

USA – SAN JUAN ISLANDS

6-days / 5-nights easy to moderate **QUALITY SELF-GUIDED** cycling holiday in the Pacific Northwest



The San Juan Islands archipelago lies between the northwest corner of the State of Washington and Canada's Vancouver Island in the waters of the Salish Sea, connected to the Pacific Ocean by the Strait of Juan de Fuca and the Strait of Georgia. The islands offer a relaxed way of life and abundant wildlife including bald eagles, a plethora of shorebirds and waterfowl, black-tailed deer, river otters and marine mammals: orcas, harbor seals, minke whales, porpoises, and sea lions.

On the San Juan Islands there is a route for every rider, from gentle journeys on Lopez Island to more challenging conditions on Orcas Island. This area is known for its wet weather, however the San Juan Islands receive less rain than Seattle as they lie in the rain shadow of the Olympic Mountains.

Self-guided tours are ideal for independent travellers. You have the freedom to cycle at your own pace, and to decide the level of difficulty you want to cycle each day, using the supplied route maps, notes, and guidebook for direction. Bicycle hire is included and support is just a phone call away. Your luggage is transferred to each night's pre-booked accommodation. You choose where to eat – bring provisions for a simple picnic lunch or discover a hidden café en route; have dinner at a fine restaurant or relax at a casual eatery – it's your choice.

Cost from: \$5235 per person twin share Single room supplement available on request.

Departs: Daily on demand May to September from Friday Harbor, San Juan Island, Washington

Includes: 5 nights' accommodation in characterful 3-star hotels and inns; hire of 21-speed hybrid bicycles; inn-to-inn luggage transfers; return transfers from/to Friday Harbor ferry terminal; emergency support and on-call roadside assistance; detailed maps, route notes and guidebook (1 set per room); introductory briefing and bike fitting on Day 1 of tour.

Not included: meals; excursions, activities, entrance fees and tasting fees; travel between Friday Harbor and the mainland; travel insurance, gratuities, and personal expenses. Transfers to points of interest or wineries not on the cycling route can be arranged at extra cost – ask for details when booking.

Level of Difficulty: Easy to moderate. Each day you are offered a choice of routes. On average, easy cycling routes are 30-50km daily over flat or gently rolling terrain; moderate and challenging cycling routes range from 55 -75km over rolling terrain.

Getting there: By ferry from Seattle or Victoria, British Columbia (Vancouver Island), services are seasonal (May to October). There are daily year-round ferries from Anacortes (north of Seattle, halfway between Seattle and Vancouver) – the Anacortes ferry terminal has a shuttle bus service from Sea-Tac International Airport. You can fly to Friday Harbor airport from Seattle's Boeing Field (with connecting shuttle bus service from Sea-Tac). Pick up and drop off at Friday Harbor airport can be arranged at no extra cost.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details and reservations



Day 1: San Juan Island Southern Loops

cycling @ 25, 50 or 65km

Meet at the Friday Harbor ferry terminal (or airport by previous arrangement). Our local contact will give an introductory briefing, make sure your bikes are correctly fitted, and point you in the direction of one of the many good lunch stops in Friday Harbor, before you set off on your first ride.

San Juan Island has rolling terrain with forested hills stretching to the coast. Small farms and homesteads and a patchwork of fertile fields fill in the gaps. These islands were once home to Native Americans who moved between islands seasonally, harvesting plants and animals, particularly the salmon that were abundant in these waters. European diseases introduced by Spanish explorers in the late 1700s wiped out most of the native population and the remnant tribes now mostly live on the mainland. Although the Spanish explorers left their mark in place names, the islands were primarily claimed and settled by British and Americans.

The riding is focused on the southern part of San Juan Island. Head first to American Camp and the southernmost tip of San Juan Island, Cattle Point. From here, continue west to False Bay and around the marine sanctuary. A short detour brings you to a lavender farm, in full purple bloom during the summer months. Loop back to Friday Harbor, where you spend the next two nights. You stay in a mid-20th century rustic charm with friendly and welcoming hosts. Breakfast is not included but there are cafes nearby.

Day 2: San Juan Island Northern Loops

cycling @ 40 or 50km

Start today's loop ride exploring the northern part of San Juan Island along rolling back roads to Roche Harbor. This sheltered cove has been a haven for sailors for 150 years. There are waterfront restaurants ideal for lunch. Continue to English Camp where the British garrison was stationed. From here it's a meandering route back to Friday Harbor along the west coast.

In places you are less than 3 miles from the Canadian border, and the snowcapped mountains of Vancouver Island frame the western horizon. Sites en route include an alpaca farm, an outdoor sculpture park and Lime Kiln State Park, the nation's only whale-watching park, with its iconic lighthouse and old lime kilns. Look out for orcas (killer whales), deer and bald eagles. Return to Friday Harbor, in time to visit the Whale Museum, or to relax with a drink overlooking the water.

Day 3: Friday Harbor to Eastsound (Orcas Island)

cycling @ 25 or 40km

Take the interisland ferry from Friday Harbor to Orcas Island (free of charge to pedestrians and cyclists). Then ride along the curving shoreline past a series of small inlets to Deer Harbor. The little sandy beach and dock make this a great place for a picnic lunch. Cross through the heart of the island past Turtleback Mountain Preserve and a succession of small farms.

A short detour brings you to Orcas Island Pottery, a co-op featuring the work of many local artists, set among old-growth cedars and Douglas fir, perched on a high bluff overlooking the Pacific Ocean.

From here it's just a short push on to Eastsound, where you will stay 2 nights. Eastsound is a charming seaside town and artists' community, so laid-back as to make Friday Harbor seem hectic. There are two good restaurants, and the best ice cream on the archipelago.

Your inn is at the top of a bluff. All rooms have views. You are staying over a mile (1.6km). Breakfast is not included.

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Day 4: Orcas Island Loops or Out on the Water

cycling @ 35km or detour 40 – 60km

This morning, head south past the placid water of Cascade Lake and through the densely forested Moran State Park. Then you can take a detour to Obstruction Pass and reach the idyllic beach at Doe Bay for lunch.

If you choose a more challenging itinerary you can head to the top of Mount Constitution, the highest point on the San Juan Islands: 2400 feet (732m) - with views of the San Juan Islands, Vancouver Island, and the mainland. Return to Eastsound for your second night.

If you prefer to give your legs a rest from cycling, take a sea-kayaking or whale-watching tour from Eastsound.

Day 5: Lopez Island Excursion

cycling @ 35, 50 or 60km

Take the ferry to Lopez Island, a 15-mile-long island which is one of the most peaceful and relaxed in the archipelago. Cycle to Spencer Spit, for stunning views of the snow-capped Cascade Mountains. Head south passing small farms producing fruit or fiber to Shark Reef Sanctuary, where seals fish and bask in the sunshine. The best place for lunch on the island is Lopez Village, the only village on the island, situated at the northern end of Fisherman Bay. Take the afternoon ferry to Friday Harbor, where you stay tonight.

Day 6: Shaw Island Excursion, then end of tour

cycling @ 25km

Shaw is one of the smallest of the islands serviced by the regular ferries. Here you'll find sandy beaches, quiet roads and a historic general store. You can visit the Benedictine monastery, where the resident nuns farm the land and welcome visitors.

After returning to Friday Harbor there should be time to visit San Juan Islands Vineyards before transferring to Friday Harbor ferry terminal (or airport by prior arrangement) for your onward travel to the mainland or to Vancouver Island in Canada.

Tour arrangements end with transfer to Friday Harbor ferry terminal – travel to the mainland is not included, nor is accommodation on this night. However we can arrange accommodation in Seattle at extra cost, please ask when booking.



Outdoor Travel offers many other small group guided or self-guided inn-to-inn cycling tours in North America, including California's Napa Valley, Hawaii and Oregon and many destinations in Europe, Vietnam, China, New Zealand, Japan and South Africa. Ask for details of our cycling holidays in Umbria, Tuscany, Provence, Loire Valley, along the Danube, around Lake Constance, or on pilgrimage trails such as the Camino de Santiago in Spain.

We also offer **guided Bike & Barge cruises** along the waterways of Europe, in many destinations including France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Venice or the Amalfi coast of Italy, the Dalmatian Coast of Croatia, the islands of Greece, the Lycian coast of Turkey, Vietnam or Romania.

Contact Outdoor Travel for more itinerary details and reservations

- Call toll free on 1800 331 582 or (03) 57551743 or Fax (03) 57501020
- Email: info@outdoortravel.com.au
- Web: <http://www.outdoortravel.com.au>
- Mail: Outdoor Travel Pty Ltd, PO Box 286, Bright, VIC 3741, Australia