

# The Best of Washington

**D**espite 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 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 daunting task. Where should we go? Where should we stay? Where should we eat? Planning a trip 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 it. 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.

## 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. 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 5.
- **Olympic National Park:** This park has 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 7.

- **North Cascades National Park Complex:** Comprised 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 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, 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 9.

- **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 9.
- **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 10.

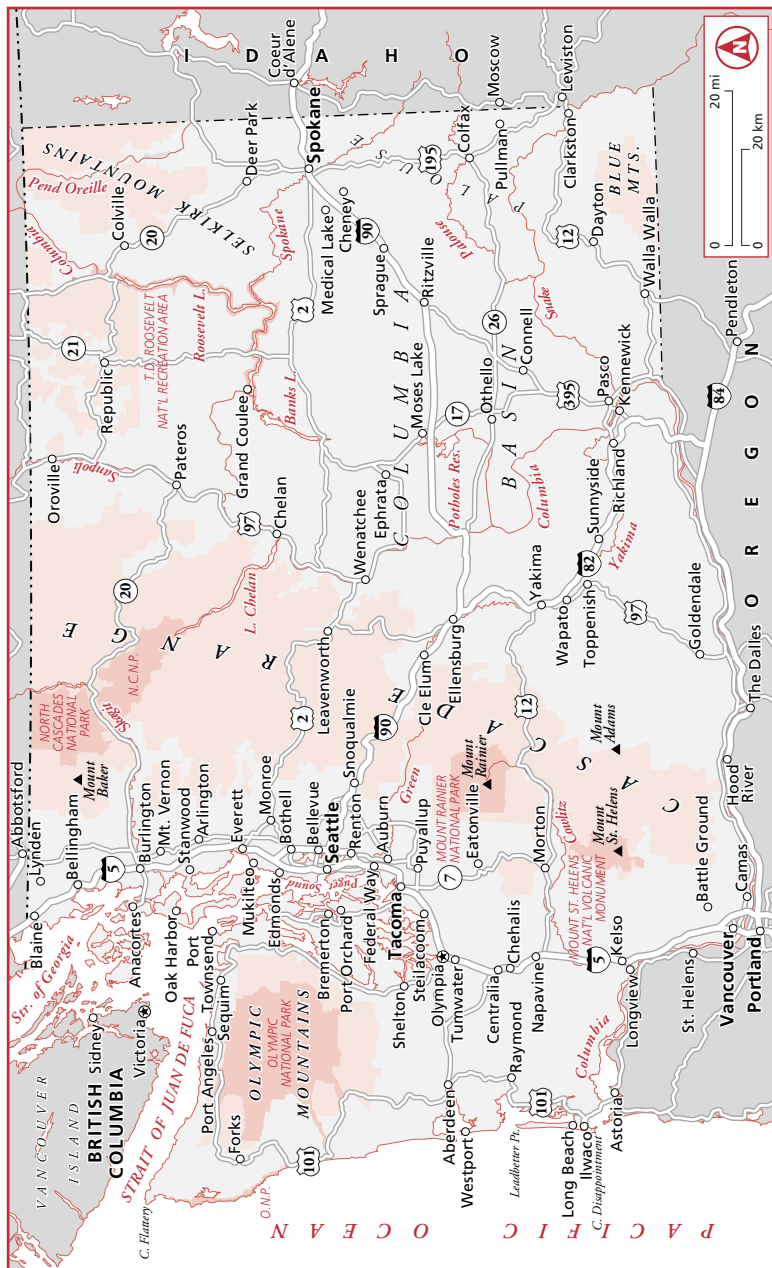
## 2 The Best Outdoor Activities

- **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 5.
- **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 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. Ski from one lodge to the next down the valley, or use one of the luxurious

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lodges as a base. See “Winthrop & the Methow Valley” in chapter 9.

- **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 9.
- **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 9.

- **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 board-sailors from around the world. See “The Columbia Gorge & the Mount Adams Area” in chapter 9.

### 3 The Best Beaches

- **Alki Beach** (Seattle): 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 are 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 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 5.
- **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 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 beach for hikers, who are often rewarded by the sight 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 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

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 7.

## 4 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 5.
- **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 7.
- **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 rainforest. Don’t forget your rain gear. See “Olympic National Park West” in chapter 7.
- **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 9.

- **Maple Pass Loop Trail** (North Cascades Scenic Highway): 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 9.
- **Trails out of Sunrise** (Mount Rainier National Park): The Sunrise area, on the northeast flanks of Washington’s 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 9.
- **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 9.

## 5 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. Larrabee State Park provides a chance to get out of your car and walk down to a pretty little beach. See “Bellingham & Environs” in chapter 5.
- **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 7.
- **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 9.
- **Columbia River Scenic Highway:** Wash. 14 parallels the Columbia River from Vancouver, Wash., 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 the waterfalls and 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.
- **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 scenic alternative to high-speed but bland I-82. See 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 10.
- **Soap Lake to the Grand Coulee Dam:** The 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. In addition to today’s cliff-ringed reservoirs, there are rugged canyons, mineral lakes, caves, and a dry waterfall. See “The Grand Coulee Dam Area” in chapter 10.

## 6 The Best Bed & Breakfasts and 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. 85.
- **Spring Bay Inn** (Orcas Island; ☎ 360/376-5531): This secluded waterfront inn is a luxurious island retreat, and a stay includes not only

bed and breakfast, but also brunch and a daily sea-kayak excursion. In-room fireplaces and a hot tub right on the beach add a touch of romance. See p. 181.

- **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. 180.
- **Willcox House Country Inn** (The 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. 208.
- **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. 216.
- **Thornewood Castle Inn** (Lake-wood; ☎ 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. 217.
- **Hoquiam's Castle** (Hoquiam; 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. The town of Hoquiam isn't a major tourist destination, but this inn is reason enough to spend a weekend in the area. See p. 265.
- **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. 304.
- **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. 303.
- **Cave B Inn at Sagecliffe** (Ellensburg; ☎ 888/785-2283 or 509/785-2283): Surrounded by vineyards and set atop 900-foot cliffs overlooking the Columbia River in central Washington, this inn offers luxury in a spectacular and remote location. Well worth the drive. See p. 330.

## 7 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. 287.
- **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. 287.

- **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. 303.
- **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 on business. With the feel of an upscale summer camp, the lodge is tucked amid granite boulders and ponderosa pines. See p. 303.
- **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. 308.

- **The Inn at Suncadia** (Cle Elum; ☎ 866/904-6300): Although this luxury inn on the east side of Snoqualmie Pass is primarily the lodging for a golf resort community, it is set amid the pine trees not far from some of the most rugged peaks in Washington. See p. 308.
- **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 scheduled to reopen in 2008 after a major renovation. 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. 315.
- **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. 325.

## 8 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. 78.
- **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 a resort feel. See p. 89.
- **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. 160.
- **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. 173.

- **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. 174.
- **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. 197.
- **The Resort at Ludlow Bay** (Port Ludlow; ☎ 800/732-1239 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. 233.
- **Lake Crescent Lodge** (Olympic National Park west of Port Angeles; ☎ 360/928-3211): On the shore of Lake Crescent, a landlocked fjord 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 cabins. See p. 248.
- **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. 255.
- **Alderbrook Resort & Spa** (Union; ☎ 800/622-9370 or 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. 258.

## 9 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.
- **The Chef's Kitchen 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. 160.
- **Backdoor Kitchen** (San Juan Island; ☎ 360/378-9540): This back-street gem is the sort of place people dream of discovering in their travels—a locals' secret in an unlikely location. With an eclectic menu that will keep you coming back for more, the Backdoor is the door to choose in Friday Harbor. See p. 176.
- **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. 188.

- **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. 208.
- **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. 234.
- **The Dining Room at 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. 288.
- **26brix** (Walla Walla; ☎ 509/526-4075): The menu at this memorable wine-country restaurant is deceptively simple, but the preparations by chef Mike Davis certainly are not. An absolute must on a visit to Walla Walla. See p. 350.
- **Whitehouse-Crawford Restaurant** (Walla Walla; ☎ 509/525-2222): In downtown Walla Walla, at the heart of Washington's fastest-growing wine region, this restaurant in a former mill building shares space with a winery. The scene and menu have a decidedly Seattle feel. See p. 351.
- **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. 353.

## 10 The Best Wineries (Open to the Public)

- **Sheridan Vineyard** (Yakima Valley; 509/829-3205): Focusing production on bordeaux blends and syrah, this winery produces highly distinctive fruit-driven wines from estate-grown grapes. See p. 334.
- **Wineglass Cellars** (Yakima Valley; ☎ 509/829-3011): This small, unassuming, family-run winery produces some of the state's best red wines. It's also one of the most underrated and little known wineries in the Yakima Valley. See p. 334.
- **Amavi Cellars** (Walla Walla; ☎ 509/525-3541): This is a sister winery to the celebrated Pepper Bridge Winery and produces more economically priced wines, with an emphasis on reds. The syrah here can be among the finest in the region and prices are around \$25. See p. 345.
- **Five Star Cellars** (Walla Walla; ☎ 509/527-8400): Producing rich, dark, fully extracted red wines with soft tannins, this little Walla Walla winery produces stellar and very drinkable wines. A rising star on the local wine scene. See p. 347.
- **Rulo Winery** (Walla Walla; ☎ 509/525-7856): Small and family-owned, Rulo crafts complex, full-bodied syrah; creamy chardonnay; and aromatic viognier. Reasonable prices and high quality make Rulo truly memorable. See p. 348.
- **Tamarack Cellars** (Walla Walla; ☎ 509/526-3533): Winemaker Ron Colvin crafts a small number of lush,

memorable red wines at his winery at the Walla Walla airport. Emphasis is on reds with silky tannins and big fruit character. See p. 347.

- **Woodward Canyon Winery** (Walla Walla; ☎ 509/525-4129): This winery produces some of Washington's premier red wines, yet surprisingly, it also offers great wines at \$20 or less (and plenty of more expensive bottles). See p. 346.
- **Barrister Winery** (Spokane; ☎ 509/465-3591): Started by two lawyers

(thus the name), this winery in a warehouse/arts district of downtown Spokane produces delicious red wines with a perfect blend of fruit, tannin, and oakiness. See p. 357.

- **Townshend Cellar** (Spokane; ☎ 509/238-1400): Many Washington wineries are now making ports, but few make ones as good as those at this little, out-of-the-way winery north of Spokane. The huckleberry port is pure ambrosia. See p. 358.

## 11 The Best Family Attractions & Activities

- **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, an interactive science museum, amusement park rides, and an arcade area. See p. 114.
- **Museum of Flight**: 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. 121.
- **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 5.
- **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. 230.
- **Point 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. 213.
- **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 stop by on a weekday or in the off season, and you'll be easily seduced by its vintage charm. See "La Conner & the Skagit Valley" in chapter 5.
- **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 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 is now a favorite weekend destination for Seattleites. See “Port Townsend: A Restored Victorian Seaport” in chapter 7.
- **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 9.

- **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 9.
- **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 10.