



## Discover the North Cascade Loop

### Whidbey Island

The scenic 440 miles of the North Cascade Loop encompasses three beautiful byways: the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way, North Cascades Scenic Highway, and Stevens Pass Greenway. Some people have done it in one very long day, but we recommend enjoying it over three or four days. Starting from Seattle, head north on I-5 to the tiny waterfront town of Mukilteo to board a [Washington State Ferry](#) to Clinton. Get to Mukilteo early to check out the historic Mukilteo Lighthouse and grab a bite at one of the family diners or the local brew pub.

The ferry from Mukilteo Ferry docks at Clinton, which offers walkable beaches, and is where your exploration of the Whidbey Scenic Isle Way leg of the Cascade Loop begins. Continuing North, Langley is a picturesque place with great art. It is also prime whale watching spot – Gray whales migrate through there from February to May – and boasts the [Langley Whale Center](#).

### Deception Pass State Park

Slow down as you cross the [Deception Pass iconic double bridge](#). This spot gets more visitors than Grand Canyon and most pull off, get out, and walk the span. Be careful of view-struck pedestrians. A trail on the north side of the span leads to Lottie Bay and a view of the bridge from below.

Heading north, you reach [Anacortes](#), the headquarters for whale watching excursions. A bit further inland in April and May, is the magnificent [Skagit Valley Tulip Festival](#).

### North Cascade Scenic Highway

The next stretch is the 140-mile North Cascade Scenic Highway, one of those roads that people line up for. In the spring when the road re-opens, there's a line of cars waiting to take in the craggy peaks and turquoise lakes of the state's

northernmost Cascade pass.

When you reach the summit at Washington Pass, the amazing panorama before you is the [Methow Valley](#). Hiking opportunities are endless, and whitewater rafting is an exciting option as well. Travel south along the Columbia River to [Lake Chelan](#), a gorgeous family vacation town that offers wine tasting to wakeboarding. The boat ride to the end of the 50-mile lake at Stehekin aboard the Lady of the Lake is a very leisurely and uniquely Washington way to spend a summer day.

### **Steven Pass Greenway**

The final section is the 90-mile, Stevens Pass Greenway. It starts at [Wenatchee](#), located on the Columbia River and the base of the Alpine Lakes Wilderness area. You may expect plenty of outdoor activity in and around Wenatchee: biking, wildlife, and wildflowers abound. This is also apple country, with the [Apple Blossom Festival](#) happening in mid-April each year.

The Bavarian town of [Leavenworth](#) is where you will be enchanted with great food, locally made wine, brews and spirits, and outdoor recreation. Plus fun shopping.

Now the road climbs, revealing wide views across mountain valleys. It peaks at [Stevens Pass](#) (4,061 ft.) a ski area that recently added a network of mountain bike trail, as well as scenic chairlift rides for year-round mountain access (call ahead to check on conditions).

For detailed information and maps on the entire Cascade Loop or any part of it, check out the Scenic Washington Website; the [Scenic Byways and Roadtrips link is here](#).