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The Best of Washington

Despite what you may 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.” Out in the eastern high desert country, there are beautiful spacious skies as big as Montana’s (part of the Rocky Mountains even reaches into Washington). In the Cascades, there are mountains that 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). Out on the Pacific Coast, there are beaches white with foam, and with an inland sea across the Olympic Peninsula from the Pacific, the sun in Washington shines from sea to shining sea. From its mountains to its valleys, Washington is indeed beautiful country.

But the diversity of this state goes far beyond mere song lyrics. There’s an island archipelago as beautiful as the coast of Maine (though without the harsh winters). There are beaches as long and sandy as those of North Carolina’s Outer Banks (though the waters are too cold for swimming). There are granite mountains as rugged as the Sierra Nevada (though not as crowded with hikers). There are desert canyons like those of the Southwest (though not nearly as hot). There are vineyard-covered hillsides like those of the Napa Valley (though without the crowds). There’s even a bayfront city with dauntingly steep streets (no cable cars, though).

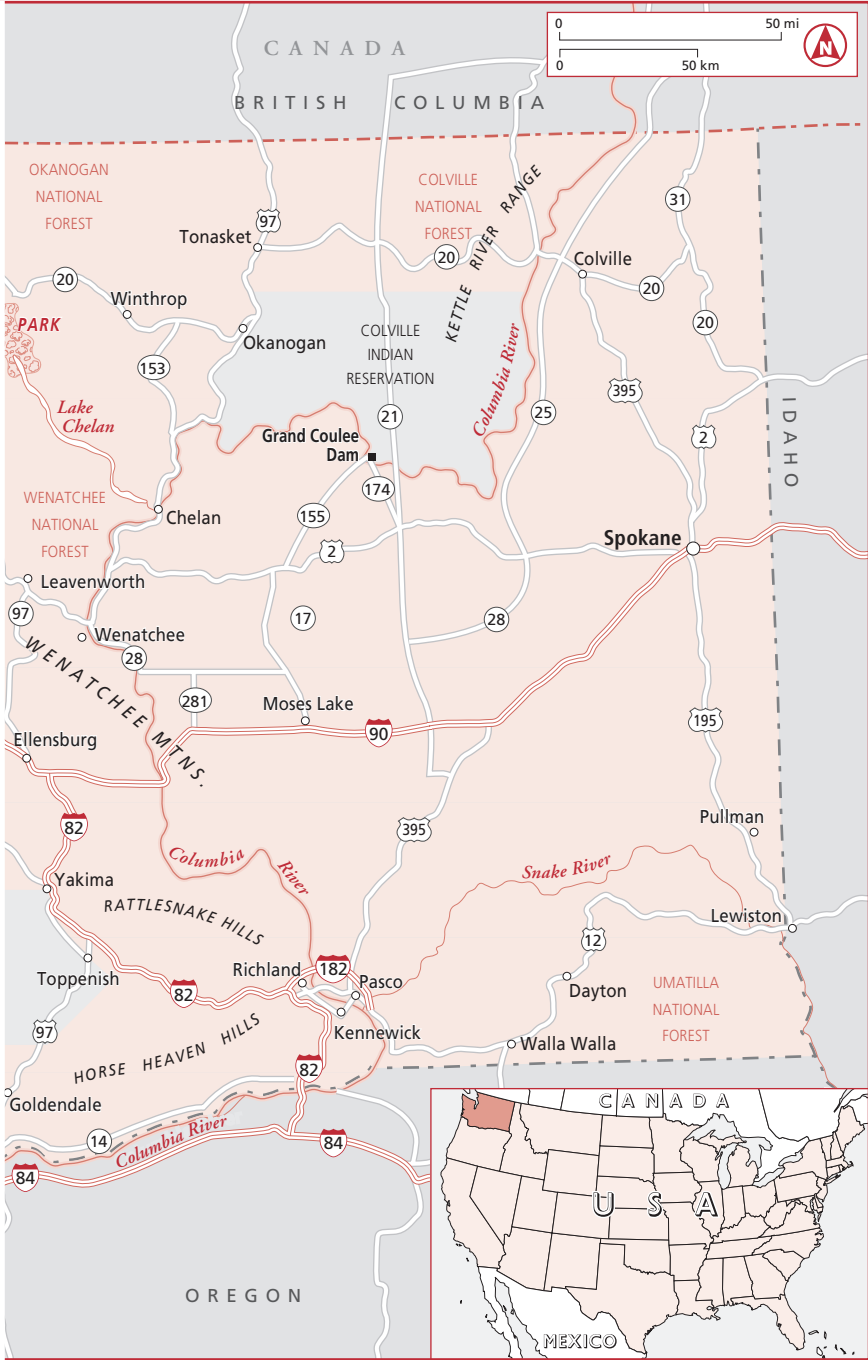
With such a complex and diverse landscape to be explored, planning a trip can become a daunting task. Where should we go? Where should we stay? Where should we eat? Planning a trip to Washington involves making a lot of these sorts of decisions, and, especially if you only have a week for your entire trip, you probably want to be sure you get the most from your trip. To help you get a better grip on the state’s highlights, its not-to-be-missed attractions and activities, we’ve put together this list of some of the best the state has to offer. 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.

1 The Best Natural Attractions

- **The San Juan Islands:** Forested mountains rise up from the cold waters north of Puget Sound to form the archipelago known as the San Juan Islands. Here, bald eagles wheel overhead while orca whales dive for salmon below. All this natural beauty is a powerful magnet and, despite the hordes of tourists in the summer, the San Juans remain the state’s best summer vacation spot. See “The San Juan Islands” in chapter 5.
- **Olympic National Park:** This park contains the only rainforests in the contiguous United States,

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and they comprise a fascinating ecosystem—living plants stake out almost every square inch of space, from towering Sitka spruce trees to mosses and lush ferns. The park also preserves miles of pristine, fog-shrouded beaches and beautiful alpine and subalpine scenery dotted with lush meadows. See chapter 7.

- **The North Cascades National Park Complex:** Actually comprised of one national park and two national recreation areas, this remote and rugged region is among the least explored in the state. Most visitors view the park from the North Cascades Scenic Highway, from which there are stupendous views on clear days, but which is closed by snow for nearly half the year. See “Mount Baker & the North Cascades Scenic Highway” in chapter 9.
- **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 9.

- **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. Several visitor centers relate the events of the eruption and what has been happening on the mountain since. See “Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument” in chapter 9.
- **Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area:** Carved by ice-age floods that were as much as 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, where you’ll also find one of the largest monoliths in the world. See “The Columbia Gorge & the Mount Adams Area” in chapter 9.

2 The Best Outdoor Activities

- **Sea Kayaking in the San Juan Islands:** Emerald islands, clear water, orca whales, bald eagles, and remote campsites that can only be reached by boat lure sea kayakers to the San Juan Islands. You can 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 5.
- **Hiking the Olympic Coast:** Within the contiguous United States, there are very few miles of wilderness coastline left. Among the longest, and most spectacular,

are those of Olympic National Park along the west side of the Olympic Peninsula. Whether you just want to do a good daylong hike, or spend several days backpacking along the beach, you’ve got several options along this coast. See chapter 7.

- **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. Skiers can ski from

one lodge to the next down the valley, or use one of the luxurious lodges as a base for doing day skis. See “Winthrop & the Methow Valley” in chapter 9.

- **Hiking on Mount Rainier:** Fed by huge amounts of melting snow each summer, the 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, with Mount Rainier for a backdrop, far outweigh the inconvenience of dealing with hordes of other hikers. See “Mount Rainier National Park & Environs” in chapter 9.
- **Climbing Mount St. Helens:** Though it isn’t the highest peak in

the Washington Cascades, Mount St. Helens is certainly the most interesting mountain to climb (you’ll need a permit, and numbers of climbers are limited). You don’t need any technical climbing skills for this one, just plenty of stamina and a tolerance for hiking in dusty conditions (if the snow has melted off, you’ll be hiking in volcanic ash). See “Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument” in chapter 9.

- **Windsurfing at Hood River:** Winds that blow through the Columbia Gorge whip up white-capped standing waves and have turned this area into the windsurfing capital of the United States, attracting boardsailors from around the world. See “The Columbia Gorge & the Mount Adams Area” in chapter 9.

3 The Best Beaches

- **Alki Beach** (Seattle): Located in West Seattle, this is the closest Washington comes to a Southern California-style beach scene. There’s a sandy beach and a paved path crowded with in-line skaters, walkers, and cyclists. Across the street from the sand, you’ll find lots of cheap restaurants and places to buy sunglasses. See chapter 4.
- **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 this beach’s charm. This is the quintessential little San Juan Islands cove beach, and you don’t have to have a boat to get to it. See “The San Juan Islands” in chapter 5.
- **Deception Pass State Park Beaches** (Whidbey Island): There’s a reason this is the most popular state park in Washington—the

many miles of beach, spread out on two sides of Deception Pass, are among the prettiest in the Puget Sound area. See “Whidbey Island” in chapter 5.

- **Dungeness Spit** (Dungeness): With 6 miles of windswept sand stretching out to a lighthouse in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, Dungeness is a hikers’ beach, and the reward for hiking several miles out this narrow strip of sand is the chance to see some of the area’s resident harbor seals. See “Sequim & Dungeness Valley” in chapter 7.
- **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

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tunnel. See “Olympic National Park West” in chapter 7.

- **Second Beach & Third Beach** (Olympic National Park outside Forks): It’s difficult to pick the best beach in the national park, since they are almost all ruggedly beautiful, but these two beaches

just outside the community of La Push are our personal favorites. Here you can listen to the calls of the eagles and gulls and contemplate the sheer vastness of the Pacific. See “Olympic National Park West” in chapter 7.

4 The Best Hikes

- **Trails Out of Hurricane Ridge:** Hurricane Ridge is the most easily accessible alpine region of Olympic National Park, and from here, and nearby Obstruction Peak, there are several possible hikes that will give you a glimpse of a superb part of the Olympic wilderness. See “Olympic National Park North & the Northern Olympic Peninsula” in chapter 7.
- **Hall of Mosses Trail/Hoh River Trail** (Hoh River Valley): Whether you’re only up for a short walk in the woods or want to do a multi-day backpacking trip, this is the best place to experience the Olympic Peninsula’s famed rainforest. Just don’t forget your rain gear. See “Olympic National Park West” in chapter 7.
- **The Maple Pass Loop Trail:** Along the North Cascades Scenic Highway, you simply won’t find a more rewarding hike than this one. The trail climbs nearly 2,000 feet from Rainy Pass to a ridge with an astounding view of seemingly all the mountains in Washington. See

“Mount Baker & the North Cascades Scenic Highway” in chapter 9.

- **Trails Out of Sunrise:** The Sunrise area, on the northeast flanks of Washington’s Mount Rainier, offers fabulous unobstructed views of both the mountain and Emmons Glacier, the largest glacier in the contiguous 48 states. From Sunrise more than a dozen trails of different lengths head off to viewpoints and lakes. Take your pick. See “Mount Rainier National Park & Environs” in chapter 9.
- **The Beacon Rock Trail** (Columbia Gorge West of Stevenson): Although this hike is less than 2 miles long, it makes up for its 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 that rivals the Rock of Gibraltar in size. The view from the top is superb. See “The Columbia Gorge & the Mount Adams Area” in chapter 9.

5 The Best Scenic Drives

- **Chuckanut Drive:** This road winds south from Bellingham through the Chuckanut Mountains, which rise straight up from the waters of Chuckanut and Samish bays. Across the water lie the San Juan Islands, and the sunsets are spectacular. Larrabee State Park provides an opportunity to

get out of your car and walk down to a pretty little beach. See “Bellingham & Environs” in chapter 5.

- **The North Cascades Scenic Highway:** Passing through the most rugged and spectacular mountains in the Northwest, this highway was not opened until

1972 because of the difficulty of building any sort of road through Washington's glacier-carved North Cascades. Even now it is closed for half of every year due to heavy snows and avalanches. See "Mount Baker & the North Cascades Scenic Highway" in chapter 9.

- **The Columbia River Scenic Highway:** Wash. 14 parallels the Columbia River from Vancouver, Washington, eastward through the Columbia Gorge, and along its length provides some of the most awe-inspiring vistas in the Northwest. Visible across the river in Oregon are not only the basalt cliffs of the Gorge but also the snow-clad summit of Mount Hood. See "The Columbia Gorge & the Mount Adams Area" in chapter 9.
- **The Yakima River Canyon:** Wash. 821, which connects Ellensburg with Yakima, is a little-known gem of a road. This route follows the Yakima River through a deep canyon bounded by rolling sagebrush hills and is a memorable

alternative to I-82, which also connects Ellensburg and Yakima. See chapter 10.

- **The Palouse:** This wheat-farming region in southeastern Washington is a convoluted landscape of steep hills and narrow valleys, and a meandering drive through the region is a trip into another time. Small towns and boldly striped hillsides make this the most fascinating farm country in the state. See "The Palouse: A Slice of Small-Town Rural Washington" in chapter 10.
- **Soap Lake to the Grand Coulee Dam:** Although today the landscape of central Washington is that of a desert, vast floodwaters once poured across this landscape. Today a drive up the Grand Coulee provides a glimpse into one of the most fascinating events in Northwest geologic history. Canyons, mineral lakes, caves, and a huge dry waterfall provide the roadside distractions. See "The Grand Coulee Dam Area" in chapter 10.

6 The Best B&Bs & Inns

- **The Gaslight Inn** (Seattle; © 206/325-3654): Beautifully decorated with lots of original Stickley furniture, this inn consists of two houses in the Capitol Hill neighborhood. One house is done in a more contemporary style if you don't happen to be a fan of Arts and Crafts style. There's also a swimming pool. See p. 81.
- **Spring Bay Inn** (Orcas Island; © 360/376-5531): This secluded waterfront inn is a luxurious island retreat, and a stay here includes not only bed-and-breakfast, but brunch and a daily sea-kayak excursion as well. In-room fireplaces and a hot tub right on the beach add a touch of romance. See p. 171.
- **Willcox House** (The Kitsap Peninsula; © 800/725-9477 or 360/830-4492): This 1930s Art Deco mansion, set on the shore of Hood Canal, is straight out of an old Hollywood movie (and indeed many movie stars did stay here back in the '30s and '40s). Because it is located in such a secluded spot, the inn also serves dinner. See p. 197.
- **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. 207.

- **The Villa Bed & Breakfast** (Tacoma; ☎ 888/572-1157 or 253/572-1157): Regardless of the fact that this inn would be more appropriate to Santa Barbara, the Italianate villa in Tacoma's Stadium Historic District is a real gem. Large rooms have whirlpool or soaking tubs and most have gas fireplaces. See p. 208.
- **Thornewood Castle Inn** (Lake-wood; ☎ 253/584-4393): Few B&Bs in America can truly 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 in this country to a European manor home. See p. 208.
- **Ann Starrett Mansion** (Port Townsend; ☎ 800/321-0644 or 360/385-3205): This is the premier Victorian B&B in the Northwest. The outrageously ornate Queen Anne-style mansion is packed to the rafters with antiques, and staying here is a bit like spending the night in a museum. See p. 222.
- **Hoquiam's Castle** (Hoquiam; 877/542-2785 or 360/533-2005): Built in 1897 by a local timber baron, this stately Victorian inn is an amazing assemblage of turrets and gables, balconies and bay windows. Although the town of Hoquiam isn't exactly a major tourist destination, this inn is reason enough to spend a weekend in the area. See p. 258.
- **Abendblume Inn** (Leavenworth; ☎ 800/669-7634 or 509/548-4059): Of all the many alpine chalet accommodations in Leavenworth, this is the most luxurious. The attention to detail shown in the construction of this chalet makes the inn an especially enjoyable place to spend a romantic weekend. See p. 299.
- **Run of the River Bed & Breakfast** (Leavenworth; ☎ 800/288-6491 or 509/548-7171): Set amid beautiful rock gardens on a side channel of the Wenatchee River, this rustic yet contemporary log inn is as tranquil a place to stay as you'll find in the region. The innkeepers are extremely helpful and eager to share their love of the area with guests. See p. 299.

7 The Best Mountain Lodges/Resorts/Retreats

- **Lake Crescent Lodge** (Olympic National Park west of Port Angeles; ☎ 360/928-3211): Set on the shore of Lake Crescent, a landlocked fjord in Olympic National Park, this lodge is the best base for exploring the north side of the park. The lodge has simple rooms in the old main lodge building and larger though less memorable rooms in various newer buildings around the property. See p. 240.
- **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 something of a cross between a mountain lodge and a classic lake resort. See p. 248.
- **The Heathman Lodge** (Vancouver; ☎ 888/475-3100 or 360/254-3100): The only thing wrong with this modern mountain lodge is that it's located in suburban Vancouver, Washington, rather than in the mountains. Nevertheless, with its log, stone, and cedar-shingle construction, it manages to conjure up the Northwest's historic mountain lodges. See p. 270.
- **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. Luxurious and rustic at the same time, the lodge is a 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 Winthrop Valley is not as extensive a place as nearby Sun Mountain Lodge, but the guest rooms here are among the most luxurious in the state. See p. 283.
- **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 is only accessible by snow coach (complimentary transport provided by the lodge). See p. 298.
- **Sleeping Lady** (Leavenworth; ☎ 800/574-2123 or 509/548-6344): Although primarily a conference resort, this place on the outskirts of Bavarian Leavenworth is far too pleasant to be reserved for those in town for business. With the feel of an upscale summer camp, the lodge is tucked amid granite boulders and ponderosa pines. See p. 298.
- **Salish Lodge and 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. 304.
- **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 was completely renovated a few years ago. 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. 311.
- **Bonneville Hot Springs Resort** (☎ 866/459-1678 or 509/427-7767): Tucked amid the trees not far from Bonneville Dam, this newly opened hot springs resort has a traditional elegance. Although there are no views to speak of, the spa and warm-springs-fed pools more than make up for the lack of vista. See p. 323.
- **Dolce Skamania Lodge** (Stevenson; ☎ 800/221-7117 or 509/427-7700): Set amid the grandeur of the Columbia Gorge, this modern mountain resort makes the ideal base for exploring the Gorge. The resort's golf course has a very distracting view of the Oregon side of the Columbia Gorge. See p. 323.

8 The Best Island & Beach Resorts & Lodges

- **Woodmark Hotel 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 a very resort-like feel. See p. 84.
- **Friday Harbor House** (Friday Harbor; ☎ 866/722-7356 or 360/378-8455): Okay, so this one isn't right on the water. Still, they're the most luxurious accommodations on San Juan Island, and the guest rooms have views of the water and distant island peaks. See p. 164.

- **Rosario Resort & Spa** (Orcas Island; ☎ 800/562-8820 or 360/376-2222): With an elegant historic mansion as its focal point and enough activities and amenities to keep you busy for a week's vacation, this is the premier resort in the San Juan Islands. See p. 171.
- **La Conner Channel Lodge** (La Conner; ☎ 888/466-4113 or 360/466-1500): Set on the shore of the Swinomish Channel, this inn is steeped in Northwest styling. River rocks and weathered wood siding lend an air of age to the exterior, which is brightened by lovely perennial gardens. In the guest rooms, balconies, fireplaces, fir accents, and slate floors yield an unexpected sophistication. See p. 181.
- **The Inn at Langley** (Whidbey Island; ☎ 360/221-3033): The setting alone, overlooking Saratoga Passage, would 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 all add up to uncommon luxuries at this romantic retreat. See p. 152.
- **Resort Semiahmoo** (Blaine; ☎ 800/770-7992 or 360/318-2000): Located on a spit of land looking across the water to Canada, this is Washington's premier golf and beach resort. It's on a long stretch of beach, which makes this a great place to get away from it all whether you want to play golf or tennis or just walk on the beach. See p. 187.
- **The Captain Whidbey Inn** (Whidbey Island; ☎ 800/366-4097 or 360/678-4097): This unusual inn was built in 1907 of local madrona-tree logs, which give it a thoroughly unique appearance. The island's seafaring history is evoked throughout the inn, and the seat in front of the lobby's beach-stone fireplace is a wonderful spot to while away a gray afternoon. See p. 152.
- **The Resort at Ludlow Bay** (Port Ludlow; ☎ 877/805-0868 or 360/437-2222): 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 appeal. See p. 224.
- **Kalaloch Lodge** (Forks; ☎ 866/525-2562 or 360/962-2271): Comprised primarily of bluff-top cabins overlooking a wild and windswept beach, this is Olympic National Park's only oceanfront lodge. As such it is extremely popular. See p. 248.
- **Ocean Crest Resort** (Moclips; ☎ 800/684-8439 or 360/276-4465): Perched high on a forested bluff above the crashing waves of the Pacific Ocean, this casual resort enjoys the most spectacular setting of any lodging on the Washington coast. There's also a good restaurant on the premises. See p. 257.

9 The Best Off-the-Beaten-Path Restaurants

- **The Herbfarm** (Woodinville; ☎ 425/485-5300): This restaurant, located northeast of Seattle adjacent to several wineries, was once little more than a roadside farm stand specializing in herbs, but over the years has become the most highly acclaimed (and most expensive) restaurant in the state. See p. 97.
- **The Chef's Kitchen Restaurant at the Inn at Langley** (Langley; ☎ 360/221-3033): This quintessentially Northwestern inn on Whidbey Island is one of the state's most luxurious accommodations.

Open on weekends only, the restaurant serves some of the best multicourse gourmet dinners in Washington. Make reservations early. See p. 152.

- **Olga's** (Orcas Island; ☎ 360/376-5862): Although this delightfully eclectic little restaurant is only open for breakfast and lunch, the food served at these two meals is as creative as you'll find at any gourmet restaurant in the state. See p. 173.
- **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. 198.
- **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), the Ajax Cafe is a hidden gem of a restaurant south of Port Townsend. Housed in an old wooden waterfront building, the restaurant is a favorite of people with something to celebrate. See p. 226.
- **The Ark Restaurant & Bakery** (Nahcotta; ☎ 360/665-4133): Oyster lovers take note, this restaurant on the Long Beach Peninsula is just down the road from Oyster-ville and is adjacent to oyster farms and an oyster packing plant, so you

know the shellfish here is as fresh as it gets. See p. 226.

- **The Depot Restaurant** (Seaview; ☎ 360/642-7880): Small, out of the way, casual and inexpensive, yet with excellent food—this is just the sort of restaurant you dream of finding on vacation. The Depot was indeed once a railroad depot, and today, the cooking here is right on track. See p. 266.
- **Sun Mountain Lodge** (Winthrop; ☎ 800/572-0493 or 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. 284.
- **Whitehouse-Crawford Restaurant** (Walla Walla; ☎ 509/525-2222): Located in downtown Walla Walla, which is at the heart of Washington's fastest-growing wine region, this restaurant is housed in a former mill building and shares space with a winery. The scene and the menu have a decidedly Seattle feel. See p. 347.
- **Patit Creek Restaurant** (Dayton; ☎ 509/382-2625): The small town of Dayton seems an unlikely place for one of the state's best restaurants, but the reliable French-inspired fare served at this unpretentious place draws diners from miles around. See p. 349.

10 The Best Wineries (Open to the Public)

- **Fair Winds Winery** (Port Townsend; ☎ 360/385-6899): This out-of-the-way winery is a surprising little gem. The winery produces a wide range of excellent wines, including a port and Aligoté, a French varietal that is rarely produced in the U.S. See p. 222.
- **Chandler Reach** (Yakima Valley; ☎ 509/588-8800): With its underground tasting room, this is one of the more memorable wineries in the Yakima Valley, but it's the outstanding syrahs and bordeaux blends that make this winery unforgettable. See p. 335.

- **Maison de Padgett Winery** (Yakima Valley; ☎ 509/829-6412): Distinctive wines in distinctive bottles with distinctive labels. That about sums up this winery. Come with an open mind (and an open check book). See p. 333.
- **Paradisos del Sol** (Yakima Valley; ☎ 509/829-9000): Winemaker Paul Vandenberg, who has also made wines for Portteus Vineyards (another of our favorite wineries), produces some wonderfully complex and atypical, barrel-aged white wines. See p. 333.
- **Portteus Vineyards** (Yakima Valley; ☎ 509/829-6970): Intensely flavored, full-bodied red wines are the specialty at this winery about midway down the Yakima Valley. Prices are moderate and their red table wine is a great value. See p. 333.
- **Kestrel Vintners** (Yakima Valley; ☎ 888/343-CORK or 509/786-2675): Winemaker Ray Sandidge is one of Washington's top winemakers and here produces many outstanding red wines. Just don't expect to find any deals. See p. 335.
- **Wineglass Cellars** (Yakima Valley; ☎ 509/829-3011): This small, unassuming, family-run winery produces some of the most awesome red wines in the state. This is perhaps the most underrated and little known winery in the Yakima Valley. See p. 334.
- **Amavi Cellars** (Walla Walla; ☎ 509/525-3541): This is one of the newer wineries in Walla Walla and is a sister winery to the celebrated Pepper Bridge Winery. The syrah here can be among the finest in the region. See p. 343.
- **Rulo Winery** (Walla Walla; ☎ 509/525-7856): A small, family-owned winery, Rulo crafts complex, full-bodied syrah, creamy chardonnay, and aromatic viognier. Reasonable prices and high quality make this winery truly memorable. See p. 345.
- **Woodward Canyon Winery** (Walla Walla; ☎ 509/525-4129): This winery produces some of Washington's premier red wines, yet, surprisingly, they offer great wines at under \$20 (as well as plenty of more expensive bottlings). See p. 344.
- **Townshend Cellar** (Spokane; ☎ 509/238-140): Quite a few Washington wineries are now making port, but none makes them as good as this little, out-of-the-way winery north of Spokane. The huckleberry port is pure ambrosia. See chapter 10.

11 The Best Family Attractions & Activities

- **Seattle Center** (Seattle): As the site of the Space Needle, Seattle Center is one of the city's required stops. However, families will also find here a children's museum, a children's theater, an interactive science museum, amusement park rides, and an arcade area. See p. 106.
- **Museum of Flight**: Okay, so airplanes may not be quite as fascinating to kids as fire engines and trains, but there are so many cool airplanes and things to do at this museum that kids usually don't want to leave when you're ready to go. See p. 111.
- **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 be spotted also. See "The San Juan Islands" in chapter 5.

- **Fort Worden State Park** (Port Townsend): With a beach, old gun batteries, a science center that has tide pool touch tanks, and miles of hiking trails, this park is a one-stop entertainment center for kids. See p. 221.
- **Point Defiance Park** (Tacoma): This gigantic city park at the north end of Tacoma packs in more fun stuff for kids than a family could ever hope to do in a day. There's a zoo, a replica of a historic trading fort, and an old-time logging camp. See p. 204.
- **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 8.

12 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 if you stop by on a weekday or in the off season, you can easily be seduced by its vintage charm. See "La Conner & the Skagit Valley" in chapter 5.
- **Langley:** Located near the south end of Whidbey Island, this former fishing village is now something of an upscale arts community. There are art galleries, antiques and fashion shops, and several good restaurants. All this right on the shore of Saratoga Passage. Some buildings even rise straight out of the water. See "Whidbey Island" in chapter 5.
- **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 has become a favorite weekend destination for Seattleites. See "Port Townsend: A Restored Victorian Seaport" in chapter 7.
- **Leavenworth:** Lederhosen? Dirndls? Polka parties? Sounds like someplace to steer clear of, 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 are the genuine article. See "The Wenatchee Valley and Bavarian Leavenworth" in chapter 9.
- **Winthrop:** If you saw an 1890s photo of Winthrop and then visited this remote community in north central Washington, you might think the town had been caught in a time warp. It just doesn't look much different than it did back then. See "Winthrop & the Methow Valley" in chapter 9.