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## The emerald city that will blow you away with its beauty – an expert guide to Seattle

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## Why go?

Surrounded by mountains and water, [Seattle](#) is a US city that will blow you away with its beauty. But it's not all style over substance — there's so much to experience, from humorous history tours to standout seafood. Cruise passengers never regret spending a little extra time in the Emerald City.

## Cruise port location

Seattle has two cruise terminals. Bell Street Cruise Terminal at Pier 66, near downtown, is the home port for Norwegian Cruise Line and Oceania Cruises. Smith Cove Cruise Terminal at Pier 91, about a 15-minute drive from downtown, houses Carnival Cruise Line, Celebrity Cruises, Holland America Line, Princess Cruises, and Royal Caribbean.

## Getting around

Getting from the airport to downtown is easy and inexpensive on the Link Light Rail (\$3, or about £2.35) and takes approximately 40 minutes. There are also taxis and ride-sharing services such as Uber and Lyft available. The core of the city is walkable, and the city bus network is fairly extensive when you want to visit another neighbourhood. On the sidewalks, you'll find shared bikes available, too.



The observation deck of the Space Needle offers unrivalled city views | CREDIT: Getty

Hiring a car isn't necessary unless you plan to take day trips outside of the city — to get to your port, you'll probably want to grab an Uber/Lyft or a taxi (many hotels also offer a cruise ship shuttle).

## Hotels

There's no shortage of hotels in Seattle to choose from for travellers of all kinds. Those cruising out of Pier 66 might like next-door neighbour [The Edgewater](#), the city's only true waterfront hotel. For Pier 91, anything in Lower Queen Anne will be convenient — [The Maxwell Hotel](#) is a fun option for families. Downtown is a good choice for any cruise passenger, and you're sure to find something to suit your fancy, from charming and historic at [Hotel Sorrento](#) to hip and music-minded at [Hotel Max](#) to warm and welcoming at [Kimpton Hotel Vintage Seattle](#).

## What can I do with one extra day in Seattle?

With just a day, walk through the iconic Pike Place Market, where you can see fish fly through the air, taste the freshest fruits and vegetables, and shop for handmade souvenirs.



Don't miss adding your own contribution to the Gum Wall in Post Alley and ordering a coffee at the original Starbucks.



Seafood lovers should head down to the city's waterfront | CREDIT: iStock

Nearby on the waterfront, soar above Elliott Bay on the Seattle Great Wheel or get a crash course in Washington state scenery at Wings Over Washington, a “flying theatre” that immerses you in the sights, sounds, and smells of the landscape. You could also devote your day to the Seattle Center. The world-famous Space Needle here was recently renovated, adding a rotating glass floor.

There's a museum for everyone: Chihuly Garden and Glass is a photographer's delight, dedicated to the works of blown-glass artist Dale Chihuly; MoPop expertly covers music, movies, video games, and other pop culture curiosities; and the Pacific Science Center is always a hit with kids, given the tropical butterfly house, high-rail bicycle 15 feet off the ground, and saltwater tidepool with animals you can touch. To get to the Seattle Center from downtown, take the two-minute Monorail ride.

## What can I do with two or three days?



Do all of the above, then board the Washington State Ferries for a ride to Bainbridge Island or Bremerton. The views from the water are stunning, and both destinations offer activities within walking distance. On Bainbridge, indulge in a refreshing scoop of sorbet at Mora Iced Creamery, browse for reading material to take on the plane at Eagle Harbor Book Co., admire the local work at the free Bainbridge Island Museum of Art, or sit down to a memorable meal at locally sourced Hitchcock.



Mount Olympus is a eye-catching sight on Bainbridge Island | CREDIT: iStock

In Bremerton, you can tour the USS Turner Joy, a naval destroyer that played an important role in the Vietnam War, or walk through the Puget Sound Navy Museum to learn more about life as a sailor.

With a little extra time, you can also head north to Mukilteo, home of the Future of Flight Aviation Center & Boeing Tour. This requires a car or signing up for a tour that leaves from Seattle. You'll see airplanes being assembled in the world's largest building by volume and learn tons of fun facts (did you know paint can add upwards of 300 kilos to an airplane's weight?). For more aviation history, the Museum of Flight in Tukwila, just south of Seattle, is home to historic aircraft, flight simulators, and space shuttle trainer tours.

## What can I do with a full week?

Do as the Seattleites do and opt outside. Take a day trip to Mount Rainier, a glacier-capped mountain that looms large in the background of Seattle's skyline on a clear day. In the summer, wildflowers in every colour of the rainbow blossom. Olympic National Park on the Olympic Peninsula is also home to some impressive mountains, along with beaches, rainforest, and all the hiking trails you could hope for.



Anyone with an interest in wildlife will enjoy the orcas around the San Juan islands | CREDIT: Getty

For a memorable day trip or overnight excursion, Kenmore Air offers seaplane trips to the San Juan Islands. Once you arrive, go whale watching — Orcas inhabit the waters here, making for a magical sight when you spot them swimming along.

## **Eat and drink**

Seattle is stocked with good restaurants; find many of the best in the Capitol Hill neighbourhood. On the beverage front, the craft coffee, brewery, and cocktail scenes are all top-notch. For fantastic wine, head 30 minutes north to Woodinville, where there are more than 100 tasting rooms.

## **Don't leave without...**



Stocking up on edible souvenirs, like smoked salmon, a bag of coffee beans, and locally made chocolates — choose from Fran’s, Theo, and Seattle Chocolates, all delicious. For something that will last a little longer, the hand-blown glass votives from Glassybaby are a quintessential Seattle gift.



Chihuly Garden and Glass is an unusual spectacle | CREDIT: Chihuly Garden and Glass

## Need to know

### Flight time from the UK

Around nine to 11 hours, with several airline options including American Airlines, British Airways, Delta, and Virgin Atlantic.

### Visas

Visas are generally not necessary for UK nationals, but all visitors should apply at least 72 hours in advance for an [ESTA](#) (Electronic System Travel Authorization). These cost \$14 (around £10) and are available.

### Safety