

Cascade Escapade

Flying Fun & Discovery of Washington's Cascade Loop

Things to know about driving the Cascade Loop: You will be thrilled. Washington's 440-mile phenomenon that winds around the geologic awe that is the Cascade Range – the Pacific Ring of Fire's volcanic stunner that stretches from British Columbia to the Shasta area of California – is a loop through the state's most scenic wonders, glacier-kissed peaks to salt-water beaches, high-desert vistas to forests as lush as they come.

Things to know about flying the Cascade Loop: Be prepared, at any time, to drive it.

Take it from me, Pilot Michael, the thrill will be still as thrilling. After all, the steep, glaciated Cascade Range – you know it by

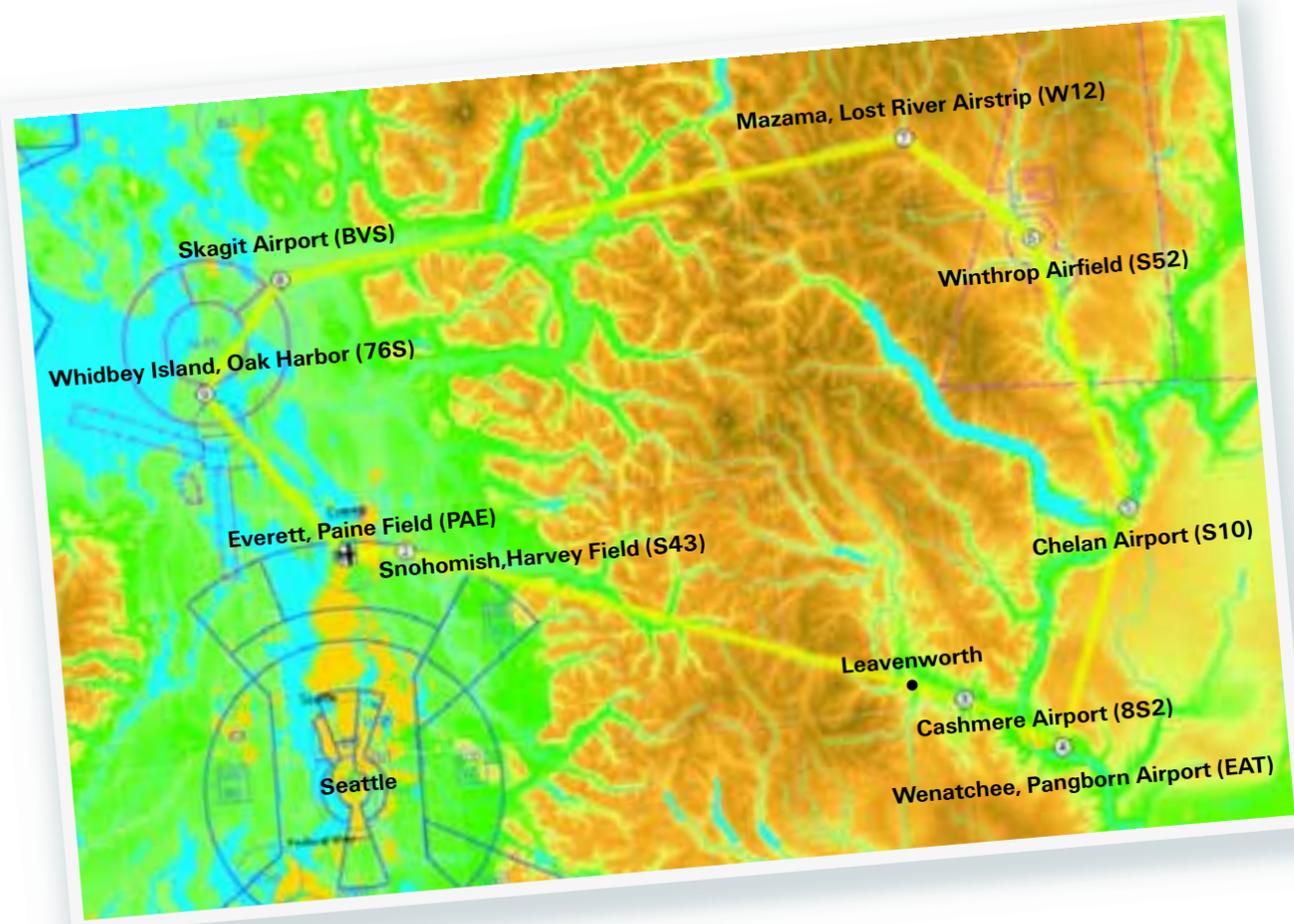
its most towering peak, the 14,410-ft Mount Rainier – attracts up to 150 yearly inches of rain on its western slopes (only 8 on its eastern). Weather thus is either an instrument flyer's fantasy or reason enough to park the plane in any one of the Loop's positively picturesque spots and drive until the sun again shines. Of these there are hundreds, from the Snohomish River Valley's fertile farm towns to the Columbia River area of rolling vineyards and orchards.

Fly or drive; fly *and* drive: either way, the Cascade Loop is a trip so nifty that if you indulge in a 7-day, 6-night escape (like I did) or an abbreviated 4-day, 3-night adventure, your pleasures, your discover-

ies, your fun will be wildly abundant. Wine tasting in wonderful wineries; overnights in charming B&Bs; dining in remarkable restaurants; spa-going and shopping and golf: Washington's richest gifts are offered up in happy spades when the Cascade Loop is your flight plan. And no need to climb to above 14,000 feet. The Loop includes two canyon passes – at both southern and northern ends – that make traversing the Range a piece of cake.

Trust me. You are going to *love* it. Buzz into Snohomish Municipal Airport/Paine Field (PAE) in Everett, WA, the Loop's only towered airport, and begin your odyssey in splendid Snohomish County. Originally a

A view into the magnificent Methow Valley



Map provided by Voyager Flight Planning Software

major Puget Sound lumber port founded in 1891 by John D. Rockefeller and fellow Eastern bigwigs intent on building a “New York City of the West,” this historic delight today maintains its considerable draw. Here is The Boeing Company’s behemoth, the biggest building in the world at 98.3 acres (or 75 NFL football fields, 911 NBA basketball courts), and host of an utterly friendly factory tour. Step in to watch a video of a 400,000-lb, 6 million-part 747 being assembled; or view the real deal in another mesmerizing area. Your awe now will be prepped for another Everett must-see, the Future of Flight. This is the ultra-tech, interactive gallery and observation deck set to open late October 2005. Wow, I thought, at the promise of this, a chance through interactive exhibits to design your own airplane or even test-drive the next generation of in-flight entertainment systems, wow. You will wow, too, to see the other aviation sensations of this happening airport, including the five new Messerschmitts being fash-

ioned in one area. It will be difficult, indeed, to tear yourself away, unless of course it is to explore more Snohomish amusements, of which there are tons. Take a three-hour cruise of the “Everett everglades,” a wildlife resplendent estuary, or a day-long Orca whale-watching float to the spectacular San Juan Islands; Everett’s Mosquito Fleet boats will welcome you onboard. A Crystal Seas kayaking adventure. A Chinook Expeditions whitewater rafting event. A Tipitrek Native American “experience” (which includes accommodations in a tipi) – these are all ways blissfully to keep busy should Snohomish County’s other allure – the 450 antique dealers, restaurants and shops of beautiful old town Snohomish proper – not be enough to amuse you. As if, I say.

So, how about a little “go and touch” flight from Paine to Harvey Field (S43) five miles away? The whimsy of this idea seized me. As soon as you are off the ground you start to land but the hop is worth it. Harvey

is a great little attraction of its own: the business of three generations of the Harvey family, the first of whom homesteaded the area in the ‘40s. Say hello to whichever Harvey happens warmly to welcome you (they all do) and enjoy a good meal in the friendly airport restaurant. You then will find yourself in excellent cheer to explore Snohomish town.

Upon arrival your intrepid Pilot Michael bid the Harveys hi then begged off for tea instead of a meal. This I enjoyed at the glorious 1896 Queen Anne-style Countryman’s B&B, where the beguiling Sandy Countryman tempted me with her colorful tales to drive an otherwise terrific walk-tour of Snohomish’s block after block of gorgeous, historically registered homes. Should you shame me and hoof it, afterward you might reward yourself with one of the 26 Pacific Northwest microbrews on tap at Fred’s River Town Ale House, a hoot of a local saloon, followed by dinner and an awesome marionberry cobbler at The

Of Wine, Wonder & Washington

Located 46-degrees north, approximately the same latitude as the great French regions of Bordeaux and Burgundy, and graced by two more hours of sunshine a day than enjoyed by the Napa Valley, Washington is a wonder when it comes to wine. Wouldn’t the Hudson’s Bay Company be amazed! Here it was, 1825, and they thought hey: let’s plant a few brave little vines around Fort Vancouver. And now here it is, 2005, and more than 240 wineries growing more than 29,000 acres of grapes for \$700 million in annual sales is proving conclusively what the Hudson’s Bay crew only suspected: The future for Washington wines is “limitless,” according to avalonwine.com, which makes the topic its business. The area available for future plantings is “immense.”

A limitless future of immense possibility. Now, *that* is a happy tune to whistle. Especially if you are a winery within Washington’s hottest emerging regions. Like? Like the Columbia Cascade appellation found along the Cascade Loop, east of the mountains in fertile valleys. These valleys are extraordinarily blessed by a rainshadow effect that encourages grapes to be their best. Indeed, because the Cascades protect these valleys from inclement weather and provide the nurture of rich volcanic soils, this newish viticultural area is exciting news for wine-lovers who thrill to heady, fruity Cabernet Sauvignon, spicy complex Syrah, and full-bodied, tasty Merlot. Oh, and let’s not forget flowery vintages made from the Riesling varietal, one of the grapes planted by the Hudson’s Bay Co., as well as bottles of beautifully ageable Semillon – honeyed, nutty – the grape for which Washington perhaps is best known.

It was in 1903 when melting Cascades snowcaps first fueled a large-scale irrigation that unlocked eastern Washington’s potential as a winemaking dynamo. All went to smash during Prohibition, of course, but in the ‘60s, when enologist



Tsillan Cellars on Lake Chelan

extraordinaire André Tchelistcheff involved himself in Château Ste. Michelle, the art re-emerged like a phoenix fiercely determined to fly. Fly she did. Walla Walla. The Yakima Valley. Red Mountain. These and other appellations started wowing the wine world with their wares. Today, according to avalonwine.com, the winemaking pace is “breakneck.” “A new winery opens every couple of weeks.”

Lucky us. We Cascade Loop flyers, winging through the Columbia Cascade and Lake Chelan regions, have a heaven of wine-tasting adventures to pursue. At the Berghof Keller Winery in Leavenworth, for instance, the German-style wines are divine. At the family-run Icicle Ridge Winery in Leavenworth, vines given TLC by crisp, cool Icicle River waters produce a reserve Merlot that Pilot Michael, for one, found out of

this world. (He liked the handmade log cabin tasting room, too.) At Château Faire Le Pont in Wenatchee, a 2003 Zinfandel Glacé, served in chocolate cups, is only one luscious taste among many in its beautiful 1920s-style winery. And then there is Tsillan Cellars, the Tuscan-style villa sitting pretty above Lake Chelan. Here, an artful masterpiece of Italianate design offers both wine and good times (to wit, its Labor Day weekend concert series) that are simply Washington wonderful.

From family ventures like Big Pine Winery in Manson, to lakeside delights like Chelan’s Vin Du Lac Winery, producers in Washington’s up-and-coming (and then some) regions make for wine times as you fly the Loop something utterly sublime.

For more delectable details, visit www.columbiacascadewines.com.

Glacier-capped drama:
The Cascade Range, late summer



Cabbage Patch. After a slice of this pie, I was gung-enough-ho on Snohomish to know I'd be back. But first: Time to get aloft on the next leg of the Cascade Loop. Which is? East into the Cascade foothills to Cashmere (852), the pretty, peaceful community named for its resemblance to India's beautiful Vale of Kashmir that is nestled beside one of Washington's most popular waters for fishing and whitewater rafting: the Wenatchee River.

Here, in the fertile Wenatchee River Valley, beats the heart of Washington's premier fruit-producing country (more than half of all U.S. apples grow here). Lately, however, the love of agriculture is giving itself over to a new, more lucrative passion: wine. And man, is this passion hot. In 2001 there were only three boutique wineries in the region; today there are 35, either existing or planned, which means the heat is creating a wildfire of wine excitement. [See sidebar.] Sweet ice wines, and rich red blends; delights in the German style, and estate Cabernet, Pinot noir and Syrah...You will find them all here at wineries that welcome – and indulge – your pleasure-seeking palate. Trip as I did through this, the Columbia

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Sunset in Snohomish

Cascade appellation, and the tasting rooms, picnic spots, intimate family-run affairs and impressive “château” you discover quickly will convince you: The wine passion is catching. If time permits, buzz through the Bavarian-style village of Leavenworth for *schweinshax’n* and beer at King Ludwig’s restaurant; this experience is as German as the town, which vaguely feels of the Alps. Don’t dawdle too long, however: East Wenatchee awaits.

Your next Loop landing is in the vital valley where the Wenatchee and Columbia rivers meet. It is a water-lover’s tra-la of fishing-boating-kayaking fun. And then some. Alight beside the Columbia River at Pangborn Memorial Airport (EAT) and remember: Here is the home of the irrepressible *Miss Veedol* – the Bellanca monoplane that Clyde Pangborn and Hugh Herndon in 1931 belly-flopped to ground (the landing gear had been dropped into the ocean) after a nonstop haul across the Pacific from Japan’s Sabishiro Beach. A 41-hour, 4,500-mile flight of infamy. Here at Pangborn, an entirely authentic *Miss Veedol* replica was built and plans, hopefully soon, to recreate the gutsy Bellanca’s historic trans-Pacific trip; at the Wenatchee Valley Museum & Cultural Center, you can be amazed and moved by the accomplishment that, like the contest prompting Lindbergh, earned a \$25,000 prize. If you would like a whirl with her yourself, go up in the second *Miss Veedol*; rides are available for a reasonable price.

Airport-close there is a wonderful game awaiting duffers at the Highlander Golf Club. But for classic Wenatchee fresh air fun, bike the Apple Capital Recreation Loop Trail. This 11-mile swoop up and down the spectacular Columbia River is a must-do; rental wheels are right on the loop in town. For an equally exciting experience, ooh and ahh as I did over the beauty of the Ohme Gardens. This pristine Alpine garden perched on a bluff overlooking Lewis & Clark’s beloved Columbia is the Ohme family’s shrine to Nature, with pools and flowers and evergreen groves that express all manner of her glory. Glorious! If you wish, fit in an après-gar-

den walking tour of downtown Wenatchee’s 59 original works of talented local sculptors, followed by an oh-so-romantic dinner river cruise aboard the 1908 Entiat Princess, a lovely sternwheeler. If you do, bear in mind that by the time it is wheels-up on your next Loop stop – Lake Chelan – you will thoroughly understand: The Wenatchee Valley is happening!

A word about Lake Chelan, the country’s third deepest and a draw since the 1800s for wealthy travelers who, like the local Native Americans, believed its waters to have magical healing powers. Once you fly into the field (S10), don’t let the fjord-like lake’s surface (50 miles long, 1,486-ft deep) trick you into thinking this area is as placid as it is picturesque. Ha! First there are the wineries. The great concentration of wineries – 10 at last count and proliferating. Whether it is C.R. Sandidge wines and its Kiss, a tasty Pinot noir to fall for, or Tsillan Cellars’s delicious Bellissima Rossa red blend, winemakers here are busy as bees bottling vintages with true vavavoon. All beg for your acquaintance in the wineries’ terrific tasting rooms. Then there is the fishing for trophy trout (current record: 35 lbs. 7 oz.), and a wonderful room or meal at beautiful, historic Campbell’s Resort right on the water. Floatplane aficionados can look-up “Nick” at Chelan Airways and fly his Beaver or Cessna 180 up-lake to Stehekin, a remote village in the wild where roughing-it consists of relishing espresso and fresh-baked goodies in tranquil café. (Non-float flyers can ferry-up via the Lady of the Lake fleet.) Also good to know about Lake Chelan: The golf here is as good as it gets. The new Bear Mountain Ranch public course (i.e., reasonable at a \$30-\$65 fee) is just as hilly and challenging as Pilot Michael likes. Work your woods here for awhile before again taking flight – direction Winthrop (S52) – and your Cascade Loop adventure will express excellent Cascade Loop fun.

The moment you land in Winthrop, the eastern gateway to the nearly 505,000-acre North Cascades National Park, you will connect with your inner *Bonanza*. Winthrop is movie-Western authentic

Snohomish County
NW Washington

Your Gateway to the Cascade Loop

Call for your free travel planner—
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www.snohomish.org

3rd Annual
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800-572-7753
wenatcheevalley.org
east-wenatchee.com/wingsandwheels.html



Lovely Lake Chelan

Alternate Loop Swoop

Here is a worth-it detour for intrepid Cascade Loop adventurers:

Arlington Municipal Airport (AWO), just north of Everett, Washington, is oh-so-close to Paine Field, where the Cascade Loop flight is suggested to begin and end. So, why not run up and catch its wonderful attraction: The Flying Heritage Collection of WWII and Cold War-era warriors and workhorses? These iconic military craft, some recovered from battlefields, others the last of their kind, are collected and meticulously restored to perfection by aviation-lover Paul G. Allen, he of Microsoft fame. Here, U.S., British, German, Russian and Japanese treasures reflect the keen craftsmanship and engineering innovation so characteristic of 20th c. aviation. Even better: the collection's informative docents include friendly war veterans, some of whose stories are more riveting than the craft on display. So whether it is a powerful P51-D Mustang or fierce Curtiss P40-C Tomahawk – or the acquaintance of the pilot who once flew it – this Heritage homage to the might of military flight is a must-see pleaser.

Tours by appointment only: www.flyingheritage.com.

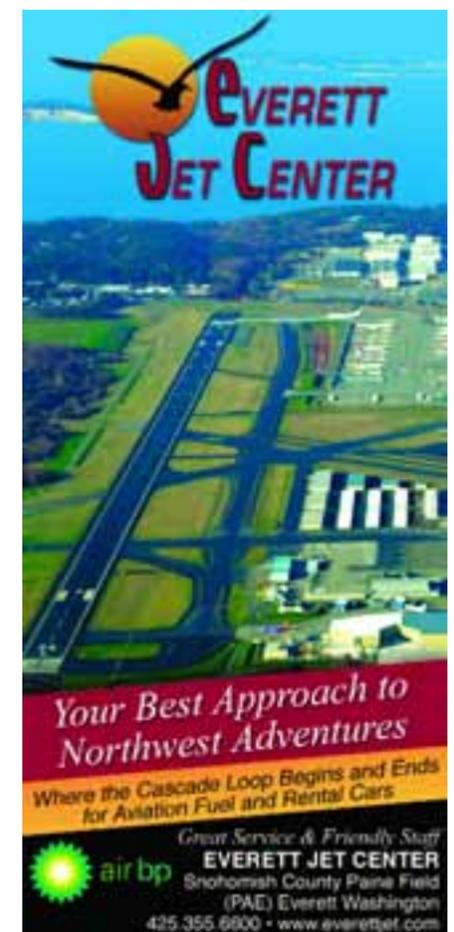
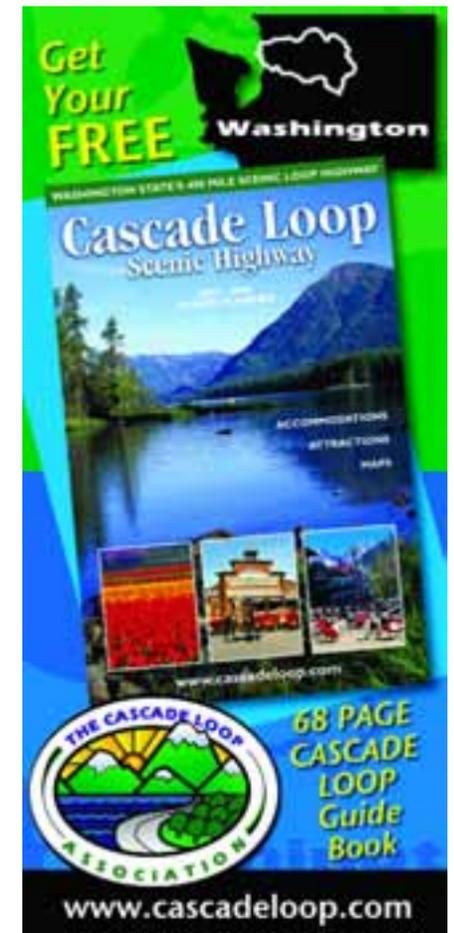
(P.S.: The beautifully equipped Crossroads Inn across the street will put you up. Call (360) 403-7222 to alert them of your arrival.)

down to the wooden hitching rails, but you will find treats here Hoss never knew. Like? Like the apricot scone-beyond-scones at the Chewuch Inn & Cabins, the charming B&B found front and center to most Methow Valley amusements. How they so flourish here! Fishing, cycling, hiking, horseback riding, luxuriating... Among the maples and golden aspens that in fall appear so spectacular, outdoor sport prevails. *Luxuriating?* Venture up to Sun Mountain Lodge for at least a meal (an overnight is better) to see what I mean. This place is pure Pilot Michael approval. Three thousand acres of private wilderness, its own flyfishing lake, and a wine cellar like no tomorrow – this resort adds the oomph of upscale pampering to your Loop circuit with spa, conference facilities and, I must mention, a mushroom truffle special on the dining menu I found utterly *yum*.

Pilot Michael's personal P.S. before continuing on northwest across the Cascades to the Skagit Valley: Fly along Early Winter Creek from Winthrop to the tiny resort of Lost River (W12). Here, in splendid isolation, if you don't stay in one of the four adorable rental cabins on the runway, you will find in the nearby town of Mazama the Freestone Inn (they will gladly come get you). This is another luxury overnight

option where the Eggs Provençal at breakfast are just one of the many incredible pleasures – spa to whitewater rafting adventures – promised by the inn's prodigious charms.

Once you again are airborne toward Skagit Regional Airport (BVS) in Burlington/Mount Vernon, your Cascade Loop escapade will bring home the dazzling impression of the Cascade Range itself. Dazzling is really the least of it! Dramatic 7,600-ft Liberty Bell Mountain; waterfalls; alpine meadows, mountain lakes, and thick stands of timber – all manner of breathtaking wonder you will see below as you cross the volcanic range that even today spits fire – to wit, the eruptions of Lassen Peak (1914, 1921) and Mount St. Helens (1980). Not to worry! These hot-headed peaks are found well south of your Loop flying route. The Native Americans thought the Cascades sacred, god-like peaks who according to their "Bridge of the God" myth, made war by throwing flame and stone. On the other hand, the US Geological Survey considers the range a massive untapped source of geothermal power that awaits exploitation. (Kalamath Falls, OR already is on the ball by heating its public buildings with volcanic steam.) But to us, easily awe-struck airmen and





Quaint, quiet LaConner

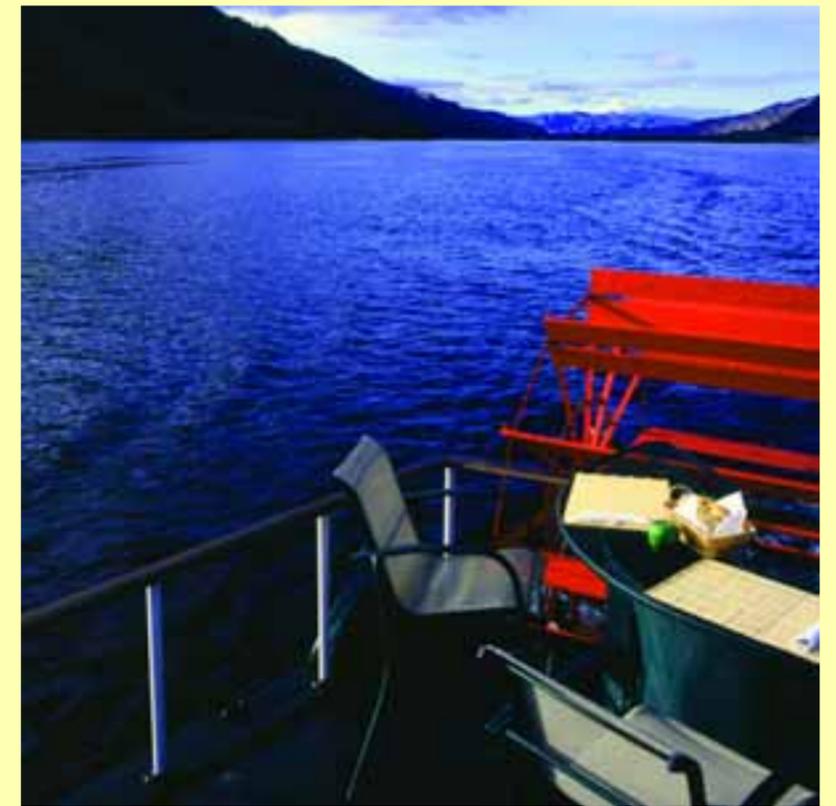
—women, these mountains in their beauty alone is – dare I gush? – stunning!

So, cross the Cascades in wonderment. Once you alight at Skagit, in the flood plain formed from the Skagit River's rush to fuse with Puget Sound, the Oyster Creek Inn will lure you into loving this next Loop adventure: oysters so good you will sing for them. Grab a crew car and cruise along the rocky shoulder of Chuckanut Drive – with views of the San Juan Islands – until you arrive at the treehouse-like setting where the lovely, historic inn overlooks a chum salmon stream churning below. Here, four to six varieties of Samish Bay oysters are served fresh daily. Delightful! A return drive along Chuckanut eventually puts you in quaint, arty LaConner, where small-town Victorian charm blends with plenty of gallery-going (and a don't-miss art walk) to create a terrific day excursion.

Also in the Skagit Valley: amazing eagle watching (they nest along the Skagit River). The Padilla Bay National Estuarine Sanctuary Interpretive Center can help you connect with the thrill.

The circle nearly complete, the Loop leaves Skagit and proceeds to Whidbey Island, the country's longest. Wing-in to Whidbey Air Park (W10) in Langley and enjoy all the reasons why this part of the San Juan archipelago is such an enthrall. Picnic near Deception Pass, one of Washington's most heart-revving ocean sites. Acquaint yourself with the 2,000 varieties of "rhodie" you will encounter hiking the 53-acre Meerkerk Rhododendron Gardens. Feast on delectable Penn Cove mussels in Dutch-settled Oak Harbor. Shop 'til you drop in the artist's colony of Langley. And just try to decide which Victorian B&B is Coupeville's most enticing. Whidbey Island, indeed, is one of the best possible concluding stops on the Cascade Loop. Why?

Because if you are anything like me, Pilot Michael, you too will see that this nifty trip, like each and every landing along the Loop, is pure and powerful fun. Leave soon on the Loop yourself and you will agree: when it comes to a phenomenal flying adventure, the Cascades are truly great! ✕



To See & Do Along the Loop

Pique your interest and satisfy your curiosity by acquiring the further Cascade Loop scoop available at any of the following websites:

Cascade Loop Region details

www.cascadeloop.com

Cascade Loop-area wineries

www.columbiacascadewines.com

Lake Chelan Area

Bear Mountain Ranch Golf:

www.bearmt.com

Campbell's Resort:

www.campbellsresort.com

Chelan Airways:

www.chelanairways.com

Snohomish Valley Region

Boeing: www.boeing.com

Future of Flight: www.futureofflight.org

Countryman B&B:

www.countrymanbandb.com

Methow Valley Region

Chewuch Inn & Cabins:

www.chewuchinn.com

Sun Mountain Lodge:

www.sunmountainlodge.com

Freestone Inn: www.freestoneinn.com

Wenatchee River Valley Region

Wings & Wheels Fly-In:

www.east-wenatchee.com

Wenatchee Museum & Cultural

Center: www.museum.wsd.wednet.edu

Highlander Golf Club:

www.highlandergolfclub.com

Apple Capital Recreation Loop Trail:

Call (509) 663-8121 for details.

Entiat Princess Dinner Cruise:

Call (509) 886-8888 for information.

Ohme Gardens:

www.ohmegardens.com

Pangborn Airport:

www.pangbornairport.com

Skagit River Area

Oyster Creek Inn:

www.oystercreekinn.com

Meerkerk Rhododendron Gardens:

www.meerkerkgardens.org

Padilla Bay National Estuarine

Sanctuary Interpretive Center:

www.padillabay.gov