

Bellingham Whatcom County Tourism – WA State Accolades & Fun Facts

Acclaimed Outdoor Recreation Haven

- **Best Ski Town:** Powder Magazine named the Bellingham area the fifth best ski town in North America (Nov, 2012).
- **Best Place to Play Year Round:** Sunset magazine honored Bellingham with this destination (Feb, 2011), as part of its list of Happiest Cities.
- **Best Paddling and Adventure Town:** Outdoor Northwest named Bellingham a haven for paddlers and touted the accessibility to mountain bike trails and Mt Baker (April, 2011).
- **Best Paddling Town:** *Outside Magazine* rated Bellingham as the best paddling destination in the U.S. (August, 2006).
- **Silver Award Cyclist Town:** Bellingham was awarded a Silver rating by League of American Cyclists. Only eight other cities nationwide received an equal or higher honor (2006).
- **Top Ski Mountain:** *Skiing Magazine* ranked Mt. Baker Ski Area 18th on a list of nation-wide ski areas, and number one in the state of Washington, based on a survey of ski professionals (2005).
- **Adventure Town USA:** National Geographic Adventure named Bellingham one of the top adventure cities in the nation. The issue, themed "Where to live and play now," describes Bellingham as a "base camp essential to the Northwest" (September, 2004).
- **Best Golf City:** With 16 public golf courses, the Bellingham Mt Baker Region has more golf courses per capita than any other county in the Pacific Northwest. *Golf Digest* rated Bellingham the seventh best "golf city" in the nation out of 314 cities (Nov. 2002). The region is frequently referred to as "Monterey North." Specific course accolades include Loomis Trail Golf Course, which was rated the number one course in WA by *Golf Digest* (2005-2006) and in the top 100 courses America (the only one in WA State).
- **Top Mountain Biking Destination:** Bellingham was ranked the 7th best locale for mountain biking in the U.S. (out of 10 cities) by *Mountain Bike* magazine (June 2001), who highlighted Bellingham's Greenways (a web of dirt paths stretching throughout Bellingham), the Interurban Trail System (follows an old railroad bed) and hard-core Galbraith Mountain (which offers rock faces, logs, twisty single-track, log ramps and ladders).

Best Place to Visit

- **Best Place to Reboot Your Life:** Sunset Magazine says that Bellingham's waterfront city is home to Western Washington University. A legion of techies have relocated here; start-ups range from farm-to-table restaurants to app developers. The city's annual gathering of Linux developers is one of the world's largest. Bonus: There is no state income tax (2014).
- **25 Best Places to Retire in 2014: Voted by Forbes Magazine, Bellingham is one of the best places to retire.** Scenic coastal home of Western Washington University, car ferry to Alaska. College town, good economy, average home price \$266,000, above-average air quality, low crime, highly walkable (2014).
- **10 Best Cities in Washington:** Movoto Blog voted Bellingham #8 on the list of best cities in Washington State. Bellingham comes in at No. 8 on our list for scoring well on its short commute time of just 19 minutes, in its number of total amenities, as well as its amenities per capita. It doesn't just have a lot of coffee shops and restaurants to choose from; as residents know, it has some of Washington's finest. Just step into the quaint Caffe Adagio for a cup of joe or the cozy Oyster Creek Inn for some of the best seafood in the area, and Bellingham may just charm you into sticking around (2014).
- **Top 100 Best Places to Live:** Livability.com voted Bellingham #25 on the list of best places to live. Bellingham is well-known for its strong sense of community, excellent schools and top-quality health care. But what makes the city truly exceptional are the amenities: the easy access to world-class recreation opportunities and a lively arts, culture, and entertainment scene that is the envy of municipalities many times its size (2014).
- **Best Place to Retire:** Bellingham received this accolade by Wall Street Journal's SmartMoney.com (June, 2012).
- **Best Place to Retire and Live:** CNNMONEY.COM named Bellingham the fifth best place (in the U.S.) to retire and live because of the area's mild summer and winters, distinct community, farmers market, harbor, state college and nationally recognized hospital (September, 2010).
- **Best in the Continent!** *Frommer's Cities Ranked & Rated* (May 2007) rated Bellingham #2 as the best place to live compared to all cities in Canada or the U.S. Criteria was based upon demographics, economy and jobs, cost of living, climate, education, health and healthcare, crime, transportation, leisure, and arts and culture.

- **Top Art Town:** *The 100 Best Art Towns in America* by John Villani features Bellingham in the ranks. (2005) Research provided by Americans for the Arts, a nonprofit that promotes the arts, compared the nation's metropolitan statistical areas and derived the Bellingham metro area ranks 2nd in the nation for arts businesses per capita (Americans for the Arts, 2004).
- **Boomer Haven:** *AARP The Magazine* rated Bellingham second among 15 "Dream Towns" for boomers looking to settle down in a new locale citing the city's "natural charm, affordable neighborhoods and recreational opportunities." (June 2003).
- **Sophisticated Retirement:** *Money Magazine/CNN* ranked Bellingham among the eight best places to retire in the country highlighting the area's "great outdoors, sophisticated community and metropolitan ambitions without big-city hassles" (July 2003).
- **America's Healthiest City:** *Organic Style Magazine* touted Bellingham as one of the seven best environmentally healthy oases in the nation (September 2003).
- **Hippest, Healthiest & Most Adventure Packed:** *Men's Journal* rated Bellingham 33rd among the "hippest, healthiest and most adventure packed" small cities in America, as well as one of the 50 best small cities to live (May 2003).
- **Breathe Easy! Cleanest Air in the Nation:** For the fourth consecutive year in a row, Bellingham, Washington is rated as having the cleanest air in the nation (in regards to air pollution), according to data collected by the E.P.A. as reported by the American Lung Association (Voted #1 since May 2000 thru 2003).
- **Dream Town USA:** *Outside Magazine* recognized Bellingham as an outstanding place to live, work and visit and as a top ten "Dream Town" and "Outdoorsy Community" in the nation. *Outside Magazine* chose Bellingham based on its close access to an abundance of usable outdoors, realistic living wages and character (September 2001).
- **"Most Alive" and Green & Clean:** AARP's *Modern Maturity* rated Bellingham as one of the 50 "most alive places" in which to retire and 4th in their 'clean and green' category (May/June 2000).

Education Excellence

- **Western Washington University** is Washington State's third largest institution of higher education with more than 12,000 full-time students and 73 permanent buildings on a 215-acre campus. For several years, Western has been ranked among the **top public regional universities** in the West and nationwide by *U.S. News & World Report*. Yahoo has named Western among the 100 "**most wired**" universities in the country. Western has been hailed for its national reputation, its high level of individual academic attention to students from faculty, and for being "academically competitive" by *Kaplan/Newsweek's College Catalog* 2001.

WWU is also home to **one of the largest & finest collections of outdoor sculpture** on the West Coast featuring the works of internationally renowned artists including Richard Serra, Isamu Noguchi, Beverly Pepper and Anthony Caro.

- **Art Town USA:** Bellingham was designated a *Top Ten Art Town in America* by John Villani, author of the book "100 Best Art Towns in America" (May 2005).

"Greenest" Facts

- **#3 Greenest City:** CountryHome magazine rated Bellingham number three in the nation for greenest cities (2008).
- **#1 EPA Green Power Community in the Nation:** Bellingham and Whatcom County earned the top status by the Environmental Protection Agency in regards to communities committed to alternative energy resources. Both the City of Bellingham and Whatcom County purchase 100% green power (2007).

Food for Thought

- **America's Raspberry Capital:** Whatcom County is the largest producer of raspberries in the nation, harvesting more than 57 million pounds each year. This represents almost 65% of the raspberries grown in the nation. Many of the raspberries are shipped to Ocean Spray and Smuckers and used in making their juices and jams.
- **Espresso Capital:** Whatcom County holds the record for the most drive-up espresso stands per-capita in Washington. More than 50 stands dot the landscape, with such lively names as "I Wanna Moka" and "Shot in the Dark."
- **Shellfish & Clams:** The Taylor Shellfish Farm, located off scenic Chuckanut Drive, is the largest Manila clam producer in the United States and cultivates a greater variety of shellfish than any other shellfish grower in the nation. Taylor Shellfish Farm has been farming the tidelands along Chuckanut Drive since 1890 and sells fresh oysters, clams, mussels, crab, scallops and prawns on site.
- **Got powdered milk?** The Bellingham Mt Baker Region is #1 in the nation in milk production per cow, producing more than 1.3 billion pounds of milk each year, and the largest producer of powdered milk. Each day, four million pounds of fluid milk (about 480,000 gallons) come into the Darigold Plant in Lynden, which equates to 53 double tanker truck loads per day. The fluid milk is then converted into 400,000 pounds of powdered milk.
- **Greatest city in the world for drinking wine:** Gadling.com named Bellingham, WA one of its top 25 greatest cities for sipping on vino thanks to its wine bars, boutique wineries, subdued vibe and stunning scenery (March, 2010).

Other Fun Facts

- **World's Most Photographed Peak:** Mount Shuksan, located off Mount Baker Highway, is the most photographed peak in the world.
- **Largest Collection of Antique Radios:** The American Museum of Radio & Electricity, located in the heart of downtown Bellingham's cultural district, has accumulated one of the largest collections of antique radios in the United States open to the public. The interactive museum features more than 800 radios & early technology including a Tesla coil, a Parisian Portable record player with a wind up needle directly connected to a paper-cone speaker and an early 1900's original wax cylinder Edison phonograph.
- **Getting' Buggy with It:** The Lynden Pioneer Museum is home to the largest publicly displayed collection west of the Mississippi of vintage horse-drawn buggies used to get around in the industrial age. More than 50 classic examples of horse-drawn vehicles are featured from all over the world.
- **Pacific Northwest's Biggest Barn:** Hovander Park's elaborate, turn-of-the-century farmhouse, located in Ferndale, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as one of the biggest barns in the Pacific NW.
- **Bellingham Ranked #8 on List of Top 10 Best Downtowns 2014:** A population of nearly 2,400 residents and about 7,500 employees in the downtown area enjoy a highly walkable community with easy access to grocery stores, parks, restaurants and entertainment venues. Depot Market, a central gathering point in the downtown area, hosts the Bellingham Farmers Market, one of the largest farmers markets in Washington, plus many other events throughout the year.