
Seattle, WA

Get the insider scoop as our expert unveils the best picks for *summer* fun in Seattle.

Written by Annika S. Hipple

Inside

[Overview/Getting Around/Checklist](#) [2]

[Hotels](#) [3]

[Restaurants](#) [4]

[Attractions](#) [5]

[Nightlife](#) [6]

[Ratings](#) [7]

[Seattle Map](#) [8]

[Notes & Resources](#) [9]

Summer in the City

If the words “Emerald City” make you think of wizards, scarecrows, and a pair of ruby-red slippers, you’re in for a surprise. Seattle’s nickname evokes its plethora of parks, waterways, and other natural assets. Add to that a vibrant cultural and restaurant scene, and you may wish you could click your heels together and say, “Don’t make me go home.”



Overview

Seattle is at its best when the clouds clear to reveal the surrounding mountains and the sun sparkles on Puget Sound and the lakes. Yet even when it rains, the city has its charms, with restaurants featuring fresh Northwest ingredients, high-quality museums and performing arts, and plenty of cozy cafés where you can while away the hours.

Still, when the weather permits—and it usually does for most of the summer—Seattle is a place to get outdoors. The city has a deep-rooted connection to nature, with plenty of parks, trails, and appealing waterfronts. Venture beyond the well-known attractions and you’ll find countless summer festivals and cultural offerings, lively street markets, and an overall sense of well-being that regularly places Seattle on lists of the most livable cities in the nation.

Weather

Summer in Seattle can get off to a slow start, but once here, it’s typically sunny, with low humidity and comfortably warm temperatures. Carry a light sweater if you’ll be outside in the evenings; temperatures often cool down substantially after sunset.

Getting Around

Flights to Seattle arrive at Sea-Tac Airport (SEA). Cab fare to downtown is approximately \$40; cheaper alternatives include the Gray Line Airporter bus and Sound Transit light rail. King County Metro Transit operates buses throughout the Seattle area, with free service in the downtown core from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily. The ORCA card joint-fare pass is valid on seven regional transit systems, including King County Metro, Sound Transit, King County Water Taxi, and Washington State Ferries.

Checklist Tourism

The Best of the Season

Top Summer Events & Attractions

- Seattle Mariner’s Major League Baseball games
- Fremont Sunday Street Market (Sundays, 10-5)
- Ballard Sunday Farmers Market (Sundays, 10-3)
- Fremont Outdoor Movies (Saturday evenings June 26-Aug. 14)
- First Thursdays Art in the Park, Pioneer Square (June 3-Sept. 2)
- JamFest summer music festival at Hing Hay Park (June 3-Sept. 2)
- Shakespeare in the Park (July 9-Aug. 10)
- Seafair Torchlight Parade (July 31)
- Seafair air show & hydroplane races (Aug. 6-8)
- Bumbershoot music festival (Sept. 4-6)

Top Tourist Attractions

- Pike Place Market
- Space Needle
- Seattle Underground Tour
- Museum of Flight
- Seattle Aquarium
- Woodland Park Zoo
- Hiram M. Chittenden (Ballard) Locks & Fish Ladder
- Experience Music Project / Science Fiction Museum
- Seattle Art Museum & Olympic Sculpture Park
- Pacific Science Center

Best Guided Tours

- EverGreen Escapes
- Savor Seattle Food Tours
- Argosy Cruises
- Ride the Ducks of Seattle
- Shutter Tours photographic tours
- Gray Line of Seattle hop-on, hop-off tours
- Kenmore Air scenic flights
- Chinatown Discovery Tours
- Seattle By Foot
- Tours Northwest

Hotels

H1 Mayflower Park Hotel

\$\$ · 405 Olive Way · 206-623-8700 · www.mayflowerpark.com

EXPERT
FAVORITE



Situated in the heart of the downtown retail core, this independent hotel has a location that's hard to beat and prices below those of the top chains. The historic building and guest rooms ooze charm, and the lobby bar serves up tasty cocktails in a low-key but elegant atmosphere. Some rooms are on the small side; consider requesting a corner room or suite if space is a prime concern.

H2 Four Seasons Hotel Seattle

LUXURY

\$\$\$ · 99 Union St.
206-749-7000 · www.fourseasons.com/seattle

Though nondescript on the outside, the Four Seasons is all about understated modern luxury from the moment you step inside. Yes, it's pricey, but it's worth it. Just a block from Pike Place Market, the hotel has a spa and an outdoor deck with infinity pool and fireplace. ART Restaurant serves classy Northwest cuisine made from local and organic ingredients. For spectacular views, splurge for a room facing the water.

H4 Inn at the Market

BOUTIQUE
PICK

\$\$\$ · 86 Pine St.
206-443-3600 · www.innatthemarket.com

Unless you're looking for it, you might not realize there's a luxury boutique hotel here: The entrance is marked only by an unobtrusive wall plaque. The tranquil interior courtyard seems worlds away from the bustle of Pike Place Market, and the rooftop deck offers outstanding views. The Tempur-Pedic beds may not be for everyone, but if your budget permits, you can't go wrong with the tasteful elegance and quality service.

H3 Homewood Suites Seattle

FAMILY
FRIENDLY

\$\$ · 1011 Pike St.
206-682-8282 · www.homewoodsuitesseattle.com

Large rooms with separate living areas and kitchenettes, together with the included breakfast buffet and free Wi-Fi, make this an excellent choice for families or extended-stay travelers. The hotel is located on the edge of downtown, very close to shopping and the convention center and a short walk from Pike Place Market. Parking costs an extra \$25 per day; free shuttle service is available to key downtown locations and hospitals.

H5 Pan Pacific Hotel

BEST FOR
BUSINESS

\$\$\$ · 2125 Terry Ave. South Lake Union
206-264-8111 · www.panpacific.com

Though this hotel primarily targets business travelers, the spacious rooms and luxury amenities make it a great option for anyone willing to walk a bit—ten blocks or so—to get to the heart of downtown. Great views and free wireless Internet are added perks, as is the Whole Foods supermarket conveniently located below the hotel. Ask for a room with a view of the Space Needle or Lake Union.

Neighborhoods

DOWNTOWN

The majority of Seattle's hotels are located downtown, where you'll find some of the city's most famous attractions, the convention center, numerous theaters and restaurants, plenty of shopping, and easy public-transit access to areas throughout the metropolitan area.

BELLTOWN

A casual mix of hip, upscale, and gritty, Belltown is located just north of downtown and is filled with restaurants, lounges, and avant-garde art galleries—as well as newish condo developments and more than a few homeless people.

WATERFRONT

Seattle's main waterfront occupies a narrow strip of land between Elliott Bay and Belltown/downtown (accessible by stairs and elevator). Here, you'll find the Bell Harbor conference center and cruise terminal, the Seattle Aquarium, and the Olympic Sculpture Park.

SOUTH LAKE UNION

This up-and-coming neighborhood used to be a no-man's-land between Lake Union and downtown but is gradually being redeveloped with condos, hotels, and restaurants. Several moderately priced chain hotels are located here, within walking distance of downtown and the Seattle Center.

CAPITOL HILL

A diverse mix of stately mansions and apartment buildings, Capitol Hill is located just east of downtown. The areas around Broadway and 12th Avenue are bustling with restaurants, offbeat shops, and a plentiful array of bars and other nightlife.

LOWER QUEEN ANNE

This lively neighborhood at the base of Queen Anne Hill lies north and west of the Seattle Center. Numerous restaurants and pubs, several supermarkets, and convenient bus connections make it a good alternative to downtown, especially for extended stays.

UNIVERSITY DISTRICT

This neighborhood surrounding the University of Washington (a.k.a. "U-Dub") caters primarily to students, with funky shops, late-night pubs, and inexpensive eateries. The business district centers on University Street (known to locals as "The Ave"), a block east of campus.

Restaurants

R1 Ray's Boathouse & Café

\$\$ - \$\$\$ · 6049 Seaview Ave. NW · Ballard · 206-789-3770 · www.rays.com

EXPERT
FAVORITE



Dining doesn't get any more summery than at Ray's, a local favorite serving seafood and other fresh Northwest cuisine. Ray's Boathouse offers a classic fine-dining experience, while the atmosphere at Ray's Café is more casual and the menu a bit more affordable. Particularly popular is the café's large outdoor deck overlooking Puget Sound and the Olympic Mountains—great for savoring summer sunsets.

R2 Wild Ginger

LOCAL
CLASSIC

\$\$\$ · 1401 Third Ave.
206-623-4450 · www.wildginger.net

A perennial favorite among both critics and locals, Wild Ginger serves a classy fusion of Asian cuisines from the Pacific Rim. The menu features an extensive satay bar and main courses such as fragrant duck and Panang beef curry. Drinks include sake and various Asian teas. The large main dining room can get quite noisy; if you're looking for quiet, try requesting a table in a side room.

R4 Tutta Bella Neopolitan Pizzeria

GOOD
FOR KIDS

\$\$ · 2200 Westlake Ave. Suite 112 · South Lake Union
206-624-4422 · www.tuttabella.com

For real Naples-style pizza—certified by the Associazione Verace Pizza Napoletana—head to Tutta Bella, where you'll find more than a dozen varieties of thin-crust wood-fired pies, as well as calzones, salads, and mouthwatering desserts. The drink menu includes Italian wines, spirits, cocktails, and beer, as well as classic after-dinner espresso. Popular with locals and families, it can get crowded during prime dinner hours.

R3 Agua Verde Café and Paddle Club

FOOD
& FUN

\$\$ · 1303 N.E. Boat St. · University District
206-545-8570 · www.aguaverde.com

There's often a wait for a table at Agua Verde, especially on fine days, when locals—including students from the nearby University of Washington—flock to this casual eatery/paddle club overlooking Portage Bay. Rent a kayak for an hour or two and then soothe your tired muscles with a margarita and some tasty Mexican fare on the outdoor deck. What better way to spend a Seattle summer day?

R5 Serafina

ROMANTIC

\$\$\$ · 2043 Eastlake Ave. E · Eastlake
206-323-0807 · www.serafinaseattle.com

This neighborhood restaurant serves up rustic Italian cuisine in an intimate setting. An extensive wine list, well-made cocktails, and live jazz Friday through Sunday evenings (as well as during Sunday brunch) add to the charm. On warm summer nights, try for a table on the leafy garden patio. Serafina's owner recently opened a sister restaurant, Cicchetti, around the corner, with a larger bar and a pan-Mediterranean small-plates menu.

Don't Just Take Our Word for It...

More top-rated best bites, according to Zagat Survey's *Seattle Restaurants 2010*:

BEST NEW AMERICAN

Restaurant Zoë

Belltown

BEST VIETNAMESE / BEST BRUNCH

Monsoon

Capitol Hill

BEST DELI / BEST QUICK BITES / BEST ITALIAN

Salumi

Pioneer Square

BEST DESSERTS

Bakery Nouveau

West Seattle

BEST MEXICAN

La Carta de Oaxaca

Ballard

BEST FRENCH

Rover's

Madison Valley

BEST STEAKHOUSE

Metropolitan Grill

Downtown

BEST PIZZA

Serious Pie

Downtown

Attractions

A1 Locks & Fish Ladder

3015 NW 54th St · Ballard · 206-783-7059 · www.seattle.gov/tour/locks.htm

EXPERT
FAVORITE



A steady stream of boat traffic passes through the Ballard Locks, which connect Puget Sound to the inland lakes. Bring a picnic and enjoy the view from the slopes overlooking the locks or catch a free big-band concert in the adjacent park on summer weekend afternoons. Don't miss the fish ladder, where you can see salmon leaping as they migrate from the ocean to their freshwater spawning grounds.

A2 Pike Place Market

SEATTLE
CLASSIC

FREE · 85 Pike St. · Downtown
206-622-6198 · www.pikeplacemarket.org

The nation's oldest continuously operating farmers' market, Pike Place Market has been selling fresh Northwest fruits, vegetables, seafood, and other products since 1907. In summer, the market is vibrant with colorful flowers and produce from regional farms, as well as crafts by local artisans and the usual eclectic array of street performers. Below the main arcade are several more floors of quirky shops selling everything from folk art to miniature cars.

A4 Washington State Ferry

CHEAP
CRUISE

\$ · 801 Alaskan Way, Pier 52 · Waterfront
206-464-6400 · www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries

A fun and cheap way to get out on the water is to take the ferry across Puget Sound to Bainbridge Island. The summer fare for walk-on passengers is just \$6.90 for the 35-minute trip (the return is free). On the Bainbridge side, it's a short walk from the ferry terminal to the main street, where you can enjoy lunch and some shopping before heading back to the city.

A3 Kerry Park

BEST
VIEW

FREE · Highland Ave. W. at W. Second Ave. · Queen Anne
www.seattle.gov/parks

If you're looking for a great view, try tiny Kerry Park, the Seattle connoisseur's free alternative to shelling out \$17 a pop for the observation deck of the Space Needle. You won't get the same 360-degree panorama, but this overlook on the south slope of Queen Anne Hill offers the classic Seattle postcard view of the Space Needle, downtown, Elliott Bay, the West Seattle peninsula, and (weather permitting) Mount Rainier.

A5 Woodland Park Zoo

GREAT
FOR KIDS

\$\$ · 750 N. 50th St. (South Ent.), 5500 Phinney Ave N. (West Ent.)
Fremont / Phinney Ridge · 206-548-2500 · www.zoo.org

Occupying 92 acres in leafy Woodland Park, this popular zoo has more than 300 species in naturalistic exhibits that give animals room to roam. The orangutans and gorillas are always favorites; other highlights include meerkats, penguins, snow leopards, and the African savanna exhibit. Occasionally, the vegetation can make it hard to spot animals, but one of the beauties of the zoo is the way it has integrated exhibits with its environment.

Get Outdoors!



ALKI BEACH

Restaurants, bars, multi-use path, beach-related activities, and great views across the water. Alki Kayak Tours rents kayaks, bikes, inline skates, and more.

ARGOSY CRUISES

Boat trips on Elliott Bay and lakes Union and Washington, as well as through the Ballard Locks.

GOLDEN GARDENS

Sandy beach, walking trails, fire pits, and gorgeous sunsets over Puget Sound and the Olympic Mountains.

GREEN LAKE

2.8-mile multi-use loop trail, paddleboat and kayak rentals, swimming area, playground, and children's wading pool.

DISCOVERY PARK

More than 500 acres of forest, beach, and grassland, including miles of hiking trails.

BURKE-GILMAN TRAIL

Ten-mile multi-use recreational trail along the Ship Canal, Lake Union, and Lake Washington. Bike rentals at Recycled Cycles in U District.

WASHINGTON PARK ARBORETUM

Wooded paths, botanical gardens, waterfront trail, and Japanese Garden.

AGUA VERDE PADDLE CLUB

Kayak rentals and guided tours. Located on Portage Bay, between lakes Union and Washington.

NORTHWEST OUTDOOR CENTER

Kayak rentals and guided tours. Located on Lake Union.

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON WATERFRONT ACTIVITIES CENTER

Canoe and rowboat rentals for exploring Lake Washington, the Arboretum, and Portage Bay.

SEWARD PARK

Hiking and biking trails along Lake Washington, old-growth forest, swimming area, and Audubon nature center.

Nightlife

N1 The Triple Door

216 Union St. · Downtown · 206-838-4333 · www.thetripdoor.net

EXPERT
FAVORITE



If you're looking for a place to hear some great live music and perhaps enjoy a classy meal at the same time, the Triple Door is for you. The Mainstage features nationally and internationally known performers, comfortable half-moon-shaped booths, and a delicious Asian-fusion menu from Wild Ginger restaurant next door. Upstairs, the Musiquarium Lounge is popular for its happy hour and music by local artists (no cover charge).

More Places Like This: Showbox at the Market, Paramount Theatre, Teatro ZinZanni

N2 Century Ballroom

DANCING

915 E. Pine St. Second Floor · Capitol Hill
206-324-7263 · www.centuryballroom.com

Century Ballroom has probably taught more Seattleites to dance than any other studio in the city, and it keeps things going with popular DJ and live-music nights. Wednesdays are for swing, Thursdays and Saturdays for salsa, and Fridays for tango; other nights vary. Free half-hour dance lessons start off each evening. The adjacent Tin Table restaurant is a good place for dinner or a drink before venturing onto the dance floor.

More Places Like This: Sonny Newman's Dance Hall, Washington Dance Club

N4 Sambar

MIXED
DRINKS

425 NW Market St. · Ballard / Fremont
206-781-4883 · www.sambarseattle.com

Tucked away in a non-commercial neighborhood, this small, classy bar serves some of Seattle's finest handcrafted cocktails. Add to that a romantic enclosed outdoor courtyard and tasty French-inspired menu items (the owner-chefs also run the adjacent Le Gourmand restaurant) and you've got one of the best places in the city to relax with a drink after a long day. Not cheap, but a true hidden gem.

More Places Like This: Zig Zag Café, Tini Bigs

N3 Tractor Tavern

LIVE MUSIC
DIVE

5213 Ballard Ave. N.W. · Ballard
206-789-3599 · www.tractortavern.com

This unpretentious club is known as one of the best places in Seattle for live music. Wall-mounted cowboy boots and other rustic décor provide clues to the musical focus: Folk, bluegrass, Celtic, Americana, and other rootsy styles are the norm here. One section of the hall contains the stage, folding-chair seating, and the dance floor, while the other half is designed for mingling around the bar.

More Places Like This: Nectar, Crocodile Café, Little Red Hen

N5 Brouwer's Cafe

BEST
BEER

400 N. 35th St. · Fremont
206-267-2437 · www.brouwerscafe.com

Beer, beer, and more beer. That's the main attraction at Brouwer's, which serves up 64 beers on tap and more than 300 bottled varieties. This Belgian bar in the heart of Fremont also features 60 types of Scotch and a food menu that's a cut above standard pub fare. A variety of seating lets you choose between people-watching and more intimate imbibing.

More Places Like This: Naked City Taphouse, Tap House Grill

By Neighborhood

CAPITOL HILL

Edgy and eclectic, Capitol Hill is home to a diverse population that includes students at nearby colleges and much of Seattle's gay community. Bars, restaurants, coffeehouses, and vintage clothing stores abound, along with nightclubs and art-house cinemas.

BELLTOWN

Belltown made a name for itself in the 1990s as the birthplace of grunge music. It's still a place to see and be seen, with a plethora of trendy bars, restaurants, and lounges, particularly along First, Second, and Western avenues.

PIONEER SQUARE

Nightlife in Pioneer Square dates back to the days when gold miners would stop in for supplies and entertainment en route to the Yukon. An abundance of bars and clubs keeps the neighborhood hopping, as does the popular monthly First Thursday Art Walk.

BALLARD

Once home to Scandinavian fishermen and millworkers, Ballard has undergone a renaissance and is now one of Seattle's most popular neighborhoods. The downtown area around Market Street and Ballard Avenue is filled with unusual shops, restaurants, pubs, and unpretentious nightlife.

Ratings

Hotels	TripAdvisor +Rated on a scale of 5	Yahoo! Travel +Rated on a scale of 5	Frommer's
Mayflower Park Hotel	4.5	3.5	Very highly recommended
Four Seasons Hotel Seattle	4.5	-	-
Homewood Suites Seattle	4.5	4	-
Inn at the Market	4.5	4.5	Very highly recommended
Pan Pacific Hotel	4.5	3.5	Very highly recommended

Restaurants	Yelp +Rated on a scale of 5	UrbanSpoon +Rated on a scale of 5	Seattle Times +Rated on a scale of 4
Ray's Boathouse & Cafe	4	4	3
Wild Ginger	3.5	4	-
Agua Verde Café	3.5	4.5	-
Tutta Bella Neopolitan Pizzeria	3.5	3.5	-
Serafina	4	4	3

By Neighborhood (continued)

FREMONT

Seattle's Capital of Quirk, Fremont bills itself as the "Center of the Universe." Explore the street art and boutiques during the day or venture over in the evening for the lively bars, restaurants, and live music.

UNIVERSITY DISTRICT

Students pack the restaurants, coffee shops, and bars in this diverse neighborhood adjacent to the University of Washington. The many shops sell vintage clothing, used books and CDs, and other items designed to appeal to a youngish set.

QUEEN ANNE

Queen Anne has two distinct sections: a leafy residential neighborhood and business district at the top of the hill and a bustling lower area adjoining the Seattle Center, home to many top venues for performing arts, cultural events, and sports.

DOWNTOWN

Seattle's nightlife may be scattered throughout the city, but the downtown core still has its share of entertainment, including sports pubs, cocktail bars, musical theaters, cinemas, and the Seattle Symphony at Benaroya Hall.

A Attraction **H** Hotel **N** Nightlife **R** Restaurant



