

Washington



Exciting Eastern Washington

Remarkable recreation areas east of the Cascades

● By Cheryl-Anne Millsap

Eastern Washington, commonly known as the “dry side” of the Evergreen State, offers a unique experience all its own. The sky seems bigger, and dramatic open spaces dominate a varied landscape that includes mountains, forests, semiarid scrublands, deep canyons, fertile fields and basalt bluffs. There are orchards with trees bent heavy with fruit and waving wheat fields shining golden in the sun. Vineyards climb steep hillsides and

miles of farmland stretch to the horizon.

Agriculture may have helped build this side of the state, but another important aspect of life quickly followed—recreation. Eastern Washington is a playground rich in lakes, mountains, rivers and plenty of sunshine. It is the perfect place to explore the great outdoors. The following are some of the places my husband and I like to enjoy in this vast land we call home.

Lake Chelan

With hundreds of miles of shoreline and views of the Cascade Range, Lake Chelan is the largest natural lake in the state.

At the upper end of the long, narrow and incredibly deep body of water (reaching nearly 1,500 feet in places), the tiny village of Stehekin is a favorite starting point for those wanting to fish, hike or take part in other activities. The community is accessible by the *Lady of the Lake* ferry that



Lake Chelan, top, is a popular spot for Eastern Washington water fun during the summer months. Apples, above, are one of Eastern Washington's major fruit crops, with up to 12 billion apples harvested annually in Washington state.

sails daily from the town of Chelan. The scenic ferry ride often includes seeing wildlife on the rocky hillsides, such as bighorn sheep and raptors.

My husband and I spent most of the first day of a recent long weekend exploring nearby wineries and little shops in the Chelan area. Later, we sat in low, comfy chairs next to the lake to bask in the late-afternoon sun. I dipped my toes into the cool water and tipped back my head, my face shaded by the brim of my hat.

On the shore, families picnicked and children played. In the water, people swam and splashed, canoes and kayaks glided across the lake's surface, and powerboats towed water-skiers. I joined those around me and splashed a bit in the water before admiring a beautiful sunset from my chair.

The next day, we picked up treats from Lake Chelan Artisan Bakery (lakechelanbakery.com) and visited a few of the region's breweries to sample outstanding ales and ciders. We ended the day with a guided Twilight Tour of Lake Chelan's beautiful shoreline on electric bikes from Chelan Electric Bikes (chelanelectricbikes.com).

Spokane

Washington's second-largest city is the place we've called home for almost 20 years. The economic and cultural hub of the Inland Northwest, Spokane has a lively arts scene and wine community and is the perfect place to explore outdoor recreation in this vast area.

My husband and I enjoy walks in the city's Riverfront Park and the views from the footbridges that cross above the Spokane River's roaring falls. The river provides opportunities for rafting, kayaking and canoeing, while the many area hikes include the popular Iller Creek Conservation Area Trail, a 4.8-mile loop trail that winds by the creek and is appropriate for all skill levels.

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Spokane is also great for golfers, with seven 18-hole public golf courses within a few minutes of the city center and a total of 33 public and private golf courses in the Greater Spokane area.

Just a short drive east into North Idaho is Lake Coeur d'Alene, where you'll find the luxurious Coeur d'Alene Resort (cdaresort.com), which includes a spa and a championship golf course. The golf layout follows the shore of the scenic lake and features a par-3 14th hole that is one of the world's only floating greens. A small electric boat ferries golfers out to the famous putting surface.

About 30 miles south of Coeur d'Alene, in Worley, Idaho, is the Coeur d'Alene Casino Resort Hotel's Circling Raven Golf Club (cdacasino.com/golf), a 620-acre course established in 2003 by designer Gene Bates. The course draws golfers from around the country with its picturesque setting that includes natural woodlands and native grasses.

Tri-Cities

For the cities of Kennewick, Pasco and Richland—better known as the Tri-Cities—the Columbia River provides fun for a variety of water sports, as well as boating and fishing.

The Sacajawea Heritage Trail—a 23-mile paved path running along the Columbia and Yakima rivers that connects the three cities—is one of my favorite biking trails through this area. We have biked along the path and found interpretive signs providing information about the land and the history of the region. The trail also has a number



of wild areas perfect for bird-watching. On a recent trip, we stopped along the trail to let mountain bikers ride by and saw a kingfisher fly from a branch to snag a meal from the river.

To the southeast of the Tri-Cities, the Sacajawea Historical State Park and Interpretive Center (parks.state.wa.us/575/Sacajawea) is located at the confluence of the Columbia and Snake rivers and provides displays that tell the story of the young Native American woman who joined Lewis and Clark's

Corps of Discovery.

The Columbia River is also the location of one of the area's largest annual events, the Tri-City Water Follies, July 28–30 this year at Columbia Park in Kennewick. Thousands of people line the banks of the river to watch hydroplanes reach speeds of 200 mph as they travel around the 2.5-mile course in the middle of the river. The festival also features an airshow, with precision flying by a group of F-22 Raptors in the skies above the Tri-Cities.

This is wine country, too, so

Spokane's Riverside Park, above, offers a variety of outdoor activities. The hydroplane races, lower left, are favorite events at the Tri-City Water Follies. L'Ecote No. 41, below, is one of Walla Walla's most popular wineries.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: ETHAN WELTY / AURORA PHOTOS; NIK WHEELER / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; BOB BRADY / TRI-CITY HERALD

you can enjoy various wine tours and visit dozens of wineries in the area.

Walla Walla

We always look forward to visiting the scenic town of Walla Walla, especially during the summer months.

A historic community in the southeastern corner of Washington, the town is known for producing crops such as asparagus, sweet onions, strawberries and wheat. But it is the more than 120 local wineries that have helped the town develop into a leader of the state's vibrant wine industry. We always stop by some of our favorite area wineries, including Dunham Cellars, Dusted Valley and L'Ecole No. 41, and then end the day with a great meal, usually at The Marc Restaurant at The Marcus Whitman Hotel and Convention Center (marcuswhitmanhotel.com).

The area's warm weather pairs well with excellent golf at courses such as Wine Valley Golf Club and Veterans Memorial Golf Course, and scenic country roads make Walla Walla popular with cyclists of all skill levels.

On our way back home, we always make a point to stop by a farmstand or one of the area's two weekly farmers markets (which run through October) to stock up on fresh produce, including some of the famous Walla Walla Sweet Onions, which are harvested from June to August. We also like attending the Walla Walla Sweet Onion Festival, which will be held on June 17 this year. [w](#)

Cheryl-Anne Millsap writes from Spokane. For more information on visiting these cities in Eastern Washington, go to lakechelan.com, visitspokane.com, visittri-cities.com and wallawalla.org.

For flight information, or to book a ticket to any of Alaska Airlines' destinations in Eastern Washington, visit alaskaair.com.



MORE TO SEE AND DO IN EASTERN WASHINGTON

• **Wenatchee**

(wenatchee.org): Known as the Apple Capital of the World, Wenatchee produces most of Washington's annual crop of up to 12 billion apples.

In fact, the area's apples are so prized, they were included in the gift bags for some of this year's Academy Award nominees.

Apples are harvested

from August to November. June and July are for picking cherries, raspberries and strawberries.

The Wenatchee area has various U-pick orchards to enjoy. You can also rent a bike and ride the Apple Capital Loop Trail along the Columbia River.

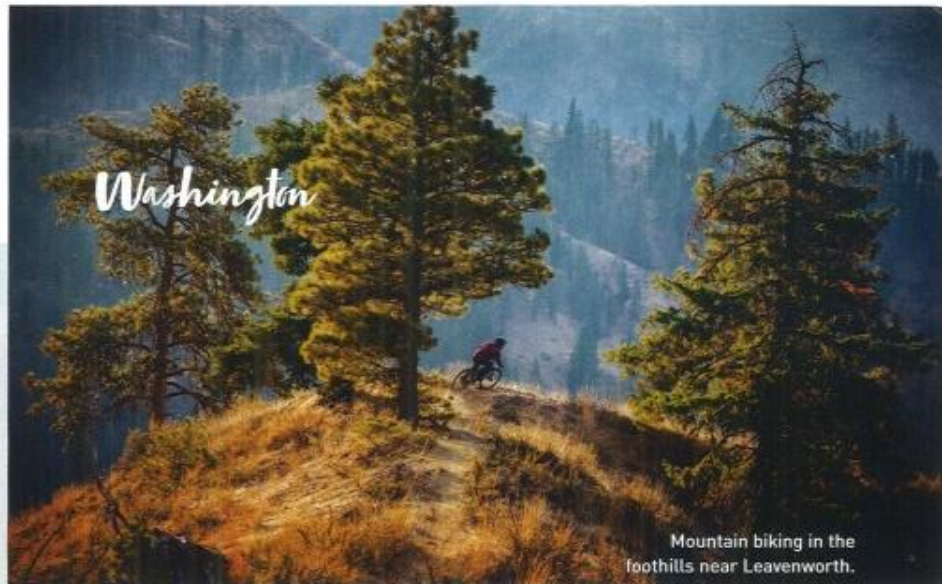
Downtown, Pybus Market (pybuspublicmarket.org) supports more than 50 local farms and growers and is the place to find fresh produce, meats, cheeses and

Washington wines. It is also a great spot to gather for a good meal or a glass of wine.

• **Leavenworth** (leavenworth.org): Add some international flair to your Eastern Washington adventure by visiting

this small town with a Bavarian atmosphere, located about 30 miles northwest of Wenatchee. From the welcoming beer wagon to the Wiener schnitzel and sauerkraut served in local restaurants to the Leavenworth Alphorns sere-

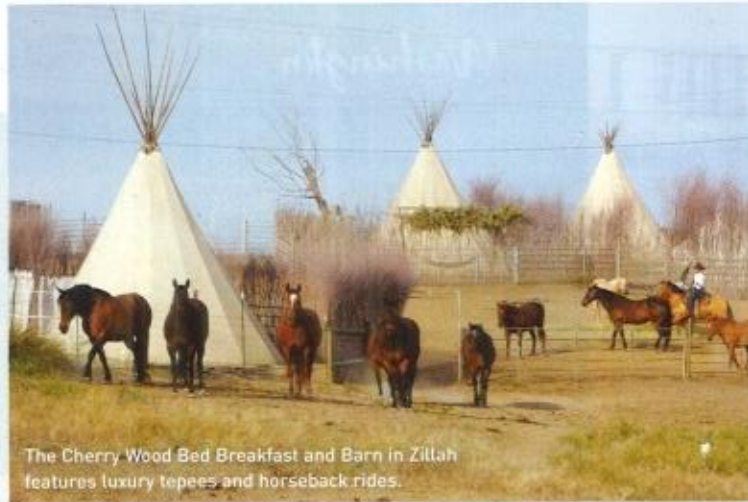
nade (not to mention a lot of lederhosen), you can immerse yourself in German culture while surrounded by the beautiful foothills of the Cascades. With hundreds of miles of hiking trails, top-tier multipitch rock climbing routes and



rafting down the Icicle Creek, there is an abundance of summer recreational options.

• **Yakima** (visityakima.com): Located in a fertile valley fed, in part, by the Yakima River, the city is known for its wineries and produce. The fertile Yakima Valley is one of the world's top producers of hops, an ingredient in beer production. It is also the heart of the state's wine region, with wineries located throughout the area.

The Yakima River draws anglers to enjoy some of the best trout fishing in the region.



The Cherry Wood Bed Breakfast and Barn in Zillah features luxury teepees and horseback rides.

SUSAN SEUBERT

About 20 miles southeast of Yakima is the town of Zillah, where you'll find the Cherry Wood Bed Breakfast and Barn, a working ranch that, for the past 16 years, has offered a unique lodging experi-

ence with luxury teepees boasting king- and queen-size beds and other amenities (cherrywoodbbandb.com).

• **Pullman** (pullman-chamber.com): Home to Washington State Uni-

versity, Pullman sits in the middle of the beautiful rolling hills of the Palouse. This verdant area offers plenty of outdoor activities, including teeing it up at the Palouse Ridge Golf Club (palouseridge.com). A

links-style public course, Palouse Ridge is located on the WSU campus and offers an award-winning layout. The area is also known for its micro-brews, such as the impressive Paradise Creek Brewery.

The Pullman area celebrates its agricultural bounty with events such as the annual National Lentil Festival (lentilfest.com), Aug. 18-19, which includes a town parade, a lentil king and queen, a pancake breakfast and the world's largest bowl of lentil chili.

The festival is a celebration of the diversity of lentils. —C.A.M.