

Volcanoes and Vineyards – 5 Days

Total for Itinerary 919 miles



Washington State Wine – Andrea Johnson Photography

Day 1 Seattle – Mount St Helens – Vancouver Day Total 255 miles

Take the easy drive south from Seattle on Interstate 5 to Toledo and then commence the fifty mile climb towards Mount St Helens National Volcanic Monument on State Route 505, then SR 504. At the 33 mile marker, the [Forest Learning Center](#) is located inside the blast zone of the May 18, 1980 eruption of Mount St. Helens. Walk through a life-like forest and experience the Eruption Chamber. Learn about forest recovery, reforestation and conservation of forest resources.

Mile 37 has [Hoffsted Bluffs Visitor Center](#) which houses the *Memories of a Lost Landscape* exhibit. This gives the best depiction of the mountain prior to the blast.

Mile 52 is the end of the road, the site of the [Johnston Ridge Observatory](#). This is a popular visitor centre, open daily mid-May through October, offering ranger talks, interactive exhibits, and award-winning films.

On the way down, follow Route 504 to the Mount St Helen's Visitor Centre at [Silver Lake](#) to recapture what you have seen. Outside, a mile-long trail takes you into marshy plains surrounding Silver Lake where you can spot plenty of waterfowl and a picture-perfect view of the mountain. Back on Interstate 5, drive south to Vancouver for the night.



5 Day Itinerary: Volcanoes and Vineyards

Day 2 Vancouver WA – Columbia Gorge Scenic Byway - Walla Walla Day Total 249 miles

After breakfast, explore [Fort Vancouver](#), a reconstructed 19th-century fur trading outpost along the Columbia River. Learn about the diverse cultures that lived and worked here. Experience costumed programmes and engaging living history events that connect you to the past.

Depart for Skamania County and the Columbia Gorge. The Gorge stretches 90 miles east-west cutting through the north-south Cascade Range of volcanoes. The Cascades include Mount Adams, Mount St. Helens and Oregon's tallest volcano, Mount Hood. Relax with an early lunch at the [Skamania Lodge](#). Craving exhilaration and excitement? Get ready to fly on the [Skamania Zip Line Tour](#) which will send you soaring through tree-tops of an old-growth forest with panoramas of the magnificent Columbia River. For a quieter experience, there are wooded nature trails with glorious views of the surrounding Columbia River Gorge and Cascade Mountains.

The next stop is at the [Stonehenge Memorial](#) built as a tribute to the soldiers of Klickitat County, Washington, who lost their lives in World War I.

Arrive in Walla Walla to unwind. Whether or not you stay at the elegant 1920s-era [Marcus Whitman Hotel](#), make sure to experience one or more of the hotel's seven on-site wine tasting rooms and dine in the Marc Restaurant, a foodie's dream come true.

Day 3 Walla Walla – Wine Tasting Detours – Yakima **Day Total approximately 150 miles including detours**

Discover the fascinating history of downtown [Walla Walla](#) with its Main Street ambience. A walk down tree-lined streets reveals a mix of vintage shops, museums, cafes and bookstores. As the downtown tasting rooms begin to open mid-morning, sample one or two. After a delicious early lunch, set off for Yakima.

The 130 mile direct route from Walla Walla to Yakima has mile after mile of vineyards. The journey passes through, or close to, seven American Viticultural Areas (AVAs). More than two hundred vineyards have some opening hours for tastings – and unlike Europe, every one of them has English speaking staff!. Wine trails' expert [Steve Roberts](#) estimates it would take 35 full days of touring to cover the main tasting rooms in this prodigious wine belt. We are going to have to be selective! Roberts' book and website are excellent reference points.

One compromise is to pick a couple of tasting rooms en route, say, one in Red Mountain AVA near [Benton](#), and one in Rattlesnake Hills near [Zillah](#). Check opening times in advance. Tasting on the site of a vineyard provides different experiences from in town tasting rooms. Then press on to Yakima. If you have a remaining thirst, there are several excellent tasting rooms in downtown [Yakima](#), after you have checked into your hotel.

Day 4 Yakima – Mt Rainier) 89 miles **Day Total 161 miles**

From Yakima take Route 410 the [Chinook Scenic Byway](#) . Dense forests, towering peaks, rocky ridges and river canyons dominate this journey. Pass by the unique basalt flows of the Columbia Plateau, old-growth forests, and lush sub-alpine meadows. Amazing views of Mount Rainier emerge.

Drive round to Crystal Mountain Resort and ride the scenic [Mt. Rainier Gondola](#). At the top you'll find unparalleled vistas of Mount Rainier, the Cascade Range. Lunch at the [Summit House](#). This is the highest elevation restaurant in Washington State, sitting at 6,872 feet.

Drive to [Sunrise Visitor Centre](#) to learn about Mount Rainier National Park. At an elevation of 6,400 feet, Sunrise is the highest point that can be reached by vehicle in the Park. Enjoy the spectacular vistas of Mount Rainier, Emmons Glaciers and a nearly 360-degree view of the surrounding valleys, the mountain and other volcanoes in the Cascade Range.

Retrace your route over the Cayuse Pass and approach the southern side of Mount Rainier. Just inside the Ohanapecosh Entrance, stop for a walk on the mile-long Grove of the Patriarchs. Afterwards drive up to one of the [National Park Lodges](#) at Paradise or Longmire for the night.

Day 5 Mt Rainier hikes - Seattle

Day Total 104 miles

Soaring nearly three miles from the coastal plain and capped by 26 glaciers, majestic Mount Rainier beckons outdoor lovers and nature enthusiasts year round. “The Mountain,” as locals call it, is the tallest free-standing volcano in the Lower 48 States of the USA. It is Washington State’s most recognized natural icon. Over one million travellers visit Mount Rainier National Park annually to enjoy its abundant wildflowers, waterfalls, wildlife, hiking and skiing opportunities.

Starting from Paradise Inn (or driving up from Longmire Lodge), first visit Henry M. Jackson Visitor Centre for help choosing a hike such as the classic [Skyline](#), or shorter trails from Paradise such as Nisqually Vista. The memories of Mount Rainier etched into your memory from these days will insist that you return.

Leave mid-afternoon to return to Seattle, or Sea-Tac Airport if you have an evening flight to the UK.

BUT if you have one more night and day

Stop off at Tacoma on the way back. You really should find time for [Tacoma Art Museum](#). The collection includes prominent 19th-century artists who shaped our views of Native Americans, mountain men, cowboys, and pristine American landscapes. Nearby the [Museum of Glass](#) has a stunning collection from artists, home grown and around the world. It boasts a functioning hot shop, where visitors can watch glass artists ply their trade.