



VISITRAINIER.COM

FACT SHEET

OVERVIEW

With the Northwest's singular natural icon as its centerpiece, the Mt. Rainier region is comprised of some 2,800 square miles including one national park as well as portions of seven wilderness areas, three national forest areas, and picturesque mountain communities.

DESTINATION ORGANIZATION

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LOCATION

Mt. Rainier is 68 miles south/southeast of Seattle, Washington, and 95 miles north/northeast of Portland, Oregon.

GEOGRAPHY

An active volcano that last erupted in 1854, Mt. Rainier dominates the Seattle/Tacoma landscape, rising some three miles from the lowlands and towering a mile and a half above the surrounding mountains. It is 14,411 feet tall — the tallest singular peak in the lower 48 states. It has the largest glacial system in the lower 48 states with 25 named glaciers. Carbon Glacier is the largest glacier by volume in the continental U.S., while Emmons Glacier covers the largest area of any glacier in the continental U.S. Mt. Rainier is part of the Cascades Range and forms a trine with Mount St. Helens and Mt. Adams. The region includes three important mountain passes: White Pass (4,500 feet above sea level), Cayuse Pass (elevation: 4,675 feet) and Chinook Pass (elevation: 5,430 feet). White Pass is the only one to remain open year round.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Lodging options in the Visit Rainier region are plentiful. They include historic inns within Mount Rainier National Park, historic lodges in Mineral and Ashford, hotels resorts, hotels, spas, mountain vacation retreats and vacation home rentals, bed and breakfasts, cabins, a tree house, and more in Ashford, Greenwater, Crystal Mountain, Enumclaw and other surrounding communities.

SHOPPING AND DINING

Restaurants, cafes, espresso stands, outfitters, gift shops, grocery stores, u-pick farms and more can be found in the communities surrounding the mountain. Within the park, there is a restaurant at the National Park Inn, Longmire and inside Paradise Inn. Snacks and gift shops are located at Longmire, Sunrise and Paradise.

ACCESS TO MOUNT RAINIER

HIGHWAY 706 – Travels from Ashford to the park's Nisqually entrance in the southwest corner of the park. Highway 706 can be accessed by Highway 7 to the west or, in the summer, via Skate Creek Road to the south. Access Longmire and Paradise from this entrance. The road inside the park from Longmire to Paradise is open daily. During winter a gate at Longmire closes uphill traffic to Paradise each night.

STATE ROUTE 410/CHINOOK PASS – 107-mile SR 410, also called the "Stephen Mather Memorial Parkway," includes the Chinook Scenic Byway. It begins at SR 167 in Sumner and travels southeast through the park to where it meets US 12 in Naches. Closes during the winter months due to snowfall.



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US HIGHWAY 12/WHITE PASS – approaching from the south side of Mount Rainier National Park. East from Morton, Randle and Packwood or west from Naches. Close access to the Ohanapecosh area of the park.

CARBON RIVER ROAD – The Carbon River entrance is reached via the Carbon River road, off State Route 165.

STEVENS CANYON ROAD – A 19-mile road inside Mt. Rainier National Park running between Paradise to the southeastern entrance of Mt. Rainier National Park where it intersects with SR 123, Cayuse Pass. Closes seasonally during the winter months.

STATE ROUTE 123/CAYUSE PASS – Cayuse Pass connects to Chinook Pass and White Pass on the east side of Mount Rainier National Park. The Cayuse Pass summit is at the junction of State Routes 123 and 410. The 4,675-foot-high pass is about five miles west of the Chinook Pass summit. Closes during the winter months due to snowfall.

SUNRISE ROAD – Sunrise Road is accessed via SR 410. The 15 mile road to Sunrise opens by late June or early July through mid September. In late September, the road to Sunrise closes nightly at the junction with White River Campground and reopens each morning as conditions permit. The entire road to Sunrise is closed for winter in mid-October or earlier with the first heavy snowfall.

MOWICH ROAD – The 16-mile Mowich Lake Road runs between the town of Carbonado and the Mowich Lake Campground inside Mt. Rainier National Park. The road is primarily gravel with some sections of difficult terrain. Road closes mid-October or with the first snowfall for the winter season.

HISTORICAL SNAPSHOT

Long before European explorers, Mt. Rainier was known as Talol, Takhoma, Tahoma and other names by Northwest American Indians who frequented it to gather wild huckleberries and hunt game.

Captain George Vancouver penned the name Mount Rainier after his friend, Rear Admiral Peter Rainier, upon observing the mountain on May 8, 1792.

One of the first recorded white explorers to Mt. Rainier was Dr. William Tolmie in 1833.

The first known successful summit climb was by Hazard Stevens and P.B. Van Trump in 1870.

James and Virinda Longmire built the first hotel on the mountain Longmire's Mineral Springs Resort in 1890. That same year, Fay Fuller, a school teacher, was the first white woman to climb Rainier.

Mount Rainier National Park was the fifth park established in the system by an Act of Congress on March 2, 1899, under President McKinley.

PARKS, NATIONAL FOREST & WILDERNESS AREAS

Mount Rainier National Park, covering 235,612 acres, includes such well-known sites as Paradise, Sunrise at 6,400 feet, the highest point in the park accessible by car, Longmire, Ohanapecosh, Grove of the Patriarchs, Tipsoo Lake, 25 named glaciers, and wildflower carpeted sub-alpine meadows.

Bordering the national park are the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, Mt. Baker Snoqualmie National Forest and Wenatchee National Forest, as well as the Wilkeson, Norse Peak, Clearwater, William O. Douglas, Tatoosh and Glacier View wilderness areas. Goat Rocks Wilderness borders both the Tatoosh and William O. Douglas wilderness areas.



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UNIQUE ATTRACTIONS

Trails for all ability levels – An established and well-maintained trail system within and outside the park offers varying levels of difficulty, diverse terrain and many scenic vistas. More renowned trails include the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, which skirts the park's east boundaries, and the Wonderland Trail, which circumnavigates Mt. Rainier. There are 240 miles of maintained trails within the park itself. A selection of hikes can be accessed at VISITRAINIER.COM.

MOUNT TAHOMA TRAILS ASSOCIATION HUT-TO-HUT TRAIL SYSTEM – The nation's most extensive no-fee hut-to-hut system trail, offers 50 miles of trails, 20 of which are groomed, three huts and a yurt. Designed for use by cross-country skiers during the snowy months, the trail is enjoyed by mountain bikers and hikers during the rest of the year. The system is best accessed from Hwy. 706 – one mile west of Ashford.

CRYSTAL MOUNTAIN RESORT – The Mt. Rainier region boasts some of the best snow in the west with 350 inches of average annual snowfall on Crystal Mountain, the largest ski area in Washington. The new Mt. Rainier Gondola, is a scenic 10-minute ride to breathtaking views of Mt. Rainier and surrounding peaks. Washington's highest restaurant, the Summit House, is located next to the gondola.

AREA LAKES & WATERWAYS – There are five major rivers the Carbon, White, Cowlitz, Nisqually and Puyallup which originate from Mt. Rainier and more than 100 waterfalls in the park alone.

FLORA & FAUNA VIEWING OPPORTUNITIES – With extensive wilderness lands, national forests and protected national park habitat, the Mt. Rainier region supports an abundance of wildlife. The Oak Creek Feeding Station in the Naches Ranger District (east of White Pass, near the intersection of Hwy. 12 and Hwy. 410) provide easy viewing of elk and mountain goats during feeding times in the winter months and other opportunities year round. On rocky slopes within and outside the national park, marmots can often be spotted. In all, fifty species of mammals make their homes in the park. Bird populations are plentiful with 130 species spotted within the park; abrupt elevation changes allow for observable vertical migrations. The environs also support a profusion of wildflowers in sub-alpine meadows.

NORTHWEST TREK WILDLIFE PARK – Northwest Trek is a 725-acre wildlife park tucked away in the forest near Mt. Rainier. Here you can view over 200 North American animals along its beautiful, winding walking trails. The varied habitats of Northwest Trek create a scenic landscape with lakes, meadows, forests and streams. A fan favorite is the 55-minute tram tour of the 435 acre free-roaming area of the park. Spot animals grazing in fields, wandering in the forest, and possibly right outside your seat on the tram. Zip Wild! at Northwest Trek offers five exhilarating zip line/challenge courses run through Northwest Trek's breathtaking tree canopy.

MT. RAINIER RAILROAD & MUSEUM – Passengers enjoy a steam train ride through the forest and across the glacial fed Upper Nisqually River to a museum located in Mineral, Washington. Exhibits at the museum offer a chance to explore a comprehensive collection of steam logging locomotives and discover the stories behind the men and women that pioneered life in railroad logging camps in the early to mid 1900's.

PIONEER FARM MUSEUM & OHOP INDIAN VILLAGE – In Eatonville, Pioneer Farm is a “hands on” homestead built in 1887 with a multitude of activities for adults and children, including overnight programs. The farm offers a tour where children can do the chores that pioneer children would have done in the log activity cabin including grinding grains, churning cream, scrubbing laundry, and carding wool.



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EXTREME RECREATION AND EVENTS

SUMMIT CLIMBS – Most frequently summit attempts are made from the southeast. Climbers cross the Ingraham glacier out of Camp Muir to Disappointment Cleaver to meet up with the Emmons Glacier. This technical climb requires excellent physical health and experience. Guides are recommended, especially for first time climbers. Attempts to summit are also made from the northeast, up the Emmons Glacier from Camp Shurman.

RAMROD – “Ride Around Mountain Rainier in One Day” offers a challenging 154-mile road bike ultra-marathon to a limited field of riders. The course features 10,000 feet of climbing.

CRYSTAL MOUNTAIN RESORT – Competitive ski and snowboard events are hosted each year at Crystal Mountain Resort. Dogs are welcome at Crystal Mountain Resort

WONDERLAND TRAIL – The Wonderland Trail Adventure (93 miles circumnavigating Mt. Rainier) is a serious trek to be considered only by skilled and trained individuals. The trail is a distinguishing feature of Mount Rainier National Park. Today’s hikers find the 93 mile Wonderland to be one of the best ways to explore Mount Rainier National Park. The trail passes through major life-zones of the park, from lowland forests to subalpine meadows of wildflowers. Passing swift rivers, the trail leads to commanding views of Mt. Rainier cloaked in icy glaciers. As the trail circles the mountain, hikers witness the varied faces of Mt. Rainier, carved by 25 named glaciers.

OTHER KEY REGIONAL EVENTS

WINTER CARNIVAL — White Pass, March

SUNRISE SERVICE ON EASTER SUNDAY MORNING — Crystal Mountain, March or April

MOUNTAIN FESTIVAL — Packwood, May

PACIFIC NORTHWEST SCOTTISH HIGHLAND GAMES AND CLAN GATHERING — Enumclaw, July

LOGGERS’ JUBILEE — Morton, August

MOUNTAIN COMMUNITIES IN THE RAINIER REGION

ASHFORD, located six miles from the Nisqually entrance to Mount Rainier National Park on Hwy. 706, is a mountain community and base camp for climbing Mt. Rainier with outfitters, shops, restaurants and many lodging options, as well as host to several family-friendly events and celebrations.

CARBONADO – Carbonado was a company boom town in the Carbon River Valley when growing towns such as Tacoma and Seattle were being settled. Many of the houses originally built by company builders still line main street. Today the population of about 600 enjoy the rural character and remote location on Hwy 165 near the Carbon River Entrance of Mt. Rainier National Park.

CRYSTAL MOUNTAIN – The Mt. Rainier region boasts some of the best snow in the west with 350 inches of average annual snowfall on Crystal Mountain, the largest ski area in Washington. During the summer, miles of hiking and biking trails and guided horseback rides showcase the best this area has to offer in a relaxing, safe atmosphere. An 18-hole disc golf course spans the mountain top-to-bottom, and frequent weekend events bring live music to the hillsides. The Mt. Rainier Gondola, is a scenic 10-minute ride to breathtaking views of Mt. Rainier and surrounding peaks. Washington’s highest restaurant, the Summit House, is located next to the gondola.



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ELBE, located on Hwy. 7 is home to the popular Mt. Rainier Railroad & Museum and legendary “scale burgers.” The Mt. Rainier Railroad & Museum offers excursions as tour trains depart Elbe and pass through forest and meadows, next to clear mountain streams and over tall wooden trestles before arriving at the Mineral Logging Museum. Passengers explore the exhibits and will see the most comprehensive collection of steam powered logging locomotives in North America before taking the return trip back to the Elbe depot. Elbe is also home to the Elbe Church, placed on the National Registry of Historic Places and offers day retreats and weddings for small groups of no more than 43 people.

ENUMCLAW is an ideal basecamp for fun in the mountains. Area lakes and streams provide lucrative fishing opportunities, while miles of nearby hiking trails delight backpackers and campers. A wide variety of independently owned restaurants and shops can be found downtown. The area also offers U-cut tree and U-pick berry farms. Enumclaw offers events throughout the year including the Mutual of Enumclaw Stage Race in May and the Scottish Highland Games held each July. Less than an hour from Seattle, Enumclaw is a year-round destination.

GREENWATER is located west of Crystal Mountain on State Route 410. This small, eclectic town lies in a densely forested area surrounded by designated wilderness areas including Norse Peak, Clearwater, Mount Rainier, William O. Douglas, Tatoosh and the Glacier View Wilderness areas. Look for family owned and operated eateries, espresso shops and Wapiti Woolies, which is well-known for their hand-crafted hats.

WILKESON – A trip to this community offers visitors a rare opportunity to take an authentic step back in time to the rich heritage and culture of the 19th century Pacific Northwest. Once known as the roughest mining town west of Butte, Montana, Wilkeson offers attractions including a look at the historic Wilkeson Elementary School, the coke ovens and the Wilkeson Sandstone Quarry.

RESOURCES

[NATIONAL PARK SERVICE](#)

[U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, U.S. GEOGRAPHICAL SURVEY](#)

[WIKIPEDIA](#)

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