

# Notes From The Adventure

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR WEEKEND



C9 Photography

Pull up on the shores of Chuckanut Bay for a serene picnic, with views.

## Train to Kayak: It couldn't be easier in Bellingham

By Ellee Thalheimer

### WANT A GUIDE?

Kristi Kucera, owner of Moondance Sea Kayak Adventures ([moondancekayak.com](http://moondancekayak.com), 360.738.7664) in Bellingham, will coordinate with car-free train travelers to take them on guided kayak trips to Chuckanut Bay or Wildcat Cove. The outfit opens in April and closes in September or October.

THE AFTERNOON sun spiked through a vault of clouds, lighting grays and blues in Bellingham Bay's waters. Our neon green kayak cut a wake that sparkled. As my friend Brittany and I glided along the shore, two gulls on a sea-eaten rock squawked at each other through wide-open beaks. We scanned the horizon for porpoises and bald eagles that frequent the undeveloped bay south of Bellingham.

In this setting, I could see

why *Outside Magazine* hailed Bellingham as the best paddling town in the country.

We paddled toward Chuckanut Bay, where pocket beaches dappled the shoreline and appeared perfect for leisurely picnics. One such hideout is Teddy Bear Cove, whose crushed-clamshell white sand stands out against the other gray sand beaches. This cove's clothing-optional past is ever-present for some folks.

Farther south from Teddy

Bear Cove, about a three-hour round-trip kayak from Bellingham's Community Boating Center, pristine Chuckanut Island is home to the Cyrus Gates Memorial Preserve. Douglas fir, western red cedar, and madrone thrive on the island's five acres, also home to hermit crabs, blue mud shrimp, surf birds and nesting bald eagles. It's a good spot to pull your kayak ashore and stretch your legs, walking the path around the island.



LEFT Magdalena's Creperie. TOP RIGHT Bellingham Community Boating Center. ABOVE: Statue of Dirty Dan Harris founder of Fairhaven.



Hatching a plan to go kayaking around Bellingham was startlingly easy for any car-free train traveler willing to spend a couple of nights in town. The Bellingham stop is less than a five-minute walk to the Community Boating Center put-in, where the center rents paddleboards, sit-on-top kayaks (for beginners), and sea kayaks (for more advanced paddlers).

Historic Fairhaven, a small enclave of south Bellingham, is less than a ten-minute walk from the station. Strolling past Fairhaven's old-fashioned brick buildings from the turn of the twentieth century, I was frequently drawn into the brightly

colored shops of its town center—a wine bar, spa, a coffee shop, an ale house, a crêperie and Village Books, a three-story independent bookstore.

Lodging is right in Fairhaven as well. Guests at Fairhaven Village Inn enjoy decadent bedding and views of the bay from their patio nooks.

If you're looking for something a bit edgier, head to downtown Bellingham, which is influenced by nearby Western Washington University. There you'll find nightlife, breweries, restaurants and galleries. The city is second in the nation for art businesses per capita.

Buses run every half-hour (hourly Sundays) from Fairhaven to downtown and take about fifteen minutes. Alternatively, rent a bike at Fairhaven Bicycles, and take the lovely South Bay Trail, which takes pedestrians and cyclists over the water for part of the 2.3-mile path en route to downtown.

Not surprisingly, Bellingham centers on its bay and shoreline. "People think you have to go to the San Juans to enjoy diversity in tidal life and geography," said Kristi Kucera, owner of Moondance Kayaking Adventures. "It's all right here near Bellingham." OnTrak

## TRAVEL

### AMTRAK CASCADES

Bellingham | BEL, 401 Harris Ave. Depot has a lobby, restrooms, a café and long- and short-term parking.

### BUS TRANSPORTATION

ridewta.com | 360.676.7433 The WTA 401 line runs between Bellingham Station and Fairhaven Transit Center all day, every day, on the half-hour, except Sundays when it leaves hourly.

### FAIRHAVEN BICYCLE

fairhavenbike.com | 360.733.4433 Rents casual bikes for \$25-\$37.50 for four hours and \$40-\$55 per day. Burley trailers for kids run \$12 for four hours and \$20 per day.

### KAYAK RENTAL

boatingcenter.org | 360.714.8891 The Community Boating Center rents kayaks and paddleboards for \$15 per hour, \$45 for four hours, and \$75 per day. Open May-Oct.

## DRINK

With five breweries in or near downtown, Bellingham is serious about craft beer.

### ASLAN BREWING

aslanbrewing.com | 360.778.2088 This newcomer features 100 percent organic ingredients and scrumptious food. I was wooed by the Stoutly-man Ale, but the Megathrust Imperial IPA won out.

## STAY

### FAIRHAVEN VILLAGE INN

fairhavenvillageinn.com 360.733.1311 Hang out by the fire in the main room and play board games provided at the cozy Fairhaven Village Inn in the heart of the restaurant district.

### CHRYSALIS INN AND SPA

thechrysalisinn.com | 888.808.0005 Half a mile away is the Chrysalis Inn and Spa. There are also bed and breakfasts and hotels closer to downtown Bellingham.

## EAT

There are plenty of tasty bites in Fairhaven and Bellingham. Two places close to the Amtrak Cascades station in Fairhaven stand out.

### THE ARCHER ALE HOUSE

thearcheralehouse.com | 360.647.7002 This joint has a considerable European beer selection, and a dynamic and delicious menu. Think herb mushroom spaetzle, seasonal pot pies, and fresh, local seafood.

### MAGDALENA'S CREPERIE

magdalenascreperie.com 360.483.8569 Polish-inspired Magdalena's Creperie serves homemade pierogi and delectably thin crepes with an expansive selection of savory and sweet fillings.

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PICTURED  
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