

Relocating to the West Coast

By James D. Nelson

Relocating to the West Coast offers the comfort of domestic service while still allowing for incredible exposure to new culture. There is no shortage of ways to fill your free time once you arrive. Take advantage of the opportunities you have available to enjoy yourself and expand your cultural horizons.

Washington

Washington State is veined with 25 scenic byways and incredible views available only by roadside. Archeological wonders like the Columbia River Plateau, Puget Sound, Mt. Rainer and Mt. St. Helen dot the state. Washington ranges from the rolling farmland of the Palouse in the southeastern corner of the state to the glaciers of the North Cascades.

Seattle

The cultural heart of Seattle is Pioneer Square, a more than 20-block area of the city with historic buildings, galleries, pubs, and independent shops.

Pike Place market, between Western and First Ave., has been open for more than 100 years and is recognized as America's premier Farmer's Market. Also known as "The Soul of Seattle," it hosts hundreds of year-round business, craftspeople, farmers, street performers, and musicians.

Also situated in downtown Seattle is the Seattle Art Museum, Seattle Aquarium, and Myrtle Edwards Park. The park offers a 1.25-mile bike and pedestrian path offering a view of the Olympics Mountains, Mount Rainier, and Puget Sound.

Seattle's China Town and International District, with Asian restaurants and specialty shops, hosts a magnificent summer festival early each July. The festival lasts several days with a



variety of cultural dances, music performances and martial arts demonstrations. The Wing Luke Asian Museum in the International District celebrates the culture, art, and history of the Asian Pacific Americans.

Volunteer Park, located in the heart of the city, displays the Black Sun statue by Isamu Noguchi. Here you will find the Volunteer Park Conservatory and Seattle Asian Art Museum, as well as a view of the world-famous Seattle Space Needle.

Originally built for the 1962 World's Fair, the needle is open to the public for full 360-degree viewing of the surrounding city and landscape. It stands in Seattle Center, where everything from beer festivals to dance performances to concerts are held.

A monorail station is located across from the space needle in Seattle Center. The monorail departs every 10 minutes and travels to the Westlake Center Mall at Fifth and Pine Street.

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Alaska

Alaska's 586,000 square miles offer exciting opportunities to adventurers and ecotourists of all kinds. Alaska is well known for the quality of its sea kayaking and glacier hikes. Five percent of the state is covered by its more than 1,000 glaciers. Alaska's world famous King salmon fishing is available in addition to ice fishing and chartered fishing tours by boat or seaplane.



Home to more than 3 million lakes, 3,000 rivers, and countless streams, there is no limit to the opportunities for rafting and fly fishing.

Hiking and mountain biking experiences are open at Mt. McKinley, North America's tallest mountain at 20,320 feet, located in the beautiful Denali National Park. For mountaineers, the "Crown Jewel" experience is available here, a month-long expedition to the summit of Mt. McKinley. Spectacular day hikes are available in the Chugach State Park out of Anchorage.

Alaska hosts the world's most concentrated population of bald eagles, which converge near Haines from October to January each year. Wildlife viewing tours are available by land to view such animals as polar bears, grizzly bears, grey wolves, lynx, and moose. Whale watching tours provide up close viewing of orcas and humpbacked whales.

Daylight in Alaska ranges from 6 to 13 hours per day, with extraordinarily long dawn and twilight hours, which can be made even more beautiful by the presence of the aurora borealis, or northern lights. Perhaps the most spectacular view in the state, this magnificent celestial display can be seen more frequently

in the more northern parts of the states. The visibility depends largely upon the geomagnetic activity of the area.

On the first Friday of every month, Juneau's art galleries and museums exhibit local artwork and host special events for local artists.

The annual Iditarod Trail Dog Sled Races of Anchorage begin in early March. The race starts in the Sullivan Arena and is open to the public.

The World Ice Art Championship is a month-long competition held each March in Ice Alaska's Ice Park of Fairbanks. This three-event competition culminates with a lighting ceremony showcasing the finished pieces of each event. The Ice Park also hosts a Kids Park with rides, slides, and sculpted animals and merry-go-rounds for the kids to play on.

Fairbanks features the annual Midnight Sun Intertribal Powwow. Here the native tribes of Alaska, roughly 16 percent of the state's population, showcase their tribes' cultural ceremonies and customs. The powwow is held each June at the Tanana Valley Fairgrounds.

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San Francisco Bay Area



San Francisco is known predominantly for the Golden Gate Bridge, which spans 1.7 miles connecting San Francisco County with Marin County to the north.



One of the most frequented areas in San Francisco is Fisherman's Wharf. Here you may visit Ghirardelli Square, which displays the historical roots of the Ghirardelli Chocolate Company, which began in 1852 as a confectionery shop. Fisherman's Wharf is

also home to Pier 39, with over 100 unique shops, an Underwater World Aquarium, a 950-birth marina, a waterfront park, a two-tiered carousel, and various street entertainers.

The fabled island of Alcatraz ended its use as a prison in 1963, and became available for public tour in 1973. Self-guided and ranger-led tours

are available with advanced reservations advised. Access to the island is available by ferry from Fisherman's Wharf.

The, "Dragon's Gate," or entrance to Chinatown at Grant Avenue and Bush Street, welcomes visitors into the 24-block attraction. The area is full of exotic shops, restaurants, markets, museums, and temples. A week-long celebration is held in Chinatown each February to celebrate the Chinese New Year. The festival is punctuated with a downtown parade featuring dancing dragons.

North Beach displays the city's Italian heritage. Here you will find cappuccino and espresso bars, jazz clubs, galleries, cabarets, inns, and various food shops.

Coit Tower on Telegraph Hill, erected in 1933, provides an amazing view of the city to the public, and the Diego Rivera murals on display on the ground floor.



Amusement Parks

Orange county hosts several amusement parks. Disneyland and its accompanying California Adventure are situated in Anaheim, with Knott's Berry Farm in nearby Buena Park.

A Universal Studios theme park is located in Hollywood and Paramount's Great America is in Santa Clara.

A Six Flags Theme Park and its accompanying Six Flags Hurricane Harbor water park are open in Valencia. Two Six Flags Waterworld parks are open in Sacramento and Concord, and Six Flags Marine World is in San Francisco.



Los Angeles

You can't enter the best-known district of Los Angeles without noticing the Hollywood Sign, which was even designated a historical landmark in 1973. Hollywood Boulevard houses several of the most prominent attractions including Mann's Chinese Theater, home of the Hollywood stars, where over 200 celebrities have left their handprints in the forecourt. Also located on the city's predominant road is the Guinness World Records Museum and the Hollywood Wax Museum. Attractive walking tours are available at the Paramount Pictures Film Studio on Melrose Ave.

Some of the state's most beautiful beaches can be found in Malibu, filming location for the famed "The OC" television series. Malibu hosts a multitude of beach and adventure activities, as well as the Malibu Lagoon Museum where you can learn about the city's original Chumash Indians.

You may wish to visit the art galleries of Santa Monica, or check out the famous outdoor gym, Muscle Beach. Gotham hall, a \$3 million billiards hall, is also located here.

No trip to LA would be complete without a visit to the Carnival City, Venice Beach, voted the third most unique cultural experience in the United States. A long stretch of shops along the beach is open year round with street performers and art walks.

