



# Bellingham Whatcom County Tourism: WA State - Accolades & Fun Facts

## Best Place Visit

- **Cleanest Air in US:** The 2018 State of the Air Report by the American Lung Association Report ranked Bellingham, WA as a first place city for cleanest metropolitan areas in the country for Ozone quality as well as for 24-hour particle pollution quality. <http://www.lung.org/our-initiatives/healthy-air/sota/city-rankings/cleanest-cities.html>
- **Best Day Hike in America:** *Backpacker Magazine* looked at the best day hike in every state and called out the 1.8-mile Winchester Mountain Lookout hike in the Mt. Baker Wilderness as the #1 Best of the Best, which the “most skewed effort-to-reward ratio in the country.” (Sept. 2017)
- **Safest Bicycling City:** Bicycling.com named Bellingham the #1 Safest City for Cyclists in America (2017), with 21 miles of current bike lanes and plans for 45 miles of new bike lanes and 50 miles of new bike boulevards.
- **Best Outdoor Adventure Town:** Trip Advisor named Bellingham to its list of 10 Best Outdoor Towns in America (May 2016) stating its proximity to Mount Baker and North Cascades National Park, plus its handful of local breweries and dozens of coffee shops. Bellingham can't be beat. *Outside Magazine* ranked Bellingham in their top 16 adventure meccas (Sept 2016). *Sunset Magazine* also ranked Bellingham a finalist for Best Adventure Town in its 2016 Travel Awards.
- **Bellingham Airport Named Highest-Rated Small Airport in the US:** BLI has been ranked 1<sup>st</sup> by customers in the United States for best customer service in the small hub airport category as compiled by Phoenix Marketing International's Airport XP mobile insights platforms, which allows travelers to share their experience at the 250 busiest U.S. airports. With a 93% favorability rating, Bellingham Airport also received the highest customer satisfaction scores among all airports across all categories. (2016)
- **Top Main Street in America:** Lynden, WA won 1<sup>st</sup> place in the 2016 Best Main Street in American contest by Independent We Stand.
- **Healthiest Small City:** Gallup Healthways “State of American Well Being” report (2013) named Bellingham, WA the 1<sup>st</sup> on its list of Healthiest Small Cities in America, saying “residents report that they are experiencing high well-being, making their lives healthier and more satisfying.”

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- **Best Tasting Water:** American Water Works Association named the City of Bellingham's drinking water as the Best Tasting in the Pacific Northwest in its 2016 taste contest. The city's water supply is drawn from Lake Whatcom and fed by mountain snowfall.
- **Fitness Friendly:** Bellingham was ranked the 2nd Most Fitness Friendly City in America by smartasset.com (Jan 2015), for its "great kayaking, canoeing, mountain climbing, skiing and cycling." Bellingham also had the 8<sup>th</sup> highest ratio of fitness professionals to working population of any city in the study.
- In a list of "The Most Underrated Places in Every State" on Thrillist.com, Bellingham was named **the most underrated place in Washington state. (2016)**
- **Well-Rounded Retirement:** Bellingham was ranked as one of the Top 3 Best Places for a Well-Rounded Retirement by *Money Magazine* (Nov 2014). The city was praised for its technology and green jobs, as well as the nearby 100 miles of shoreline.
- **15 Northwestern Spots That Will Take Your Breath Away.** *The Huffington Post* looked at the entire Northwest and came up with 15 excellent towns worth a visit, including Bellingham – "a vibrant city situated in an insanely tranquil bay" (April 2014).
- **Top 100 Best Places to Live:** Livability.com voted Bellingham 25th 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 (March 2014).
- **Best Place to Reboot Your Life:** Bellingham earned this accolade from *Sunset* magazine. The 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 (Feb 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 8th on the list of best cities in Washington State. Bellingham comes in at 8th on their 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 (2014).
- **Best Downtowns:** Bellingham was ranked 8th on the list of *Top 10 Best Downtowns* by Livability.com (2014)

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- **Best Place to Retire:** Bellingham received this accolade by *Wall Street Journal's* SmartMoney.com (June 2012).
- **Best Place to Play Year Round:** *Sunset* magazine honored Bellingham with this designation (Feb 2011), as part of its list of Happiest Cities.
- **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).

## Outdoor Recreation

- **Best Place to Mountain Bike:** Singletracks ranked Galbraith Mountain as the best place to mountain bike in Washington state (2016), followed by Duthie Hill and Tiger Mountain, both in Issaquah, Washington. Rankings were based on the number and quality of Singletracks members' reviews and the number of visits riders make to each trail during the year.
- **Multi-sport Haven:** Bellingham's annual Ski to Sea race is the largest multi-sport relay race in the world, featuring 500 teams competing in skiing, running, cycling, mountain biking, canoeing and sea kayaking.
- **Best Ski Town:** Mount Baker Ski Area holds the record for the most snowfall in a single season (1998-99) at 1,140 inches (95 feet or 29 meters), and was named one of the Best Early Season North American Ski Resorts by LocalFreshies.com (2017).
- **Best Paddling and Adventure Town:** *Canoe & Kayak* magazine named Bellingham to its list of North America's Best Paddling Towns (2015), with the highest number of surfski paddlers per capita.
- **Best Paddling Town:** *Outdoor Northwest* also named Bellingham a haven for paddlers and touted the accessibility to mountain bike trails and Mt. Baker (April 2011).
- **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 (2012).
- **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 #1 course

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in WA by *Golf Digest* (2005-2006) and in the top 100 courses in America (the only such course in WA State).

### Got Beer?

- **Best Craft Beer:** Two Bellingham breweries brought home gold medals from the 2018 World Beer Cup. Chuckanut Brewery earned gold for its Chuckanut Pilsner and Chuckanut Kolsch. Aslan Brewing earned gold for its specialty saison: Frances Farmer.
- **Best Craft Beer:** A new beer-cation hot spot, the Bellingham region is now home to 14 craft breweries, which collectively won 28 high-profile awards in 2017. *The Seattle Times* named the new Melvin Brewing the Best Brewery to Open in WA State this Year. Chuckanut Brewery was named Washington State Large Brewery of the Year.
- In 2016, Travelocity named Bellingham a **Top 20 Beer Destination** in the U.S. for small metro areas based on the number of breweries per capita and local amenities.
- In July 2015, Bellingham was ranked as **the 1<sup>st</sup> place Beer Snob city in the United States**, according to Dan Kopf with Pricenomics. Beer snob cities omit mass-produced macro-brews like Bud Light, Miller Lite and Coors Light from their drinks menus. It's unlikely to find these three macro-brews on tap because 92 percent of restaurants and bars in Bellingham don't sell them.
- **Great Craft Beer Town:** Bellingham was ranked 8th on the list of *Top 10 Beer Cities in America* by Livability.com (2014)

### Food for Thought

- **Best Coffee in the U.S.:** National Geographic Traveler named Bellingham to its 2018 Top 20 list titled "These Unexpected Cities Have the Best Coffee in the U.S." Bellingham's Camber Coffee has been named one of the best coffee roasters in the country by *Thrillist*. (2017).
- **Best Restaurant in America:** The Willows Inn on Lummi Island placed first in a list of Top 100 U.S. Restaurants 2017 by *Opinioned About Dining*, and was again included on the list of America's Essential Restaurants 2017. Chef Blaine Wetzel is a James Beard Award winner for Best Chef Northwest.
- **World-wide Culinary Excellence:** *The New York Times* named The Willows Inn on Lummi Island one of 10 Restaurants in the Worth a Plane Ride, which includes dining establishments across the globe. (2011).
- **Hometown Apple Pie:** Lynden Dutch Bakery in Lynden, WA was named 3<sup>rd</sup> on the list of 10 Best Apple Pie Places in America by tripping.com (2017).

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- **America's Raspberry Capital:** Whatcom County is the largest producer of red-raspberries in the nation, harvesting more than 60 million pounds each year. (75 million pounds in 2016.) 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.
- **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?:** Lynden's Dairgold plant is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest producer of powdered milk in the United States, providing 330,000 pounds of dry milk powder every day, seven days a week.

## Education Excellence

- **In February 2017, Western Washington University** was ranked 3rd of 10 best colleges for people who love the great outdoors by Money – Time Magazine. The campus is a public university that is surrounded by the mountains, Bellingham Bay and Sehome Arboretum. Students have the chance to explore many different outdoor areas that are in the city limits, as well as the Mount Baker, the North Cascades and Larabee State Park. Additionally, Western was one of the first university campuses that has been dedicated to using renewable resources.
- Western Washington University is the **top public master's producing university in the Pacific Northwest**, according to Money Magazine's 2016 Best Colleges ranking.
- Western Washington University is the state's 3rd largest institution of higher education with a 215-acre campus, more than 15,000 students and 160+ academic programs. Western is ranked among **the top public regional universities in the West** and nationwide by *U.S. News & World Report*.
- In October 2015, Western Washington University was awarded the **Active Minds Healthy Campus Award**. This prestigious recognition was also awarded to Cornell University, the University of Minnesota, University of North Carolina at Greensboro and the University of Texas at Austin.
- In October 2015, Western ranked 7<sup>th</sup> in a list of the "**50 Best Colleges by the Sea in the U.S.**," created by CollegeRankings.com.
- WWU was named a "**2015 Great College to Work For.**" Only 92 institutions in the U.S. qualify for this recognition, which is based on collaborative governance, teaching environments and tenure clarity and process.

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

### Other Fun Facts

- **Largest Collection of Antique Radios:** The Spark Museum of Electrical Invention, located in the heart of downtown Bellingham's cultural district, has accumulated one of the largest collections of early electrical devices and 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.
- In 2016, the City of Bellingham was awarded the American Public Works Association "**Project of the Year**" Award for the Squalicum Creek reroute project. Squalicum Creek is habitat for Coho, Chum, Pink, Chinook and steelhead salmon, and also supports other fish, birds and mammals.
- In 2016, Fairhaven Village Inn was ranked as **the best hotel for families in the Pacific Northwest** by the website Family Vacation Critic, in the annual Best Hotels for Families List.
- **Lummi Island landed on a list of "5 Amazing Island escapes you've probably never considered"** by Sharon McDonnell on CNN.com in 2015. Lummi Island is the only U.S. location on the list.