

Your guide to state parks in the

San Juan Islands

Welcome

The San Juan archipelago north of Puget Sound is like no other place on earth. The cluster of 400 islands and rocks in the Salish Sea is a world unto itself. It is a world where people are friendly and hearty, where the land smells like the sea, and wind, art and history are celebrated. For island dwellers and visitors, the pace of life slows, set by tides and ferry schedules.

Within this watery haven, 16 Washington state parks shine like lighthouse beacons, welcoming locals and visitors to moor, dock, hike, kayak, camp, sightsee and just be on their beautiful shores.

The San Juan Islands state parks are large and small, hilly and rocky, forested and seemingly barren. Pacific madrone trees cling to their windswept buttes, and neon-hued lichens cover boulders on their beaches.

Orca whales sing and blow as they migrate May to September, and gray whales slap their fins on the water. The whales share Puget Sound, Georgia Strait and Strait of Juan de Fuca with porpoises, otters, seabirds, raptors and seals, as well as people in kayaks, sailboats, powerboats and yachts.

Four San Juan Islands — and four state parks — are accessible by car on a Washington state ferry. Park goers can access a few of the 12 marine state parks by commercial water taxi. But the most thorough San Juan Islands exploration involves travel by private boat (including human- and wind-powered crafts), making the island chain a beloved destination for boaters and paddlers worldwide.



www.parks.state.wa.us

Four auto-accessible and 12 marine state parks make Washington's famed archipelago a bucket-list destination



Auto-accessible parks

Lime Kiln Point State Park (San Juan Island)

At Lime Kiln Point State Park, the loud neighbors gear up for a party that runs from spring into fall. Those would be the spouting Orcas, fin-slapping gray whales, barking sea lions and splashing porpoises.

Set on a craggy bluff at the west end of San Juan Island, Lime Kiln Point is considered one of the best whale-watching spots on earth. Other whales, including humpback and minke, pass through the area every May through September. Visitors can see the action from a 1919-vintage lighthouse or from a nearby sea cliff.

After delighting in the migration, whale-watchers can view an array of related exhibits and learn about local and transient Orca pods at the Lime Kiln Interpretive Center. Other adventures include hiking, diving and bird watching. More favorites: touring the historic lighthouse and exploring the 19th-century lime kiln for which the park was named.

This small day-use park, with its spectacular sea life, is a destination within a destination. It's a must-do on any San Juan Island vacation.

- Day-use park with 12 picnic sites
- Nearly 2 miles of hiking trails



Moran State Park (Orcas Island)

Pass through the welcome arch at Moran State Park, and time begins to slow. You'll find yourself in a Northwest island frame of mind, free to relax, breathe and head into the vast, varied terrain.

Hike, cycle or drive to the summit of Mount Constitution for expansive views of the San Juan archipelago. Climb the historic stone tower on the mountaintop for an even grander view. Enjoy the park's five lakes, where you can swim, kayak, stand up paddleboard or fish for rainbow trout. Explore Moran's 38 miles of hiking trails, or take a trail ride on your favorite bike or with your trusted horse. Stroll through a natural preserve to spot birds and wildlife.

Set up camp under the stars, or enjoy "glamping" in a luxury platform tent. Wind down by the lake with a book, or venture back in time with a closer look at the park's structures, more than 20 of which were built by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Great Depression. Whether you're on a day trip or an extended stay, Moran State Park offers a chance to refresh, renew and expand your horizons.

- 124 campsites, six hiker/biker sites, one group camp (all reservable between May 15 and Sept. 15)

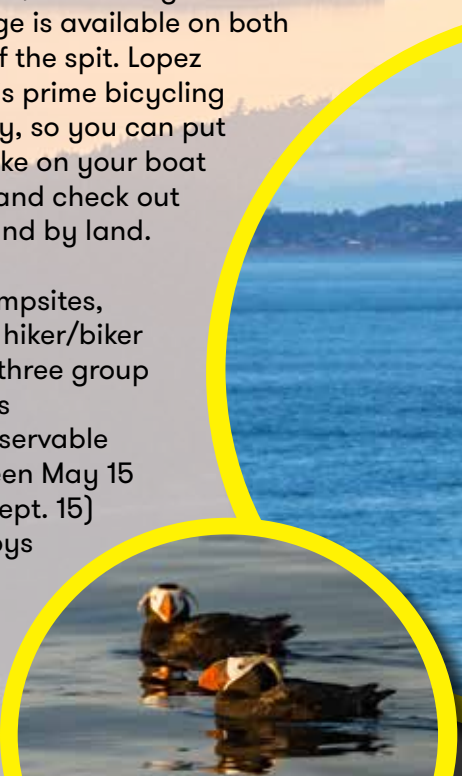
Spencer Spit State Park (Lopez Island)

Spencer Spit on Lopez Island provides dramatic views of Decatur and Blakely islands and Mount Constitution on Orcas Island, and it features a rare sand spit enclosed by a salt-chuck lagoon. The effect is a driftwood-scattered beach on one side of the spit and a spongy marsh on the other. A historic log cabin on the point serves as a picnic shelter.

The park offers crabbing, clamming, saltwater fishing, swimming, diving, bird and wildlife viewing and 2 miles of hiking trails. Families can take part in Junior Ranger interpretive programs between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

Boaters of all kinds enjoy Spencer Spit, which sits on the Cascadia Marine Trail. Didn't bring your kayak or paddle board? No problem! Rent one, or take a guided tour. Moorage is available on both sides of the spit. Lopez Island is prime bicycling territory, so you can put your bike on your boat or car and check out the island by land.

- 37 campsites, seven hiker/biker sites, three group camps (all reservable between May 15 and Sept. 15)
- 11 buoys



Obstruction Pass State Park (Orcas Island)

Obstruction Pass State Park is one of the few public beaches on famed Orcas Island.

Though most people flock to its bigger neighbor, Moran State Park, this property's quiet beauty is unsurpassed. Clear waters lap at pebbly beaches, and madrone trees cling to bluffs. The park's viewpoints entice picnickers, birders, lovebirds and youthful explorers.

Follow the half-mile trail through a low forest to the bluff and down to the beach. But don't forget to snag one of nine first-come, first-served primitive campsites near the south end of the park.

If you arrive by kayak or canoe, stake your tent at the Cascadia Marine Trail campsite close to the water. Motoring in on a bigger boat? Tie up to a mooring buoy, and enjoy a night below deck.

- Nine campsites (one Cascadia Marine Trail site; all first come, first served)
- Three buoys



Auto-accessible parks

The Discover Pass allows you to enjoy millions of acres of Washington state-managed recreation lands – including parks, wildlife areas, trails, natural areas, wilderness areas and water-access sites.

Buy the Discover Pass:

- Online at www.discoverpass.wa.gov
- By phone (866) 320-9933
- In person at fishing and hunting license vendors
- At State Parks headquarters and region offices, automatic pay stations and at state parks when staff is available.

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If you would like to support Washington State Parks even more, please consider making a donation when renewing your license plate tabs. You also may place a check in a donation box when you visit state parks. Donations are a significant part of the State Parks budget and are needed to keep your parks open and operating. Thank you, and enjoy. For more info, visit www.parks.state.wa.us/donations

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

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All Washington state parks are developed and maintained for the enjoyment of all people.

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Marine state parks (accessible only by boat)

Blind Island

Can you imagine finding a chunk of rock in the middle of a strait of water, staking a claim and planting an orchard there? A cluster of 19th-century apple trees and two formerly freshwater wells offer evidence of early farming on Blind Island.

This marine state park is an unassuming mound next to larger Shaw Island. In high season, Blind Island is a popular stop for kayak groups, including youth groups. In the off-season, it is ideal for contemplation.

One of the park's four campsites sit at the island's high point, among the fruit trees now choked with grasses and brush. All the sites offer broad views of Shaw and Orcas islands and the narrow channel between them. Stunning Mount Baker shows itself on clear days, and big skies full of clouds offer changing views when the mountain is hiding.

- Four campsites • Four buoys
- (All Cascadia Marine Trail sites; first come, first served)



Clark Island

Calling all beach lovers! Head out to Clark Island for your choice of fine-grained sand or warm gray pebbles.

Midway between Orcas and Lummi islands, this long stretch of land is ideal for napping, camping or resting after a big day of boating or paddling. Consider an overnight stay. First-come,

first-served campsites sit on the east side's pea gravel strand, and watching the sunrise from your tent on the beach cannot be beat.

After a short walk to the island's west side, step onto a sandy beach bookended by large rocks, where the sunsets can be glorious.

Once you've had a restorative visit, whether for an afternoon or a night, you'll be reinvigorated and ready to sail or paddle on your San Juan Island adventure.

- Nine buoys
- 15 campsites (all first come, first served)

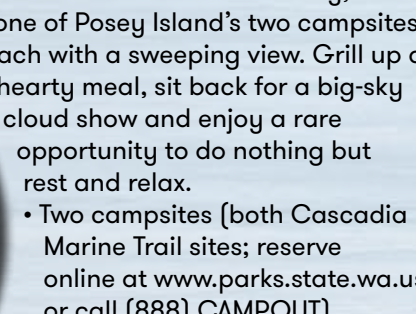
Posey Island

Posey Island Marine State Park is popular with kayak groups, but, depending on the day, you may have the park to yourself.

Though Posey seems barren at first, a thorough perusal reveals meadow grasses, fragile juniper trees, bright orange lichen and wildflowers blooming in season.

Take your kayak for a spin around Spieden Island and its neighboring rock formations. Look for mouflon sheep, fallow and sitka deer. Though you cannot land on the privately owned island, wildlife is often visible from the water. At the end of the day, retire to one of Posey Island's two campsites each with a sweeping view. Grill up a hearty meal, sit back for a big-sky cloud show and enjoy a rare opportunity to do nothing but rest and relax.

Two campsites (both Cascadia Marine Trail sites; reserve online at www.parks.state.wa.us or call (888) CAMPOUT)



Doe Island

Doe Island is a dot on the map next to Orcas, but, as an island getaway, you could not ask for more.

Once you've stepped ashore, the island's 0.3-mile perimeter loop is a short, rugged hike, so bring your good boots and trekking poles. Campsites are first come, first served, and all provide outstanding views. The island's rocky south side features two pocket coves perfect for beaching a kayak or dinghy.

While the south and east sides are stony and bare, the island's north and west sides are pleasantly shaded. Orcas Island is visible across the narrow channel that separates little Doe from its mammoth neighbor.

- Five campsites (all first come, first served)
- Small dock (available seasonally)



James Island

Remote as it seems, James Island is not to be missed! Featuring deep blue-green coves, dramatic cliffs and an isthmus with two lovely beaches, this park offers primitive campsites for boaters and travelers arriving by human- or wind-powered watercraft.

Most of the campsites are grouped in two areas on opposite sides of the isle, and moorage is available on both sides.

Thrill-seekers can hike to the top of the island on a steep, exposed trail for extraordinary views, while mellow hikers stroll through the forest, explore rock outcroppings and sheltered beaches and relax!

- Four buoys
- Large dock
- 15 campsites (two Cascadia Marine Trail sites; all first come, first served)

Jones Island

When you dock at Jones Island, your welcoming committee may include otters, deer and raccoons.

Among the most enchanting of the San Juan Islands, Jones Island Marine State Park is the place to let your heart and feet wander. A trail (wheel-chair accessible) takes you through a forest of moss-covered nurse logs and trees, to a lawn with a small apple and pear orchard. Grill up a picnic in the shelter and take a short stroll to an untamed beach. Deer may approach in search of a fruit handout; please do not feed them.

Check out cliff-side campsites and picnic tables with million-dollar views. Look for elusive cacti, or check out a book from the informal "Jones Island Public Library," located in one of the restrooms. Jones Island is sure to be a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

- Seven buoys • Dock and drinkable water in season
- 26 campsites (all sites first come, first served; group campsite reservable)



Matia Island

Picture a green fairy forest of moss-covered rocks and cedar trees. Matia Island is unique in the San Juan archipelago for its old-growth trees and rainforest vibe. Motor in, tie up to the dock or a mooring buoy and start walking.

The island features an interior hike under an evergreen canopy on a fern-edged trail. The path opens up to a dramatic cove and forms a loop back to the dock.

The island, owned by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, has campsites, restrooms and trails managed by Washington State Parks.

- Two buoys
- Five campsites (all first come, first served)
- Dock
- Part of the San Juan Islands National Wildlife Refuge
- Fires and pets are not allowed



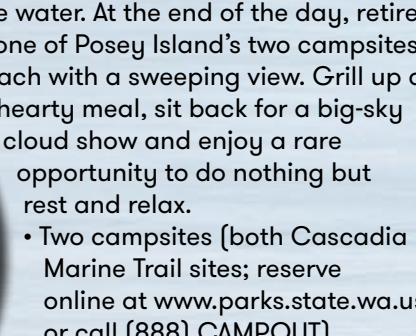
Patos Island

Once you've beached your kayak or dinghy on Patos Island, linger at the picnic bench above the beach and savor the moonscape-like views. Then, meander into a colorful forest of Pacific madrone trees.

Walk a half-mile path to a lighthouse run by the U.S. Coast Guard, and stand in front of the lonely building where dramatic rock formations are punctuated by yellow lichens and kelly-green moss.

If you're planning a longer stay, scoop up one of the park's first-come, first-served campsites, pitch your tent and take in the beauty of this rare, haunting landscape.

- Two buoys
- Seven campsites (all first come, first served)
- Owned by the Bureau of Land Management
- Group campsite is often reserved for the volunteer group associated with the lighthouse



Saddlebag Island

Seeking a warm pebble beach, a grassy meadow or a green forest? You will find all of them on Saddlebag Island.

Among the easternmost of the San Juan Islands, Saddlebag sits between Padilla Bay and Guemes Island. Saddlebag offers crabbing and fishing. The island's proximity to Padilla Bay, a National Estuarine Sanctuary, means wildlife sightings are common. Bald eagles and peregrine falcons frequent the area. Motorized water sports are permitted here, so don't forget water skis!

This park is a 4-mile kayak ride from Anacortes through Guemes Channel, and the area around Dot Island is very shallow. After your trip around the island by land or by water, pull up a camp chair, sauté the catch of the day and enjoy this San Juan Island outlier.

- Five campsites (one Cascadia Marine Trail site; all first come, first served)



Stuart Island

Imagine an isle with turquoise inlets and craggy coves. The San Juans may not come to mind at first, but Stuart Island could surprise you.

Located near the U.S.-Canada border, this park is one of the northernmost islands in the archipelago. Boaters mingle as they fish, dive, swim or socialize in one of two harbors. Hikers can walk up to higher ground or hoof a few miles to the Turn Point Light Station outside the park. Canoeists and kayakers pitch their tents in the primitive campsites overlooking Reid or Prevost harbors, or on the spine of the island.

You'll find a slow island vibe and a friendly boating community on Stuart Island.

- 20 buoys
- 18 campsites (all primitive sites; four Cascadia Marine Trail sites; all first come, first served)
- Two docks, two linear moorage
- Drinkable water in high season

Sucia Island

A horseshoe-shaped island in the northern San Juans, Sucia Island is considered the crown jewel in the marine state park system and a world-class boating destination.

The main land mass is surrounded by picturesque rocks and smaller islands. The island's satellite rocks and secluded coves are great for kayaking, diving, wildlife and marine life viewing.

Tie up to a mooring buoy and sleep aboard your vessel, or grab a first-come, first-served campsite in a small inlet or bay. Known for its emerald waters and forested trails to dramatic vistas, Sucia offers splendid sunsets, sandstone formations and driftwood-scattered beaches.

- 48 buoys
- 39 campsites (all first come, first served; four group sites)
- Two docks
- Drinkable water in high season



Turn Island

Turn Island is a kayaker's dream. With its pea gravel beaches and water-view campsites, this park is a destination for the paddling crowd and a quiet place in the off-season.

Once you've beached your craft or tied your vessel to a mooring buoy, take time to explore. The island's perimeter trail, best taken counterclockwise, starts in a stand of russet madrone trees above a rocky beach. The path goes up and down (trekking poles are recommended), boasting water views around every turn.

Set up camp on a small butte above the beach, or enjoy some chill time. You also can sail or paddle across the water for the shops and eateries of neighboring Friday Harbor.

- Three buoys
- 12 campsites (all first come, first served)
- Part of the San Juan Islands National Wildlife Refuge
- Fires and pets are not allowed



Marine state parks (accessible only by boat)

Transportation resources and information

Washington State Ferries run several times a day between Anacortes and San Juan Island (Lime Kiln Point), Lopez Island (Spencer Spit) and Orcas Island (Moran, Obstruction Pass).

Reservations are recommended May through September: www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries

Several private water taxi companies are available for trips to the San Juan Islands. Visit online at www.visitsanjuans.com for details.

San Juan Transit offers bus service on ferries to the four main islands. The bus make stops at Spencer Spit and Moran plus special sunset trips to Lime Kiln Point State Park: www.sanjuantransit.com

Other planning information is available at www.visitsanjuans.com

Boating laws and safety



The Washington State Mandatory Boating Safety Education law requires boaters ages 12 and older to pass a boating safety course or an equivalency exam and obtain a Boater Education Card before operating a motorized vessel of 15 horsepower or greater.

In Washington, it is illegal to operate a boat under the influence of alcohol or drugs. This includes operating kayaks, canoes and rafts. The legal limit for alcohol is .08. Officers with probable cause can ask skippers to take a breathalyzer test. Penalties include up to a \$5,000 fine and up to a year in jail. Designate a sober skipper! Marijuana use and possession are illegal in state parks, including at state park-owned mooring buoys. The legal limit for driving a boat under the influence of marijuana is 5.0 nanograms.

Lifejackets are more than a good idea; in Washington, they are the law for children. Adults are encouraged to set an example for children by also wearing their life jackets. Wearing a life jacket on a boat is as important as wearing a seat belt in the car or a helmet on a bike or motorcycle.

The San Juan Islands are popular among kayakers. Beginners can find guided tours through calm

waters, but most inter-island kayaking trips are for experts and are discouraged for novices to the sport. The open waters between the islands are high-traffic areas that are subject to wakes from passing ferries, commercial vessels and recreational boats.

Navigating the San Juan Islands

The map in this brochure is not intended to be used for navigation. Boaters should refer to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) charts for navigating. A list of NOAA charts for the San Juan Islands is online at www.nauticalcharts.noaa.gov.

Numerous print and online publications and guidebooks provide additional details on safely navigating the waters of the San Juan Islands.

All boaters — from kayakers to yacht owners — should have a solid understanding of marine weather and tides and currents before setting out.



In recent years, the federally endangered southern resident killer whale population, whose primary food source is salmon, has suffered because of weak salmon runs. Contamination of Puget

Sound waters also poses risks to their health and survival, and disturbances from vessels large and small limit their ability to hunt for food and communicate with one another. Washington State Parks is a member of the Governor's Southern Resident Killer Whale Recovery Task Force. The task force was created in March of 2018 to find solutions for the survival and recovery of this majestic and iconic species, treasured in Washington and the greater Pacific Northwest. For more information about the task force, visit online at <https://bit.ly/2yspnCo>.

New laws were passed in 2019 to help protect the orcas. Additionally, a voluntary no-go zone along the west side of San Juan Island, where killer whales frequently forage and socialize, was established to help provide the whales with a quiet area to feed. For more information on the new laws and the voluntary no-go zone, visit <https://bit.ly/2LRaLFL>.

- www.bewhalewise.org
- www.whalemuseum.org
- www.orcaconservancy.org

