

Pacific Northwest Itinerary - from Carolyn at tastingspoons.com

For us, this trip was 11 days. If I did it over, I'd stay 3 nights in Sequim and 2 nights in Vancouver, so that would make it a 13-day trip. If you wanted to extend your stay in Seattle that would make it a full 2-weeks. Fly into Seattle (SeaTac), rent a car - it sure helps to have a GPS, or use your phone's map feature (but don't try to drive AND use the mapping). We used my iPhone, but there were numerous times when we didn't have cell service (through AT&T) so it was useless. I have read that if you use Google Maps instead, you can identify a destination (when you do have good cell service) and save it somehow, so even if you don't have good cell, you can still use the map to view your route. Don't forget your passport!

SEQUIM - our first night's destination. It's located on the Olympic Peninsula about halfway between Port Townsend and Port Angeles. Sequim is a very cute little town. Took us about 2 ½ hours to get there from the airport. Beautiful scenery.

Dungeness Barn B&B (Sequim): <http://www.dungenessbarnhouse.com/> we stayed here 2 nights, but 3 would have been better in order to visit everything

Dinner: Alder Wood Bistro, Sequim: <http://www.alderwoodbistro.com/> - should have eaten there every night

Visit Olympic National Park (<http://www.nps.gov/olymp/index.htm>) - to do it all you'll need at least 2 full days (the Park is big and it takes awhile to drive to the western parts of it where the rain forest is located). Visit Hurricane Ridge. Look at the webcams to check weather before you drive up to the top: <http://www.nps.gov/olymp/photosmultimedia/webcams.htm>

Lake Crescent - beautiful lake within the National Park. There's a lodge there (we had dinner, not memorable, but scenery made it worth eating there):

<http://www.olympicnationalparks.com/accommodations/lake-crescent-resort.aspx>

FERRY - Take BlackBall car ferry from Port Angeles to Victoria: <https://cohoferry.com/> Fri/Sat/Sun are busy. You can make reservations (recommended). Took about an hour or so; can't stay in the car during the ride. Victoria ferry dock is right in downtown. If you don't turn on data roaming (upcharge and costly) you'll not have GPS available on your phone. We winged it with some little maps provided by the car rental company.

SOOKE - our destination was Sooke, specifically Sooke Harbour House, a favorite hotel of ours where we've stayed before. Small inn with maybe 30 rooms, all with views of the Straits of Juan de Fuca. Absolutely stunning scenery (not so fun if it's raining). It takes about an hour to drive from Victoria to Sooke (about 30 miles west of Victoria, but it's a bit circuitous to get there. 2-lane roads mostly. <http://www.sookeharbourhouse.com/> Eat dinner at the inn - expensive. They serve only British Columbia wines.

This is a great place to relax (all rooms have big soaking tubs, great place for a romantic weekend), read, walk some, watch the maritime traffic on the Straits. You can drive further west from Sooke (a dead end road) but the scenery isn't all that special. Lots of hiking trails, though. Have Sooke Harbour House pack you a picnic lunch. On our in between day we drove back toward Victoria, then north to visit Butchart Gardens, the stunning man-made gardens created by Mrs. Butchart from her husband's old abandoned quarry. Takes about 1 ½ hours to get there, 2 hours to tour. Several restaurants in the Gardens from expensive to more expensive (some casual). Restaurants are busy and popular.

<http://www.butchartgardens.com/>

TOFINO: our next destination was an inn way up north and west of Sooke (still on Vancouver Island though) near the town of Tofino, right on the coast. It took us 3 ½ hours to drive from Sooke to Tofino (up Hwy 1, then west on Hwy 4). Friends had recommended staying at The Wickaninnish Inn, and oh, is it ever beautiful (and expensive). It was a big splurge for us. <http://www.wickinn.com/> It is right on the beach (hard, and lovely sand to walk on). It's somewhat remote, and about 5-7 miles from the town of Tofino. If you're into water sports, you'll love Tofino. On our way there we had a late lunch in Ucluelet (you-clue-let), also called Ukee for short, about 20 miles before you get to Tofino. The Blue Room Bistro - <http://www.theblueroombistro.com/> a little café kind of place but we thoroughly enjoyed sharing a bacon and cheddar burger. We stayed 2 nights at the Wick Inn, ate dinner at the Inn restaurant both nights, and the in between day we had lunch at a very funky outdoor restaurant that was within a bit of a walk from the Inn (we drove). The Wildside Grill - great fish and chips. <http://www.wildsidegrill.com/> We walked around in downtown Tofino, read our books, walked on the beach and just enjoyed the scenery in every direction. I think 2 nights there is sufficient unless you are into the sports there - it's remote and quiet. Someone else there recommended that next time we try the Best Western that is within spitting distance of The Wick Inn - the Tin Wis Resort Lodge (run by the Native people): <http://book.bestwestern.com/bestwestern/CA/BC/Tofino-hotels/BEST-WESTERN-Tin-Wis-Resort-Lodge/Hotel-Overview.do?propertyCode=62079>

FERRY: We drove from Tofino to Nanaimo (took about 2+ hours, but we were lucky with the traffic and being able to pass slow-moving trucks and campers on the 2-lane highway) and were able to get onto a ferry (reservations recommended). There are 2 different ferries - depends on your destination. Took about 1 ¾ hours to make the crossing.

VANCOUVER: Our next destination was North Vancouver (North Van, as they say). I'd found the B&B at Trip Advisor and chose it because there was not one single negative review. It was really exceptional. Lovely room, pretty tree-lined street. Thistle Down House, near Edgemont. <http://www.thistle-down.com/> Not difficult to find. We stayed just one night, but I think next time I'd stay for 2. Easy to get into Vancouver (others at the B&B were using local transit). Caters to an international clientele. Breakfast was exceptional. Dinner was at a charming small restaurant within long-walk distance from the B&B, called Canyon, in Edgemont village. There is no website for them. B&B made reservations for us. The place has a 1 Michelin star. Don't go there if you're in a hurry.

BORDER CROSSING: We've crossed the Canada/US border many times at Peace Arch (directly south of Vancouver) but the last time we waited in line for about 2 hours. Friends told us to go further east on Hwy 1 to Abbotsford. You'll see signs on the freeway telling you the wait times at the different crossings. We went to Abbotsford (followed signs because the phones still weren't tracking us) and crossed at Sumas (that's what the crossing is called there). You exit at Hwy 11, which then becomes Hwy 9 once you cross into the US, then go west on 546 to the 5. We had to wait about 15 minutes at the border. Easy. The border guard told us how to get to Bellingham (although our cell phones worked once we got to within half a mile of the border).

LUMMI ISLAND (pronounced lumm-ee, not loom-ee): This was definitely a different kind of "experience" part of the trip. We went there specifically to have dinner at The Willows Inn - <http://www.willows-inn.com/> To get there you must take a ferry to the island, which is part of the San Juan Islands. Except for 3 weeks per year you can take your car across (about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile) but we were there during the 3 weeks when the car ferry goes in for annual dry dock maintenance. We had to leave our car in a hotel-designated parking place (otherwise it would be towed) and take the passenger ferry. The people at the Inn met us in a van, took us to the actual check-in hotel location, then drove us to the beautiful home where we stayed. The Inn leases homes on the island to accommodate the visitors who want to stay on the island along with having the sumptuous dinner. Dinner is pricey - we paid \$150/person not including wine pairing (\$70/person). VERY pricey, and maybe not for everyone. Not ordinary food at all. If you're not a foodie, you won't want to go here. The island is lovely - pretty, remote, quiet (not a lot to do unless you're a hiker or do water sports). There is one café on the island - the Beach Store Café near the ferry dock - only place to eat (very good food) other than at the Inn itself. We stayed 2 nights, but probably should have stayed just one. If you're looking for a get-away that's quiet, then 2 nights or more might be fine. I'd definitely go when the car ferry is running - we had no wheels, so couldn't explore the island except when the van picked us up to take us to breakfast or back. The island is 8 miles long, and maybe $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles wide.

SEATTLE: We retraced our steps (the ferry), retrieved our car and headed towards Seattle. Bellingham is about 90 miles north of Seattle. We wanted to stay near the Pike Place Market, so I chose The Inn at the Market, a lovely small hotel about 100 feet from the Pike Place Market itself.

<http://innatthemarket.com/> I'd recommend a room on one of the upper floors (it's not all that high, however) just because of the street and people noise. Lovely deck on the top of the building with pretty views in every direction. Weekends at the Pike Place Market are an absolute zoo - especially if it's nice weather. I'd avoid this on weekends if at all possible. If you like tea, buy some of the signature Cinnamon-Orange Spice Tea from Market Spice, just to the left of the fish-throwers. Two restaurants were recommended to us - Spinasse - <http://www.spinasse.com/> (Italian) but I couldn't get a reservation even 2 days ahead. The 2nd choice was Poppy - <http://poppyseattle.com/> Very interesting food, by Jerry Traunfeld, of The Herbfarm fame. The hotel van took us and picked us up (nice!).