



## **WASHINGTON COUNTY, OREGON: ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES**

### ***Portland's "Next-Door Neighbor" Is one of the Pacific Northwest's Emerging Leisure and Business Destinations***

Washington County, Oregon, is one of the best-kept secrets of the Pacific Northwest. This burgeoning region in northwestern Oregon - part of the Northwest's renowned "silicon forest" - mixes urban, high-tech businesses with serene natural and agricultural settings.

Located only minutes from downtown Portland, Washington County is a destination worthy of applause, with its myriad signature attractions and amenities such as local wineries, nature parks and preserves, golf courses and shops (tax-free, as Oregon enjoys no sales tax).

The county, encompassing 727-square miles, is scenically situated between Portland and the Oregon Coast. Larger cities within Washington County include Beaverton, Hillsboro, Sherwood, Tigard and Tualatin. Small communities, some with populations of less than 1,000 residents, include Banks, Cornelius, Durham, Forest Grove, Gaston, King City, North Plains and Wilsonville.

With 5,050 hotel rooms, and lodging properties that range from luxury to business hotels, Washington County offers affordable room rates and low lodging taxes, as well as convenient, free parking. The region is easily accessible, with light rail access from Portland International Airport and downtown Portland to larger cities in the county, such as Beaverton and Hillsboro.

Many world-renown companies are headquartered in Washington County, among them are sports, shoe and apparel giant, *Nike*; outdoor and recreational clothier, *Columbia Sportswear*; and legendary optical instrument and binocular manufacturer, *Leupold and Stevens*. In addition, the county's thriving corporate business parks house some of the largest high-tech companies in the world, such as *Intel*, *Tektronix* and *IBM Corporation*.

Ironically, many of these internationally recognized corporations are just a stone's throw from the heart of Washington County's agricultural areas. It is the co-habitation of a thriving urban core with a successful agricultural zone that has defined Washington County as an ideal destination for both leisure and business travelers.

#### **Agri-Tourism**

Farm lands are abundant in the area, with crops ranging from vegetables, berries and fruits to wine vineyards, hazelnut groves and lavender fields. Several farms that dot the agricultural zones of Washington County offer tours, allowing urban dwellers to learn more about the functions of a working farm. During seasonal months, many farms have produce stands or are open as "u-pick" farms, allowing the public to pick their own produce, apples, berries or flowers.

Farmers' markets are extremely popular in Oregon, with most of Washington County's larger cities holding weekly markets filled with local produce, meats, wines and baked goods. The largest, the *Beaverton Farmers' Market* has become a draw for residents in the Portland Metropolitan area as well as for visitors.

A drive through the region's agricultural areas may take travelers by several alpaca farms, some of which are open to the public and have gift shops that sell yarn and other goods made from alpaca wool. In Forest Grove, a bison ranch, *L-Bar-T Bison Ranch*, sells fresh bison meat.

#### **Wine Tourism**

Oregon's wine country is known for its exquisite Pinot Noir, and Washington County is home 16 wineries, many with regular tasting-room hours, where visitors may sample the state's signature grape. This burgeoning wine region has continued to thrive with new wineries entering the landscape, such as *Purple Cow Vineyards*. *SakéOne*, the only American-owned saké brewery in the world, also makes Washington County its home, and offers tastings daily, which will demystify this traditional Japanese beverage.

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During warmer months, many of the wineries play host to live music, such as *Montinore Estate's* Sunday jazz concert series or *SakéOne's* "Sakétini Saturdays". Other wineries host weddings, as the pristine scenery of many of the vineyard sites are a desired location for events. Memorial Day and Thanksgiving weekends are an especially busy time for Washington County's wine tourism, as most wineries – including those that are not regularly open to the public – open their doors for public tastings.

### **Eco-Tourism**

As more travelers seek locations to "become one with nature," Washington County becomes a fitting location for those who want to experience nature at its best. With the region a mixture of urban and agricultural centers, these authentic, verdant areas also are close and easy to access.

Nature lovers can take in the sights and sounds of Washington County's multitude of outdoor opportunities. Wildlife and bird watching is plentiful, as the county houses several wetlands and nature preserves and hundreds of parks.

Geocaching, which was created Oregon, also is a popular activity in Washington County. Similar to letterboxing, an outdoor hobby that combines elements of orienteering, art and puzzle solving, Geocaching is a world-wide, outdoor treasure-hunting game that utilizes Global Positioning System (GPS) receivers or other navigational techniques.

### **Golf Tourism**

The region has 13 public and semi-private golf courses, ranging from executive nine-hole to championship 18-hole courses. Unlike other golf destinations on the West Coast, Washington County's golf courses are more affordable for the average golf tourist.

High-profile courses, such as *The Reserve Vineyards and Golf Club* and *Pumpkin Ridge Golf Club*, have hosted some of the biggest names in the sport, in addition to some of golf's most prestigious professional and amateur events.

When combined with other attractions in the region – wine tasting, shopping and dining – Washington County has all of the elements of an ideal destination for sophisticated, upscale travelers.

### **Retail Tourism**

Residents of neighboring states have long been known to make pilgrimages to Oregon for shopping excursions, because of the state's well-known sales-tax-free status. This exempt status, as well as the diversity of shopping experiences, makes Washington County an ideal retail tourism location.

Marathon shoppers can break a sweat with myriad shopping venues in Washington County. From high-end European-style lifestyle centers and traditional malls featuring national retailers, to quaint antique stores and artisan shops, featuring art from local and regional artists, the region is a tax-free shopping paradise.

From nature to sports, wine tasting to shopping, Washington County's best-kept secrets offer some of the most rewarding – and affordable – experiences in the Pacific Northwest.

## **ABOUT WASHINGTON COUNTY, OREGON**

Washington County, Oregon, is scenically situated between Portland and the Oregon Coast, and is only minutes away from downtown Portland. The county spans 727 square miles, and includes the growing communities of Banks, Beaverton, Cornelius, Durham, Forest Grove, Gaston, Hillsboro, King City, North Plains, Tigard, Tualatin, Sherwood and Wilsonville. Washington County is home to world-class golf courses, award-winning wineries, an array of outdoor recreation opportunities, lush, natural and scenic wetlands and wildlife preserves, superb dining and myriad shopping, from boutiques to antiques. Its thriving corporate business parks house some of the largest high-tech and industrial companies in the world, such as Nike, Columbia Sportswear and Intel. For more information on the region, visit the Washington County Visitors Association's website, [www.visitwashingtoncountyoregon.com](http://www.visitwashingtoncountyoregon.com), or call 503-644-5555, toll-free, 800-537-3149.

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