

Washington State Ferries serves the four main San Juan islands—Lopez, Orcas, Shaw and San Juan, as well as Sidney, near Victoria, B.C. For Sidney, it's advisable to secure a vehicle reservation in advance if traveling with your vehicle. The San Juans and Sidney route is the most-complex in the system, with a variety of routes to and among the islands, and variable schedules for each route. The Anacortes Ferry Terminal is located 3.5 miles west of town, on State Route 20.



Anacortes' antiques shops and cafes offer treasures and treats.

Steve Beremson

## San Juan Islands

Consisting of 172 islands, islets and small skerries in the Salish Sea, the San Juan Islands are surrounded by more than water. Mountains loom in the distance—especially the ivory summit of 10,781-foot Mount Baker, 50 miles eastward. Clean Pacific air rushes down the Strait of Juan de Fuca to envelop the islands. Poised in a rain shadow created by the Olympic Mountains to the southwest, the islands are bathed in sunlight throughout the summer and much of the rest of the year.

The result of the islands' geographical character is a palpable sense of unhurried serenity. Fewer than 16,000 people live here. Small towns with charming inns, cafes and shops give way to pastoral farmlands, forested hills and 300 miles of shoreline lapped by gentle waves. Artists, musicians, chefs and crafters flock here; the quiet is not only intrinsic to the islands, it's protected by law: San Juan County was the first jurisdiction in the United States that bans personal watercraft. Kayaking and sailing, bike-riding and hiking, whale-watching and beachcombing are the key activities—aside from simply listening to the bark of sea lions, the cry of eagles and the telltale “whoosh” as whales blow.

All three main islands, have spring, summer and fall farmers markets, where truly local growers offer island produce. The most conspicuous events each summer are Fourth of July fireworks shows, again on all three main islands, in Friday Harbor, Roche Harbor, Eastsound and Lopez Village. **Savor the San Juans**, a festival devoted to local foods, crafts and art,

## Anacortes

Equidistant between Seattle to the south and Vancouver, B.C. to the north, Anacortes, on Fidalgo Island (reached via a bridge across a narrow channel), is the gateway to the San Juan Islands and Victoria, B.C. The city of Anacortes is a retail and maritime center that's home to one of the largest boat-building facilities on the West Coast. Several whale-watching charter operations here draw visitors, and travelers heading to the San Juans or Victoria stop in to explore the town's art galleries and antiques shops, or to have a meal in a local cafe. Festivals, such as the **Anacortes Waterfront Festival** (June 2-3) and the **Anacortes Arts Festival** (Aug. 3-5) are another draw.

One of the finest city parks in the region can be found just beyond the ferry terminal; at the western edge of Fidalgo Island, on a 220-acre knob of land, **Washington Park** juts into Strait. From the park's lengthy shoreline there are gorgeous views of the Rosario Strait and the Olympics. With a scenic loop drive through deep forest, as well as campgrounds and day-use areas, the park is beloved by locals and visitors.



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takes place throughout October. Several dozen adventure companies offer kayaking, bicycling, sailing, diving and wildlife watching tours on each of the islands.

## San Juan Island

The most populous (pop: 7,000) of the four major islands, San Juan is the county seat, and the most-frequently visited island in the archipelago. Ferries dock in downtown Friday Harbor, the island's main town, allowing foot passengers to easily wander the town. The picturesque harbor is protected by Brown Island, and is ever bustling with the thrum of small-boat traffic and floatplanes taking off or landing. A stroll along the Port of Friday Harbor public docks brings you to small seafood stands and past glistening yachts from near and far; harbor seals are a common sight. Adjacent to the ferry dock, **Cannery Landing** is a charming small shopping center with a popular ice-cream store, a bookstore, locally roasted coffee, island wine store, clothing boutique and craft galleries.

The rest of Friday Harbor climbs the hill above the water, consisting of colorful streets lined with small shops, inns, hostels and cafes. Just up the hill from the ferry dock, the **Whale Museum** (62 First St. N) is devoted to fostering appreciation and understanding of the cetaceans that inhabit the waters nearby, focusing on, but not limited to, orcas. Adventure-seekers who would rather see the real thing can take multi-day kayak trips with Friday Harbor's **Outdoor Odysseys** ([www.outdoorodysseys.com](http://www.outdoorodysseys.com)), a kayak touring company that's notable for



The view of the San Juan Islands from the top of Mount Constitution is magnificent.

Robert Demar

wildlife viewing and gourmet cuisine.

Nearby, the **Bluff** restaurant at Friday Harbor House (130 West St.) was one of the pioneers of Northwest contemporary cuisine. **Bakery San Juan** (775 Mullis St.) has been proffering treats, breads and pizzas to residents and visitors for decades; and **Kings Market** (160 Spring St. W) stocks marine gear, clothing and supplies in addition to food. **Waterworks Gallery** (315 Argyle St.) focuses exclusively on Northwest artists, with an emphasis on island sculptors and painters.

The rest of San Juan Island is a visitor's delight, whether touring by car or bike. **San Juan Island National Historical Park** preserves two lovely but different landscapes: **English Camp**, at the north end of the island, is a sylvan dale on a small cove holding tidy gardens, broad green lawns and what may be the largest bigleaf maple in the Northwest. **American Camp**, a much larger preserve (1,220 acres) is one of the last bastions of native Puget Sound prairie, a lovely, rolling-hill

grassland carpeted with wildflowers, enjoying expansive views over the water to Vancouver Island and the Olympic Mountains. Hikers here often spy orcas in Haro Strait. The park marks a unique episode in 19<sup>th</sup>-century history when two great powers, the United States and Britain, came to the brink of war but chose to mediate their differences in peace.

The two park units are 13 miles apart; roughly halfway between, **Lime Kiln State Park** overlooks Haro Strait and is an oft-used vantage point to watch for whales. Not far from Lime Kiln, **Pelindaba Lavender** (33 Hawthorne Lane) offers soaps, candles, oils and innumerable other products—including ice cream—made from the aromatic herb.

At the northwest end of the island, **Roche Harbor** ([www.rocheharbor.com](http://www.rocheharbor.com)) is a historic port and resort; from here, limestone was shipped throughout the Northwest in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The resort's historic **Hotel de Haro** was a favorite of John Wayne, who sailed these waters each summer; the Roche Harbor docks often host multi-million-dollar yachts from around the world. The nearby **Westcott Bay Sculpture Park** has more than 100 pieces of art, including some clever wind-operated sculptures, strategically placed in lightly wooded grasslands around a small pond.

Oyster fanciers like to stop by **Westcott Bay Sea Farms** (904 Westcott Dr.) to buy a dozen or two fresh oysters; close by, **Westcott Bay Cider** (12 Anderson Lane) produces European-style ciders from heritage apple orchards.



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### JUNE

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With miles of country lanes and lovely beaches, the San Juan Islands are popular for bicycle touring.



San Juan Islands Visitors Bureau

## Orcas Island

The largest of the San Juan Islands, Orcas is a 57-square-mile horseshoe splayed wide at the north end of the archipelago. Like all the islands, it consists of hill and woods, farm fields and rocky shores, with sandy beaches interspersed amid headlands. While the ferry docks at a tiny hamlet called Orcas on maps, the island's main town, **Eastsound**, lies at the top end of the long inlet that bisects the island.

The road from the ferry landing to Eastsound takes visitors past a small community at **Deer Harbor** (a cove along the colorfully named Massacre Bay), with a small inn, restaurant and marina. As you approach the main town, you'll find **Crow Valley Pottery** (2274 Orcas Rd.), for 48 years one of the Northwest's premier outlets for clay, porcelain and ceramic goods by local artists.

Like Friday Harbor, Eastsound overlooks a protected harbor, Fishing Bay, from its vantage between two points. It too, is a small collection of quiet streets

lined with shops, cafes, inns and galleries. In Eastsound, a tidy village eminently suitable for walking, local institutions include **Wild Flower Bakery** (29 Beach Rd.), famed for muffins, cinnamon rolls, and sandwiches made with hearty breads; **Allium Restaurant** (310 E Main St.), where contemporary cuisine celebrity

chef Lisa Nakamura focuses on island foods; and the **Outlook Inn** (171 Main St.), a small boutique lodging whose restaurant, **New Leaf**, is a highly rated practitioner of Northwest Contemporary cuisine, and famed for its breakfast French toast and eggs Benedict.

Farther around the island, historic **Rosario Resort** ([www.rosarioresort.com](http://www.rosarioresort.com)) occupies its own small harbor on Eastsound. Past that is the most conspicuous attraction on Orcas, **Moran State Park**, which climbs 2,409-foot **Mount Constitution**, the highest point in the San Juans. The road to the top challenges energetic bike riders, as do woodland trails leading to the summit; from here, views of Mount Baker, the Coast Range in Canada, the Vancouver Island ranges and the Olympic Mountains are simply breathtaking.

At the far eastern end of the island, **Doe Bay Resort & Retreat** (107 Doe Bay Rd., Olga) is a legendary counterculture haven famed for its relaxed atmosphere, economical small cabins and yurts, and soaking tubs.

## Lopez Island

A favorite among bicycle travelers and kayakers, Lopez is a largely rural island that's flatter than San Juan or Orcas. Long country lanes here offer uncrowded riding for visitors; most lodgings have bikes for guests to use if you don't bring your own. The ferry berths at a small north-end wharf famed for its leave-one, take-one book collection in its waiting room, and the colorful geranium pots along the ramp. As on Orcas, the island's main town, Lopez Village, lies several miles away along a series of traffic-free county roads. Two parks at the north end draw many visitors: **Odlin County Park** and **Spencer Spit State Park**. Both offer camping, long sandy beaches, wetland preserves and easy hikes through native forests.

Lopez Village largely occupies just two streets, and overlooks a completely protected harbor, Fisherman Bay, that's perfect for kayaking. In the village, the **Bay Café** (9 Old Post Rd.) is a nationally renowned purveyor of Northwest cuisine, focusing on seafood; and **Holly B's Bakery** (165 Cherry Tree Lane) may be the best-known purveyor of cinnamon rolls in the state.

The rest of the island is a very peaceful pastiche of farm fields grazed by sheep, copses of trees marking tiny hillocks, and pebbly coves along the shoreline. The late April **Tour de Lopez** (April 28) draws hundreds of bicycle riders to the island. Aside from that, and the Fourth of July festivities, not a whole lot happens on Lopez—exactly as its residents and visitors like it.

## Shaw Island

The smallest island (7.7 square miles) served by Washington State Ferries, Shaw is the home of a monastery, **Our Lady of the Rock**, operated by Benedictine nuns. Guests are welcome for day visits and overnight spiritual retreats. Elsewhere on the island, several public preserves are open for day use only, and a popular campground, **Shaw County Park**, has waterfront and wooded campsites, a long sandy beach and a boat launch.

On the waterfront at the ferry landing,

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the 1898 **Shaw General Store**, with original island fir floors, is at the heart of the community; the **Silver Water Cafe** recently opened inside.

## Sidney, B.C.

The Washington State Ferries terminal on Vancouver Island is the gateway for visitors to our neighboring land, most of whom head on to Victoria, 20 miles south. However, Sidney has its own merits as a destination. Its full name is Sidney-by-the-Sea, and its British beachside resort flavor is enhanced by the fact it also represents another uniquely British institution, a “booktown”—the only such place in Canada. The main street, Beacon Avenue, is lined with bookshops ranging from general interest to stores specializing in military, children’s and vintage titles.

Also on Beacon Avenue is a popular breakfast bistro, **Third Street Café** (2466 Beacon Ave.), locally famous for a menu that features eight different preparations of eggs Benedict. At the end of Beacon Avenue, housed in a complex that includes the Sidney Pier Hotel, is the **Shaw Ocean Discovery Centre** (9811 Seaport Pl.). This compact, but very engaging, aquarium focuses exclusively on the marine life of the Salish Sea and Northwest Coast, and illustrates in its exhibit tanks just how colorful and rich the life is within the waters we sail.

The nearby Sidney Pier is the departure point for day-tour boats heading out to **Sidney Spit**, one unit of Canada’s new **Gulf Islands National Park Reserve**. The spit is a long stretch of white sand at the north end of a small island, a mile offshore Sidney. The park’s main vehicle campground, McDonald, is just north of Sidney proper.

One of the world’s best-known tourist attractions, **Butchart Gardens** ([www.butchartgardens.com](http://www.butchartgardens.com)), is just 20 minutes from the dock in Sidney, on the other side of Saanich Peninsula, past Victoria International Airport. This 55-acre preserve was carved from a former quarry by Jennie Butchart in the early 20th century, and its lavish gardens now draw almost 1 million visitors a year.

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This Mukilteo route is among the busiest in the system, carrying more than 4 million passengers annually between Mukilteo, on the mainland just south of Everett, and Clinton, on south Whidbey Island. The crossing takes approximately 20 minutes.



Krisag Burns

Mukilteo Lighthouse

## Mukilteo

On Possession Sound 26 miles north of Seattle, Mukilteo stair-steps down a wooded, west-facing hillside overlooking Whidbey Island, with the Mukilteo Ferry Terminal at the foot of the hill. Originally the place where the Snohomish Tribe spent their winters, Mukilteo later was the setting for a lumber mill and the state's first salmon cannery.

Front Street forms a short spur just south of the ferry terminal, with **Lighthouse Park** at the end of the street. The picturesque 1906 **Mukilteo Lighthouse**, still in operation today and on the National Register of Historic Places, is the focal point of the community; the Mukilteo Historical Society offers tours on weekend afternoons, April through September. Between the park and the ferry terminal, **Ivar's Mukilteo Landing**—a historic local company—sells thick-cut fish-and-chips. Opposite, the **Diamond Knot Brewing Company** (621 Front

St.) serves up pub fare, pizzas and sandwiches to accompany their own brews and guest taps.

Beyond the park and cafes, State Route 525, also called the Mukilteo Speedway, cuts uphill from the ferry dock. Several blocks up from the water, past the railroad tracks, a small retail sector draws visitors to shops, diners and the **Mukilteo Chocolate Company** (407 Lincoln Ave.), which makes homestyle fudge.

## Whidbey Island

The largest island in Puget Sound, at 45 miles long and 10 miles across at its widest, Whidbey Island may be only 29 miles from Seattle, but it feels a world away, with gorgeous sand beaches facing sparkling Admiralty Inlet to the west; small towns filled with shops and cafes; five exceptional view parks; and many recreational options. Beyond its scenic splendors, the island



Future of Flight Aviation Center

### Future of Flight Aviation Center

The Future of Flight Aviation Center ([www.futureofflight.org](http://www.futureofflight.org)), on State Route 526 en route to Mukilteo, is the only commercial jet assembly plant in North America open to touring. Visitors here can design their own aircraft; the Airplane Design Zone explains the technology and design innovations of powered flight, and visitors can build their fantasy jets onscreen before modifying, testing and printing out the final schematic. The tour concludes with a visit to the world's largest building to watch Boeing jets such as the 747 and 787 being assembled.



Whidbey Island Kayaking Company

Viewing gray whales off the bluffs of Langley is a highlight of springtime Whidbey Island Kayaking Company paddling excursions.

is ideally situated in the rain shadow of the Olympics, so islanders enjoy more sunshine than nearly any other Western Washington locale.

Whidbey Island was long occupied by several groups of Coast Salish people. Living along the shoreline in longhouses, they feasted on shellfish from the rich tidelands and berries from the island's meadows. When Captain George Vancouver sailed into Admiralty Inlet in the summer of 1792, he named the island after the master of the HMS *Discovery*. Over the following decades, sea captains settled central Whidbey Island,

and pioneering farmers grew wheat, oats, barley and fruit, and raised sheep. These days, farming is again in fashion, and farmers markets across the island attract shoppers, while farm stands piled high with seasonal produce decorate farm gates along country byways. The island today is mostly rural, with small communities dotted across the landscape and several quaint towns.



Clinton Beach Park offers plenty of space for kids to burn off energy.

## Clinton

Whidbey Island's Clinton Ferry Terminal, at the southeastern edge of the island, is at the bottom of a forested hill. There is no development at the terminal—the town's tiny commercial district is located atop the hill, several blocks away, although a stand, **Shirley's**, offers quick bites and picnic fare, including hamburgers, perfect for picnics at **Clinton Beach Park**, a pocket beach adjacent to the terminal. **Pickles Deli** (11042 SR 525), with a lengthier menu, including Panini, wraps and salads, is a three-minute drive the ferry dock.

While Clinton is a tiny hamlet (pop: 928) with goods and services oriented mostly toward locals, the town has a destination garden that's well worth a visit. **Cultus Bay Nursery** (7568 Cultus Bay Rd.), 5 miles south, is beloved by garden enthusiasts; pathways here weave through lush foliage, and intimate settings are surrounded by vibrant flower borders.

## Up-Island

Six miles north of the ferry dock, **Langley** is a welcoming bluff-top tourist destination overlooking Saratoga Passage. The arts are a part of everyday life here; boutiques and galleries jostle side by side with a gem of a small art museum, and wine bars, cafes and a destination luxury inn with a nationally renowned

restaurant—the **Inn at Langley** (400 First St.)—offer sustenance after shopping.

**Callahan's Firehouse Studio & Gallery** (179 Second St.), inside the town's old firehouse, offers visitors the opportunity to create their own colorful glass art; **Museo** (215 First St.) is a contemporary fine-art gallery that specializes in whimsy, and **Whidbey Art Gallery** (220 Second St.) is an artists' cooperative with works that reflect the island's serene landscapes and seascapes.

Long before all the galleries, the town's historic **Star Store** (201 First St.) was at the heart of the community; today it offers contemporary fashions, kitchenware and knick-knacks on one side, gourmet groceries on the other. For chocolate lovers and kids in need of sweets, **Sweet Mona's** (138 Second St.) makes buttery, dark-chocolate caramels, crave-worthy truffles and creamy fudge.

Langley is a fun destination year-round, but it's especially so in spring, when gray whales visit the shoals off the town's bluffs; you can spot them from the town's scenic overlook or, even better, slip into a kayak for a day tour with **Whidbey Island Kayaking Company** ([www.whidbeyislandkayaking.com](http://www.whidbeyislandkayaking.com)), which also offers bike tours. Every summer Langley sets aside its laidback nature during the vibrant **Choochokam Arts Festival** (July 7-8), with nonstop concerts, an arts-and-crafts show and a lively street dance.

### CASH STORE CACHET

*It may be just a bend in the road, but historic Bayview Corner, just off SR 525 5 miles north of Clinton, is filled with character. The landmark Bayview Cash Store building, in danger of being demolished in 1999, was rescued by a group of philanthropists. Today the lovingly restored complex brims with shops, an art gallery and coffee shop, the Taste for Wine sampling room, the Basil Cafe and a nursery. A farmers market is held here Saturdays, May through October.*



## Visitor Information Centers:

For in-person help and detailed information, call or stop by one of the many visitor centers located throughout the islands.

**Greater Oak Harbor Chamber of Commerce**  
32630 SR 20  
Oak Harbor, WA 98277  
OakHarborChamber.com  
(360) 675-3535



**Central Whidbey Chamber of Commerce**  
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CentralWhidbeyChamber.com  
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**Greater Freeland Chamber of Commerce**  
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Freeland, WA 98249  
Freeland-WA.org  
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**Langley Chamber of Commerce**  
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Langley, WA 98260  
VisitLangley.com  
(360) 221-6765



**Clinton Chamber of Commerce**  
Anchor Books & Coffee  
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Clinton, WA 98236  
ClintonChamberofCommerce.org  
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**Camano Island Chamber of Commerce**  
SR 532 & North Camano Dr.  
Camano Island, WA 98282  
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WhidbeyCamanoIslands.com

North of Freeland, the island's retail and financial center, **South Whidbey Island State Park** has awe-inspiring views of Puget Sound and the Olympics from more than a mile of shoreline; visitors can harvest crab and clams here, and camp in a verdant forest.

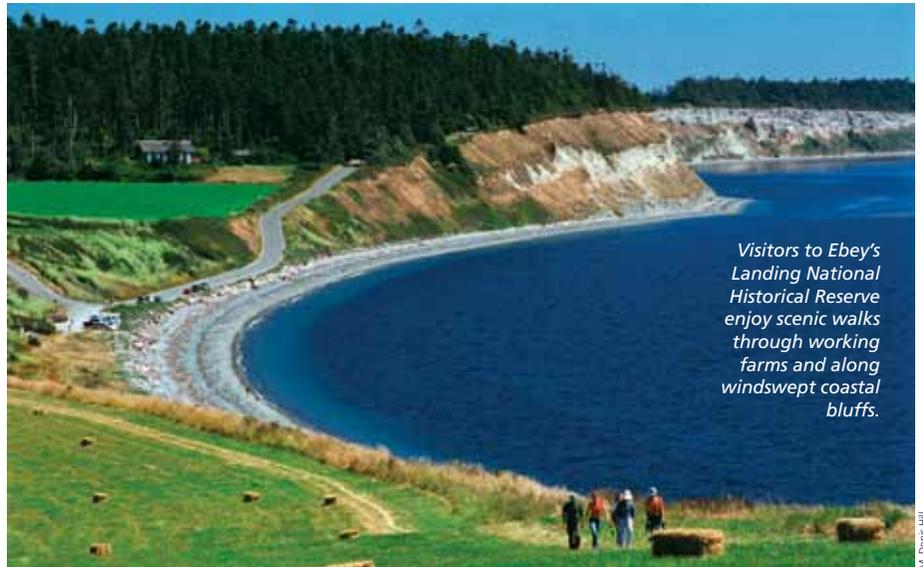
The bright red barn of **Greenbank Farm** (SR 525 at Smuggler's Cove Rd.) stands out against green farm fields at the narrowest point of the island. Founded as a sheep farm in 1906 by Calvin Philips, the farm was a microcosm of island life, with some 50 laborers working on the farm at its zenith. By the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century the farm was a regionally famous loganberry farm whose fruit was used in wines made by the predecessor of the renowned Chateau Ste. Michelle.

Today, the farm, owned by the Nature Conservancy, has nature paths, two art galleries, the **Greenbank Wine Shop**, the **Greenbank Cheese Shop** and the rustic **Whidbey Pies Café**, which features local-foods meals and lightly sweetened loganberry pie that's well worth the stop, alone.

Nearby, the **Meerkerk Rhododendron Gardens** (SR 525 and Resort Road) is a 53-acre wonderland of peaceful woodland gardens with more than 5 miles of trails.

On Admiralty Inlet on the west side of the island, the ferry to Port Townsend docks at the Coupeville Ferry Terminal, which is situated within **Ebey's Landing Historical Reserve**. The reserve encompasses more than 17,000 acres of working rural landscape, two state parks and miles of shoreline.

**Fort Casey State Park**, just north



Visitors to **Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve** enjoy scenic walks through working farms and along windswept coastal bluffs.

M. Dennis Hill

of the ferry terminal, was built as a coastal defense during WWII. This is a grand, windswept place with more than 2 miles of sand beaches and phenomenal views overlooking Admiralty Inlet and the Olympics. There are also gun emplacements and upland trails for exploring the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Nine miles north of Fort Casey, at the northern edge of the reserve, **Fort Ebey State Park** features similar views, more than 3 miles of saltwater shoreline, a freshwater lake for fishing, and a web of hiking and biking trails; it's also the setting for the Admiralty Head Lighthouse.

The town of **Coupeville**, on Penn Cove on the eastern shore of the island, is at the heart of the reserve. The town's Front Street looks much like it did in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and with more than 50 buildings on the National Register of Historic Places, the town is a draw for visitors and moviemakers. Coupeville

is known for its antiques shops and boutiques.

**Oak Harbor** (pop: 22,000), the largest town on Whidbey, has a historic downtown and waterfront parks; it's primarily a commercial center for nearby Naval Air Station Whidbey Island.

At the northern tip of the island, the spectacular 1935 **Deception Pass Bridge** conveys travelers across the churning maelstrom between Whidbey Island and Fidalgo Island; the tidal rapids here can flow as fast as 9.5 miles per hour. For those without vertigo, it's well worth a stop to park and walk across the bridge. **Deception Pass State Park** is a 4,134-acre park with 77,000 feet of saltwater shoreline, including sand dunes, as well as forested campgrounds and three lakes. Trails here pass through stands of old-growth forest and yield exciting views of the cliff-edged waters.



*Spoiled Dog Winery, near Langley, welcomes visitors to their vineyards and tasting room.*

Sherry Wyatt

### Whidbey Wineries

Eight wineries call Whidbey home. While many craft their wines from grapes grown in sunny Eastern Washington, several produce estate wines from grapes grown in the island's loamy, sun-warmed soil. As momentum builds for the island's wine industry, wineries are bringing home awards from competitions.

Wineries with onsite tasting rooms include: **Comforts of Whidbey**, **Greenbank Cellars**, **Holmes Harbor Cellars**, **Spoiled Dog Winery** and **Whidbey Island Winery**. The **Blooms** winery tasting room is at the Historic Bayview Cash Store, at Bayview Corner, north of Clinton, and **Ott & Murphy** has a tasting room in downtown Langley. **Useless Bay Wines** are sold at the Greenbank Farm Wine Shop and other locations.

Whidbey Island wine-makers band together for the **Savor Spring** event every May and **Autumn Crush** event in November. Listings of wineries can be found at [www.whidbeycamanoislands.com](http://www.whidbeycamanoislands.com).

*The Coupeville Ferry Terminal (see previous page), from which passengers travel to and from Port Townsend (it's a 35-minute crossing), is 8 miles south of the town of Coupeville, and 24 miles from the Clinton Ferry Terminal, at the south end of the island. The terminal is flanked by the driftwood-jumbled beaches of Fort Casey State Park across Admiralty Inlet from Port Townsend.*

## Port Townsend

One of the state's most-visited tourist destinations, the beautiful, historic town of Port Townsend has it all: block after block of galleries and boutiques in vintage brick buildings; fanciful Victorian architecture; some of the best local-foods restaurants on the Olympic Peninsula; a thriving maritime culture with boating opportunities just steps from the commercial district; and a historic fort with a lighthouse and spectacular beach, nearby. All this, and the town has some of the most stunning water views anywhere, with Puget Sound in the foreground and the snow-tipped Cascade Range to the east, glaciated Mount Baker to the north.

Access to Port Townsend from the mainland is easy via Washington State Ferries, from Mukilteo to Clinton at the southern edge of Whidbey Island, and then from Central Whidbey's Coupeville ferry terminal to downtown Port Townsend. When rolling off the Port Townsend ferry dock, turn right to reach downtown.

Once known for its safe harbor and bountiful forests that went into lumber products secured aboard clipper ships, the town was the headquarters for the Puget Sound Customs District in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; all ships had to stop here on their way into Puget Sound. Bustling with sailors and merchants, the town was every bit a part of the Wild West, where unsuspecting victims were kidnapped and smuggled through tunnels to waiting ships, where they became indentured servants. The town's upstanding citizens chose homes on the high bluff above the town, building their gingerbread-like Victorians overlooking the ruff-raff. The town today is on the National Register of



*The Romanesque Jefferson County Courthouse, in Port Townsend, is one of the town's most dramatic historic structures.*

Historic Places, and it's still divided into the lower commercial district and upper residential area, connected by a staircase on Taylor Street.

The **Visitors Bureau** (440 Twelfth St.), a 3-minute drive south of the ferry dock, offers a walking map of Port Townsend's Victorian architecture. Rather than just looking, you can choose to stay in a restored Victorian, complete with period furnishings. The **Bishop Victorian Hotel** (714 Washington St.) has suites with kitchenettes (some with fireplaces); **The Palace Hotel** (1004 Water St.) is a bit more rustic, with no phones—but tall windows overlook the town.

Several museums illuminate Port Townsend's colorful history, including the **Rothschild House Historic Museum** (corner of Taylor and Franklin streets, upper PT); the **Jefferson County Historical Museum** (450 Water St.) and the **Commanding Officer's Quarters**, in nearby Fort Worden State Park.

Fort Worden is another of the town's

most popular attractions. Just north of downtown (within walking distance via a blufftop trail, but more easily reached by car), this assemblage of 20<sup>th</sup> century officers' homes, barracks and bunkers is centered on an expansive parade ground. At the base of the bluff, the **Port Townsend Marine Science Center** thrills kids with touch tanks, and a broad sweep of beach with the picturesque **Point Wilson Lighthouse** positioned at the far end is one of the best picnicking, sand-play and beachcombing places in the state. Thrifty travelers pitch tents or park their campers in the campground here.

If you'd rather get out on the water than admire it, you can hop aboard a kayak at **PT Outdoors**, situated at the base of the bluff in Fort Worden and in town at 1017 Water Street; the company offers kayak and stand-up paddle-board rentals, and guided kayak tours of the wildlife-rich bay, where you're likely to see seals, porpoises and bald eagles.

The waters that lap at the region's



Cristina Pwamik

Left: With scores of local boutiques and galleries, Port Townsend is one of the Northwest's best shopping destinations.

Right: The Northwest Maritime Center offers visitors a chance to learn about the Northwest's maritime heritage.



NW Maritime Center

beaches have long been a center of commerce and a playground for the region. Wooden boat enthusiasts make pilgrimages to Port Townsend to participate in classes at the beautiful new **Northwest Maritime Center** (431 Water St.), the focal point for the **Wooden Boat Festival** (Sep. 7-9), which draws admirers from across the nation. The center also has a cozy café inside a chandlery for boaters and landlubbers.

The adjacent **Swan Hotel** (216 Monroe St.) has a fresh, beachy appeal, with deluxe cottages with Adirondack chairs positioned to take in the sun.

Northwest shoppers appreciate Port Townsend's mix of charming boutiques in vintage buildings on two streets that parallel the waterfront. Many of the more-than-a-dozen galleries feature local art, but among the leading places to find Northwest art are two cooperatives: **Port Townsend Gallery** (715 Water St.) and **Gallery Nine** (1012 Water St.). **Ancestral Spirits Gallery** (701 Water St.) is a showcase for contemporary and

antique Native art. Other galleries carry everything from fine-art paintings to jewelry made from sea glass. The town's **First Saturday Art Walk** is a convivial event.

Possibly because PT is such a kid-friendly place, the town has no fewer than three soda fountains. They include **Elevated Ice Cream** (631 Water St.), known for their rich, homemade ice cream; **Nifty Fifties Soda Fountain** (817 Water St.), with thick, flavorful shakes and tabletop jukeboxes; and the old-time **Don's Pharmacy** (1151 Water St.), serving up malts and sundaes at a classic long counter with swivel stools.

## FESTIVAL FUN

Port Townsend and nearby Fort Worden State Park draw throngs of visitors to festivals throughout the year, including:

**Mar. 23-25**

Victorian Heritage Festival

**May 14-19**

Rhododendron Festival

**July 1-8**

Festival of American Fiddle Tunes

**July 22-29**

Jazz Port Townsend

**July 29-Aug. 5**

Port Townsend Acoustic Blues Festival

**Sept. 7-9**

Wooden Boat Festival

**Sept. 21-23**

Port Townsend Film Festival

## CIDER RENAISSANCE

Farms and cideries in the Port Townsend region are leading a national cider renaissance. A European tradition steeped in history, hard cider is made from tart apples that yield robust beverages (2 to 8 percent alcohol) similar to craft ales. **Finnriver Farm and Cider** ([www.finnriver.com](http://www.finnriver.com)), a family farm, produces an organic Artisan Sparkling Cider and a Sparkling Pear Cider; visitors can participate in cider-tasting in their rustic barn in nearby Chimacum Valley. **Alpenfire Cider** ([www.alpenfire.com](http://www.alpenfire.com)) uses intensely flavored English, French and heritage apples to create their all-organic cider, which can be tasted at their farm. And **Eaglemount Wine & Cider** ([www.eaglemountwinery.com](http://www.eaglemountwinery.com)) makes cider from heirloom apples grown in an original homestead orchard; you can sip and sample their ciders—and wines—at their onsite tasting room.



### Loaves of Love

A narrow slice of a bakery with a bright-red door in upper Port Townsend, Pane d'Amore (617 Tyler St.), has developed a reputation far beyond the city limits. The bakery's European-style, all-organic breads are star attractions in the best Olympic Peninsula restaurants. The bakery spares no effort to craft high-quality baked goods: One of their rustic loaves is made with a heritage strain of wheat grown within the city limits. Their finely crafted, artisan pastries come in many varieties—from classic cinnamon rolls and croissants to elegant creations such as *canneles*, a cylindrical French pastry with a custard filling and caramelized crust.