

Eight miles south of downtown Seattle, beyond the broad span of the West Seattle Bridge, ferries to and from West Seattle and Southworth dock at the Fauntleroy ferry terminal. It's a 20-minute crossing to Vashon, and 40 minutes to Southworth.

## Fauntleroy

The Fauntleroy ferry dock is largely surrounded by residential neighborhoods. Abutting the ferry dock to the north, heavily forested **Lincoln Park**, one of Seattle's most overlooked preserves and one of the city's largest parks, has a lovely seaside promenade that affords great views of Puget Sound and the Olympic Peninsula. The park's unique **Colman Pool** is one of the few public saltwater swimming pools on the West Coast.

A small neighborhood services center up the hill from the ferry dock holds a couple of restaurants popular with regular Fauntleroy travelers. **Guadalajara** (9214 45th Ave. SW) serves traditional Mexican-American cuisine; and **The Original Bakery** (9253 45th Ave. SW) is a popular stop for bike riders fueling up on fresh doughnuts and Danish pastries before heading over to the island.



Adjacent to the Fauntleroy ferry dock, Lincoln Park has a lovely seaside promenade.

Seattle Parks and Recreation



Point Robinson Lighthouse, on Vashon Island.

## Vashon Island

Occupying much of the area between Seattle and Tacoma in the middle of Puget Sound, Vashon Island largely escapes the attention afforded other destinations in the Washington State Ferries route system. The largest island in south Puget Sound, Vashon encompasses 37 square miles—an area bigger than Manhattan, but with just over 10,000 residents. Composed almost entirely of farms, fields, forests and small residential acreages, with one town and scattered communities, the island is a pastoral retreat, most of whose residents commute to work in Seattle or Tacoma.

Geographically, the island is composed of what were once two separate islands. The southeastern portion, Maury Island, was joined to

Vashon in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when the Army Corps of Engineers filled in a small slough between the two then-separate islands.

The island famously has just one fast-food restaurant, and no traffic lights; an attempt by county officials to install a light in the middle of the main town, Vashon, met almost universal opposition and was abandoned. It remains, as it has been for 150 years, a quiet place with country lanes winding across the rural landscape, popular with bicycle riders, and kayakers who enjoy the calm waters of Quartermaster Harbor, the mid-island inlet.

Numerous small B&Bs house island visitors, few of them larger than two or three rooms. Visitors flock to the island in late July for the island's **Strawberry Festival**, a three-day celebration with music, food booths, craft and art displays, and a unique parade with antique tractors and the legendary Island

Thriftway grocery-cart drill team.

The one town of any size, Vashon, is in the middle of the island, 6 miles south of the north-end ferry landing. Though the island's old strawberry farmers and orchardists are long gone, they have been replaced by a new generation of organic farmers pursuing sustainable agriculture, most of them members of the Vashon Island Growers Association. Hence, you'll find farm stands with everything from cheese and eggs to berries and produce lining the island's pastoral lanes.

One of the island's most dynamic farms, Sea Breeze, has a combination butcher shop and restaurant, **La Boucherie** (17635 100th Ave. SW), in downtown Vashon where nearly everything on the menu, including braised lamb and sausage, was grown on the island. More island products, ranging from salad greens to heritage fruits, are available on Saturdays, April-October, at the **Vashon Farmers Market**, at the Village Green, in the center of the town.

**Bob's Bakery** (17506 Vashon Highway SW) is a local institution famed for cinnamon rolls and scones, and lunch pies resembling British pasties that are popular with bicycle tourists. Across the intersection, the **Vashon Hardware Store** restaurant and gallery (17601 Vashon Highway SW) occupies a 121-year-old building whose ancient fir-plank floors are still redolent from more than a century of the building's use as a hardware supply store; the menu is an eclectic mix of comfort foods.

Farther down the main highway, the **Bicycle in a Tree** (20312 Vashon Highway SW) is an island icon, an old bike supposedly hung in a tree crotch years ago by a kid, now mostly overgrown by the tree. (Actually, it was placed there as a joke by an island prankster.) Nearby, the **Vashon Island Coffee Roasterie** (19529 Vashon Highway SW) is one of the Seattle area's earliest gourmet coffee roasters, which roasts, brews and sells rare heirloom coffees from around the world.

Farther south, at the tiny village of Burton, **Quartermaster Inn** (24007 Vashon Highway SW) serves Northwest



Vashon Island's quiet, secluded beaches are ideal for picnicking and beachcombing.

contemporary cuisine emphasizing island-grown ingredients. **Burton Acres Park** is one of two launching points for kayakers enjoying the inlet's quiet waters; you can rent kayaks April through September at the **Vashon Kayak Center**, located at the nearby **Jensen Point Park**. Quartermaster Harbor is one of the few places in Puget Sound where the waters are warm enough for pleasant swimming in July and August.

The side road to Maury Island, SW Quartermaster Drive, passes over **Portage**, the erstwhile tidal slough that was filled in to join Maury to Vashon Island. On Dockton Road Southwest, the hamlet of **Dockton** was once a late 19<sup>th</sup>-century boomtown, with a shipyard and the largest dry dock on the West Coast, as well as two hotels and Piano Row—a series of houses where the ship workers' foremen lived (the only ones with enough income to own pianos). Today little is left of this legacy, though the houses still stand.

At the end of Point Robinson Road, heading east on Maury, the **Point Robinson Lighthouse**, one of the most photographed in the Northwest, occupies a sandy beach whose view of Mount Rainier is one of the finest in the region.



## Southworth

The western terminus of the Fauntleroy ferry route is the gateway to the **Kitsap Peninsula** and **Port Orchard**, one of the oldest towns on the west side of the sound, incorporated in 1890. Its historic downtown, located along Bay Street, is known for small craft galleries and antiques stores. Each May, hundreds flock to the waterfront for a one-of-a-kind event, the annual **Seagull Calling Festival**; yes, it is exactly what the name implies. A passenger ferry links Port Orchard to Bremerton, across the way.



Russell Johnson/ courtesy Museum of Glass

Tacoma's striking Museum of Glass features a Hot Shop glass-blowing studio.

### City of Destiny

Once the most prosperous and largest city on Puget Sound, Tacoma's history is highlighted by the 1900 founding of Weyerhaeuser Corporation, when Frederick Weyerhaeuser bought hundreds of thousands of acres of Northwest timberland by signing what was then the largest check ever written—\$1 million. Tacomans enjoy the city's quiet, historic residential neighborhoods, and frequent views of nearby Mount Rainier—which residents say is "their" mountain, not Seattle's. The **Tacoma Dome**, one of the world's largest wooden domed arenas, hosts numerous concerts and athletic events.

Though Seattle eventually outgrew the "City of Destiny," it remains a shipping and forest-products center that has carved out a new, 21st century identity with its downtown **Museum District**.

Here, within blocks of each other along Pacific Avenue, are the **Museum of Glass** (1801 Dock St.) and the **Tacoma Art Museum** (1701 Pacific Ave.), both featuring works by Tacoma native Dale Chihuly; the **Washington State History Museum** (1911 Pacific Ave.); and historic **Union Station** (1717 Pacific Ave.), a beautifully restored 1911 masterpiece of Beaux Arts design, featuring a huge, copper-domed rotunda. The building now houses federal courts. Across the street, shops, cafes and galleries reflect the resurgence of downtown Tacoma.



MacParks Tacoma

The Japanese Garden is just one of eight magnificent theme gardens at Tacoma's Point Defiance.

*Ferries at the Tahlequah terminal, at the southern tip of Vashon, connect with Point Defiance, near Tacoma. The crossing takes 15 minutes.*

## Point Defiance/Ruston

Though it connects Vashon Island with Tacoma, the Point Defiance ferry dock is actually in the small town of **Ruston**, once the home of a large smelting plant whose grounds are now being converted to parks and multiple-use development. Just up the hill from the dock, the **Antique Sandwich Shop** (5102 N. Pearl St.) is a long-time popular lunch spot for ferry travelers, best-known for its black bean burritos. Across the street, the **Jungle Fever Exotics** (5050 N. Pearl) nursery offers palms and other tropical plants many people are unaware can be grown in Puget Sound.



Point Defiance Zoo

**Owen Beach**, adjacent to the ferry landing, is a long stretch of log-strewn sand popular for beachcombing. It's part of 702-acre **Point Defiance Park**, which occupies the northwest end of its namesake peninsula, and holds one of the largest remaining old-growth forests in lowland Puget Sound. **Five Mile Drive** winds through the park woods and

park attractions, including a **Botanical Gardens** complex whose dahlia beds are among the most extensive in North America. The park's annual Christmas lights display in December is one of Washington State's largest.

**Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium** (5400 N. Pearl) is a compact zoological institution known for its polar bears, sea otters, walrus, puffins and other north Pacific denizens. The zoo also has rare red wolves in a natural outdoor environment and clouded leopards; two leopard cubs are new additions this year.

Farther along Five Mile Drive, **Fort Nisqually** is a reconstruction of a historic frontier outpost where living history enactors portray pioneer settlers, soldiers and other early Northwest inhabitants.

Several miles south of Point Defiance, **Chambers Bay Golf Course** ([www.chambersbaygolf.com](http://www.chambersbaygolf.com)) is a high-profile, newer, links-style course hosting several prominent tournaments over the next couple of years.

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