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Queen of the Winter Flowers

SEATTLE — BY MARY JO MANZANARES ON AUGUST 27, 2010 AT 7:32 PM
 FILED UNDER: BEVERAGE, CULINARY TRAVEL, DEALS, FEATUREDARTICLE, FOOD

Washington State Develops Agritourism Packages & Promotions

There's no doubting that culinary tourism has hit Washington State in a big way. Everywhere you turn you'll find food and cooking classes, farm and ranch tours, you-pick farms for fruit and vegetables, an increase in farm-to-table restaurants, and plenty of hands-on experiences designed to bring consumers closer to the source of their food. The state produces 300 crops, and with over 650 wineries, trails only California as a top wine producing state.

So how do you enjoy the agritourism of Washington State? With the incredible diversity the state offers, I suggest using this list to get you thinking:

Leavenworth: Hot days, cool nights, and lots of fertile soil make for great growing conditions in this part of the state. Here you'll find fruit and berry orchards aplenty, and from June through October you can enjoy fruit freshly picked off the vine: apples, pears, cherries, peaches, apricots, corn, strawberries, cantaloupe, melons, blueberries, prunes, nectarines, plums, watermelon, tomatoes, potatoes, pumpkins and onions. This Bavarian-styled town also has wineries and a distillery. ([map](#))



1. San Juan 2. Island 3. Kitsap 4. Mason 5. Thurston 6. Wahkiakum 7. Columbia 8. Garfield 9. Skagit

Special Promotion: [Cheese Making Package](#) that includes a class with [Alpine Lakes Sheep Cheese](#), a Wenatchee Valley artisan cheese maker. The package includes one night accommodation, gourmet dinner, hearty breakfast, hands-on cheese making class with sampling. Rates start at \$378, double occupancy.

Long Beach Peninsula: Besides 28 miles of sandy beaches, visit the southern part of our coast to find fishing, crabbing, oyster farming and cranberries. It's a great spot for families, too. ([map](#))

Special Promotion: [Wild Mushroom Celebration Package](#) offers a chance to forage for the delicious fungi during the annual festival October 22nd – 24th, 2010. The package includes two nights accommodations, 3-course Wild Mushroom and Washington Wine Dinner at the Depot Restaurant, breakfast both days with a little extra special breakfast on Sunday, and a mushroom discussion by a professional forager. Rates start at \$510 per couple, all inclusive. An optional foraging field trip can be added on for an additional \$50/person.

Olympic Peninsula: While the peninsula seems to be attraction attention of Twilight fans lately, it also offers lush valleys and a perfect climate for growing. Lavender is one of the big crops here, with an annual Lavender Festival, as well as lots of family farms growing fruit, berries, vegetables, and grains. You'll also find salmon, Dungeness crab, and other seafood. ([map](#))

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Special Promotion: Overnight Farm Retreat at Finnriver, a 33-acre organic family farm and cidery, offering a hands-on tour of life on the farm and a cider tasting room. Rates start at \$189/night, and during the fall season (September 15th – November 15th) if you purchase two nights you'll get one night free.

San Juan Islands: There are over 450 islands in this archipelago, but chances are you'll only be visiting a few of them (only 20-some of them are inhabited). It's a great place all year long, but in October you'll find lots of culinary activities on Lopez, Orcas, and San Juan Islands: farmers markets, farm visits, and special packages. ([map](#))

Special Promotion: Quest for Orcas, Pigs and Wine Tour. The tour departs Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from Seattle, and lasts a full day (12-13 hours). Transportation is via Mercedes Van or Jeep, and the tour includes morning and afternoon snacks, locally grown organic lunches by San Juan Island's Market Chef Restaurant, wine and other refreshments, and all fees associated with birding, whale watching, wine tasting and sightseeing... Rate is \$235/person. Consider adding on an overnight on the islands for a great weekend getaway.

Now that you have a little tease about the delicious culinary offerings around the state, you should continue your travel research becoming a fan of the [Washington State Culinary Agritourism Facebook page](#). You'll find lots of additional information to plan the perfect culinary experience.

Photo credit: [wikimedia](#)

Related places:

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- B** Long Beach
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Steve SEPTEMBER 1, 2010 AT 3:09 PM
 Make sure to come visit the beautiful Skagit Valley. We have a great diversity of farms, orchards, ranches, seafood, restaurants, and willow baskets(ok that's a little self-promoting!). But how about putting Skagit County on your map Planeteyetraveler! Your map has us mislabeled as Lincoln (which is on the east side of the state). We're in the Northwest part of the state between Whatcom and Snohomish Counties.
 Thanks.
 Reply

Mary Jo Manzanares SEPTEMBER 2, 2010 AT 11:26 AM

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I was born in Skagit County and lived there till my teen years, so I know it well. I remember picking berries as a kid for my summer money! There is, indeed, lots to see and do in Skagit County, and I'll make sure to feature some of those things in an upcoming article.

I will also let the designer of the map know that an error was made in the counties. It was not produce by me or PlanetEye, but was used as a graphic for illustrative purposes.

Thanks for being a PlanetEye Traveler reader.

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