

Passengers take in the views from aboard the Bainbridge Island Ferry.

# Discovering Seattle



The high-tech boomtown offers natural splendor, fascinating history, and free-spirited fun to curious visitors.

BY PAM MANDEL



**F**rom scruffy lumber town to buzzy metropolis, Seattle is no stranger to rapid growth. Yet the city's appeal can still be found in its panoramic skies, evergreens, and Puget Sound shores.

## Get subterranean

Beneath the bustling streets of Pioneer Square you can still find the tin ceilings and brick foundations that survived the town's bawdy logging past. After a fire took out the entire city center in 1889, Seattle raised the streets and rebuilt over the ashes of burned-out buildings. The real draw of Bill Speidel's **Underground Tour** is the guides who retell local history with humor and style.

## Live radio

KEXP is the on-air voice of the city's independent music scene and an avid proponent of all kinds of new tunes. See the influential radio station in action as it broadcasts near the Space Needle at Seattle Center. The public Gathering Space has a café, a record store, and the KEXP front desk, where you can sign up for in-studio concerts or the daily tour.

## Views from the water

Any ferry will give you skyline vistas, but the **Bainbridge Island Ferry** shows the city's best side before dropping you a short walk from the gourmet treats at Mora Iced Creamery, sweet and savory baked goods at Blackbird Bakery, and craft-rich window-shopping.

## Local wares

The weird, wonderful **Archie McPhee** novelty store has been selling rubber finger puppets, boxing nuns, and bacon bandages for over 30 years. There's nothing here you need, but who cares? Kids love it. Want something more grown-up? Head to **Revival** on Capitol Hill for vintage fashion, jewelry, and work by local artists.

## Puget Sound flavor

The Sound's abundance extends to its creative chefs. Edouardo Jordan's **JuneBaby** is stacking up awards (including a James Beard) for its Southern cooking with area ingredients, down to the rhubarb in the flip, a frozen dessert served in a Dixie cup. At Renee Erickson's

brightly appointed **Bar Melusine**, the food is French Atlantic, but the Hama Hama oysters come from Hood Canal waters. Mutsuko Soma's **Kamonegi** features Northwest seafood and soba noodles often made from regionally sourced buckwheat.

## A taste of old Seattle

**Georgetown** is the rare neighborhood that still feels like old Seattle. Ramble alongside the weathered brick warehouses to discover hidden delights. **Fran's Chocolates** is housed in the original Rainier Brewery building; drop in for a taste and admire the airy space. At the funky **Georgetown Trailer Park Mall**, vendors sell vintage what-nots, local art, and cake (yes, cake) from a courtyard of retro trailers.

## Capitol Hill nightlife

The city's LGBTQ nexus is the heart of Seattle's welcoming bar scene. Kitschy **Unicorn** is fun with its bright carnival decor and arcade games. For the ultimate in cocktails (there's a \$650 Sazerac on the menu), head to **Canon**, home of the largest whiskey collection in the Western Hemisphere. **Big Mario's** has slices of New York-style pizza up front and a classic dive bar in the back.

## Cozy hangouts

The **Elliott Bay Book Company** on Capitol Hill is a sprawling temple to the written word—don't miss the local author section in the front. There's a café on-site, but you can also take your books around the corner to **Caffe Vita** and settle in for meticulously roasted coffee, quiet reading, and people-watching.

## Asian influences

The **Wing Luke Museum** documents the role Seattle's Asian Pacific immigrants continue to play in the region's culture. Take the Historic Hotel Tour, where time seems to stand still. Walk through the 1910 general store at street level before heading up to the austere furnished boardinghouse, which brings to life the personal past of the community that helped shape the city. ●

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**TOP:** Raw oysters with mignonette on ice beckon at Bar Melusine. **MIDDLE:** Bill Speidel's Underground Tour reveals Seattle's hidden past through subterranean tunnels. **BOTTOM:** Patrons enjoy snacks, excellent coffee, vinyl browsing, and deejayed music at La Marzocco Café in the KEXP Gathering Space.