



Destination Guide: Seattle



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AAA Destination Guide: Seattle includes trip-planning information covering AAA recommended attractions and restaurants, exclusive member discounts, maps and more.

Seattle is so scenically blessed it's almost laughable. Just try to picture it: The snowcapped Olympic Mountains frame the western sky, while



14,410-foot Mount Rainier, although some 90 miles from the city, is a majestic presence on the southern horizon. Puget Sound is sculpted with an intricate network of bays and inlets and speckled with islands large and small, resembling nothing so much as polished emeralds flung onto the surface of an intense blue soup. The shore of long, skinny Lake

Washington is beautified by an almost continuous series of sylvan parks and greenbelts. And Seattle sits right in the middle of it all. The vistas are, in a word, awesome.

If you don't spend all day gawking at nature's splendor, myriad activities await. This is a city chock full of distinctive neighborhoods—from hip, socially diverse Capitol Hill to the elegant homes of Queen Anne to salty, Scandinavian-flavored Ballard, a reminder of Seattle's maritime heritage. So come on. Explore the Pioneer Square Historic District. Visit the attractions at Seattle Center. Watch fish being flung at Pike Place Market. Zip to the top of the Space Needle. Above all, drink plenty of coffee—you're going to be busy.

Essentials

Every Seattle sojourn should begin with a stop at Pike Place Market. The fishmongers' salmon-tossing antics alone are worth a visit, which makes the gorgeous array of produce, delectable baked goods and myriad craft stalls simply icing on the cake.

Take an invigorating morning walk on the paved path around Green Lake, which is popular with legions of strolling, jogging and cycling Seattleites.

For a crash course in local history, go on the Underground Tour of the Pioneer Square Historic District. It's fun and educational, and yes—parts of it are subterranean.

Admire the view from Kerry Park on Queen Anne Hill, which unveils a quintessential Seattle panorama: bristling downtown skyline, Elliott Bay waterfront and Mount Rainier as a backdrop.

Despite its rainy reputation, Seattle does enjoy plenty of summer sunshine. Seafair, held from early July to early August, is the city's big, exuberant warm-weather festival, complete with hydroplane races, a Blue Angels air show, visiting naval ships, the Miss Seafair pageant and a downtown Torchlight Parade.

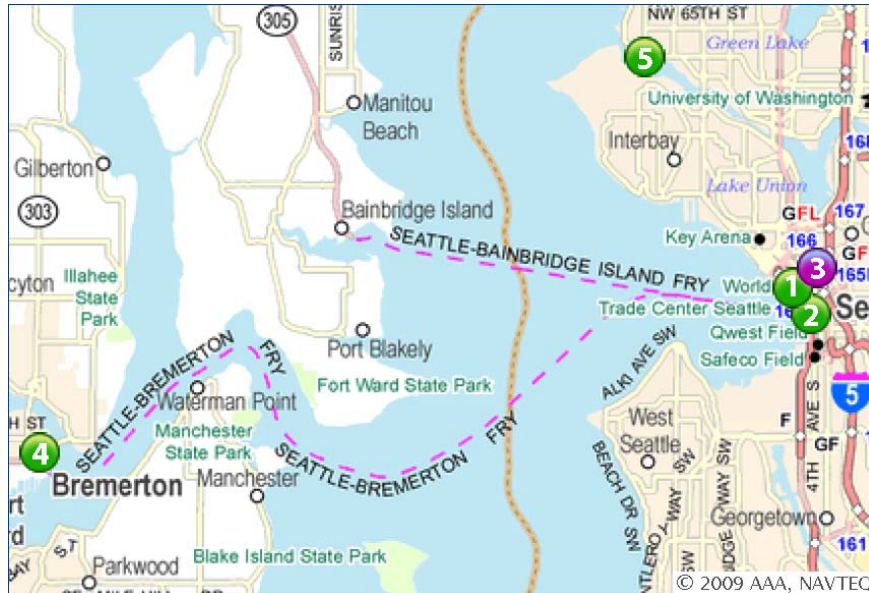
While away some time in Fremont, the self-styled "center of the universe." This eclectic neighborhood of shops and eateries is graced with such delightful examples of public art as "Waiting for the Interurban" and the "Fremont Troll."

Hop aboard the Bremerton Ferry and marvel as the boat navigates a spectacular passage through the channel approaching Bremerton.



Visit the [Lake Washington Ship Canal](#), used by all types and sizes of vessels to negotiate a chain of freshwater lakes en route to saltwater Puget Sound, and watch salmon and trout swimming upstream to their Cascade Mountains spawning grounds via a fish ladder.

Essentials Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using [TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com](#)

Curl up with a good tome at the Elliott Bay Book Company, Seattle’s premier independent bookstore and a local institution.

Although it now has a worldwide presence, Starbucks began in Seattle. Indulge in your favorite coffee concoction at Pike Place Market—where the chain’s very first outlet opened in 1971—or downtown at 4th Avenue and Pine Street, a great people-watching spot in the heart of the shopping district.

Essentials Details - Get additional information on [AAA.com](#)



- GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*

1. Pike Place Market

85 Pike St
Seattle, WA 98101
Phone: (206) 682-7453



2. Underground Tour

608 1st Ave
Seattle, WA 98104
Phone: (206) 682-4646



3. Seafair

911 Pine St
Seattle, WA 98101
Phone: (206) 728-0123

4. Bremerton

Chamber of Commerce
286 4th St
Bremerton, WA 98337
Phone: (360) 479-3579

5. Lake Washington Ship Canal

3015 NW 54th St
Seattle, WA 98107
Phone: (206) 783-7059



Seattle in 3 Days

Three days is barely enough time to get to know any major destination. But AAA travel editors suggest these activities to make the most of your time in Seattle.

Day 1: Morning

Spend the morning at [Pike Place Market](#) (trust us; you’ll want to spend the day). This venerable market celebrated its centennial in 2007, and it’s quite likely to be around another 100 years from now. It’s the best place in Seattle to meet a friend (the traditional spot is under the market’s neon sign where Rachel the bronze piggybank stands) and then wander around looking, smelling, tasting and buying. Arrive early (before 8 a.m.) so you can banter with the vendors as they set up; if you’re lucky you may get some inside information on hot purchases, not to mention first pick at the flower stalls and produce stands.

Have breakfast at the Sound View Café (south end of the Main Arcade). Snag a window table, because the view over Elliott Bay to the distant

Olympic Mountains is wonderful. The menu is standard—omelets, pancakes, sandwiches, soups, chowders—but you can watch seagulls wheel and ferries cruise the water while you eat.

Now you're ready to explore. Fruits, vegetables and flowers are market mainstays, and the artful arrangements and jewel-like colors of farm-grown Northwest products are a joy to behold. Pike Place vendors are no-nonsense, and their displays are likely to include hand-lettered signs with friendly reminders like "pleeza no squeezeza." The whole fish, spidery-looking crabs and jumbo shrimp at the seafood stands are all glisteningly fresh, and the boisterous antics of the fishmongers—flinging critters while cracking wise—always draw a crowd.

Follow your nose to the bakeries and unsuccessfully resist the urge to pick up some gooey-good cinnamon buns, sugar-glazed apple fritters, nutty almond cookies or rich cheesecake brownies to go. Pike Place Bakery (1501 Pike Place) and Three Girls Bakery (1514 Pike Place) are particularly mouthwatering. This market is just chock-full of specialty food vendors. Beecher's Handmade Cheese (1600 Pike Place) makes a yummy grilled cheese panini with tomato and basil; Uli's Famous Sausage (1511 Pike Place), a classic bratwurst slathered with mustard. Non-culinary vendors offer aromatic homemade soaps, handcrafted belt buckles, souvenir trinkets and just about everything else.

One important tip: Restrooms are down the stairs at the south end of the Main Arcade (look for the sign). Many of the surrounding businesses don't permit you to use the restroom unless you're a paying customer.

Afternoon

If you still can't tear yourself away from the market (and it's hard), have lunch here, too. [Cafe Campagne](#) (1600 Post Alley) is the casual downstairs counterpart of the more formal restaurant upstairs. Indulge in a bacon and onion tart or *bucherondin de chèvre*, the baked cheese and croutons served atop arugula and frisée (free-ZEY) greens dressed in a scallion vinaigrette. Afterward, pick up your favorite beverage to go at Starbucks (1912 Pike Place); this is the global coffee purveyor's original location.

From the main market entrance at the corner of Pike Street and 1st Avenue, turn right and walk down 1st Avenue two blocks to the [Seattle Art Museum Downtown](#). The 48-foot-tall "Hammering Man," a black steel sculpture, stands guard outside the entrance, his arm raising and lowering four times a minute. SAM's galleries exhibit art from every corner of the world, often mixing media, concepts, centuries and artists in the same room. If you don't feel like walking through the entire collection, the main staircase in the museum's free visitor area, called the Art Ladder, features three public installations incorporating optical illusions into their design.

TASTE Restaurant (it's in the museum but also has a separate entrance on 1st Avenue) is a dimly lit, intimate place at night, but in the afternoon it's a bustling and bright. Stop for carrot cake or a bowl of house-made ice cream and discuss Albert Bierstadt's 1870 landscape masterpiece "Puget Sound on the Pacific Coast" or the very cool installation "Inopportune: Stage One," automobiles suspended from the ceiling amid a profusion of multi-channeled light tubes.

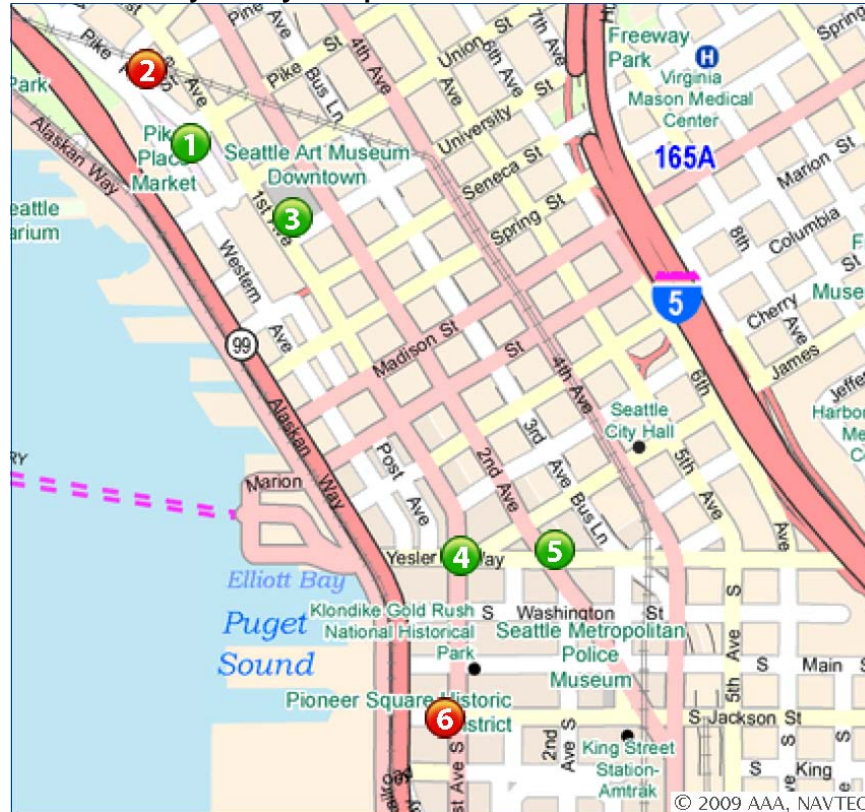
Continue down 1st Avenue to Madison Street and then walk up three blocks to the Seattle Central Library. The utilitarian name certainly doesn't allude to its strikingly futuristic look, which gives off the impression of glass wrapped in a very large net. The design by Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas is anything but stuffy, from illuminated escalators to fourth-floor hallways painted an exceedingly bright shade of red. Even if you don't take one of the guided public architectural tours it's a fascinating place to walk around. There are views of neighboring skyscrapers and Elliott Bay from the reading room on level 10.

Walk down Madison back to 1st Avenue, turn left and head toward Pioneer Square. The [Pioneer Square Historic District](#) covers a 30-block area. This was Seattle's first downtown, before an 1889 fire demolished the mostly wooden buildings. Rich with history, for a time decrepit but for the most part charmingly refurbished, it's a prime tourist destination. Relax on one of the benches in small, tree-shaded Pioneer Park. The

park's totem is a replica of one carved by Tlingit Indians in the late 19th century.

If it's a clear day, take the elevator to the top of the Smith Tower for a view of the city below. This was Seattle's first skyscraper, although it's now relatively dwarfed by a number of taller structures.

Seattle in 3 Days – Day 1 Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using [TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com](#)

Evening

Regulars swear by Il Terrazzo Carmine. This Pioneer Square favorite is old-school Italian all the way, from the background music to the decadent dessert tray. The food is reliably delicious and also reliably pricey; if you

Day 1 Details - Get additional information on [AAA.com](#);
AAA Diamond Rating information available on [AAA.com/Diamonds](#)



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- Exclusive AAA member discounts available

1. Pike Place Market

85 Pike St
 Seattle, WA 98101
 Phone: (206) 682-7453



2. Cafe Campagne

1600 Post Alley at Pine St
 Seattle, WA 98101
 Phone: (206) 728-2233

3. Seattle Art Museum Downtown

1300 1st Ave
 Seattle, WA 98101
 Phone: (206) 654-3137



4. Pioneer Square Historic District

118 S. Main St
 Seattle, WA 98104



5. Smith Tower

506 2nd Ave
 Seattle, WA 98104
 Phone: (206) 622-4004



6. Il Terrazzo Carmine

411 1st Ave S
 Seattle, WA 98104
 Phone: (206) 467-7797

don't feel like stuffing yourself—or emptying your wallet—order the risotto of the day or caesar salad, which tastes as lovely as it looks. Reservations are advised.

If it's not too late, enjoy a stroll along Pioneer Square's brick building-lined streets. The nighttime entertainment choices are many, from cozy taverns to comedy to raucous live music joints. Local rock bands play most nights at The Central Saloon (207 1st Ave.), while at the New Orleans Creole Restaurant (114 1st Ave.) the music is blues, jazz and Dixieland. These two venues participate in Joint Cover, which provides entry to several different clubs for one cover charge (\$5 Sun.-Thurs., \$10 Fri.-Sat.).

Note: The Pioneer Square area can get pretty rowdy at night, and it also attracts loiterers and the homeless. Enjoy yourself, but stay alert and keep common sense safety precautions in mind

Day 2: Morning

Grab breakfast at the Pioneer Square branch of the Grand Central Baking Company (214 1st Ave. in the Grand Central Arcade). In warm weather sit on the cobblestone patio and enjoy a freshly made pastry with your espresso; if it's chilly sit inside by the fireplace. Then take the [Underground Tour](#) and bone up on Pioneer Square history. You'll learn all kinds of fascinating stuff about opium dens, bootleg operations and Seattle's once-primitive sewer system on this above- and below-ground jaunt.

Browse to your heart's content at the Elliott Bay Book Co. (101 S. Main St. at 1st Avenue). The books are stocked on cedar shelves in a meandering series of nook-and-cranny rooms. Then take your treasures downstairs to The Elliott Bay Café and have a cup of organic java. The brick walls of yore are cream colored now, and blond wood tables and chairs give the cafe a sunny feel. Sandwiches are terrific; try the Moroccan steak sandwich, stuffed into a pita with mint-flavored yogurt and feta, or a pan bagne—garlicky mashed chickpeas, grilled veggies and goat cheese on semolina bread.

Schedule some time to explore the [International District](#) (also called Chinatown and known locally as “the ID”), which lies east of the Pioneer Square Historic District. A true melting pot of Asian cultures, this area is home to Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Filipino, Korean and Cambodian residents, so even though it continues to gentrify the ID maintains a distinctive identity.

Fast Metro Transit and Sound Transit bus service takes advantage of the 1.3-mile Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel, which connects the International District with four downtown stations. Sound Transit's Central Link light-rail service also uses the tunnel. Metro Transit buses and trolleys (electric buses) operate on surface streets; those serving the International District converge at the intersection of 5th Avenue S. and S.

Jackson Street. The fare is \$1.75 (\$2 during peak hours—Mon.-Fri. 6-9 a.m. and 3-6 p.m.). Exact cash fare is required. Bus service is free daily from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. within the Ride Free Area, bounded by Battery Street on the north, 6th Avenue on the east, Jackson Street on the south and the waterfront on the west.

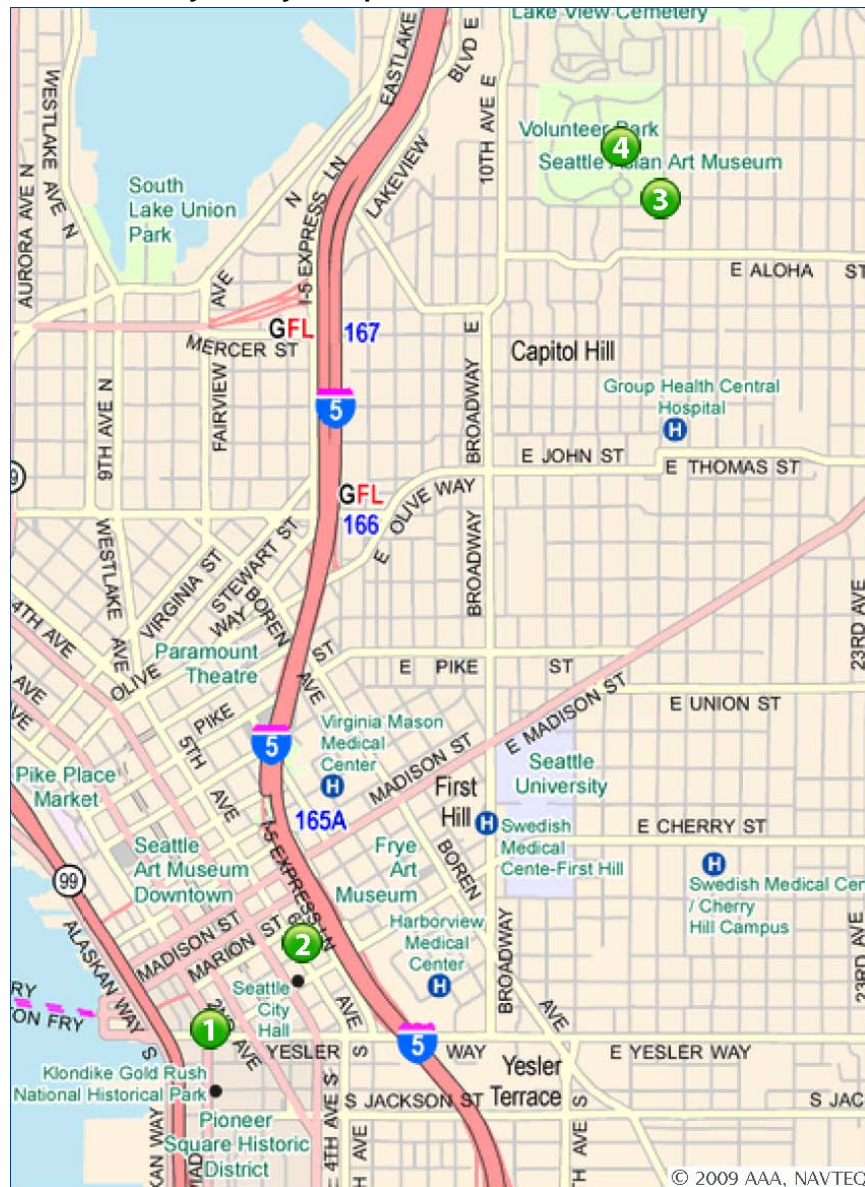
Cultural and historical roots were honored with the grand opening of the Historic Chinatown Gate in February 2008. Painted vibrant shades of red and gold, with an orb perched atop the roofline (to keep away bad luck), the 45-foot archway straddles S. King Street at 5th Avenue S. The structure, a symbolic welcoming, is similar to those marking Chinese communities in San Francisco, Portland, Vancouver and Washington, D.C.

Uwajimaya, 600 5th Ave. S., is a big Asian grocery store that anchors Uwajimaya Village, a complex of shops and restaurants. The Uwajimaya food court is a great place to have lunch. Golden-brown ducks hang by their necks in roasting ovens and the aroma of curry fills the air. Try *banh mi*, a Vietnamese sandwich with beef, onions, pickled peppers and cilantro on a crusty baguette. Dip salad rolls—translucent rice paper wrapped around shrimp, veggies and thin noodles—in peanut sauce. Slurp up *pho*, the traditional Vietnamese noodle soup. Dessert should be a piece of light, sweet strawberry cake from the Yummy House, a local bakery. It's fast food, but filling, good and inexpensive fast food.

Afternoon

From the International District head to Capitol Hill, an ethnically and socially diverse neighborhood that lies astride a ridge between downtown's skyscrapers and Lake Washington. While away some time at [Volunteer Park](#), Seattle's most elegant greensward. It's a lovely expanse of old cedars and spruces, manicured lawns, formal gardens and glass-surfaced ponds, surrounded by the mansions of old-money Seattle families. Walk through the park's Victorian-style, steel and cast-iron Conservatory, filled with a riot of orchids, tropical plants and huge cactuses.


Seattle in 3 Days – Day 2 Map



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The park also contains the Seattle Asian Art Museum, downtown SAM's sister gallery. The exhibits at SAAM focus on Chinese, South Asian and Southeast Asian art. Gaze upon urns, exquisite porcelain bowls, a bronze depiction of Guanyin—a multi-armed, multi-headed female figure considered by followers of Buddhism to be the personification of compassion and kindness—and of course, statues of Buddah himself. Then have a soothing cup of jasmine tea at the museum's TASTE Café.

Day 2 Details - Get additional information on AAA.com

 - Exclusive AAA member discounts available

1. Underground Tour

608 1st Ave
Seattle, WA 98104
Phone: (206) 682-4646



3. Volunteer Park

1400 E. Galer St
Seattle, WA 98112
Phone: (206) 684-4743

2. International District

700 5th Ave
Seattle, WA 98104

4. Seattle Asian Art Museum

1400 E. Prospect St
Seattle, WA 98112
Phone: (206) 654-3100



Evening

The 10 or so blocks of north-south Broadway between E. Pine and E. Roy streets are the heart of Capitol Hill, a haven for alternative culture, the center of Seattle's gay community and a hangout for punk rock kids. Neon hair, outré clothing, multiple piercings and full-body tattoos are par for the course, but that doesn't mean you'll be ostracized for looking, well, boring—anything goes here.

Broadway shops cater to youth culture, so if you're looking for vintage clothing, funky jewelry, unusual art or totally cool stuff like Ethiopian wands or little Mexican *calaveras* (skeletons) decked out in wacky costumes, you've come to the right place. Window shop until you find a place that strikes your fancy. Broadway Market (401 E. Broadway at E. Harrison Street) is the neighborhood "mall"—a big QFC food store, Hot Topic, Urban Outfitters, Blooms on Broadway and a handful of local businesses under one roof.

Broadway also is lined with restaurants, so you have plenty of choices for dinner. Siam on Broadway (616 E. Broadway) serves solid renditions of Thai standards, from pad Thai with fried tofu squares to curry beef. You can watch the chefs whip everything together while you wait. Pizza Pagliacci (426 E. Broadway) is casual and lively; you order cafeteria style from the delivery stations (good, freshly made pizza by the slice or by the pie, calzones, pasta and green salads), pay and take your little feast to a table and enjoy.

If you just want to chill at a movie afterward the Harvard Exit Theatre, 807 E. Roy St. at Harvard Avenue (north end of Broadway), shows current independent and foreign films. Originally a women's clubhouse, this was one of Seattle's first art-house theaters, and it still has a large and elegant lobby complete with grand piano and chandelier.

Note: A parking space is usually easier to find on one of the residential side streets a block or so off than along Broadway, but check signs to make sure you're not parked in a restricted area before leaving your car for the evening.

Day 3: Morning

Seattle Center, with its museums, park-like grounds and year-round special events, is the best place in the city to take kids. If time is short, just go to the top of the Space Needle; you don't need a timed ticket and lines usually aren't that long. The glass-enclosed, walk-around observation deck provides a panoramic view in every direction. The only caveat is the weather; don't bother if it's overcast or foggy. Instead, explore the exhibits at the Pacific Science Center. Devoted fans of visionary guitar hero Jimi Hendrix won't want to miss the exhibit devoted to the Seattle native at the Experience Music Project (EMP). The Science Fiction Museum and Hall of Fame is a must for sci-fi buffs with its collections of movie spaceships, weapons and space wear. A single admission gets you into both museums.

From the Space Needle, walk down Broad Street to Pier 70 on the waterfront and check out Olympic Sculpture Park. The outdoor art installations are interspersed among plantings of trees, shrubs and

flowers native to the Pacific Northwest. This is a prime downtown location; the view overlooking Elliott Bay west to the Olympics is inspiring. After tracing the zigzagging pathways and stopping to admire the bold "Father and Son" fountain that stands at the head of Pier 70, pick up an espresso from the cafe inside the PACCAR Pavilion and relax on the veranda.

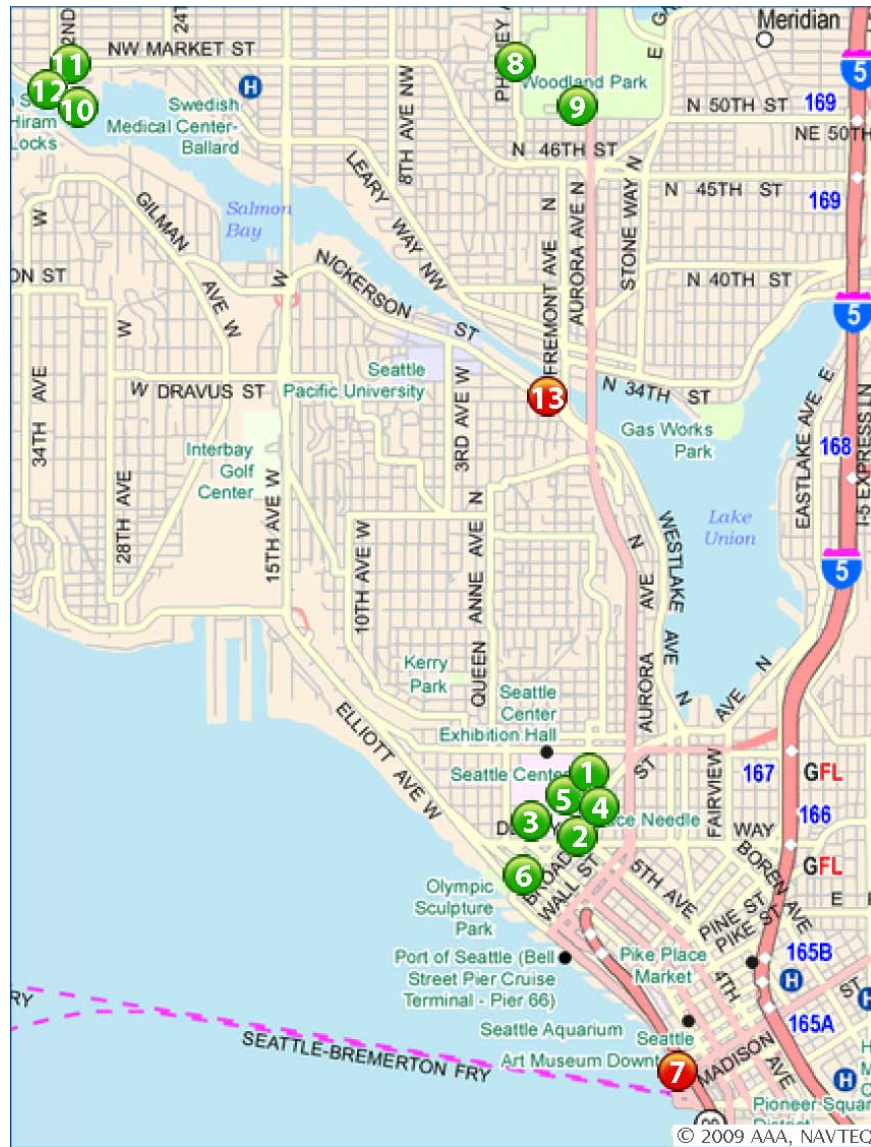
Afternoon

Seattle and seafood go together like yin and yang, so walk south along the waterfront to Pier 54 and have lunch at Ivar's Acres of Clams. Consult the daily fresh sheet to see what looks good, but you sure can't go wrong with the Dungeness crab salad, fish and chips or the deservedly popular Puget Sound clam chowder, brimming with clams, potatoes and bits of bacon. If it's nice outside, order from the Fish Bar walk-up window and sit at one of the picnic tables. Then pop into Ye Olde Curiosity Shop, a waterfront institution also at Pier 54. It's a quintessential souvenir stop and quasi museum with lots of antiques, including the requisite shrunken heads.

Grab your pith helmet and take Aurora Avenue (SR 99) north across the Lake Washington Ship Canal to Woodland Park and the Woodland Park Zoo. The animals live in a variety of themed habitats like the Tropical Rain Forest, home to gorillas, colobus monkeys, jaguars and other jungle denizens. Then spend a relaxing half hour breathing in the fragrance at the gorgeous Woodland Park Rose Garden. The roses are at their splendiferous peak from June through August, but due to Seattle's mild climate they're still in bloom well into October.

An alternate agenda is a jaunt to the Ballard neighborhood (get there by accessing east-west Market Street) and the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks. Watching vessels of all sizes pass through the navigation locks is fascinating. The Fish Ladder helps salmon swim at a gradual incline to their upstream spawning grounds; you can observe them go by through porthole windows. There's another garden here, the Carl S. English Jr. Botanical Garden. The trees and shrubs are a mix of exotic and indigenous species, and plantings vary according to the season. On a warm summer day it's a lovely stroll.

Seattle in 3 Days – Day 3 Map



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Day 3 Details - Get additional information on AAA.com



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- Exclusive AAA member discounts available

1. Seattle Center

305 Harrison St
Seattle, WA 98109
Phone: (206) 684-7200



2. Space Needle

219 4th Ave N
Seattle, WA 98109
Phone: (206) 905-2100



3. Pacific Science Center

200 2nd Ave N
Seattle, WA 98109
Phone: (206) 443-2001



4. Experience Music Project (EMP)

325 5th Ave. N.
Seattle, WA 98121
Phone: (877) 454-7836



5. Science Fiction Museum and Hall of Fame

325 5th Ave. N.
Seattle, WA 98109
Phone: (206) 770-2702



6. Olympic Sculpture Park

2901 Western Ave.
Seattle, WA 98101
Phone: (206) 654-3100



7. Ivar's Acres of Clams

1001 Alaskan Way
Seattle, WA 98104
Phone: (206) 624-6852

8. Woodland Park Zoo

5500 Phinney Ave N
Seattle, WA 98103
Phone: (206) 548-2599



9. Woodland Park Rose Garden

5500 Phinney Ave N
Seattle, WA 98103
Phone: (206) 684-4863

10. Hiram M. Chittenden Locks

4 mi. w. of I-5 exit 169
Seattle, WA 98107
Phone: (206) 783-7059



11. Fish Ladder

4 mi. w. of I-5 exit 169
Seattle, WA 98107

12. Carl S. English Jr. Botanical Garden

3015 NW 54th St
Seattle, WA 98107
Phone: (206) 783-7059

13. Ponti Seafood Grill

3014 3rd Ave N
Seattle, WA 98109
Phone: (206) 284-3000

Evening

Fremont is a delightfully idiosyncratic neighborhood that bills itself—with tongue only slightly in cheek—as “the center of the universe.” Locals will tell you that the only correct way to enter Fremont is across the Fremont drawbridge, but if you do you’ll miss the Fremont Troll, a crouching 18-foot-tall statue hiding under the north end of the Aurora Bridge (at N. 36th Street), a block east. Fremont, in fact, is known for its quirky sidewalk art: the six people that constitute “Waiting for the Interurban” and a 16-foot bronze sculpture of communist revolutionary Vladimir Lenin are two well-known examples.

Fuel up at Peet’s Coffee & Tea (3401 Fremont Ave. N.) before browsing Fremont’s variety of offbeat shops. Frank and Dunya (3418 Fremont Ave. N.) supports Northwest artists by selling their arts, crafts and jewelry. The Dusty Strings Acoustic Music Shop (3406 Fremont Ave. N.) has an array of dulcimers, mandolins, banjos and other stringed instruments. Collectors favor Sonic Boom Records (3414 Fremont Ave. N.) for really obscure stuff on vinyl, but they also have new releases and used CDs. A Sonic Boom T-shirt makes an in-the-know souvenir.

Have dinner at Costas Opa Restaurant (3400 Fremont Ave. N.). Start with a classic Greek salad and then go for a specialty like chicken souvlaki or keftethes (Greek-style meatballs with rice and vegetables). Or if you still have a hankering for seafood, try [Ponti Seafood Grill](#); the waterside patios overlook the Fremont Bridge and the ship canal. Grilled marinated calamari is a superb appetizer; follow it up with Washington king salmon or Thai curry penne with scallops and crab. Finish with a ginger peach tart and vanilla ice cream and you’ll feel like you *are* at the center of the universe.

Restaurants

Our favorites include some of this destination’s best restaurants—from fine dining to simple fare.

Seattle is a city that definitely has hip foodie credentials, with a number of downtown restaurants that attract loyal regulars as well as visitors up for

a good meal in stylish surroundings. A discriminating clientele frequents the [Wild Ginger Asian Restaurant & Satay Bar](#), but the good news is that aside from the dress-to-be-seen element, Wild Ginger’s food, an eclectic potpourri of ethnic influences, is excellent. Start with one of the grilled satays—say chicken skewers or lightly grilled sea scallops—served with pickled cucumbers and an aromatic dipping sauce. Duck spiced with cinnamon and star anise is a house specialty, and the kitchen’s skill shows in dishes like wok-fried prawns in a barbecue sauce spiked with garlic, hoisin, peanuts, scallions and dried chilies. The Triple Door lounge beneath the restaurant has a nightly menu of live music.

Carnivores can’t go wrong at the [Metropolitan Grill](#). The dining room’s high ceilings, mahogany tables and dark green, brass-accented booths exude Old World charm, making it a popular after-work destination for downtown suits as well as the theater crowd on big event nights. The “Met” focuses on classic cuts like filet mignon, delmonico and porterhouse, carved tableside. California ranch-raised, Kobe-style Wagyu beef will up the tab considerably, but you can order the less expensive Wagyu burger, a hefty 20 ounces that comes with Gruyère cheese, caramelized onions and a trio of condiments. Accompany your choice with a robust pile of onion rings and one of the wine cellar’s many fine reds. Local “best steakhouse” articles usually have this one on their list.

As good as the Metropolitan for steaks is [The Brooklyn Seafood, Steak & Oyster House](#), across from the Seattle Art Museum Downtown. Go all out with steak Oscar—filet mignon, Dungeness crab and asparagus with rich béarnaise sauce, accompanied by a tower of cheddar potatoes and celeraic-fennel gratinéé. Oysters are the seafood specialty, with as many as a dozen different varieties to entice adventurous palates. The servers even give you background information about the harvesting of these cold-water mollusks, as well as tips on how to consume them. The king salmon, cooked on an alder plank, is a classic Northwest dish. The Brooklyn also offers crab cakes, Penn Cove mussels, seafood cannelloni and other items as reasonably priced small plates.

The museum also joins the downtown culinary crowd with its TASTE Restaurant. At lunchtime this is a bustling place full of art lovers, families and business types, with floor-to-ceiling windows bathing the room in light (as well as providing outstanding people-watching). Although it somewhat resembles a high-tech cafeteria, the food here is seriously good. Chef Christopher Conville relies on local, organically grown ingredients whenever possible and the freshness shows, whether it's a salad niçoise with grilled salmon or spring pea soup flavored with sorrel purée. For dessert have a plate of warm cookies—snickerdoodles and oatmeal chocolate cherry chunk are two of the delightful varieties—that come with a little milk for dunking. If the weather's nice and you'd rather eat outside, the restaurant makes yummy sandwiches to go, like turkey and havarti with butter lettuce and herbed, oven-dried tomatoes on eight-grain bread.

It's a given that Seattle is a seafood kind of city, and a couple of restaurants on the downtown waterfront fill the maritime bill nicely. Another given? The oyster bar is a big draw at [Elliott's Oyster House](#), a noisy, energetic place that sits right on Elliott Bay at Pier 56. But Northwest Dungeness crab is a tradition here, and you can get it steamed with butter, chilled with three dipping sauces or marinated in spices and grilled. Dungeness crab cakes, smoked Alaskan king salmon and sesame-seared ahi tuna can be ordered as small plates. For lunch try grilled Yukon River salmon basted with a bourbon barbecue sauce and topped with fresh tomatillo salsa. The pastry chef whips up delights like Granny Smith apple fritters and white chocolate coconut cake with raspberry sauce. Take advantage of the outside deck in summer.

Not far away is another landmark, [Ivar's Acres of Clams](#), which has served the waterfront area since 1938. If you're having dinner, go for the "acres of clams"—two pounds of Manila clams simmered with red potatoes in a garlic and white wine butter sauce. It's truly finger lickin' good. But all of Ivar's seafood satisfies, from grilled salmon with sauteed mustard greens, smoked bacon and cannellini beans to classic fried fish and chips. Their outdoor walk-up service counter does a brisk business in chowders (New England-style clam and Dungeness crab and sweet

corn), and there are picnic tables where you can enjoy your soothing cup or bowl with a view.

Pick a sunny day for lunch or dinner and then snag an outdoor table at [Ray's Cafe](#), the casual, convivial upstairs sibling to Ray's Boathouse in Ballard. Manila clams steamed in beer and dill butter or oysters on the half shell are worthy appetizers. For a main dish you can't go wrong with grilled Alaskan king salmon or Ray's bountiful seafood cioppino in a saffron-tomato broth. An open-face roasted vegetable sandwich on grilled hominy bread is savory vegetarian fare. The seafood goes well with one of the 20 microbrews on tap. Share a dessert—perhaps apple crisp with sour cherries and a brown sugar cinnamon oat topping—and linger over the vista of Shilshoe Bay and the distant Olympic Mountains. Now *this* is good food with a great view.

[Pioneer Square Historic District](#) is a fun gathering place, and locals in search of classic Italian fare have been coming to [Il Terrazzo Carmine](#) (at the district's southern end in the Merrill Place Building) for more than two decades. There's a reason owner Carmine Smeraldo has such a loyal clientele—dishes like pork tenderloin medallions with prosciutto and glazed parmigiano cheese or fettuccine tossed with pesto and prawns are prepared the old-fashioned way and are full of flavor. You won't dine cheaply, but you will dine well. In balmy weather the courtyard at the back of the restaurant is a delightful place to linger.

As terrific as [Pike Place Market](#) is to shop for your own food, it also has some good restaurants. [Cafe Campagne](#) (yes, it's spelled correctly), just above the market in Post Alley, is a little sister to the same-named but more formal dining room upstairs. What with the alley cobblestones outside and the draperied windows inside, this quaint little hideaway does a respectable job of replicating a Parisian cafe. Settle in for a simple bistro-style lunch—say a ham and Gruyère cheese sandwich or quiche and a green salad—and any cares you have will melt away, at least for the afternoon.

Located literally under the market, [Il Bistro](#) is considered by Seattleites to be something of a local secret since it's rather hard to find, at least the

first time. (Hint: It's near the market's information kiosk.) The chef takes good advantage of the surrounding array of produce and catches of the day, so the evening specials burst with freshness and flavor. The rack of lamb is said to be the city's best, and there also are comforting standbys like homemade gnocchi in a sweet tomato sauce. Desserts—from fresh fruit sorbet to Italian cheesecake with an almond biscotti crust—are made in-house. Il Bistro is an ideal choice for a romantic candlelit dinner.

South of downtown near Seattle's football and baseball stadiums is the [Pyramid Alehouse-Brewery & Restaurant](#). If you're in town to see the Seahawks or the Mariners, this is a convenient stop either before or after a game. Families and groups frequent it for the reliable grill standards—spicy chicken wings, pub pizzas, three-bean chicken chili, burgers, fish tacos and a barbecue pork sandwich served with horseradish coleslaw. Locals go for the Thomas Kemper sodas and Pyramid beers, many of which are made on the premises, as well as reasonably priced wines by the glass.

Plenty of restaurants pop up in the eclectic neighborhoods east of downtown toward Lake Washington. Capitol Hill's [Kingfish Cafe](#) is an intimate little diner that rather incongruously—given Seattle's location—serves up ample portions of soul food. Mac and cheese, oozing two cheeses and studded with bits of onion, bell pepper and mushroom, is the down-home real thing. Catfish is rolled in cornmeal, fried on a hot griddle and served with herb-flecked grits and slow-simmered greens. Red beans and rice (also available as a side) is a house favorite, flavored with tasso and andouille sausage, and be sure to order the nicely crispy sweet potato fries. If there's still room, the red velvet cake with cream cheese icing will surely finish you off. The restaurant is owned by two sisters, and their way with time-honored comfort food shows.

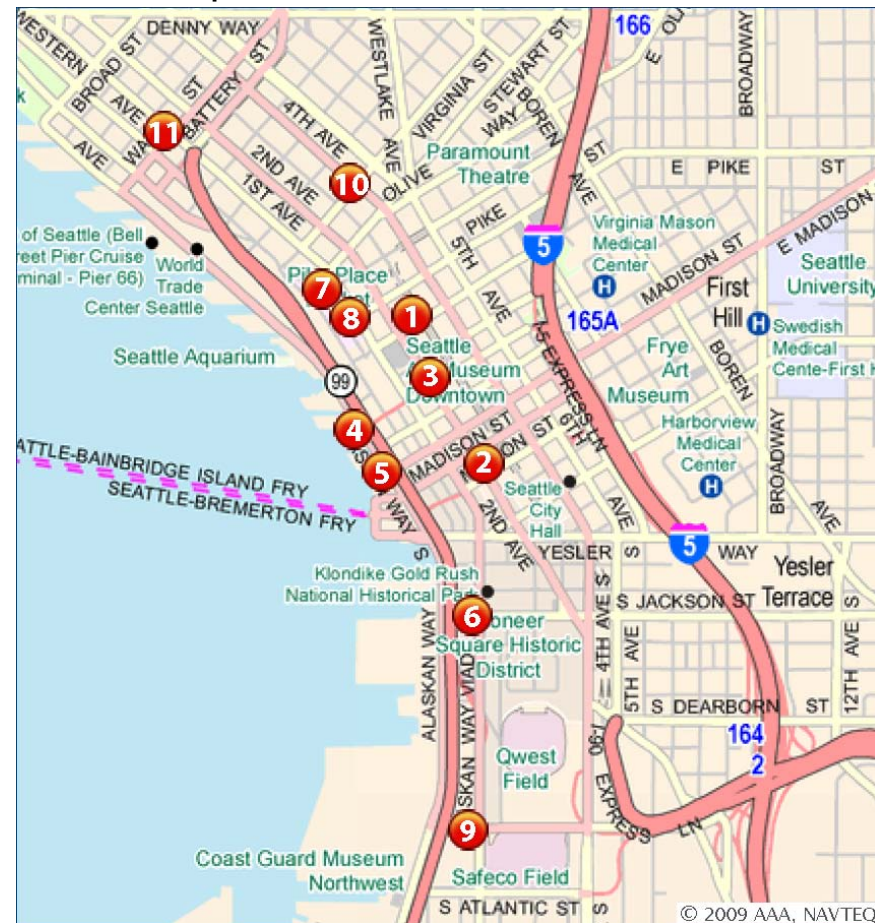
At [Cactus Madison Park](#) the flavor is Mexican, with a little Southwestern thrown in for good measure. An excellent margarita is a good starter. Try the Navajo fry bread as an appetizer, along with house-made guacamole or the tortilla soup. *Puerco adobo*—spice-rubbed, grilled pork tenderloin served with a potato and black bean fritter, chimichurri coleslaw, adobo

and tomatillo sauces and chipotle piña de gallo—is a Mexican standard given a couple of twists. The fajitas (chicken, steak, shrimp or vegetable) and the house chimichanga (chicken, *carnitas*, shredded beef, chorizo or wild mushroom-vegetable) also are mighty tasty. Finish with flan. Cactus' Madison Park location, within a block of Lake Washington, is perfect for an after-dinner stroll.

Award-winning chef/owner Thierry Rautureau mans the helm at [Rover's Restaurant](#), which occupies a charming little Madison Valley house. There's street parking only, which can be tricky, but the hunt for a space is worth the effort to be entertained by the ebullient “chef in the hat” (Rautureau favors a Panama-style chapeau) and sample his five- or eight-course standing menus (you also can order a la carte). The food is classic Northwest with French accents, so expect lots of seafood and game, beautifully prepared vegetables, between-course sorbets to cleanse the palate and a “symphony of desserts” that leave you totally satisfied. The three different multi-course tasting menus are a fine way to sample Rautureau's expertise. The wait staff will be more than happy to suggest wines from the restaurant's extensive list.

Belltown, just northwest of the downtown core, vies for the title of Seattle's trendiest neighborhood. Style thus counts for a lot, and Belltown restaurants are nothing if not stylish. The [Dahlia Lounge](#) has the sort of warm, romantic atmosphere favored by both the business crowd and couples seeking that special experience. Owner Tom Douglas, who presides over six other equally popular Seattle restaurants, is credited with helping develop the concept of Pacific Rim cuisine associated with the Northwest. With chef Brian Walczyk at the helm here, the menu changes daily to take advantage of the seasons. A meltingly tender flat-iron steak, served with creamed spinach and a crispy wedge of grits, and the lemon-scallion crab cakes—a house specialty—exemplify what the Dahlia Lounge does so well. Don't skimp on dessert; either the hefty slice of coconut cream pie or the “little taste” of banana bread pudding with milk chocolate are divine. The adjoining Dahlia Bakery sells all of the breads and sweet creations offered at Douglas' restaurants.

Restaurants Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using [TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com](#)

El Gaucho does the classic metropolitan steakhouse thing just right. Comfortable banquettes line a dining room designed like a theater in the round. If you like appetizers with a kick, try tuna tartare, tenderloin diablo or the wicked shrimp. The tuxedo-attired wait staff presents Caesar salad, vodka-flamed lamb tenderloin and chateaubriand for two with a flourish. The steaks range from a petite 8-ounce filet to an impressive 24-ounce porterhouse, and you also can order venison chops, an ostrich filet or Australian lobster tail. With all that meat accompaniments are

**Restaurants Details - Get additional information on [AAA.com](#);
AAA Diamond Rating information available on [AAA.com/Diamonds](#)**

1. Wild Ginger Asian Restaurant & Satay Bar

1401 3rd Ave
Seattle, WA 98101
Phone: (206) 623-4450

2. Metropolitan Grill

820 2nd Ave
Seattle, WA 98104
Phone: (206) 624-3287

3. The Brooklyn Seafood, Steak & Oyster House

1212 2nd Ave
Seattle, WA 98101
Phone: (206) 224-7000

4. Elliott's Oyster House

Pier 56-Alaskan Way, Suite 100
Seattle, WA 98101
Phone: (206) 623-4340

5. Ivar's Acres of Clams

1001 Alaskan Way
Seattle, WA 98104
Phone: (206) 624-6852

6. Il Terrazzo Carmine

411 1st Ave S
Seattle, WA 98104
Phone: (206) 467-7797

7. Cafe Campagne

1600 Post Alley at Pine St
Seattle, WA 98101
Phone: (206) 728-2233

8. Il Bistro

93A Pike St
Seattle, WA 98101
Phone: (206) 682-3049

9. Pyramid Alehouse-Brewery & Restaurant

1201 1st Ave S
Seattle, WA 98134
Phone: (206) 682-3377

10. Dahlia Lounge

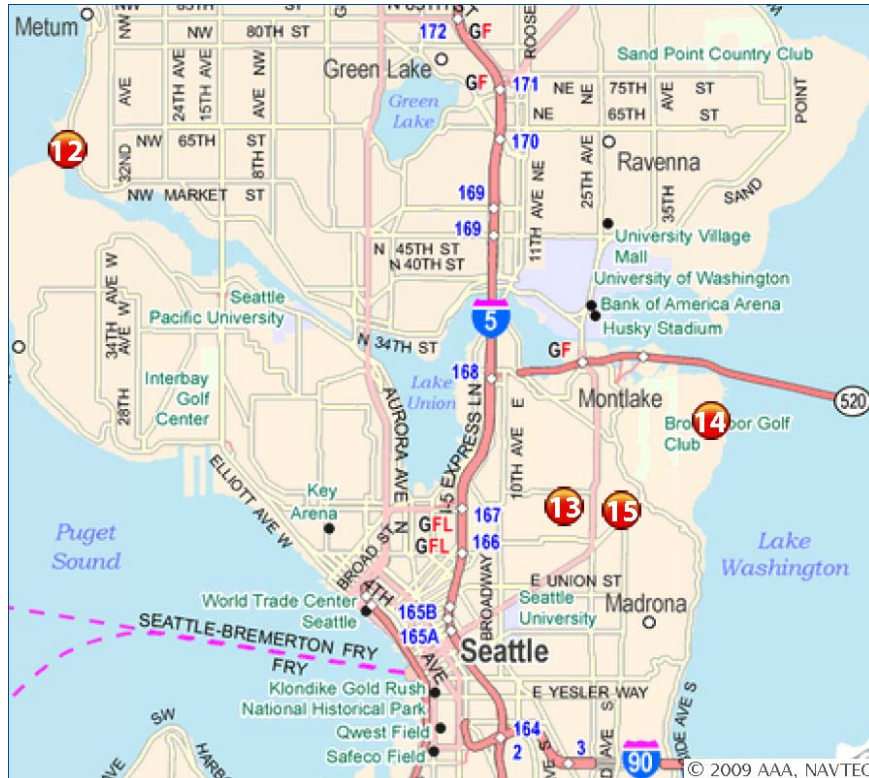
2001 4th Ave
Seattle, WA 98121
Phone: (206) 682-4142

11. El Gaucho

2505 1st Ave
Seattle, WA 98121
Phone: (206) 728-1337

practically an afterthought, but big appetites can choose from the likes of sautéed spinach, asparagus, grilled portobellos or a baked potato. And not just any baked potato—this one's gussied up with butter, cracked pepper, scallions and Tillamook cheddar and even fluffed for you. One of El Gaucho's biggest draws is nightly live music in the main dining room.

Restaurants Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using [TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com](#)

Restaurants Details - Get additional information on [AAA.com](#);
AAA Diamond Rating information available on [AAA.com/Diamonds](#)

12. Ray's Cafe
 6049 Seaview Ave NW
 Seattle, WA 98107
 Phone: (206) 782-0094

13. Kingfish Cafe
 602 19th Ave E
 Seattle, WA 98112
 Phone: (206) 320-8757

14. Cactus Madison Park
 4220 E Madison St
 Seattle, WA 98112
 Phone: (206) 324-4140

15. Rover's Restaurant
 2808 E Madison St
 Seattle, WA 98112
 Phone: (206) 325-7442

Attractions

In a city with dozens of attractions, you may have trouble deciding where to spend your time. Here are the highlights for this destination, as chosen by AAA editors. GEMs are “Great Experiences for Members.”

If there is one destination that encapsulates Seattle, it's Pike Place Market. This AAA GEM attraction, a city landmark for more than a century, started out as a place for farmers to sell their products and was a key source of cheap food during the Great Depression. The bedrock enterprises—a year-round farmers market and crafts arcade—remain, but you'll also find ethnic groceries, restaurants, bakeries, meat and seafood stalls, bookstores, specialty shops and small businesses. It's a head-spinning assemblage in every sense. How do you “do” Pike Place? It's simple; just dive right in, browsing, nibbling and purchasing as you go. One bit of planning advice: The Market Garage at 1531 Western Ave., just down the hill from Victor Steinbrueck Park, is a convenient place to park.

Nearby is another AAA GEM attraction, the Pioneer Square Historic District. Exploring the 30-odd blocks of this multifaceted urban neighborhood—Seattle's first downtown—it's hard to believe the area was nothing but an immense tidal mudflat in the early 1850s. The harmonious brick architecture dates from the aftermath of a disastrous 1889 fire that destroyed most of the original wooden buildings. People come here to wander the gaggle of galleries and trendy retail outlets, duck into bookstores, celebrate sunny weather at a sidewalk cafe or make a varied nightlife scene.

For some historical perspective, visit Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park. This museum chronicles the feverish 1897 gold rush in the Canadian Yukon and Seattle's lucrative role in outfitting prospective treasure seekers with everything from steamship tickets to pack animals. For a glorious view (on clear days) of the city, the Olympic and Cascade ranges and Mount Rainier, head to the observation level on the 35th floor

of the Smith Tower. This was the tallest building west of the Mississippi when it opened in 1914, and the city's loftiest until 1969.

Bordering Pioneer Square on the east is the International District, also known as Chinatown. The neighborhood developed in the late 19th century, a time when Chinese immigrants came to Seattle to find work in lumber mills, on fishing boats and with railroad construction crews. Over the ensuing decades it has become both a home and a community center for Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Korean, Vietnamese, Cambodian and Laotian Asian Americans. A good one-stop immersion experience is Uwajimaya, a huge retail store with grocery, seafood, meat, produce, deli and gift departments offering a myriad array of the exotic, the unusual and the delicious.

Museums? Seattle has a passel of them. The The Museum of Flight, a AAA GEM attraction, has an aircraft collection that includes early primitive examples like the Lilienthal 1893 Glider—a contraption with curving, bat-like wings that predated the Wright Brothers' first efforts—as well as more recent technological accomplishments (check out the sleek Concorde supersonic airliner).

The Seattle Art Museum Downtown, a AAA GEM attraction, reopened bigger and better in May 2007 following the completion of an ambitious expansion project. The redesigned building at 1st Avenue and University Street has been augmented by the bottom four floors of a 16-story building co-owned with neighboring Washington Mutual Bank, which provides significant additional space for future acquisitions to the permanent collection. The exhibits are organized thematically rather than chronologically, with airy, track-lit galleries offering a captivating mix of everything from African pottery and masks to Native American carved glass to Persian wall hangings.

Along with masterpieces like Anthony van Dyck's "Pompeii II de Bellièvre" and Albert Bierstadt's "Puget Sound on the Pacific Coast," back on display are SAM's beloved Japanese Crow screen and almost 1,000 pieces of porcelain. You can't miss the installation in the glass-walled Brotman Forum (where the ticket counters are located): six automobiles

hanging suspended from the ceiling, each one bristling with a thicket of metal rods equipped with blinking red lights. The museum's iconic "Hammering Man"—a towering black mechanical sculpture complete with movable arm—still presides over the 1st Avenue entrance.

SAM's sister facility, the Seattle Asian Art Museum, is another AAA GEM. Located in Volunteer Park, it has an outstanding collection of paintings, sculpture, calligraphy, porcelain, jades, bronzes and other Asian works of art.

The newest member of the SAM family—and a GEM as well—is Olympic Sculpture Park, which opened in January 2007. This urban green space and showcase for outdoor art installations boasts an especially scenic setting: the downtown Seattle skyline as a backdrop, with a view looking out over Elliott Bay toward the distant Olympic Mountains. Wander the 2,200-foot zigzagging gravel pathway past such works as "Split," a gracefully lifelike stainless-steel tree, and "Typewriter Eraser, Scale X," an outsize example of a commonly recognized object (at least for those over a certain age). The "Father and Son" fountain standing at Western Avenue and Pier 70 is a provocative work that conveys, through water and two nude figures, the emotional vulnerability that can exist between parent and child. The park's trees, plants and flowers evoke several different Pacific Northwest landscapes.

Switch gears from the artistic to the fantastic at the Science Fiction Museum and Hall of Fame, on the grounds of Seattle Center. This AAA GEM attraction salutes all things visionary with exhibit galleries such as Brave New Worlds, which displays computer-generated vistas of cityscapes from visually innovative films like "Blade Runner" and "The Matrix." The museum's hall of fame honors the genre's greats, from authors Jules Verne and H.G. Wells to filmmaker Steven Spielberg to stop-motion animator Ray Harryhausen. And no fan will want to miss the fearsomely toothy Alien Queen, who engaged in a memorable fight to the death with Sigourney Weaver in the sci-fi classic "Aliens."

The museum shares a building with the Experience Music Project (EMP), another AAA GEM attraction. Both lauded and derided by Seattleites, the

unusual structure somewhat resembles a melting electric guitar. Inside are exhibit galleries celebrating the diversity of popular music, from blues and jazz to rock, punk, funk and hip-hop. One exhibit is devoted to Seattle-born Jimi Hendrix, whose pioneering blend of blues and psychedelia and awesome guitar mastery revolutionized pop music in the late '60s. A third Seattle Center museum, the venerable [Pacific Science Center](#), has lots of kid-friendly interactive exhibits, although everyone will get a kick out of the moving robotic dinosaurs (they even roar) and appreciate the beauty of the winged creatures flitting about in the Tropical Butterfly House.

The Emerald City is a particularly apt nickname, and its botanical riches can be enjoyed at both [Volunteer Park](#) and the [Washington Park Arboretum](#). Volunteer Park, in the Capitol Hill neighborhood, is Seattle's most elegant greensward, an expanse of formal gardens, glass-surfaced ponds, and noble cedars and spruces surrounded by fine old mansions. A riot of cactuses, orchids and tropical vegetation grows in the park's steel and cast-iron Conservatory. The arboretum, a AAA GEM, spreads south from Union Bay, encompassing 200 wooded acres in which thrive thousands of species of trees, shrubs and flowers from the Pacific Northwest and around the world. It looks simultaneously manicured and wild, and there's beauty in every season. Take a slow spin along scenic Arboretum Drive, then get out of the car for a peaceful stroll through the Japanese Garden, a serene haven of evergreens, camellias and Japanese maples planted among rocks and sculptures.

Water, of course, plays an instrumental role in past and present Seattle history. The [Lake Washington Ship Canal](#) and [Hiram M. Chittenden Locks](#) are AAA GEM attractions connecting saltwater Puget Sound with the freshwater network formed by Salmon Bay, Lake Union, Portage Bay, Union Bay and Lake Washington. "Seattle's ditch" opened in 1917 to a flotilla of vessels led by the *Roosevelt*, the flagship of Adm. Robert Edwin Peary's North Pole expedition, and are still among the nation's busiest. A fish ladder enables sockeye, chinook and coho salmon to swim on a gradual incline as they migrate to their spawning grounds in upstream creeks and rivers.

The Odyssey Maritime Discovery Center, appropriately located on the downtown waterfront, has interactive exhibits wonderfully illustrating Seattle's role in marine trade, including Puget Sound's role as the gateway to the Pacific Rim. Take the [Argosy Cruises](#) narrated boat tour of the waterfront and shipyards to gain a suitably salty appreciation of the city's maritime face. Argosy also offers a popular 2.5-hour Locks Cruise that tours the harbor and includes passage through the Lake Washington Ship Canal and Chittenden Locks.

For a slightly different perspective of the water, drive across the [Evergreen Point Floating Bridge](#)—the world's longest, with 33 separate pontoon units—and the Lake Washington Floating Bridge, about 1,000 feet shorter. Both bridges are prone to traffic congestion, and Evergreen Point's days may eventually be numbered due to persistent mechanical problems, but both offer views of the lake, shoreline neighborhoods and the Cascades, from Mount Rainier in the south to Mount Baker in the north.

Perhaps the most conventionally touristy thing to do in Seattle is trek to the [Space Needle](#). The AAA GEM attraction's futuristic space-age look was conceived as a symbolic icon for the 1962 World's Fair. The kind of place longtime residents pay little attention to but first-time visitors should not miss, it offers a breathtaking 360-degree panorama from the observation deck at the 520-foot level; telescopes installed on the outside walkway intensify the views.

Another tourist favorite and AAA GEM attraction is the [Woodland Park Zoo](#), known for its naturalistic habitats representing different bioclimatic zones. Bears, river otters and bald eagles are among the inhabitants of Northern Trail, which replicates a harsh cold-weather environment, while the elephants of Tropical Asia and the jaguars, gorillas, monkeys and lemurs of the Tropical Rain Forest are accustomed to more comfy temperatures.

Finally, embark on a scenic voyage to pint-size Blake Island in Puget Sound and experience yet another AAA GEM attraction, [Tillicum Village Northwest Coast Indian Cultural Center](#). Its centerpiece, a huge cedar