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## TOP 5

## MULTISPORT DESTINATIONS

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# GEAR UP & GO



Our picks for Washington's best spots for multisport adventures

written by John Nelson

Why settle for one winter activity when you can do several? For multisport savants, our state has you covered, from skiing to kayaking to surfing. Grab your gear and hit these five early-spring adventure locations.





Find acres of world-class mountain bike trails near Bellingham.



## BELLINGHAM POWDER SHOTS TO PADDLING

North America's snowiest mountains, epic single-track riding, picture-perfect kayaking waters—Bellingham has it all. "It's kind of like a triple scoop of ice cream," said Todd Elsworth, co-director of Recreation Northwest, an outdoors advocacy group in Whatcom County. "People here ski, bike and paddle all in the same day. We call that 'the trifecta.'"

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**YOUR ADVENTURE TOOLS:** Skis, snowboard, snowshoes, hiking boots, kayak, mountain bike

**Alpine skiing and snowboarding:** Mt. Baker Ski Area is famous for its snowfall, receiving an average of nearly 55 feet annually. Snowboarders love the resort's natural half-pipe, which is the site of the Legendary Banked Slalom race every February. Out of bounds, the terrain gets even wilder for skiers and boarders who drop off Shuksan Arm.

**Backcountry and Nordic:** The end of the Mount Baker Highway (SR 542) in Heather Meadows offers easy access to the striking Chain Lakes Basin for backcountry skiers and snowshoers. Nordic skiers also tour here and at Salmon Ridge Sno-Park.

**Hiking:** Bellingham's temperate climate means you can hike year-round near sea level. In town, you'll find 5.5 miles of trails at Whatcom Falls Park. For wilder adventures, go south to Larrabee State Park, where you can access the view-rich Chuckanut Mountains.

**Mountain biking:** Bellingham is "the No. 1 area in the state for mountain biking," Elsworth said. Access 3,000 acres of world-class riding at Galbraith Mountain east of downtown.

**Kayak:** Explore more than 100 miles of shoreline in the Salish Sea from Birch Bay to Chuckanut Bay. Even more paddling can be found on three beautiful lowland lakes—Whatcom, Padden and Samish.

[basecampbellingham.org]

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