509/837-8281**. www.steppecellars.com. Apr-Oct Fri and Sun 11am-5pm, Sat 11am-6pm; Nov-Mar by appointment. Take exit 63 off I-82 and drive north, turn left on Yakima Valley Hwy., right on N. Outlook Rd., then right on winding Chaffee Rd. and continue for 2 miles.

Prosser

Just off I-82 at exit 80 (head toward downtown Prosser and take an immediate left onto Merlot Dr.), you'll find the valley's greatest concentration of wineries and tasting rooms. **Prosser Vintner's Village**, 100 Merlot Dr. (<http://prosservintnersvillage.com>), a modern development, is home to more than a dozen wineries and a

wine bar. The large tasting rooms here tend to be those of large vineyards that have long sold grapes to the biggest and best wineries in the region. With so many tasting rooms within walking distance of one another, this is a great place to sample wines from both large and small wineries. You'll find seven of the smallest wineries at the **Winemaker's Loft**, 357 Port Ave.

Alexandria Nicole Cellars ★ Although the Alexandria Nicole tasting room is located in an industrial park on the north side of Prosser, it is still one of the prettiest tasting rooms in the valley. Likewise, the wines are reliably good, and most are priced between \$20 and \$28 per bottle.

2880 Lee Rd., Ste. C., Prosser. ☎ **509/786-3497**. www.alexandrianicolecellars.com. Daily 11am–5pm. Take exit 82 off I-82 and go east on Wine Country Rd. (away from Prosser).

Chinook Wines ★ This is one of the oldest wineries in the area, and despite having been in business for nearly 30 years now, it is still a small husband-and-wife operation. Dry red and white wines are the focus, and the reds are big, bold, and generally in the \$20 to \$25 range.

Wine Country Rd. at Wittkopf Loop, Prosser. ☎ **509/786-2725**. www.chinookwines.com. May–Oct Sat–Sun noon–5pm. Take exit 82 off I-82 and go east on Wine Country Rd. (away from Prosser).

Gamache Vintners ★ Brothers Bob and Roger Gamache have been growing grapes in eastern Washington for 30 years, and for most of that time, they sold their grapes to some of the state's top wineries. When the Gamache brothers decided to start making their own wine, they hired Charlie Hoppes, one of my favorite Washington winemakers. Consequently, the wines here are some of the best you'll taste in Prosser.

In Vintner's Village, 505 Cabernet Court, Prosser. ☎ **509/786-7800**. www.gamachevintners.com. Daily 10am–5pm.

Hogue Cellars ★★ In an industrial park just off the freeway, Hogue is one of the state's largest, most reliable wineries. It's a good place to visit if you're on a budget or want to sample reasonably priced, approachable Washington state wine. This winery produces three levels of wine; the Genesis label wines tend to be the best values.

2800 Lee Rd., Prosser. ☎ **888/659-7900** or 509/786-4557. www.hoguecellars.com. Daily 10am–5pm; Jan to Presidents' Day weekend, call for hours. Take exit 82 off I-82 and go east on Wine Country Rd. (away from Prosser).

Mercer Estates Winery 🍷 This family-owned winery is one of the newer wineries in the area, but the two families that own the winery together have decades of winemaking and grape-growing experience. The winery is co-owned by the Hogue family, which once owned one of the largest and most reliable wineries in Prosser. Likewise, the winemaker here once made wine for Hogue. The white wines here are particularly good values.

3100 Lee Rd., Prosser. ☎ **509/786-2097**. <http://mercerwine.com>. Mar–Dec Wed–Sun 10am–5pm. Closed Jan–Feb. Take exit 82 off I-82 and go east on Wine Country Rd. (away from Prosser).

Olsen Estates If you happen to be searching for white wines, be sure to stop in at this winery just off I-82 in Prosser. The vineyards from which these wines are produced have long grown grapes for Chateau Ste. Michelle Winery, and both the Rieslings and the chardonnays can be pretty good.

In Vintner's Village, 500 Merlot Dr., Prosser. ☎ **509/786-7007**. www.olsenestates.com. Wed–Sun 11am–5pm.

Pontin del Roza Winery ★ This small, family-owned winery is one of the oldest in the area and has been producing wines since 1984. It produces a variety of whites and reds, including good chenin blanc and sangiovese.

35502 N. Hinerling Rd., Prosser. ☎ **509/786-4449**. Daily 10am–5pm. Take exit 80 off I-82 and go north, then go east on Johnson Rd. and north on Hinerling Rd.

Snoqualmie Vineyards ★ This is another of Washington's large wine producers; you'll find Snoqualmie wines in grocery stores all across the state. Predictably reliable wines at reasonable prices are the specialty. A good place to start if you're new to wine or aren't into spending a lot of money.

660 Frontier Rd., Prosser. ☎ **800/852-0885** or 509/786-5558. www.snoqualmie.com. Daily 10am–5pm. Take exit 82 off I-82 and drive south on Frontier Rd.

Thurston Wolfe Winery ★ This small family winery, in an industrial park outside of Prosser, focuses its attentions on producing some of the less common red wines—zinfandel, sangiovese, lemerger, primitivo, and tempranillo—and Dr. Wolfe's Family Red can be a very good value. They also do port-style wines.

In Vintner's Village, 588 Cabernet Court, Prosser. ☎ **509/786-3313**. www.thurstonwolfe.com. Apr–Dec Thurs–Sun (and holiday Mon) 11am–5pm. Closed Jan–Mar.

Willow Crest Winery ★★ With vineyards set high in the hills north of Prosser, this is one of the Yakima Valley's smallest wineries and consequently has a very limited production. However, since winemaker David Minick likes to experiment, you'll often find some rather unusual wines here, perhaps a syrah port or a syrah sparkling wine.

In Vintner's Village, 590 Merlot Dr., Prosser. ☎ **509/786-7999**. www.willowcrestwinery.com. Daily 10am–5pm.

Benton City

Chandler Reach Vineyards ★★ With a beautiful Tuscan villa–style winery and tasting room overlooking the Yakima River, Chandler Reach Vineyards is one of the prettiest wineries in the Yakima Valley. It also produces plenty of big red wines, with many wines priced just under \$20.

9506 W. Chandler Rd., Benton City. ☎ **509/588-8800**. www.chandlerreach.com. Thurs–Sun 11am–5pm; call for winter hours. Take exit 93 off I-82 and go north.

Fidélitas ★★ Set in the middle of the prestigious Red Mountain AVA (American Viticultural Area), this little winery is owned by Charlie Hoppes, who has been making wine for more than 20 years and is one of Washington's most respected wine-makers. Come for the big reds.

51810 N. Sunset Rd., Benton City. ☎ **509/588-3469**. www.fidelitaswines.com. Daily 11am–5pm. Take exit 96 off I-82, go east on Wash. 224, and then turn left on Sunset Rd.



Let's Do Lunch

Because good restaurants are few and far between in the Yakima Valley, you should consider bringing along picnic

supplies when you go out wine tasting. Lots of wineries have patios, picnic tables, and great views.

Hedges Cellars at Red Mountain ★★ Focusing attentions on its cabernet sauvignon–merlot blend and an unusual sauvignon blanc–chardonnay blend, this winery has a beautiful tasting room at its château in Benton City. Hedges is one of Washington's more reliable wineries. The CMS cab–merlot–syrah blend is an exceptionally good deal.

53511 N. Sunset Rd., Benton City. ☎ **509/588-3155**. www.hedgescellars.com. Mar–Nov Fri–Sun noon–4pm; closed rest of year. Take exit 96 off I-82, go east on Wash. 224, and then turn left on Sunset Rd.

Hightower Cellars ★ Located next door to Tapteil Vineyards at the north end of Sunset Road, this small winery makes wines not only from Red Mountain fruit but also from such celebrated vineyards as Pepper Bridge in Walla Walla. Big reds are the specialty here, and while you might spend \$50 for a wine here, you might also find an excellent wine for under \$20.

19418 E. 583 PR NE, Benton City. ☎ **509/588-2867**. www.hightowercellars.com. Fri–Sun 11am–5pm.

Kiona Vineyards and Winery ★ This winery has been around for years, but has cashed in on the ever-increasing acclaim that the surrounding Red Mountain vineyards have been getting. Surprisingly, the wines here are still moderately priced wines that are very easy to drink. The tasting room is a gorgeous modern space with fabulous views.

44612 N. Sunset Rd., Benton City. ☎ **509/588-6716**. www.kionawine.com. Daily noon–5pm. Take exit 96 off I-82, go east on Wash. 224, and then turn left on Sunset Rd.

Tapteil Vineyard Winery ★★ Tapteil Vineyards, at the far north end of the Sunset Road, has been growing grapes on the celebrated Red Mountain since 1985. Over the years they have sold grapes to some of the state's top wineries, and now make small amounts of wine from their own grapes. Big, bold cabernet sauvignon is the specialty here, but they also do good syrah.

20206 E. 583 PR NE Benton City. ☎ **509/588-4460**. www.tapteil.com. Apr–Dec Fri–Sat 11am–5pm; other months by appointment.

Terra Blanca Vintners ★ Despite the name, which translates as “white earth,” this winery's vineyards are on the slopes of Red Mountain, known for producing outstanding wines. Bordeaux blends and syrah, usually with lots of tannins, are the highlights here, but chardonnay, viognier, and several dessert wines are also produced. This is one of the few wineries in the state with barrel-aging caves. April through November, the winery offers tours (\$15) on Friday and Saturday.

34715 N. DeMoss Rd., Benton City. ☎ **509/588-6082**. www.terrablanca.com. Daily 11am–6pm. Take exit 96 off I-82; go east on Wash. 224, then left on DeMoss Rd.

The Tri-Cities Area

Barnard Griffin ★ Good white wines, including fumé blanc and chardonnay, can be had here, and the dessert wines can be delicious. Prices are quite reasonable for many of the wines, but there are also plenty of reserve red wines here in the \$30 to \$35 range.

878 Tulip Lane, Richland. ☎ **509/627-0266**. www.barnardgriffin.com. Daily 10am–6pm. Take exit 3 off I-82, turn left on Columbia Park Trail, left on Windmill Rd., and right on Tulip Lane.

Bookwalter Winery ★★ Producing everything from light, drinkable picnic wines to complex, full-bodied cabernet sauvignon and merlot, this winery on the

west side of Richland is one of the valley's more reliable operations. No matter what your tastes, you're likely to find something here that you'll like. The winery also has a bistro that serves light meals and features live music several nights each week.

894 Tulip Lane, Richland. ☎ **877/667-8300** or 509/627-5000. www.bookwalterwines.com. Mar-Oct Sun-Tues 11am-8pm, Wed-Sat 11am-11pm; Nov-Feb Mon-Tues noon-8pm, Wed-Sat 11am-10pm, Sun noon-6pm. Take exit 3 off I-182, turn left on Columbia Park Trail, left on Windmill Rd., and right on Tulip Lane.

Goose Ridge Estate Vineyards and Winery ★★ This winery's 1,300-acre vineyard is the largest contiguous vineyard in Washington and is Chateau Ste. Michelle Winery's single biggest grape grower. Goose Ridge produces quite a few good wines, both white and red, for under \$20, but also has produced some superb wines in the \$30 to \$50 range.

16304 N. Dallas Rd., Richland. ☎ **509/628-3880**. www.gooseridge.com. Spring-fall daily 10am-6pm; winter Thurs-Mon 10am-6pm. Take exit 104 off I-82 and drive north on N. Dallas Rd.

Toppenish & Its Murals

Before or after visiting wineries around Zillah, you may want to drive into **Toppenish**, which was just a quiet little cow town until someone got the great idea of enlivening a few town walls with **historical murals**. Today, on walls all over town, there are more than 60 murals depicting aspects of Toppenish history. At almost any store in town, you can pick up a map to the murals. Though some murals have taken as much as a month to paint, each year on the first Saturday in June, crowds descend on the town to watch a new mural being created in just 1 day. One of the best ways to see the murals is on a horse-drawn trolley tour with **Toppenish Mural Tours** (☎ **509/697-8995**). The 1½-hour tours cost \$12 for adults and \$5 for children ages 12 and under.

Toppenish is within the boundaries of the Yakama Indian Reservation, which operates the **Yakama Nation Museum & Cultural Center**, Buster Road (☎ **509/865-2800**; www.yakamamuseum.com), on U.S. 97 just outside town. This large building, designed to resemble a traditional Yakama winter lodge, contains a museum, library, gift shop, and restaurant. Exhibits in the museum present the history and culture of the Yakama people. The Yakama are well known for their beadwork, and you'll find pieces for sale in the gift shop. The center is open Monday through Friday from 8am to 5pm, Saturday from 9am to 6pm, and Sunday from 9am to 5pm; admission is \$6 for adults, \$4 for seniors and students, and \$2 for children ages 10 and under.

Several other attractions in town provide glimpses into the area's history. The most entertaining is the **Northern Pacific Railway Museum**, 10 S. Asotin Ave. (☎ **509/865-1911**; www.nprymuseum.org), which is in the town's 1911 railway depot. It's open May through October Tuesday to Saturday from 10am to 4pm, and Sunday from noon to 4pm (closed Nov-Apr). Admission is \$5 for adults, and \$3 for children ages 17 and under accompanied by a parent. The Yakima Valley is one of the world's main hops-growing regions, and at the **American Hop Museum**, 22 S. B St. (☎ **509/865-4677**; www.americanhopmuseum.org), you can learn about this crucial beer ingredient. The museum is open May through September, Wednesday to Saturday from 10am to 4pm and Sunday from 11am to 4pm; the cost is \$3 for adults and \$2 for students.

Attractions & Activities in the Yakima Area

Local history is chronicled at the **Yakima Valley Museum ★★**, 2105 Tieton Dr. (☎ 509/248-0747; www.yakimavalleymuseum.org), where a collection of restored horse-drawn vehicles is on display. There are also displays on the Yakama tribe and on former Supreme Court justice and environmentalist William O. Douglas, who was a Yakima resident. The museum's most enjoyable exhibit is a functioning replica of a 1930s soda fountain. The museum is open Tuesday to Saturday from 10am to 5pm and Sunday from 11am to 5pm; admission is \$5 for adults, \$3 for seniors and students. The museum also operates the **H. M. Gilbert Homeplace**, an 1898 Victorian farmhouse, at 2109 W. Yakima Ave. This historic home is open by appointment; admission is \$2.50.

Extending between Union Gap and Selah Gap, the **Yakima Greenway** follows the banks of the **Yakima River**, with 10 miles of paved pathways within the greenway. The easiest place to access the path is at Sherman Park on Nob Hill Boulevard. In summer, **kayaking**, **rafting**, and **tubing** are popular on this section of the river, and the **bird-watching** is good year-round.

If you'd like to see another scenic river stretch, head north to Selah and take Wash. 821 north through the **Yakima River Canyon**. The river has been around longer than the surrounding hills, which have risen as the river sliced through them.

Attractions & Activities in the Tri-Cities Area

If you're interested in learning more about the science, technology, and history (including the nuclear history) of this region, pay a visit to the **Columbia River Exhibition of History, Science & Technology**, 95 Lee Blvd., Richland (☎ 877/789-9935 or 509/943-9000; www.crehst.org), adjacent to the attractive Howard Amon Park in downtown Richland. Be sure to ask to watch the video on the great floods that scoured this landscape during the last Ice Age. The museum is open Monday to Saturday from 10am to 5pm and Sunday from noon to 5pm. Admission is \$4 for adults and \$3 for seniors and students.

Upriver from the Tri-Cities area are the Hanford Site (where the plutonium for the first nuclear bombs was made) and the Hanford Reach National Monument, which preserves eastern Washington's last free-flowing stretch of the Columbia River. Some remote areas of the monument are accessible by vehicle, but the best way to see it is on the jet-boat tours offered by **Columbia River Journeys** (☎ 888/486-9119 or 509/734-9941; www.columbiariverjourneys.com). The 4-hour tours run May through mid-October, and cost \$64 for adults and \$49 for children. Along the way, you see the wild shores of the Columbia River, as well as the nuclear reactors of the Hanford Site.

Where to Stay

For a list of bed-and-breakfast inns in the wine country, contact **Wine Yakima Valley**, 5808A Summitview St., #325, Yakima, WA 98908 (☎ 800/258-7270 or 509/965-5201; www.wineyakimavalley.org).

IN YAKIMA

Birchfield Manor Country Inn ★★ Just 2½ miles east of Yakima, Birchfield Manor is surrounded by pastures and is well known for elegant dinners (see below for restaurant review). Both upstairs from the dining room in the 1910 Victorian

farmhouse and in a new building constructed to resemble a vintage home, you'll find antiques-filled guest rooms, most with good views out over the countryside. Several rooms have fireplaces, whirlpool tubs, and decks to take in the view. Breakfasts are nearly as legendary as the dinners and a great start for a day of wine-country touring. Note that the rooms in the new building have TVs and phones.

2018 Birchfield Rd., Yakima, WA 98901. ☎ **509/452-1960**. www.birchfieldmanor.com. 11 units. \$119–\$219 double. Rates include full or continental breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Children 8 and over welcome.

Amenities: Restaurant; outdoor pool; room service. *In room:* A/C, hair dryer, no phone, free Wi-Fi.

Oxford Inn ★ East of I-82 on the banks of the Yakima River, this is Yakima's most pleasant and popular budget lodging. As such, the inn regularly books up on weekends. The rooms are spacious, and many have balconies overlooking the river. Most also have refrigerators. Walkers and joggers will be pleased to find a 10-mile riverside walking/biking path going past the motel. Right next door, the affiliated Oxford Suites offers larger rooms and complimentary breakfast buffets.

1603 E. Yakima Ave., Yakima, WA 98901. ☎ **800/521-3050** or 509/457-4444. Fax 509/453-7593. www.oxfordinnyakima.com. 96 units. \$85–\$95 double. Rates include continental breakfast. Children 10 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Pets accepted (\$25 fee). **Amenities:** Exercise room; Jacuzzi; outdoor pool. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge, free Wi-Fi.

IN THE TRI-CITIES AREA

Hampton Inn Richland/Tri-Cities ★★ 😊 On the banks of the Columbia River adjacent to Richland's Howard Amon Park, this inn claims the best location of any Tri-Cities area hotel. The walking paths and green lawns of the park are right next door, and good restaurants are a short walk away. Rooms are well designed and comfortable, many with balconies overlooking the river. With the indoor pool and complimentary breakfast, this is also a good bet for families.

486 Bradley Blvd., Richland, WA 99352. ☎ **800/426-7866** or 509/943-4400. Fax 509/943-1797. www.hamptoninn.com. 130 units. \$120–\$140 double; \$160–\$315 suite. Rates include continental breakfast. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Exercise room; Jacuzzi; indoor swimming pool. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge, hair dryer, free Internet.

Where to Dine

IN YAKIMA

For espresso, breakfast, pastries, and good bread to take along on a picnic, drop by **Essencia Artisan Bakery and Chocolaterie**, 4 N. Third St. (☎ **509/575-5570**; www.essenciaartisanbakery.com). For a good latte in downtown Yakima, stop by **Le Cup**, 5 N. Front St. (☎ **509/452-4200**).

Birchfield Manor Country Inn ★★ CONTINENTAL Birchfield Manor, a grand old farmhouse on the eastern outskirts of Yakima, doubles as both Yakima's best B&B (see above) and its best restaurant. The dining room looks as if a wealthy family cleared out the regular furniture and brought in a few extra tables for a holiday dinner. The menu changes with the season and includes a choice of five or six entrees. The house specialty is salmon in puff pastry with a chardonnay sauce, but other offerings are very tempting as well. The filet mignon with cabernet sauce and steak Diane with a brandy-cream sauce are two other standout dishes here. The dinner includes fresh-baked bread, an appetizer, salad, and, best of all, handmade after-dinner chocolates.

2018 Birchfield Rd. (☎ **509/452-1960**. www.birchfieldmanor.com. Reservations required. 5-course dinner \$41–\$51. AE, DC, MC, V. Seatings Thurs–Fri 7pm; Sat 6 and 8:45pm.

Greystone Restaurant ★★ NEW AMERICAN Housed in—you guessed it—a gray stone building, this restaurant has, for more than 20 years, been Yakima's favorite upscale, downtown dining establishment. With its historical character, lively little bar, and convivial atmosphere, this is my favorite place in Yakima for dinner. Pan-fried oysters and spicy south-of-the-border-style crab cakes both make good starters, before moving on to spicy prawns in Tabasco-cream sauce or horseradish-crusted salmon. Of course, there's a long list of regional wines.

5 N. Front St. (☎ **509/248-9801**. www.greystonedining.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$18–\$39. AE, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 5–9pm or 10pm.

SUNNYSIDE

For some cheese to go with your wine, drop by Sunnyside's **Darigold Dairy Fair**, 400 Alexander Rd. (☎ **509/837-4321**), a half-mile south of I-82 at exit 67. A sort of circus atmosphere prevails, and ice cream and sandwiches are also available. Dairy Fair is open Monday to Saturday from 8am to 6pm and Sunday from 10am to 6pm. Here in Sunnyside, you can also get decent pub fare and microbrews at **Snipes Mountain Brewing**, 905 Yakima Valley Hwy. (☎ **509/837-2739**; www.snipsmountain.com).

IN PROSSER

With its concentration of wineries and tasting rooms right beside the freeway, Prosser has become the Yakima Valley's main destination for people touring the valley's wine-country, and as such, it now has your best dining options. You can even get a decent lunch at **Willow Crest Winery**, 590 Merlot Dr. (☎ **509/786-7999**; www.willowcrestwinery.com), which has a pleasant patio. If, by the time you make it to Prosser, you need a break from wine, you can get locally brewed beer and pub food at **Whitstran Brewing**, 1427 Wine Country Rd., Prosser (☎ **509/786-4922**; www.whitstranbrewing.com). For a dose of caffeine, head to **6th Street Coffee**, 713 Sixth St. (☎ **509/786-2269**), which is in historic downtown Prosser. Here in Prosser, at exit 80 off I-82, you can also stop in at **Chukar Cherry Company**, 320 Wine Country Rd. (☎ **800/624-9544** or 509/786-2055; www.chukar.com), and sample dried cherries and lots of dried fruit and candies.

Picazo 7 Seventeen ★ NORTHWEST/SPANISH This restaurant in downtown Prosser is a local favorite both for its lively, modern wine-bar feel and for its Spanish-influenced menu that includes both tapas and paella. The menu changes seasonally, and among the tapas you might find prawns stuffed with chorizo sausage, or beef skewers with South American chimichurri sauce. Among the entrees, the paellas and the firecracker prawns are perennial favorites. The wine list, of course, emphasizes local wines. While the food here isn't always as good as at nearby Wine O'Clock, it's a fun scene and stays open later, which is a real plus.

717 Sixth St., Prosser. (☎ **509/786-1116**. www.picazo717.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$17–\$31. AE, DISC, MC, V. Tues–Thurs 4–9pm; Fri–Sat 4–10pm.

Wine O'Clock ★★ NEW AMERICAN It may seem a bit strange that a wine bar would close as early as 5pm (or 7pm on weekends), but this wine bar, surrounded by more than a dozen wineries and tasting rooms, is primarily the tasting room for

the wines of Bunnell Family Cellar and RiverAerie wines. That said, this is also the best place in the area for lunch or an early dinner. A wood-fired oven cranks all kinds of delicious dishes, including roasted asparagus with mascarpone and a variety of pizzas (I like the one with roasted pears and bacon). Pair your pear pizza with a sampler of Bunnell or RiverAerie wines for a simple yet satisfying wine-country meal. For heartier appetites, there are steaks and the likes of whitefish with brown butter-caper sauce.

In Vintner's Village, 548 Cabernet Court, Prosser. ☎ **509/786-2197**. www.wineoclockwinebar.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$14–\$18. MC, V. Fri–Sat noon–7pm; Sun–Mon noon–5pm.

IN THE TRI-CITIES AREA

If you're just in the mood for some pub food and a microbrew, head to **Atomic Ale Brewpub & Eatery**, 1015 Lee Blvd., Richland (☎ **509/946-5465**; www.atomicalebrewpub.com), which is just a block off George Washington Way in downtown Richland. One of my favorite places in the area for a light meal is the **Bookwalter Winery**, 894 Tulip Lane, Richland (☎ **877/667-8300** or 509/627-5000; www.bookwalterwines.com), which serves simple meat and cheese plates to go with the wines. There's live music Wednesday through Saturday night. See the listing above for hours.

Katya's Bistro & Wine Bar ★ INTERNATIONAL This little second-story restaurant, close to a couple of riverfront hotels and the pretty Howard Amon Park, is a surprising find in downtown Richland. The menu is fairly long, quite creative for this area, and includes not only good Italian dishes, including pork *osso buco* and chicken marsala, but also a few Ukrainian dishes, including borscht and pelmeni. This latter is a dumpling stuffed with pork or chicken that is tossed with sautéed bacon, onion, and chardonnay. There's an extensive wine list that emphasizes local wines.

430 George Washington Way. ☎ **509/946-7777**. www.katyasbistro.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$13–\$29. AE, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 5–9pm; Fri–Sat 5–10pm.

Taverna Tagaris ★ MEDITERRANEAN Located within the Tagaris Winery, this is one of the best and most unusual restaurants in the region. While the word “taverna” might imply someplace casual, this is actually the most elegant dining room around. The menu includes everything from traditional Greek dishes to a couple of good steaks. In summer, on a beautiful enclosed patio that even has its own open-air kitchen, there is alfresco dining starting at 4pm, and on Friday and Saturday nights, there's live music (usually jazz). While you're here, be sure to do a tasting of Tagaris wines.

844 Tulip Lane, Richland. ☎ **509/628-0020**. www.tagariswines.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$8–\$15 lunch, \$14–\$27 dinner. AE, MC, V. Mon–Sat 11am–3pm and 5–9pm.

WALLA WALLA

50 miles E of Richland/Pasco/Kennewick, 155 miles S of Spokane, 39 miles NE of Pendleton

Although Walla Walla was for a long time best known as the home of the Walla Walla sweet onion, in recent years the buzz around town has been generated more by red wines than by white onions. New wineries have been popping up as fast as champagne corks on New Year's Eve, making this town the single best destination in

the state for a few days of wine touring. The explosion of wineries has also brought on a downtown renaissance, with a restored historic hotel, excellent restaurants, numerous tasting rooms, and a few wine bars.

Before there was wine, it was onions that made Walla Walla famous in the Northwest. The Walla Walla onion is a big sweet variety, similar to the Vidalia onion of Georgia, and owes its sweetness not to sugar, but to a high-water and low-sulfur content. These onions, which can weigh as much as 2 pounds, are legendary around the Northwest as the best onions for burgers at summer barbecues. Between June and August, produce stands in the area sell big bags of these sweet onions.

This is also a college town with three schools of higher learning: Walla Walla College, Whitman College, and Walla Walla Community College. Due in large part to these colleges, the town wears a rather cultured air. The town's residential streets, lined with stately old homes and large shade trees, add yet another layer to Walla Walla's character. A stroll or drive through the town's old neighborhoods conjures up times past, when the pace of life was slower.

Walla Walla is one of the oldest communities in the Northwest and was the site of both an early mission and one of the region's first forts. Before white settlers arrived, the area was home to several Indian tribes from which the town's name, which means "many waters" or "small, rapid streams," is derived.

Essentials

GETTING THERE Walla Walla is on U.S. 12, 45 miles east of I-82/I-182 in the Tri-Cities area. From I-82 west of Richland, take I-182 to Pasco and continue south, then west on U.S. 12. From Pendleton, Oregon, and I-84, take Ore. 11 north. From Spokane, take U.S. 195 south to Colfax, continuing south on Wash. 26 and then Wash. 127. In Dodge, you pick up U.S. 12 and continue south to Walla Walla.

Walla Walla Regional Airport (☎ 509/525-3100; www.wallawallaairport.com) is served by Horizon Air.

VISITOR INFORMATION Contact the **Walla Walla Valley Chamber of Commerce/Tourism Walla Walla**, 29 E. Sumach St. (P.O. Box 644), Walla Walla, WA 99362 (☎ 877/998-4748 or 509/525-0850; www.wvvchamber.com or www.wallawalla.org).

GETTING AROUND Rental cars are available through Budget, Enterprise, and Hertz.

FESTIVALS In early May, there's the **Walla Walla Balloon Stampede**, and in mid-July, the **Walla Walla Sweet Onion Festival**. Area wine festivals include the **Spring Release Weekend** over the first full weekend in May and the **Holiday Barrel Tasting** on the first weekend in December.

Exploring the Town

The **Whitman Mission National Historic Site**, 328 Whitman Mission Rd. (☎ 509/529-2761 or 522-6360; www.nps.gov/whmi), 7 miles west of Walla Walla, just off U.S. 12, is dedicated to a tragic page in Northwest history. Missionaries Marcus and Narcissa Whitman were among the first settlers to travel to the Northwest and arrived in this area in 1836. Although the Whitmans had come here to convert Indians, Marcus Whitman was also a doctor and often treated the local

Cayuse people. During the mid-1840s, a wagon train brought a measles epidemic to the area, and the Cayuse, who had no resistance to the disease, began dying. Though Whitman was able to save his own family, most of the Cayuse who contracted the disease died from it. Legend has it that the Cayuse had a tradition of killing medicine men who could not cure an illness, and on November 29, 1847, several Cayuse attacked and killed the Whitmans and 11 other residents of the mission. The massacre at the Whitman mission prompted a war on the Cayuse and a demand for territorial status for what was at that time the Oregon country. In 1848, in response to pleas brought about by the Whitman massacre, Oregon (which included present-day Washington state) became the first territory west of the Rocky Mountains.

Today, nothing remains of the mission, but a trail leads through the mission site and the building locations are outlined with concrete. An interpretive center provides historical background on the mission and has artifacts from the days when the Whitmans worked with the Cayuse. The site is open daily from dawn to dusk; the visitor center is open daily from 8am to 6pm in summer and from 8am to 4:30pm in other months (closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day). Admission is \$3 per person; children 15 and under are free.

In town, the **Fort Walla Walla Museum**, 755 Myra Rd. (☎ 509/525-7703; www.fortwallawallamuseum.org), is a collection of pioneer-era buildings, including log cabins, a one-room schoolhouse, an old railway station, and several other buildings. It's open April through October, daily from 10am to 5pm. Admission is \$7 for adults, \$6 for seniors and students, \$3 for children ages 6 to 12, and free for children 5 and under. In addition to displays on pioneer life, there's a large collection of horse-era farming equipment, including an old combine pulled by 33 life-size fiberglass mules. There are also living-history programs here on Sunday afternoons at 2pm.

If you appreciate old homes, then the **Kirkman House Museum**, 214 N. Colville St. (☎ 509/529-4373; www.kirkmanhousemuseum.org), an impressive brick Victorian home built in 1874, is also worth a visit. Inside you'll find rooms full of period antiques. The museum is open Wednesday to Saturday from 10am to 4pm and Sunday from 1 to 4pm. Admission is by donation.

Wine Touring

Although many of Washington's largest wineries and vineyards lie to the west of the Tri-Cities area, Walla Walla is home to many of the state's best wineries and most celebrated vineyards. The climate and soils are perfect for growing grapes, and the emphasis here is on syrah and cabernet sauvignon grapes. Because Walla Walla is such an attractive town and has so many good restaurants, it is a far more appealing wine-touring region than the Yakima Valley. In addition to the wineries listed below, there are many others that are only open by appointment or a couple of weekends a year. For more information on wine touring in Walla Walla, contact the **Walla Walla Valley Wine Alliance**, 13½ E. Main St., Ste. 214, Walla Walla, WA 99362 (☎ 509/526-3117; www.wallawallawine.com).

IN DOWNTOWN WALLA WALLA

Wineries and tasting rooms continue to proliferate in downtown Walla Walla. I've listed my favorites below, but some others I like that are open on a regular basis include **Ash Hollow**, 14 N. Second Ave. (☎ 509/529-7565; www.ashhollow.com);

Bergevin Lane Vineyards, 1215 W. Poplar St. (☎ 509/526-4300; www.bergevinlane.com); **Forgeron Cellars**, 33 W. Birch St. (☎ 509/522-9463; www.forgeroncellars.com); **Sleight of Hand Cellars**, 16 N. Second Ave. (☎ 509/525-3661; www.sofhcellars.com); and **Spring Valley Vineyard**, 18 N. Second Ave. (☎ 509/525-1506; www.springvalleyvineyard.com).

Canoe Ridge Vineyard ★ Taking its name from a nearby vineyard region, this winery, part of a huge wine company, feels like a local winery and is housed in an old streetcar engine house a bit removed from downtown Walla Walla. Wines here are usually reliably drinkable, and there are occasionally good deals.

1102 W. Cherry St. ☎ 509/527-0885. www.canoeridgevineyard.com. May–Sept daily 11am–5pm; Oct–Apr daily 11am–4pm. From U.S. 12, go south on W. Pine St. and then right on 13th Ave.

Chateau Rollat Winery ★ Using the skills of famed winemaker Christian Le Sommer (who has worked for Chateau Latour, Chateau d'Yquem, and Domaines Barons de Rothschild), this little winery is crafting world-class bordeaux blends using grapes from Pepperbridge and Seven Hills vineyards, two of the most celebrated Washington vineyards.

43 E. Main St. ☎ 509/301-8596. www.rollat.com. Fri–Sun 10am–5pm. Drive south on Wash. 125, turn left on Old Milton Hwy., right on Braden Rd., and then left on Merlot Dr.

Morrison Lane ★ If I told you a 2002 syrah I once sampled here tasted of cherry cough syrup, you might think that was a bad thing. However, as a kid, I loved cherry cough syrup, and I love these syrahs even more. They're big fruit-driven wines with, unfortunately, big prices. This winery also produces nebbiolo, roussanne, cinsault, dolcetto, and other rarely seen varieties.

201 W. Main St. ☎ 509/526-0229. www.morrisonlane.com. Fri–Sun noon–6pm (also holiday Mon). Jan–Feb by appointment.

Seven Hills Winery ★ Housed in the same renovated woodworking-mill building as the Whitehouse-Crawford Restaurant, this winery produces some excellent red wines, including merlot and syrah. Most are in the \$22 to \$32 range.

212 N. Third Ave. ☎ 877/777-7870 or 509/529-7198. www.sevenhillswinery.com. Thurs–Mon 10am–5pm.

Whitman Cellars ★ Winemaker Steve Lessard formerly worked at Hedges Cellars, long one of my favorite large state wineries. Here, Lessard is producing consistent, aromatic wines with soft tannins. All are very drinkable, and most red wines are in the \$24 to \$36 price range.

1015 W. Pine St. ☎ 509/529-1142. www.whitmancellars.com. Daily 11am–5pm.

WEST OF WALLA WALLA

L'Ecole No. 41 ★ Housed in a former elementary school and using children's art on its labels, this is one of the oldest wineries in the region. It started with semillon and merlot, and the semillon is still one of the best wines, though the chardonnays and cabernet-merlot blends are good, also. The semillon tends to be in the \$15 to \$20 range, while reds are often in the \$30 to \$40 range.

41 Lowden School Rd., Lowden. ☎ 509/525-0940. www.lecole.com. Daily 10am–5pm. On U.S. 12, 12 miles west of Walla Walla.

Reininger This west-side winery focuses almost exclusively on red wines made from Walla Walla and Columbia Valley grapes. Wine from the latter fruit is priced

lower (\$16–\$25) and is usually meant to be drunk immediately rather than cellared. The red wines from Walla Walla fruit are usually priced between \$38 and \$50.

5858 W. Hwy. 12. ☎ 509/522-1994. www.reiningerwinery.com. Daily 10am–6pm. Located 6 miles west of Walla Walla on U.S. 12.

Waterbrook Winery ★ Waterbrook is the largest winery in Walla Walla, and its parent company operates the third-largest winery operation in Washington (it's that big building across the pond from the tasting room). This is also one of the oldest and most reliable wineries in the area. At the winery's beautiful, modern tasting room, you can sample a wide variety of very reasonably priced wines. You might find an excellent \$12 chardonnay or a decent cabernet sauvignon or merlot for under \$25.

10518 W. U.S. 12. ☎ 509/522-1262. www.waterbrook.com. Sun–Thurs 10am–6pm; Fri–Sat 10am–8pm. On U.S. 12, 6 miles west of Walla Walla.

Woodward Canyon Winery ★★★ This winery is well known in the Northwest for its full-bodied reds and its chardonnays and is one of Washington's best wineries. While most of the wines come in at \$30 to \$50, the Nelms Road reds are usually priced around \$20, a particularly good value. The tasting room is in a renovated old farmhouse adjacent to the winery.

11920 W. U.S. 12, Lowden. ☎ 509/525-4129. www.woodwardcanyon.com. Daily 10am–5pm. On U.S. 12, 13 miles west of Walla Walla.

EAST OF WALLA WALLA & THE AIRPORT

The Walla Walla Airport was home to close to 20 wineries the last time I visited, and many of these were small start-up wineries. Some of the airport wineries are in World War II–era buildings, while others are in purpose-built winery “incubators.” I've listed my favorites below, but several others are also worth searching. These include **Buty**, 535 E. Cessna Ave. (☎ 509/527-0901; www.butywinery.com; open Mon–Sat 11am–4pm); **Russell Creek Winery**, 301 Aeronca Ave. (☎ 509/301-0061; www.russellcreek-winery.com; open Sun–Thurs 11am–4pm, Fri–Sat 11am–5pm); and **Syzygy**, 405 E. Boeing Ave. (☎ 509/522-0484; www.syzygywines.com; open Sat 11am–4pm).

Dunham Cellars Adjacent to the Walla Walla airport, this winery produces an exceptional red blend called Trutina. The composition of this wine varies from year to year, but it is almost always outstanding. Wines here are mostly big, long-keeping reds. Expect to pay \$25 to \$45 for most wines, although there are some wines for under \$20.

150 E. Boeing Ave. ☎ 509/529-4685. www.dunhamcellars.com. Daily 11am–4pm. Take the airport exit off U.S. 12 east of downtown.



Class-y Wines

You'll be hard-pressed to find better values on Walla Walla wines than you'll find at **College Cellars**, 500 Tausick Way (☎ 509/524-5170; www.collegecellars.com). That's because the wines sold here are made by students

enrolled in the degree program at the Center for Enology & Viticulture on the campus of Walla Walla Community College. The tasting room, which is straight south of the airport, is open on Friday from 1 to 5pm.



Walla Walla Has Gone to the Birds

In shady Pioneer Park, a historic park complete with a Victorian bandstand, birds of a feather are flocking together at the Pioneer Park Aviary. The two largest aviaries have ponds and are home to a variety of ducks. Smaller

aviaries house colorful pheasants from around the world. The aviary is free and is open from dawn to dusk. To find it drive east from downtown on Alder Street and turn right on Division Street. It's about a mile from downtown.

Five Star Cellars ★★ Can you say YUM? That's all I can think when I taste the wines produced by this rising-star winery in the airport area. Its stellar wines include super-silky reds that caress your tongue and fill your mouth with big dark fruit flavors. These out-of-this-world wines are priced between \$30 and \$50.

840 C St. ☎ **509/527-8400**. www.fivestarcellars.com. Sat 10am–4pm. Take the airport exit off U.S. 12 east of downtown.

K Vintners ★★ What does a \$70 syrah taste like? Stop by this syrah-centric winery and you just might get to find out for yourself. On any given visit, you might get to taste three or four syrahs in the \$35 to \$40 range. However, I doubt they'll be pouring any of their \$100 syrahs. K syrah, syrah. As you might have already guessed, complex, well-balanced syrahs are the specialty here.

820 Mill Creek Rd. ☎ **509/526-5230**. www.kvintners.com. May–Sept Thurs–Fri noon–5pm, Sat 10am–5pm, Sun 10am–2pm; other months by appointment.

Patit Creek Cellars Whether you're looking for a sweet Riesling, a bordeaux blend with a good tannin backbone, or an easy-drinking red for under \$20, you'll find it here. Jammy cabernet sauvignon and tempranillo are highlights.

325 A St. ☎ **509/522-4684**. www.patitcreekcellars.com. Tues–Sat 11am–5pm; Sun 11am–4pm.

Revelry Vintners ♦ If you're used to Trader Joe's wine prices, you may be suffering from sticker shock as you tour Walla Walla wineries, where red wines are often in the \$30-to-\$40 range. If you're looking for good values, then you'll revel in the discovery of Revelry, where you can pick up young merlots and cabernet sauvignons for \$15 a bottle.

720 C St. ☎ **509/414-6440**. www.revelrywines.com. Fri 11am–5pm; Sat 10am–5pm; Sun 10am–3pm. Take the airport exit off U.S. 12 east of downtown.

Tamarack Cellars ★★ The first time I visited this airport-area winery, gregarious winemaker Ron Coleman was playing loud classical music in his barrel room. He swore it helped to make great wine. The proof is in the glass. Red wines that fill your mouth with fresh fruit flavors are symphonies for the palate.

700 C St. ☎ **509/526-3533**. www.tamarackcellars.com. Mar–Dec Thurs–Fri noon–4pm, Sat–Sun 10am–4pm; Jan–Feb Sat 10am–4pm. Take the airport exit off U.S. 12 east of downtown.

Walla Walla Vintners ★★ This small winery out on the western edge of Walla Walla makes luscious, seductive red wines that caress the tongue as they whisper of dark, ripe cherries, chocolate, and caramel. Don't believe me? Stop by and find out for yourself, but be prepared to be seduced. Most wines are in the \$28 to \$40 range.

225 Vineyard Lane. ☎ **509/525-4724**. www.wallawallavintners.com. Mar–Nov Fri 1–5pm, Sat 10:30am–4:30pm; Jan–Feb Sat 11am–4pm. Closed Dec. Located east of town off Mill Creek Rd. (take Rooks Park or Interchange Road exit of U.S. 12 and go south to Mill Creek Rd.).

SOUTH OF WALLA WALLA

Amavi Cellars ★★★ This is a sister winery to the celebrated Pepper Bridge Winery, and although Amavi doesn't produce very many varietals, it makes complex and delicious wines that are mostly in the \$20 to \$30 range. The tasting room is in an architecturally intriguing building surrounded by vineyards.

3796 Peppers Bridge Rd. ☎ **509/525-3541**. www.amavicellars.com. Daily 11am–5pm (call for hours in winter). Drive south on Wash. 125, turn left on Old Milton Hwy., turn right on Peppers Bridge Rd.

Basel Cellars ★ No visit to Walla Walla is complete without a stop at this huge log lodge on a hilltop south of town. Looking as if it should be in a national park, this is the most impressive winery building in eastern Washington. The wines are good, and there are a surprising number of reasonably priced wines to be found here, including both red and white wines for around \$20.

2901 Old Milton Hwy. ☎ **888/259-9463** or 509/522-0200. www.baselcellars.com. Daily 10am–4pm. Drive south on Wash. 125 and then turn right on Old Milton Hwy.

Dusted Valley Vintners ★ Housed in a garage underneath the owner's home, this tiny winery is the absolute antithesis of nearby Basel Cellars, but it produces some excellent wines, despite its low-key character. The chardonnay and viognier can be standouts here, as can the many syrahs.

1248 Old Milton Hwy. ☎ **509/525-1337**. www.dustedvalley.com. May–Nov Thurs–Sun noon–5pm; mid-Feb to Apr Sat–Sun noon–5pm. Closed Dec to mid-Feb. Drive south on Wash. 125, and then turn left on Old Milton Hwy.

Northstar Winery ★★★ Supple, seductive merlots are the focus of this winery adjacent to acclaimed Pepper Bridge Winery, but Northstar doesn't stop at merlot. It also makes petite verdot, cabernet franc, and cabernet sauvignon, and all of these wines can be astonishingly delicious. Think the wine equivalent of silk sheets. Want to sit and sip all afternoon? Order a snack platter and some wine and kick back on the patio.

1736 JB George Rd. ☎ **866/486-7828** or 509/529-6100. www.northstarwinery.com. Mon–Sat 10am–4pm; Sun 11am–4pm.

Pepper Bridge Winery ★★ Crafting ultra-premium wines from estate-grown grapes, Pepper Bridge is one of the state's premier producers of bordeaux-style wines, with the emphasis on cabernet sauvignon. A state-of-the-art gravity-flow winery ensures as little handling of the grapes as possible, which produces smoother, more cellar-worthy wines. Expect to pay \$50 or more per bottle here.

1704 JB George Rd. ☎ **509/525-6502**. www.pepperbridge.com. Daily 10am–4pm. Drive south on Wash. 125, turn left on Old Milton Hwy., turn right on Peppers Bridge Rd., and then left on JB George Rd.

Waters Winery ★★ On a visit to Walla Walla a few years ago, this little winery was my most impressive discovery. Producing no fewer than four syrahs each year, Waters is an excellent place to develop a greater appreciation for the Rhone Valley grape that has put Walla Walla on the world wine map.

1825 JB George Rd. ☎ **509/525-1590**. www.waterswinery.com. Thurs–Sat and Mon 11am–5pm; Sun 11am–4pm. Drive south on Wash. 125, turn left on Old Milton Hwy., turn right on Peppers Bridge Rd., then left on JB George Rd.

Zerba Cellars ★ Although this winery is in the Walla Walla AVA (American Viticultural Area), it is actually just across the state line in Oregon. Zerba Cellars does a wide range of wines, most of which exhibit good structure and are not too fruit forward. In other words, well balanced. They have in the past made outstanding malbec and good semillon.

85530 Ore. 11, Milton-Freewater. ☎ **541/938-9463**. www.zerbacellars.com. Daily 10am–5pm. Drive south on Wash. 125, which becomes Ore. 11.

Where to Stay

Cameo Heights Mansion ★★ If your dream wine-country vacation includes staying at a luxurious mansion surrounded by vineyards and orchards, then this modern inn, set on a hillside overlooking the Walla Walla River valley, is the place for you. The setting is just spectacular, and guests are free to roam the acres of orchards and vineyards. Guest rooms, most of which are named for different wine-making countries, are mostly large and luxuriously appointed, with jetted tubs, rain-head showers, and gas fireplaces. While Cameo Heights is 25 miles from both Walla Walla and the Tri-Cities, the on-site restaurant means you won't have to drive 30 minutes for dinner.

1074 Oasis Rd., Touchet, WA 99360. ☎ **509/394-0211**. www.cameoheights.com. 7 units \$199–\$249 double. Rates include full breakfast. DISC, MC, V. Adults only. **Amenities:** Restaurant; concierge; exercise room; Jacuzzi; seasonal outdoor pool; room service. *In room:* A/C, TV/DVD, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

Inn at Abeja ★★ 🏡 Set on a classically picturesque farm a few miles outside of town, this inn is surrounded by green lawns and big shade trees. The main house's wide veranda, hammocks under the trees, and colorful perennial gardens all add up to the quintessential farm getaway that you imagine when thinking of running away to your own green acres. Rather than being in the main house, guest rooms are in a collection of converted outbuildings, including an old summer kitchen, a bunk-house, and even the old chicken coop (which now has vaulted ceilings and its own kitchen). An on-site winery makes this place ideal as a base for a wine tour of the area.

2014 Mill Creek Rd., Walla Walla, WA 99362. ☎ **509/522-1234**. Fax 509/529-3292. www.abeja.net. 8 units. \$215–\$295 double; \$390 2-bedroom suite. Rates include full breakfast. MC, V. Pets accepted (\$15 fee). *In room:* A/C, TV, CD player, fridge, hair dryer, kitchen (some rooms), free Wi-Fi.

Inn at Blackberry Creek ★ This restored 1906 Victorian farmhouse is in one of Walla Walla's prettiest old neighborhoods and yet is set on 2 acres of shady grounds that give it a secluded country feel. There's even a creek in the backyard (thus the inn's name), and the yard is a delightful place to relax on a warm summer day. Guest rooms are simply furnished in country style with antique furnishings. The shady Pioneer Park, with its aviaries full of pheasants and ducks, is just 2 blocks away.

1126 Pleasant St., Walla Walla, WA 99362. ☎ **877/522-5233** or 509/522-5233. www.innatblackberrycreek.com. 3 units. \$120–\$214 double. Rates include full breakfast. AE, DISC, MC, V. Children 12 and over welcome. **Amenities:** Bikes; concierge. *In room:* A/C, TV/DVD/VCR, fridge, free Wi-Fi.

Marcus Whitman Hotel ★★ Opened in 1928, this historic high-rise hotel in downtown Walla Walla is the finest in this corner of the state, and is an excellent base for a local wine tour. Not only is there an excellent restaurant and wine bar on

the premises, but several others are a few blocks away. Guest rooms are designed with a classic elegance to match the lobby, which is filled with dark-wood paneling, ornate plasterwork, and lots of original details. The hotel has rooms in both the historic tower and a more modern low-rise wing. Other than the suites, the best rooms are the executive tower kings, which are spacious and well designed.

6 W. Rose St., Walla Walla, WA 99362. ☎ **866/826-9422** or 509/525-2200. Fax 509/524-1747. www.marcuswhitmanhotel.com. 127 units. \$119–\$184 double; \$239–\$294 suite. Rates include full breakfast. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Pets accepted (\$25/day). **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge; free airport transfers; exercise room. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

Stone Creek Manor ★★ Built in 1926 in the Federal colonial style and set on three acres of gardens that were designed by the Olmstead brothers, this brick mansion is one of the most impressive homes in Walla Walla. Guest accommodations are in two spacious cottages rather than in the manor house itself, but these cottages are spacious and just as luxuriously furnished as they would be if they were in the main house. Both can sleep two couples and have full kitchens (in case you couldn't resist the offerings at the farmers market). On Friday evenings, there's a hosted wine hour in the manor house, and on Sundays, guests are served brunch in the manor's formal dining room or, in summer, on the patio.

756 Bryant Ave., Walla Walla, WA 99362. ☎ **509/593-4770** or 206/948-6632. www.stonecreekmanor.com. 2 units. \$175–\$305 double. Rates include continental breakfast. AE, DISC, MC, V. Children 16 and over welcome. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, kitchen, free Wi-Fi.

Where to Dine

For breakfast, lunch, espresso, or a pastry, visit **Olive Marketplace & I**, 21 E. Main St. (☎ **509/526-0200**; www.merchantsdeli.com), which is Walla Walla's favorite downtown hangout, the sort of place you find yourself going back to throughout the day. For sausages made with Walla Walla sweet onions, drop by **Onion World**, 2 S. First Ave. (☎ **509/522-2541**; www.onionworld.com), which is just a walk-up window. When it's coffee time, try **Coffee Perk**, 4 S. First Ave. (☎ **509/526-0636**), a favorite downtown espresso place. At **Colville St. Patisserie**, 40 S. Colville St. (☎ **509/301-7289**), a block off Main Street, you'll find the best pastries in this corner of the state. For perfect picnic fare for a wine-tasting foray, be sure to stop first at **Salumiere Cesario**, 20 N. Second Ave. (☎ **509/529-5620**; www.salumierecesario.com). If it's pub food and microbrews you're after, then head to **Mill Creek Brew Pub**, 11 S. Palouse St. (☎ **509/522-2440**; www.millcreek-brewpub.com). If at the end of a day of wine tasting you want to hang out in a wine bar, head to **Vintage Cellars**, 10 N. Second Ave. (☎ **509/529-9340**).

Brasserie 4 ★★ 😊 FRENCH Casual and family-friendly French food? Mais oui! This downtown restaurant not only serves excellent food but also has a children's play area. Best of all, the prices are quite reasonable. This is simple country French cooking with a good selection of soups and salads (I like the *trois*, which is made with beets, fennel, and carrots). You can also get such standards as escargots, croque-monsieur, quiche, and *pommes frites* (served with mayonnaise, of course). There are also more substantial dishes, including a good boeuf bourguignon, moules frites, and bouillabaisse. There are also some interesting pizzas on the menu, and any of the dishes can be prepared in children's portions.

4 E. Main St. ☎ **509/529-2011**. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$12-\$24. AE, MC, V. Tues 5-10pm; Wed-Sat noon-10pm; Sun 11am-3pm.

CreekTown Café ★★ NORTHWEST This popular little restaurant is 10 blocks south of downtown in a building with modern wine-country character. Start your meal with the spinach salad, spicy calamari, or the five-spice-seared ahi tuna. You'll also find plenty of intriguing appetizers made with locally produced Monteillet goat cheese; give these a try. The menu changes regularly, but look for crab cannelloni, duck breast (perhaps with saffron risotto and a port reduction), and vegetable lasagna. In summer, dine on the patio. Local wines are available by the glass.

1129 S. Second St. ☎ **509/522-4777**. www.creektowncafe.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$10-\$16 lunch, \$19-\$29 dinner. AE, DISC, MC, V. Tues-Fri 11am-9pm; Sat-Sun 9am-9pm.

Saffron Mediterranean Kitchen ★★★ MEDITERRANEAN Ahhh! If you're a foodie, you'll heave a great sigh of contentment after a dinner at this little gem of a restaurant. The menu changes regularly, but expect the unexpected. You might find a fragrant grilled octopus with charred Meyer lemon, chickpeas, mint, and *chermoula* (a Moroccan marinade), or a hangar steak with an adobo marinade, fire-roasted potatoes, and almond-and-caperberry salsa. The last time I visited, Turkish flatbreads (sort of exotic pizzas) were being highlighted. With lots of small plates on the menu, this is a great place to sample a lot of different flavors. This is my favorite restaurant in Walla Walla; don't miss it. And, yes, the menu does have dishes made with saffron.

125 W. Alder St. ☎ **509/525-2112**. www.saffronmediterraneankitchen.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$21-\$26. DISC, MC, V. May-Oct Tues-Thurs and Sun 2-10pm, Fri-Sat 2-11pm; Nov-Apr Tues-Sun 2-9pm.

T. Maccarone's ★ ITALIAN If all the red wine you've been sampling at area wineries has put you in the mood for some Italian food, T. Maccarone's is the place. This sophisticated little downtown restaurant is a favorite of local winemakers, and not just because they have a lot of local wines on their wine list. Ingredients are local, sustainable, and organic as much as possible, and that commitment to quality shows in the food served here. Of course, you must try the T Mac and cheese, which is made with imported Italian cheeses and white truffle oil, but you could also opt for such less familiar dishes as sweet potato-salt cod fritters or grilled octopus with white beans and arugula. There are lots of good salads on the menu, and, depending on the time of year, you might find a green-tomato gazpacho. Pastas are definitely not your mama's spaghetti and meatballs. Want a steak to go with that big red? Try the Kobe rib-eye with caramelized Walla Walla sweet onions.

4 N. Colville St. ☎ **509/522-4776**. www.tmaccarones.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$14-\$28. AE, DISC, MC, V. Mon-Thurs 4-9pm; Fri-Sat 4-10pm; Sun 9am-2pm and 4-9pm.

Whitehouse-Crawford Restaurant ★★★ NORTHWEST Housed in a former woodworking mill, this stylish restaurant brings a touch of urban sophistication to remote Walla Walla. The menu is as creative as you'll find anywhere east or west of the Cascades and much of it changes regularly. However, you can almost always start out with the warm spinach salad, which comes with smoked trout and grilled onions. Anything with Walla Walla sweet onions is a good bet. Even the burger here is a local legend; some say it's the best in town. There are plenty of excellent wines available, and many can be ordered by the glass. You also can dine in the wine bar.

THE PALOUSE: A SLICE OF RURAL WASHINGTON

Dayton: 33 miles NE of Walla Walla, 62 miles E of Tri-Cities, 129 miles SW of Spokane

Between Walla Walla and Spokane lie the rolling Palouse Hills, which are among the most productive wheatlands in the nation. Today, these bucolic hills offer a glimpse back in time to the days when the American West was an agrarian society and family farms were a way of life. Even before the settlement of the region by whites, Native Americans had discovered that the Palouse, as it's known, offered ideal horse-grazing land. Horses had reached the Northwest sometime after the Spanish conquered the southern regions of North America, and by the time Lewis and Clark passed through the Palouse, the tribes of the region had become well known for their horses, which they bred for stamina and sure-footedness. On the site of present-day Dayton, there was even a Native American horse-racing track. Today these native-bred horses are known as Appaloosas for the Palouse Hills from which they came.

Although the Lewis and Clark expedition passed through in 1806, it was not until the 1850s that the first pioneers began settling in the area. By the 1880s, the region was booming as a major wheat- and barley-growing region. Throughout the Palouse, small towns that have long been forgotten and left far out of the mainstream are nestled along creek banks below rolling hills. Several of these towns are classic examples of small-town America, with attractive Victorian homes lining their shady streets. Between the towns, the roads wind uphill and down, through a distinctive zebra-striped landscape created by farming practices developed to reduce erosion on the steep hills.

Essentials

GETTING THERE U.S. 12 runs from Walla Walla to Clarkston, the main route through the southern part of the Palouse. From Lewiston, Idaho, across the Snake River from Clarkston, U.S. 195 runs north through the Palouse to Spokane.

VISITOR INFORMATION Contact the **Dayton Chamber of Commerce**, 166 E. Main St., Dayton, WA 99382 (C 800/882-6299 or 509/382-4825; www.historicdayton.com). Contact the **Pullman Chamber of Commerce**, 415 N. Grand Ave., Pullman, WA 99163 (C 800/365-6948 or 509/334-3565; www.pullmanchamber.com). Check out www.palousescenicbyway.com.

Exploring the Palouse

Among the many little towns along the route from Walla Walla to Spokane, **Dayton** is the prettiest. Its old-fashioned, small-town American feel is as genuine as it gets. Dayton was one of the most important towns in this region and is still the county seat of Columbia County. Its 1887 **Columbia County Courthouse** is the oldest county courthouse still in use in the state. It's open Monday to Friday from 8:30am to 4:30pm. The **Dayton Historic Depot**, 222 E. Commercial St. (C 509/382-2026; www.daytonhistoricdepot.org), is the oldest railway depot in the state (built 1881). From May through October, the depot is open for tours Wednesday

to Saturday from 10am to noon and from 1 to 5pm; November to April, it's open Wednesday to Saturday from 11am to 4pm. Admission is \$5, which includes a guided tour. In all, Dayton has nearly 120 buildings on the National Historic Register. On the second Sunday in October, there is a historic homes tour. In nearby Waitsburg, where there are more Victorian homes, you can also tour the 1883 **Bruce Memorial Museum**, 318 Main St. (☎ 509/337-6157), open June through September, Friday and Saturday from 1 to 4pm. It is filled with Victorian-era furnishings.

About 44 miles northwest of Dayton, you'll find **Palouse Falls State Park** (☎ 509/646-9218; www.parks.wa.gov). The spectacular falls here cascade 198 feet into a rock-walled canyon. To reach the falls, drive north on U.S. 12 and then west on Wash. 261. South of town 21 miles, you'll find **Ski Bluewood** (☎ 509/382-4725; www.bluewood.com), a small ski area in the Blue Mountains.

Some 13 miles north of Colfax, **Kamiak Butte County Park** provides the ideal vantage point for surveying the vast Palouse. To reach this park, take Wash. 272 east 5 miles to a right turn onto Clear Creek Road. Continue another 7 miles and turn right on Fugate Road. Nearby, **Steptoe Butte State Park** (☎ 360/902-8844; www.parks.wa.gov) also has good views of the surrounding landscape. To reach this park, drive 6 miles north from Colfax on U.S. 195 and turn east on Scholz Road.

A trip to the Palouse can also include an exploration of **Hell's Canyon**, which was carved by the Snake River and is the deepest gorge in North America. **Beamer's Hells Canyon Tours**, 1451 Bridge St., Clarkston (☎ 800/522-6966 or 509/758-4800; www.hellscanyontours.com), offers a variety of day and overnight jet-boat trips up the Snake River. Prices range from \$86 for a half-day tour to \$159 for a full-day tour. There are also brunch cruises and wine-tasting cruises.

Where to Stay

The Weinhard Hotel ★ Constructed in 1889 to house a saloon, this brick building is now a comfortable and reasonably priced Victorian inn. Guest rooms have high ceilings with overhead fans and at least one piece of antique furniture. The best room in the house has a whirlpool tub in the bathroom. At street level, there's an Internet cafe, and up on the roof, there's a terrace garden where you can sit and have a glass of wine.

235 E. Main St., Dayton, WA 99328. ☎ 509/382-4032. Fax 509/382-2640. www.weinhard.com. 15 units. \$125-\$180 double. Rates include continental breakfast. MC, V. Pets accepted (\$20 fee). **Amenities:** Restaurant; concierge. *In room:* A/C, TV, free Wi-Fi.

Where to Dine

IN WAITSBURG

For pub grub and microbrews, check out **Laht Neppur Brewing Co.**, 444 Preston Ave. (☎ 509/337-6261; www.lahtneppur.com). The pulled-pork sandwich here is one of the best I've had.

Whoopemup Hollow Café ★ 🎁 SOUTHERN Named for a valley just outside of town and sporting wooden booths and classic Art Deco styling, this little gem of a restaurant is the biggest thing to hit Waitsburg since they built the flour mill. Serving Cajun and Southern food, the Whoopemup may seem out of place in this quiet wheat-farming community, but people from Walla Walla make the 20-mile drive on a regular basis for the tasty food and reasonable prices. The jambalaya is the best I've

ever had; don't pass it up. Desserts here are a highlight, so be sure to save room (if you can) for the red-velvet cake or cola chocolate cake.

120 Main St., Waitsburg. ☎ **509/337-9000**. www.whoopemuphollowcafe.com. Reservations highly recommended. Main courses \$10–\$29. AE, DISC, MC, V. Wed–Mon 3–9pm.

IN DAYTON

Patit Creek Restaurant ★★ FRENCH This restaurant, in a little cottage beside the road on the north side of Dayton, is worth the trip to this small Palouse town. Don't let the proximity to the highway worry you; stained-glass windows hide the passing traffic from diners and allow guests to focus on their food. Though lunches include everything from a smoked turkey sandwich to top-sirloin steak bordelaise (and all at reasonable prices), dinners are on a very different level. You might start a meal with chèvre cheese–stuffed dates or a delicious smoked salmon cheesecake. The standouts on the entree menu include chicken Riesling, medallions of beef, and a superb filet mignon *poivre vert* with green peppercorns, cognac, and cream. Desserts are a highlight here, so be sure to save room. The wine list focuses on the wines of the Walla Walla area.

725 E. Dayton Ave. ☎ **509/382-2625**. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$7–\$17 lunch, \$19–\$35 dinner. MC, V. Wed–Fri 11:30am–1pm and 4:30–8pm; Sat 4:30–8pm.

IN PULLMAN

Paradise Creek Brewery AMERICAN Housed in a restored 1931 neoclassical post office in downtown Pullman, this brewpub has an ambitious menu that makes this one of the best restaurants in town. Among the sandwiches and burgers, you'll find a buffalo burger and a chickpea patty sandwich made with local chickpeas (the Palouse grows not only wheat but also dry peas, lentils, and chickpeas). There is, of course, an assortment of pizzas to go with your beer, but you can also get smoked trip tip, chicken saltimbocca, or a top sirloin steak.

245 SE Paradise St. ☎ **509/338-9463**. Main courses \$8–\$19. DISC, MC, V. Tues–Thurs 5–8:30pm; Fri–Sat 5–9:30pm.

SPOKANE

284 miles E of Seattle, 195 miles NE of Yakima, 155 miles N of Walla Walla

Spokane is the second-largest city in Washington, the largest city between Seattle and Minneapolis, and a center for both commercial and cultural pursuits. While Spokane is a very pleasant city with a beautiful park, excellent museum, a downtown historic district, great hotels, and excellent restaurants, it isn't really a tourist destination. However, its proximity to Lake Coeur d'Alene and several Idaho ski areas makes it a jumping-off point for explorations of the northern Idaho Rocky Mountains.

For thousands of years, Native Americans lived along the Spokane River, and it was at Spokane Falls that the Spokan-ee tribe congregated each year to catch salmon. When the first explorers and fur traders arrived in 1807, it was near these falls that they established a trading post where they could barter with the Native Americans for beaver pelts. Spokan House (the original spelling had no letter e), established in 1810 downriver from Spokane Falls, became the first settlement in the area, but not until 1872 was a settlement established at the falls themselves. When the Northern Pacific Railroad arrived in 1881, the town of Spokan Falls

became the most important town in the region. However, in the summer of 1889, the city's downtown commercial district was destroyed by fire. Within 2 years, the city had fully recovered from the fire and also changed the spelling of its name.

Today, the Spokane River is still this city's greatest asset. Along the river you'll find numerous parks and a paved hiking/biking trail. The falls themselves are an impressive sight, despite being hemmed in by industrial buildings, and only a few miles from downtown, the Spokane River still looks wild and untamed.

Essentials

GETTING THERE Spokane is on I-90, Washington's east-west interstate. U.S. 2 is an alternative route from western Washington. U.S. 395 is the main route from Canada south to Spokane. U.S. 195 connects to Lewiston, Idaho.

Spokane International Airport, 9000 W. Airport Dr. (☎ 509/455-6455; www.spokaneairports.net), is located 10 miles west of downtown and is served by Alaska Airlines, Frontier Airlines, Horizon Air, Skywest/Delta Airlines, Southwest Airlines, United/United Express, and US Airways.

Amtrak (☎ 800/872-7245; www.amtrak.com) trains provide passenger service to Spokane. The station is at 221 W. First Ave.

VISITOR INFORMATION Contact the **Spokane Regional Convention & Visitors Bureau Visitor Information Center**, 201 W. Main Ave., Spokane, WA 99201 (☎ 888/776-5263 or 509/747-3230; www.visitspokane.com).

GETTING AROUND **Rental cars** are available from Alamo, Avis, Budget, Dollar, Enterprise, Hertz, National, and Thrifty. If you need a taxi, contact **Spokane Cab** (☎ 509/568-8000). Public bus service is provided by the **Spokane Transit** (☎ 509/328-7433; www.spokanetransit.com); the fare is \$1.50.

FESTIVALS Spokane's nickname is the Lilac City, and the city's biggest annual event is the **Spokane Lilac Festival** (☎ 509/535-4554; www.lilacfestival.org), which is held each year in mid-May. On the first Sunday in May, the city holds its annual **Lilac Bloomsday Run** (☎ 509/838-1579; www.bloomsdayrun.com), one of the largest timed foot races in the world (more than 50,000 runners participate).

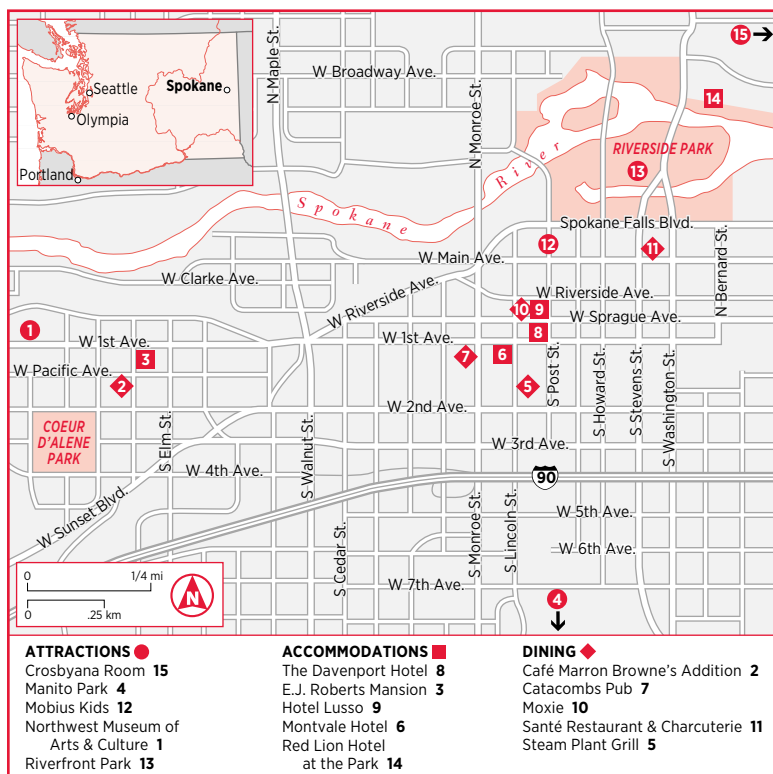
What to See & Do

Spokane has made it easy for visitors to get a sense of what the city is all about by mapping out a Spokane City Drive that takes in all the highlights. The well-marked route meanders through Spokane and passes by the city attractions listed below. The drive also takes in some great vistas from the hills to the south.

RIVERFRONT PARK

Created for the 1974 World's Fair Expo and set on an island in the middle of the Spokane River, 100-acre **Riverfront Park** ★ (☎ 509/625-6601 or 456-4386; www.spokaneriverfrontpark.com) is the city's pride and joy. The land on which the park stands was once a maze of railroad tracks and depots, and the polluted river was nearly inaccessible to the public. The park's creation helped rejuvenate downtown Spokane, and today crowds flock here to enjoy everything from summertime concerts to ice-skating in the winter. Activities for both adults and children abound. At the Howard Street entrance to the park, you'll find the **Rotary Fountain**, a stainless-steel sculpture that's also a choreographed fountain in which people can play on

Spokane



hot days. The restored 1909 **Looft Carrousel** ★★, with its hand-carved horses, is one of the most beautiful in the country and a big hit with kids. More contemporary entertainment is offered at the **IMAX Theatre** (☎ 509/625-6601). A family-fun center includes kiddie rides and miniature golf. Throughout the summer there are many special events.

Serving as a spectacular backdrop for the park is the Spokane River, which here cascades over Spokane Falls, and is most impressive during the spring snowmelt season. The best view of the falls is from the lilac-colored gondolas of the **Spokane Falls SkyRide** (☎ 509/625-6601). Gondolas swing out over the falls before crossing to the far side of the river. Between March and October, the SkyRide operates Sunday to Thursday from 11am to 6pm and Friday and Saturday from 11am to 9pm; November through February, it is open on weekends and holidays only. Rides cost \$7.25 for adults, \$6.25 for teens and seniors, and \$4 for children ages 12 and under.

MANITO PARK

Manito Park ★★, 1702 S. Grand Blvd. (☎ 509/363-5422; www.spokane-parks.org or www.manitopark.org), Spokane's other major green space, is more traditional

than Riverfront Park and is south of downtown, beginning at the corner of South Grand Boulevard and 18th Avenue. Here, among rocks and pine forest, you'll find several of the most beautiful public gardens in the Northwest. Foremost of these is the classically proportioned **Duncan Garden**, a formal garden patterned after those of 17th-century Europe. In summer, these sunken gardens are a riot of colorful flower beds. Adjacent to this garden is the **Gaiser Conservatory**, which brims with exotic tropical plants. The perennial garden and rose garden are at their exuberant peaks in June and should not be missed. The lilac garden is also well worth a visit during the May flowering season. There is also the **Nishinomiya Tsutakawa Japanese Garden**, a strolling pond garden. To reach the gardens from downtown, drive south on South Stevens Avenue, which winds around a bit and eventually leads you onto South Grand Boulevard.

More Attractions

Crosbyana Room ★ Bing Crosby got his start here in Spokane, where he spent most of his youth. When young Bing's aspirations soared beyond the bounds of Spokane and he made his name in Los Angeles, the members of his band who chose to stay safely at home must have long regretted their decision. All of Crosby's gold records, his Oscar, and plenty of other memorabilia (including a Bing-endorsed mousetrap and a Bing Crosby Ice Cream box) are on view. You can also take a look at Crosby's boyhood home, which is now home to the Crosby Alumni House, 508 E. Sharp St.

Crosby Student Center, Gonzaga University, 502 E. Boone Ave. ☎ **509/313-3847**. www.gonzaga.edu. Free admission. Sept-May Mon-Fri 7:30am-midnight, Sat-Sun 11am-midnight; June-Aug Mon-Fri 9am-4pm. Closed holidays.

Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture ★★ From the dramatic architecture and landscaping to the eclectic collections and exhibits, this museum makes a big impression. One of the most fascinating exhibits focuses on the region's Plateau Indians. Other galleries mount temporary art exhibits. Next door to the museum is the historic Campbell House (a tour of this old mansion is included in the admission price). With a well-balanced blend of history, art, and culture, this is one of the finest museums in the Northwest and should not be missed.

2316 W. First Ave. ☎ **509/456-3931**. www.northwestmuseum.org. Admission \$7 adults, \$5 seniors and students, free for children 5 and under; open by donation 5-8pm 1st Fri of each month. Wed-Sat 10am-6pm (1st Fri of each month until 8pm). Closed Easter, Memorial Day, July 4, Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

Wine Touring

The Spokane area is too cold to produce much in the way of wine grapes, but a handful of area wineries produce wines from Yakima and Columbia Valley grapes. For more information on area wineries, contact the **Spokane Winery Association** (www.spokanewineries.net). Most area wineries charge a \$5 tasting fee that is waived if you buy any bottles of wine.

Arbor Crest Wine Cellars ★ Northeast of downtown Spokane in the historic Cliff House atop a 450-foot-high bluff overlooking the Spokane River, this winery boasts one of the most spectacular settings of any winery in the state and is worth

visiting for this reason alone. Prices are often quite reasonable, with both merlot and sangiovese available for \$18.

4705 N. Fruithill Rd. ☎ **509/927-9463**. www.arborcrest.com. Daily noon–5pm. Take exit 287 off I-90, go north on Argonne Rd., turn right on Upriver Dr., and then left on Fruithill Rd.

Barrister Winery ★★★ This winery is in the downtown Davenport Arts District and is owned by a couple of lawyers who also happen to be great winemakers. Cabernet franc is the flagship wine here, and over the years, these wines have won numerous awards. However, Barrister also produces excellent syrah and merlot. Expect soft, silky tannins on the fruit-forward wines here. Prices are generally in the \$25 to \$30 range.

1213 W. Railroad Ave. ☎ **509/465-3591**. www.barristerwinery.com. Fri–Sat noon–5pm. In downtown, drive west on Second Ave., turn right on Jefferson St., and then left onto Railroad Ave.

Caterina Winery In the historic Broadview Dairy Building across the Spokane River from downtown, Caterina Winery is owned by Don Townshend, who also owns Townshend Cellar (see below). Under the Caterina label, Townshend makes fruit-forward New World–style wines that are usually very approachable and easy drinking when still quite young. The chardonnay and viognier are both highlights here.

905 N. Washington St. ☎ **509/328-5069**. www.caterinawinery.com. Wed–Sun noon–6pm. From downtown, go north on Division St. and then left on N. River Dr.

Knipprath Cellars ★ Housed in an old school building in a residential neighborhood on Spokane's east side, this small winery is most noteworthy for its port wines, one of which is flavored with chocolate and is absolutely delicious.

5634 E. Commerce Ave. ☎ **509/534-5121**. www.knipprath-cellars.com. Wed–Sun noon–5pm. Take exit 287, go north on Argonne Rd., turn left on Trent Ave., then turn right on Fancher Rd. and left on E. Commerce Ave.

Lone Canary Winery ★ Although winemaker Mike Scott produces plenty of red varietals each year, including sangiovese, barbera, cabernet franc, merlot, and cabernet sauvignon, he also likes to make different red blends. Sauvignon blanc, however, has long been Scott's greatest passion; don't miss it. Most red wines here are under \$20, and the sauvignon blanc is around \$10.

109 S. Scott St. ☎ **866/822-6279** or 509/534-9062. www.lonecanary.com. Thurs–Sun noon–5pm. From downtown, drive ½ mile east on Sprague St. and turn right on Scott St.

Robert Karl Cellars ★ In a downtown warehouse just a few blocks from the heart of Spokane, this winery is the husband-and-wife operation of Joe and Rebecca Gunselman, who, over the years, have produced some outstanding cabernet sauvignons. Red wines here tend to be in the \$30 price range.

115 W. Pacific Ave. ☎ **888/425-2738** or 509/363-1353. www.robertkarl.com. Thurs–Fri 2–5pm; Sat noon–5pm. From downtown, drive north on Division St. and turn left on Pacific Ave.

Townshend Cellar ★★★🍷 This may be the most out-of-the-way winery in the Spokane area, but it is well worth searching out for its delicious port wines, including some made exclusively with huckleberries and some with grapes and huckleberries. This winery also makes good chardonnay and syrah, as well as a huckleberry sparkling wine and a huckleberry blush that's made with late-harvest chenin blanc.



Cat Tales

Fifteen miles north of Spokane is a wildlife park unlike any other in the state. **Cat Tales Zoological Park**, 17020 N. Newport Hwy., Mead (☎ 509/238-4126; www.cattales.org), lets visitors get up close to tigers and other big cats from around the world. Treat bags

can also be purchased, if you want to hand-feed a lion or tiger. May through September, the zoo is open Tuesday to Sunday from 10am to 6pm; October through April, it closes at 4pm. Admission is \$8 for adults, \$6 for seniors, and \$5 for children 12 and under.

16112 N. Greenbluff Rd., Colbert. ☎ 509/238-1400. www.townshendcellar.com. Fri-Sun noon-6pm. From I-90, take exit 287, go north on Argonne Rd., which becomes Bruce Rd., turn left at the "T" intersection onto Day-Mt. Spokane Rd., go ½ mile, and turn right on Greenbluff Rd.

Sports & Outdoor Activities

Walkers, joggers, and cyclists will want to get in some exercise on the **Spokane River Centennial Trail** (www.spokanecentennialtrail.org). The paved trail starts at Nine Mile Falls west of the city and parallels the river for 37 miles to the Idaho state line, where it connects to the North Idaho Centennial Trail for another 24 miles, ending east of Coeur d'Alene (a total of 61 miles of pathway).

Riverside State Park ★★, 9711 W. Charles Rd., Nine Mile Falls (☎ 509/465-5064; www.parks.wa.gov or www.riversidestatepark.org), lies along the banks of the meandering Spokane River on the west edge of the city, with hiking trails, picnic areas, campgrounds, and access to the Spokane River Centennial Trail. Despite proximity to the city, the park has a surprisingly wild feel, and the river flowing through the park is one of the state's prettiest stretches of water. The Bowl and Pitcher Overlook, near the park headquarters, provides a vista of huge basalt boulders on the banks of the river. Adjacent to the park is the **Spokane House Interpretive Site**, which tells the story of the early fur trade in this area. It's open from Memorial Day to Labor Day, on Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 4pm. To find the park, drive north from downtown on Maple Street, turn left on Maxwell Street, which becomes Pettit Street; go past the Downriver Golf Course.

For a great view of the region, head northeast 25 miles to **Mount Spokane State Park**, 26107 N. Mt. Spokane Park Dr. (☎ 509/238-4258; www.parks.wa.gov), where you can drive to the top of the mountain. Hiking trails wander for miles through the forest here. To find the park, drive north on U.S. 2 to Wash. 206 heading northeast.

Where to Stay

The Davenport Hotel and Tower ★★★ Far and away the state's finest hotel east of Seattle, this restored grande dame is an absolute work of art. Originally opened in 1914, the Davenport has an astonishingly ornate Spanish Renaissance lobby with the feel of a European palace. The many ballrooms, each of which draws on different European periods and countries for styling, continue the palatial feel of the hotel. However, the highlight is the Hall of the Doges (be sure to sneak a peek while you're here). Guest rooms are as classically elegant as the lobby, with hand-carved furniture imported from Indonesia. This should be your first choice of hotel

in Spokane if cost is no object. The tower portion of the hotel is a modern, though equally impressive, hotel across the street from the main hotel.

10 S. Post St., Spokane, WA 99201. ☎ **800/899-1482** or 509/455-8888. Fax 509/624-4455. www.thedavenporthotel.com. 611 units. \$299–\$319 double; \$419–\$2,500 suite. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Self-parking \$17; valet parking \$24. Pets accepted (free). **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; 3 lounges; babysitting; concierge; 2 exercise rooms; 2 Jacuzzis; 2 indoor pools; room service; spa. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

E.J. Roberts' Mansion ★★ This beautifully restored 1889 Queen Anne Victorian mansion in the Browne's Addition neighborhood is my favorite Spokane B&B. The mansion is filled with gorgeous period antiques, and owner/innkeeper Mary Moltke, who has spent 30 years restoring this brick-and-stone home, is full of interesting stories of the mansion's past. In the basement billiard room, there is even a case full of artifacts she has found on the property over the years. The Marian Suite, with its turret, balcony, and claw-foot tub, is one of my favorite rooms. However, the E.J. Roberts Suite, with its mahogany bed, is equally impressive. One suite, hidden away in a separate building across the inn's secret garden, has a full kitchen.

1923 W First Ave., Spokane, WA 99201. ☎ **866/456-8839** or 509/456-8839. www.ejrobertsmansion.com. 5 units. \$140–\$200 double. Rates include full breakfast. MC, V. *In room:* A/C, hair dryer, no phone, free Wi-Fi.

Hotel Lusso ★★ Although it is not nearly as ornate and over-the-top as the associated Davenport Hotel across the street, the Lusso is still one of the most luxurious hotels in Spokane. With a sort of contemporary Italianate styling, this boutique hotel has a posh yet low-key European feel. Because the hotel was created from two existing buildings, there is a lot of variety in the room size and layout. Most of the rooms have 12- to 14-foot ceilings that make even the smallest rooms feel big. For a splurge, there are penthouse suites, which have deluxe bathrooms with double whirlpool tubs surrounded by walls of glass.

808 W. Sprague Ave., Spokane, WA 99201. ☎ **509/747-9750**. Fax 509/747-9751. www.hotellusso.com. 60 units. \$139–\$159 double; \$329–\$399 suite. Children 17 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Parking \$17. **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge; babysitting; concierge; exercise room and access to nearby health club; room service. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

Montvale Hotel ★ This little boutique hotel in downtown Spokane is in a building constructed in 1899. Although the street-level lobby is small and very understated, the Montvale also has a much bigger second-floor lobby with the feel of a living room in a rustic lodge or old-fashioned men's club. A large skylight bathes it in natural light, and a third-floor mezzanine frames the space. Guest rooms have a timeless, classic feel and meld antiques, antique reproductions, and classic and contemporary art. They have high ceilings, plush mattresses, and large bathrooms with both tubs and showers.

1005 W. First Ave., Spokane, WA 99201. ☎ **866/668-8253** or 509/747-1919. www.montvalehotel.com. 36 units. \$79–\$179 double; \$259–\$279 suite. Rates include continental breakfast. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Valet parking \$15. **Amenities:** Concierge. *In room:* A/C, TV, CD player, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

Red Lion Hotel at the Park ★★😊 Because this conference hotel is adjacent to downtown Spokane's Riverfront Park, it is the city's most conveniently located hotel for those on a family vacation. In addition to the fun in Riverfront Park, the hotel offers a resortlike, lagoon-style pool complete with a waterslide that kids love.

A variety of rooms accommodate all travelers, even those without kids in tow, and anyone desiring extra luxury can opt for the executive rooms with balconies overlooking the pool or river. Kids 10 and under eat free in the hotel's dining rooms.

303 W. North River Dr., Spokane, WA 99201. ☎ **800/733-5466** or 509/326-8000. Fax 509/325-7329. www.spokaneredlionpark.com. 400 units. \$130-\$200 double. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Self-parking \$14. Pets accepted (\$20/day). **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; lounge; concierge; exercise room; Jacuzzi; room service; 2 swimming pools (1 indoor, 1 outdoor). *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

Where to Dine

For espresso and muffins downtown, I always stop in at **Rocket Bakery**, 1325 W. First Ave. (☎ **509/747-1834**; www.rocketspokane.com). **Mary Lou's Milk Bottle**, 802 W. Garland Ave. (☎ **509/325-1772**), a few miles north of downtown, is a unique Spokane landmark. It's an old-time ice-cream parlor fronted by a three-story cement milk bottle. For the best breakfast in town, catch the train at **Frank's Diner**, 1516 W. Second Ave. (☎ **509/747-8798**; www.franksdiners.com). Actually, your gorgeously appointed 1906 railway car won't be leaving the station, but you can pretend. Good breakfasts can also be had at the **Wall Street Diner**, 4428 N. Wall St. (☎ **509/325-4730**), north of downtown. The chipotle-ham hash is outstanding.

Café Marron Browne's Addition ★★ INTERNATIONAL With its tree-shaded streets lined with grand old mansions, the Browne's Addition neighborhood just west of downtown is my favorite part of Spokane, and it's also home to this wonderful little neighborhood restaurant. The menu shows influences pulled from around the world, and there are plenty of bold flavors here to wake up your taste buds. Not up for a big dinner? Just opt for the chili, macaroni-and-cheese, or a burger with bacon and Gorgonzola. On warm summer days, the front wall of the restaurant rolls up for alfresco dining.

144 S. Cannon St. ☎ **509/456-8660**. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$7-\$20. DISC, MC, V. Sun-Thurs 8am-8pm; Fri-Sat 8am-9pm.

Catacombs Pub ★ INTERNATIONAL In the basement of the Montvale Hotel in downtown Spokane and only about a block away from the Davenport Hotel, this casual place comes pretty close to living up to its name. Stone walls and heavy ceiling beams set the tone; the only things missing are the old bones that catacombs are supposed to have. Designer pizzas are the specialty here, but there are also good salads. For dessert, don't miss the Nutella calzone.

110 S. Monroe St. ☎ **509/838-4610**. www.catacombspub.com. Main courses \$11-\$23. AE, DISC, MC, V. Daily 4:30-11pm.

Moxie ★ ASIAN/CONTINENTAL/NEW AMERICAN With its corrugated metal walls and glowing ceiling illuminated by red neon lights, this restaurant is one of the hippest dining spots in Spokane. The menu is just as hip as the setting with a contemporary blend of the lively flavors of Asia and the classics of Europe. Think tempura asparagus with ginger-sesame aioli and truffle ponzu sauce; sesame-crustured seared yellowfin tuna with red curry-coconut sauce; and Hawaiian-style grilled flatiron steak. However, despite the Asian flavorings, it's the chipotle-glazed meatloaf that most people rave about here.

816 W. Sprague Ave. ☎ **509/456-3594**. www.moxiemoxie.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$12-\$26. AE, DISC, MC, V. Sun-Thurs 5-9pm; Fri-Sat 5-10pm.

Santé Restaurant & Charcuterie ★★ FRENCH This is the sort of restaurant you leave wishing it was in your own town. Any time of day, no matter what my appetite, it's one of my favorite places to eat in Spokane. You can stop by for breakfast and get an omelet with leeks, black trumpet mushrooms, Manchego cheese, and *guanciale* (a kind of Italian bacon). At lunch, have a sandwich with mortadella and smoked Gouda or perhaps duck confit with black-pepper blinis and plum jam. Stop by in the afternoon for an espresso and *crêpes suzette* or a glass of wine and a charcuterie plate of house-cured meats. In the evening, have a charcuterie salad and lamb à la Bolognese or pull out all the stops and have a 7- or 10-course tasting menu. 404 W. Main St. ☎ **509/315-4613**. www.santespokane.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$22–\$34. DISC, MC, V. Sun–Tues 8am–5pm; Wed–Sat 8am–9pm.

Steam Plant Grill ★🎁 INTERNATIONAL In a renovated former steam-generating plant that is now a historic landmark, the Steam Plant Grill claims the most unusual setting of any restaurant in Spokane. Diners are surrounded by boilers, girders, and the pipes that once pumped steam heat to the buildings of downtown Spokane. At lunch, the menu comprises burgers, sandwiches, and wraps. At dinner, there's more creativity, including a good basil-cream ravioli and Southwestern-style salmon. The restaurant serves the microbrews of the Coeur d'Alene Brewing Company. Don't miss the smokestack room.

159 S. Lincoln St. ☎ **509/777-3900**. www.steamplantgrill.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$10–\$40. AE, MC, V. Sun–Thurs 3–9pm; Fri–Sat 3–10pm.

THE GRAND COULEE DAM AREA

85 miles W of Spokane, 92 miles NE of Wenatchee

Grand Coulee, formerly a wide, dry valley, is a geologic anomaly left over from the last Ice Age. At that time, a glacier repeatedly dammed an upstream tributary of the Columbia River and formed what is referred to as Glacial Lake Missoula, a huge lake in what is today Montana. When this prehistoric lake repeatedly burst through its ice dam, massive floods poured down from the Rocky Mountains. So great was the volume of water that the Columbia River overflowed its normal channel and, as these floodwaters flowed southward, they carved deep valleys into the basalt landscape of central Washington. As the floodwaters reached the Cascades, they were forced together into one great torrent that was so powerful it scoured out the Columbia Gorge, carving cliffs and leaving the beautiful waterfalls that can be seen in the Columbia Gorge today. With the end of the Ice Age, however, the temporary flood channels were left high and dry. Early French explorers called these dry channels *coulées*, and the largest of them all was Grand Coulee, which is 50 miles long, between 2 and 5 miles wide, and 1,000 feet deep.

Grand Coulee Dam, located at the northern end of the Grand Coulee, is considered one of the greatest engineering marvels of the 20th century. Constructed during the Great Depression, it was the largest man-made structure on earth at the time of its completion in 1941 and is still the largest concrete dam in North America. The dam is 550 feet tall, 5,223 feet wide (almost a mile), and impounds the waters of the Columbia River, forming 151-mile-long Roosevelt Lake. Despite the name, the

Grand Coulee Dam did not, however, fill the Grand Coulee with water. That did not happen until the 1950s when Dry Falls Dam was built at the south end of the coulee and waters from Roosevelt Lake were used to fill the Grand Coulee and form 31-mile-long Banks Lake. The waters of both Roosevelt and Banks lakes have been used to irrigate the arid lands of eastern Washington, turning this region into productive farmlands. The Grand Coulee Dam is also a major producer of hydroelectric power.

Essentials

GETTING THERE The towns of Grand Coulee, Coulee Dam, and Electric City are at the junction of Wash. 155, which runs south to Coulee City and north to Omak, and Wash. 174, which runs west to Wash. 17 and east to U.S. 2.

VISITOR INFORMATION Contact the **Grand Coulee Dam Area Chamber of Commerce**, P.O. Box 760, Grand Coulee, WA 99133 (☎ 800/268-5332 or 509/633-3074; www.grandcouleedam.org).

What to See & Do

You can learn the history of the dam by stopping in at the **Grand Coulee Dam Visitor Center** (☎ 509/633-9265; www.usbr.gov/pn/grandcoulee), open daily from 9am to 5pm (extended hours from Memorial Day through Sept). April through September, free guided tours of the dam are offered daily at 10am, noon, 2pm, and 4pm. Every night between Memorial Day weekend and end of September, a 36-minute **laser-light show** is projected onto the face of the dam. An accompanying narration tells the history of Grand Coulee and the dam.

Lake Roosevelt, with 600 miles of shoreline, provides ample opportunities for watersports and fishing and makes up the **Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area**, 1008 Crest Dr., Coulee Dam, WA 99116 (☎ 509/633-9441 or 738-6366; www.nps.gov/laro). Along the shores of the lake are 17 car or walk-in campgrounds and 10 boat-in campgrounds. About 21 miles north of Davenport, at the confluence of the Spokane and Columbia rivers, stands **Fort Spokane**, which was built in 1880. Four of the original buildings are still standing. An 1892 brick guardhouse serves as a visitor center, though the recreation area's main visitor center is the Grand Coulee Dam Visitor Center right at the dam.

Some 30 miles down the Grand Coulee, just south of Coulee City on Wash. 17, you can have a look at a natural wonder that's as impressive as the dam. **Dry Falls** are the remains of a massive waterfall created by the same floodwaters that scoured out the Grand Coulee. At their peak flow, the waters cascading 400 feet over these falls stretched 3½ miles wide (in comparison, Niagara Falls are less than 1 mile wide and less than 180 ft. tall). You can learn more about the falls and floods at the **Dry Falls Visitor Center** (☎ 509/632-5214; www.parks.wa.gov), at the Dry Falls Overlook on Wash. 17. May through September, this center is open daily from 9am to 5pm (until 4pm other months). If you're interested in going to the base of the cliffs that once formed the falls, continue south 2 miles to **Sun Lakes-Dry Falls State Park**, which has a road leading back to the cliffs. Within this park, you'll also find a campground and lakes for swimming, boating, and fishing.

Ten miles south of Sun Lakes State Park, you'll find **Lake Lenore Caves**. These caves were created by the same floodwaters that carved Dry Falls. In this case, the

waters tore off chunks of basalt as they flowed past the cliffs above today's Lake Lenore. The caves were later used by wandering bands of prehistoric Indians. There are seven caves accessible along an established trail. To reach the caves trail from Coulee City, take Wash. 17 south 7 miles.

Continuing south will bring you to **Soap Lake**, an alkaline lake named for the soapsuds that gather on its shores. For centuries, the lake has attracted people who believe the waters have medicinal properties. Once a busy health spa, Soap Lake today is a quiet little town. However, it does have a couple of good lodges where you can soak in the lake's waters. A public town beach also provides lake access.

About 25 miles south of Soap Lake lies **Moses Lake**, popular with water-skiers. South of Moses Lake lie the **Potholes Reservoir** and **Columbia National Wildlife Refuge** (☎ 509/488-2668; www.fws.gov/columbia). This area is a stark contrast of desert and water, with dramatic basalt outcroppings. To explore this region, drive south from Moses Lake on Wash. 17, west on Wash. 262, south on K2 SE Road (it becomes Morgan Lake Rd.), and west on Wash. 26.

Where to Stay

Columbia River Inn ★ Right across the street from Grand Coulee Dam Visitor Center in the town of Coulee Dam, this updated motel is convenient for viewing the laser-light show (just cross the street to the park). Guest rooms have attractive pine furnishings, small balconies with partial dam views, and some rooms have whirlpool tubs.

10 Lincoln Ave., Coulee Dam, WA 99116. ☎ 800/633-6421 or 509/633-2100. www.columbiariverinn.com. 35 units. \$105 double; \$105-\$210 suite (lower rates Oct-Apr). DISC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Exercise room; Jacuzzi; seasonal outdoor pool; sauna. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge, hair dryer, free Wi-Fi.

Where to Dine

In the town of Soap Lake, be sure to stop at **Mom's European Food & Deli**, 331 Main Ave. E. (☎ 509/246-1121), which serves the area's Russian and Ukrainian community. There are cases full of cheese, salami, and smoked fish, and on the shelves, you'll find all kinds of unusual imported foods. Be sure to ask if they have any of their delicious halvah.

Fusion Café and Espresso AMERICAN Although it doesn't look like much from the outside, this roadside diner a couple of miles south of Grand Coulee Dam in the town of Coulee City serves the best food in the area. The menu is pretty basic—burgers, sandwiches, salads. However, the burger might be on focaccia and come with chipotle-lime aioli, and the sandwich might be a pastrami and aged cheddar on French bread. There's a good selection of salads, including several entree salads with chicken. Be sure to ask if they have anything on the menu from their smoker.

Wash. 155, Electric City. ☎ 509/633-3525. www.heavensentcomp.com/fusioncafe. Main courses \$7-\$10. MC, V. Mon-Fri 11am-8pm.

FAST FACTS

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FAST FACTS: WASHINGTON STATE

Area Codes The area code is **206** in Seattle, **425** for the Eastside (including Kirkland and Bellevue), and **253** for south King County (near the airport). The area code east of the Cascade Range is **509**.

Business Hours The following are general guidelines; specific establishments' hours may vary. Banks are open Monday through Friday from 9am to 5pm (some also on Sat 9am-noon). Stores are open Monday through Saturday from 10am to 6pm and Sunday from noon to 5pm (malls usually stay open until 9pm Mon-Sat). Bars can stay open until 2am.

Cellphones (Mobile Phones) See "Staying Connected," p. 44.

Drinking Laws The legal age for purchase and consumption of alcoholic beverages is 21; proof of age is required and often requested at bars, night-clubs, and restaurants, so it's always a good idea to bring ID when you go out.

Do not carry open containers of alcohol in your car or any public area that isn't zoned for alcohol consumption. The police can fine you on the spot. Don't even think about driving while intoxicated.

Driving Rules See "Getting There & Around," p. 32.

Electricity Like Canada, the United States uses 110-120 volts AC (60 cycles), compared to 220-240 volts AC (50 cycles) in most of Europe, Australia, and New Zealand. Downward converters that change 220-240 volts to 110-120 volts are difficult to find in the United States, so bring one with you.

Embassies & Consulates All embassies are in the nation's capital, Washington, D.C. Some consulates are in major U.S. cities, and most nations have a mission to the United Nations in New York City. If your country isn't listed below, call for directory information in Washington, D.C. (☎ **202/555-1212**) or check **www.embassy.org/embassies**.

The embassy of **Australia** is at 1601 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20036 (☎ **202/797-3000**; www.australia.visahq.com). Consulates are in New York, Honolulu, Houston, Los Angeles, and San Francisco.

The embassy of **Canada** is at 501 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001 (☎ **202/682-1740**; www.canadainternational.gc.ca/washington). Other Canadian consulates are in Buffalo (New York), Detroit, Los Angeles, New York, and Seattle.

The embassy of **Ireland** is at 2234 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20008 (☎ **202/462-3939**; www.embassyofireland.org). Irish consulates are in Boston, Chicago, New York, San Francisco, and other cities. See web-site for complete listing.

The embassy of **New Zealand** is at 37 Observatory Circle NW, Washington, DC 20008 (☎ **202/328-4800**; www.nzembassy.com). New Zealand consulates are in Los Angeles, Salt Lake City, San Francisco, and Seattle.

The embassy of the **United Kingdom** is at 3100 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20008 (☎ **202/588-6500**; <http://ukinusa.fco.gov.uk>). Other British consulates are in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, and Seattle.

Emergencies Call ☎ **911** to report a fire, call the police, or get an ambulance anywhere in the U.S. This is a toll-free call. (No coins are required at public telephones.)

Gasoline (Petrol) At press time, in the U.S., the cost of gasoline (also known as gas, but never petrol) was running close to \$2.80 per gallon in most places. Taxes are already included in the printed price. One U.S. gallon equals 3.8 liters or .85 imperial gallons.

Holidays Banks, government offices, post offices, and many stores, restaurants, and museums are closed on the following legal national holidays: January 1 (New Year's Day), the third Monday in January (Martin Luther King, Jr., Day), the third Monday in February (Presidents' Day), the last Monday in May (Memorial Day), July 4 (Independence Day), the first Monday in September (Labor Day), the second Monday in October (Columbus Day), November 11 (Veterans Day/Armistice Day), the fourth Thursday in November (Thanksgiving Day), and December 25 (Christmas). The Tuesday after the first Monday in November is Election Day, a federal government holiday in presidential-election years (held every 4 years, and next in 2012).

For more information on holidays see "Washington Calendar of Events," in chapter 3.

Insurance For information on traveler's insurance, trip cancellation insurance, and medical insurance while traveling, please visit www.frommers.com/tips.

Internet Access See "Staying Connected," p. 44.

Legal Aid If you are "pulled over" for a minor infraction (such as speeding), never attempt to pay the fine directly to a police officer; this could be construed as attempted bribery, a much more serious crime. Pay fines by mail, or directly into the hands of the clerk of the court. If accused of a more serious offense, say and do nothing before consulting a lawyer. Here the burden is on the state to prove a person's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt, and everyone has the right to remain silent, whether he or she is suspected of a crime or actually arrested. Once arrested, a person can make one telephone call to a party of his or her choice. The international visitor should call his or her embassy or consulate.

Mail At press time, domestic postage rates were 28¢ for a postcard and 44¢ for a letter. For international mail, a first-class letter of up to 1 ounce costs 98¢ (75¢ to Canada and 79¢ to Mexico); a first-class postcard costs the same as a letter. For more information go to www.usps.com.

If you aren't sure what your address will be in the United States, mail can be sent to you, in your name, c/o General Delivery at the main post office of the city or region where you expect to be. (Call ☎ **800/275-8777** for information on the nearest post office.) The addressee must pick up mail in person and must produce proof of identity (driver's license, passport, and so on). Most post offices will hold mail for up to 1 month, and are open Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm, and Saturday from 9am to 3pm.

Always include zip codes when mailing items in the U.S. If you don't know your zip code, visit www.usps.com/zip4.

Newspapers & Magazines See "Staying Connected," p. 44.

Passports See “Embassies & Consulates,” above, for whom to contact if you lose your passport while traveling in the U.S. For other information, contact the following agencies:

For Residents of Australia Contact the Australian Passport Information Service at ☎ **131-232**, or visit www.passports.gov.au.

For Residents of Canada Contact the central **Passport Office**, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Ottawa, ON K1A 0G3 (☎ **800/567-6868**; www.ppt.gc.ca).

For Residents of Ireland Contact the **Passport Office**, Setanta Centre, Molesworth Street, Dublin 2 (☎ **01/671-1633**; www.foreignaffairs.gov.ie).

For Residents of New Zealand Contact the **Passports Office**, Department of Internal Affairs, 47 Boulcott St., Wellington, 6011 (☎ **0800/225-050** in New Zealand or 04/474-8100; www.passports.govt.nz).

For Residents of the United Kingdom Visit your nearest passport office, major post office, or travel agency or contact the **Identity and Passport Service (IPS)**, 89 Eccleston Sq., London, SW1V 1PN (☎ **0300/222-0000**; www.ips.gov.uk).

For Residents of the United States To find your regional passport office, check the U.S. State Department website (travel.state.gov/passport) or call the **National Passport Information Center** (☎ **877/487-2778**) for automated information.

Police To reach the police, dial ☎ **911**.

Smoking Smoking is banned in public indoor spaces throughout the state of Washington, so don't try lighting up—even in a bar.

Taxes The United States has no value-added tax (VAT) or other indirect tax at the national level. Every state, county, and city may levy its own local tax on all purchases, including hotel and restaurant checks and airline tickets. These taxes will not appear on price tags.

The state of Washington makes up for its lack of an income tax with its heavy sales tax, and counties add on their own as well. In Seattle you'll pay 9.5%. Hotel-room tax in the Seattle metro area ranges from around 10% to 16%. On car rentals at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, you'll pay a total of around 45% additional in taxes and fees!

Telephones See “Staying Connected,” p. 44.

Time The continental United States is divided into **four time zones**: Eastern Standard Time (EST), Central Standard Time (CST), Mountain Standard Time (MST), and Pacific Standard Time (PST). Alaska and Hawaii have their own zones. For example, when it's 9am in Los Angeles (PST), it's 7am in Honolulu (HST), 10am in Denver (MST), 11am in Chicago (CST), noon in New York City (EST), 5pm in London (GMT), and 2am the next day in Sydney. Seattle is on Pacific Standard Time (PST), making it 3 hours behind the East Coast.

Daylight saving time (summertime) is in effect from 1am on the second Sunday in March to 1am on the first Sunday in November, except in Arizona, Hawaii, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. Daylight saving time moves the clock 1 hour ahead of standard time.

Tipping In hotels, tip **bellhops** at least \$1 per bag (\$2–\$3 if you have a lot of luggage) and tip the **chamber staff** \$1 to \$2 per day (more if you've left a big mess for him or her to clean up). Tip the **doorman** or **concierge** only if he or she has provided you with some specific service (for example, calling a cab for you or obtaining difficult-to-get theater tickets). Tip the **valet-parking attendant** \$1 every time you get your car.

In restaurants, bars, and nightclubs, tip **service staff** and **bartenders** 15% to 20% of the check, tip **checkroom attendants** \$1 per garment, and tip **valet-parking attendants** \$1 per vehicle.

As for other service personnel, tip **cab drivers** 15% of the fare; tip **skycaps** at airports at least \$1 per bag (\$2–\$3 if you have a lot of luggage); and tip **hairstylists** and **barbers** 15% to 20%.

Toilets You won't find public toilets or "restrooms" on the streets in most U.S. cities but they can be found in hotel lobbies, bars, restaurants, museums, department stores, railway and bus stations, and service stations. Large hotels and fast-food restaurants are often the best bet for clean facilities. Restaurants and bars in resorts or heavily visited areas may reserve their restrooms for patrons.

Visas For information about U.S. visas go to <http://travel.state.gov> and click on "Visas." Or go to one of the following websites:

Australian citizens can obtain up-to-date visa information from the **U.S. Embassy Canberra**, Moonah Place, Yarralumla, ACT 2600 (☎ **02/6214-5600**) or by checking the U.S. Diplomatic Mission's website at <http://canberra.usembassy.gov/visas-geninfo.html>.

British subjects can obtain up-to-date visa information by calling the **U.S. Embassy Visa Information Line** (☎ **0891/200-290**) or by visiting the "Visas to the U.S." section of the American Embassy London's website at www.usembassy.org.uk.

Irish citizens can obtain up-to-date visa information through the **U.S. Embassy Dublin**, 42 Elgin Rd., Ballsbridge, Dublin 4 (☎ **353/1-668-8777**; <http://dublin.usembassy.gov>).

Citizens of **New Zealand** can obtain up-to-date visa information by contacting the **U.S. Embassy New Zealand**, 29 Fitzherbert Terrace, Thorndon, Wellington (☎ **644/472-2068**; <http://newzealand.usembassy.gov>).

Visitor Information For information on Washington, contact the **Washington State Tourism Office** (☎ **800/544-1800**; www.experiencewashington.com). For information on the Seattle area, contact **Seattle's Convention and Visitors Bureau**, 701 Pike St., Ste. 800, Seattle, WA 98101 (☎ **206/461-5840**; www.visitseattle.org), which operates the Seattle Visitor Center & Concierge Services inside the Washington State Convention and Trade Center, at Seventh Avenue and Pike Street, main level (☎ **206/461-5888**). If you're surfing the Net for information on the Seattle area, check out www.ci.seattle.wa.us/html/visitor, the city of Seattle's visitor information site.

Also, keep in mind that most cities and towns in Washington have either a tourist office or a chamber of commerce that can provide you with information. When approaching cities and towns, watch for signs along the highway directing you to these information centers. See the individual chapters for specific addresses.

For information on outdoor recreation in national parks and national forests of Washington, contact the **Outdoor Recreation Information Center**, Seattle REI Building, 222 Yale Ave. N., Seattle, WA 98109 (☎ **206/470-4060**; www.nps.gov/ccso/oric.htm).

For information on Washington state parks, contact **Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission**, 1111 Israel Rd. SW, Olympia, WA 98504-2650 (☎ **360/902-8844**; www.parks.wa.gov).

One of my favorite Seattle blogs is *Seattle Times'* columnist Nancy Leeson's "All You Can Eat" (<http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/allyoucaneat/index.html>), which is always full of good, up-to-the-minute restaurant information. Seattle-area restaurants are also the focus of *Seattle Metropolitan* magazine's www.seattlemet.com/blogs/nosh-pit. The friendly innkeepers of the Washington Bed & Breakfast Guild also have an informative blog: <http://blog.wbbg.com>.

Wi-Fi See "Staying Connected," p. 44.

AIRLINE WEBSITES

MAJOR AIRLINES

Aeroméxico

www.aeromexico.com

Air Canada

www.aircanada.ca

Air France

www.airfrance.com

Alaska Airlines/Horizon Air

www.alaskaair.com

American Airlines

www.aa.com

British Airways

www.british-airways.com

Continental Airlines

www.continental.com

Delta Air Lines/Northwest Airlines

www.delta.com

Hawaiian Airlines

www.hawaiianair.com

Icelandair

www.icelandair.com

Korean Air

www.koreanair.com

Lufthansa

www.lufthansa.com

Midwest Airlines

www.midwestairlines.com

United Airlines

www.united.com

US Airways

www.usair.com

Virgin America

www.virginamerica.com

BUDGET AIRLINES

AirTran Airways

www.airtran.com

Frontier Airlines

www.frontierairlines.com

JetBlue Airways

www.jetblue.com

Southwest Airlines

www.southwest.com

Sun Country Airlines

www.suncountry.com

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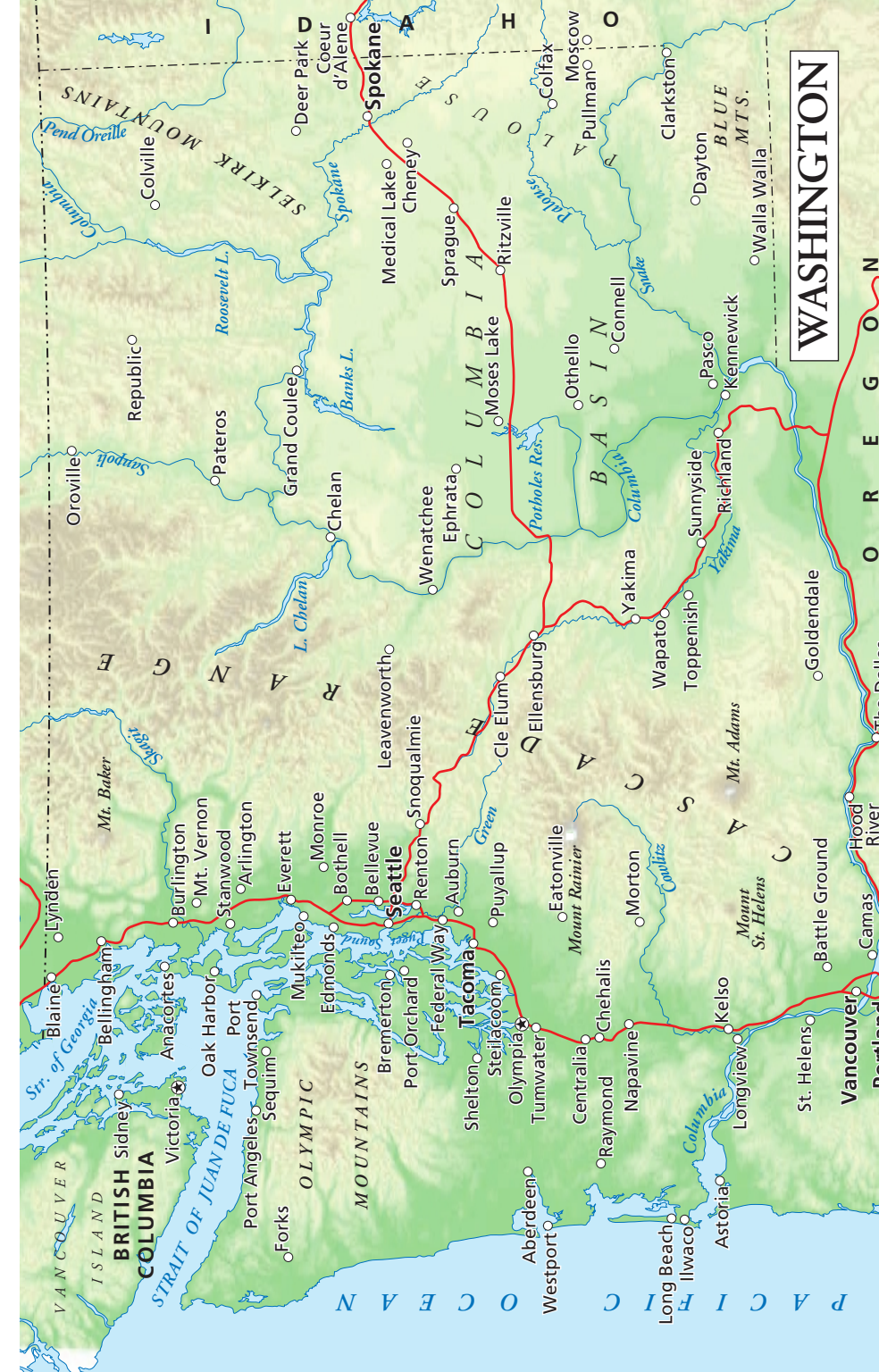
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WASHINGTON



At night, take to Walla Walla's lively downtown, filled with restaurants and tasting rooms. See chapter 11.

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ISBN 978-0-470-60751-0

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7th Edition