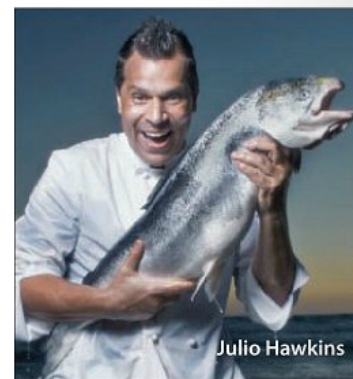


What to do in Seattle: Eat, play, love

Julio Hawkins is passionate about the Pacific Northwest. "I love the people, the culture, the clean water, the clean air, the great seafood and, last but not least, the landscape." Hawkins, executive chef at Fly-n-Fish Oyster Bar in Newport Beach, is a Northwesterner himself, and travels to the Seattle area every year for inspiration. Several dishes he serves – such as Cedar Plank Skuna Bay Salmon – would be right at home on a Washington menu. But the region's cuisine isn't the only reason he's enthusiastic. "You have the option to do so many outdoor activities. And it usually costs little or no money, which makes it even better." **As told to Rosemary McClure**



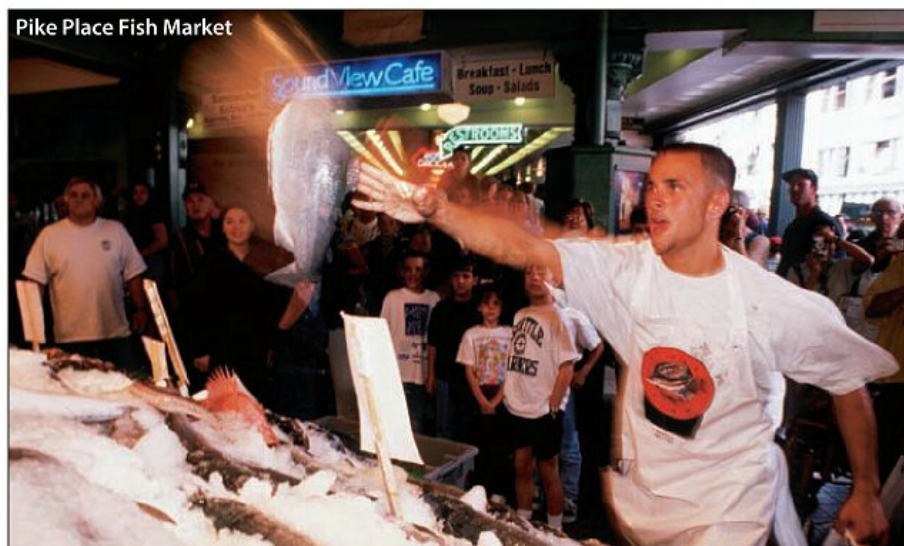
WHY NEW SEATTLE?

The Pacific Northwest has so much to offer: fishing, camping, hunting, crabbing, snowboarding, water skiing or just a simple dip in the glacier-fed waters of Lake Chelan. Washington state is one of the most geographically diverse states in the union. In addition, it has a rich cultural history. As a matter of fact, Seattle is named after a prominent Native American chief named Sealth who was born in the late 18th century. His tribes, the Duwamish and Suquamish, lived in the area now called Puget Sound.

MUST DO

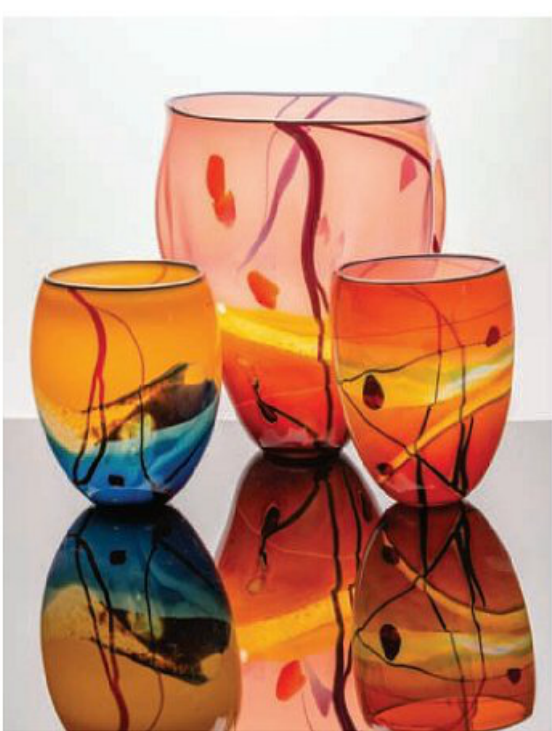
When in Rome, do as the Romans do. Pike Place Market is clearly one of the best open-air markets in the world, welcoming 10 million visitors a year. Founded in 1907, the market has 500 vendors selling such things as fish, comic books, antiques, flowers, produce and crafts. There are also restaurants, arcades and an organic rooftop farm. Be prepared to spend the whole day.

∴ pikeplacemarket.org



AFTER DARK

A few minutes from downtown Seattle, you'll find Seattle Center, offering some of the best opportunities for nightlife, entertainment and food. A must-do is the Space Needle. It's a great place for dining while you take in the rotating 360-degree view of Puget Sound, downtown and Seattle's waterfront.



BUY IN

Some of the best fashion shopping is downtown, where you'll find Nordstrom, Totokaelo and E. Smith Mercantile. If you enjoy glass art, check out Seattle Glassblowing Studio where you can view and purchase amazing masterpieces of glass or sign up for one of the many classes offered. :: seattleglassblowing.com



TIME IS RIGHT

The best time to visit depends on the outdoor activities you prefer. Snowboarders like winter, for instance. The best time to enjoy summer, in my opinion, is between August and September, when you can catch Seattle's Seafair. It features neighborhood street fairs and culminates in a weekend event that includes Blue Angels flyovers over Lake Washington, followed by the roaring engines of hydroplane boats, skipping across the water like a perfectly smooth river stone. :: seafair.com



SECRET TIP

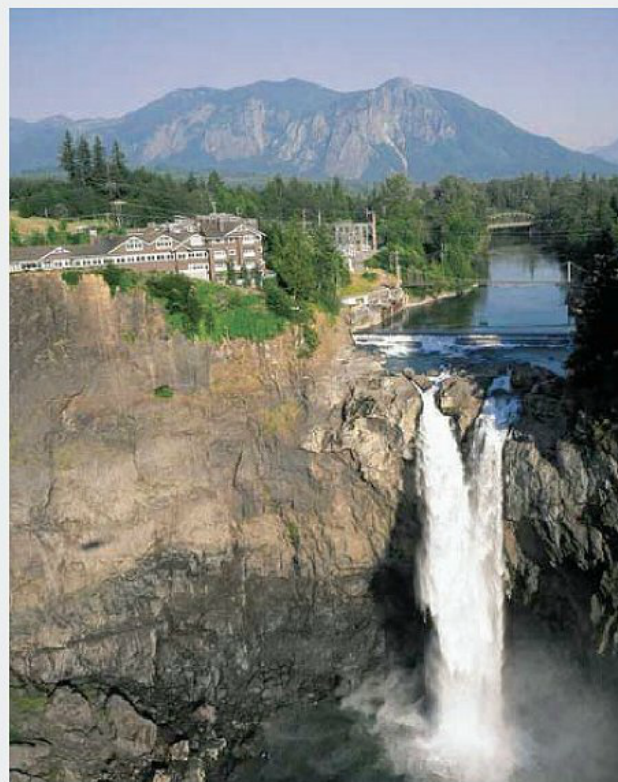
If you love oysters, visit one of the oyster farms scattered along the sound. You'll want to call and make an appointment for a tour. Most of the time they provide samples at no cost. Shuck, slurp and swallow away!



Organic, locally sourced meals

BEST BITE

The Salish Lodge & Spa gets my vote as the apex of dining. Expect pure, clean, organic, locally grown food served in a restaurant that has a killer view. It's off the beaten path, but well worth the trip and an absolute must for hardcore foodies and nature lovers. Only a 20- to 30-minute drive out of downtown Seattle, Salish Lodge is a gem of an eatery. If you're lucky enough to get one of the private dining rooms, you can overlook the heart-pounding surge of Snoqualmie Falls while you dine.



The famous Salish Lodge & Spa