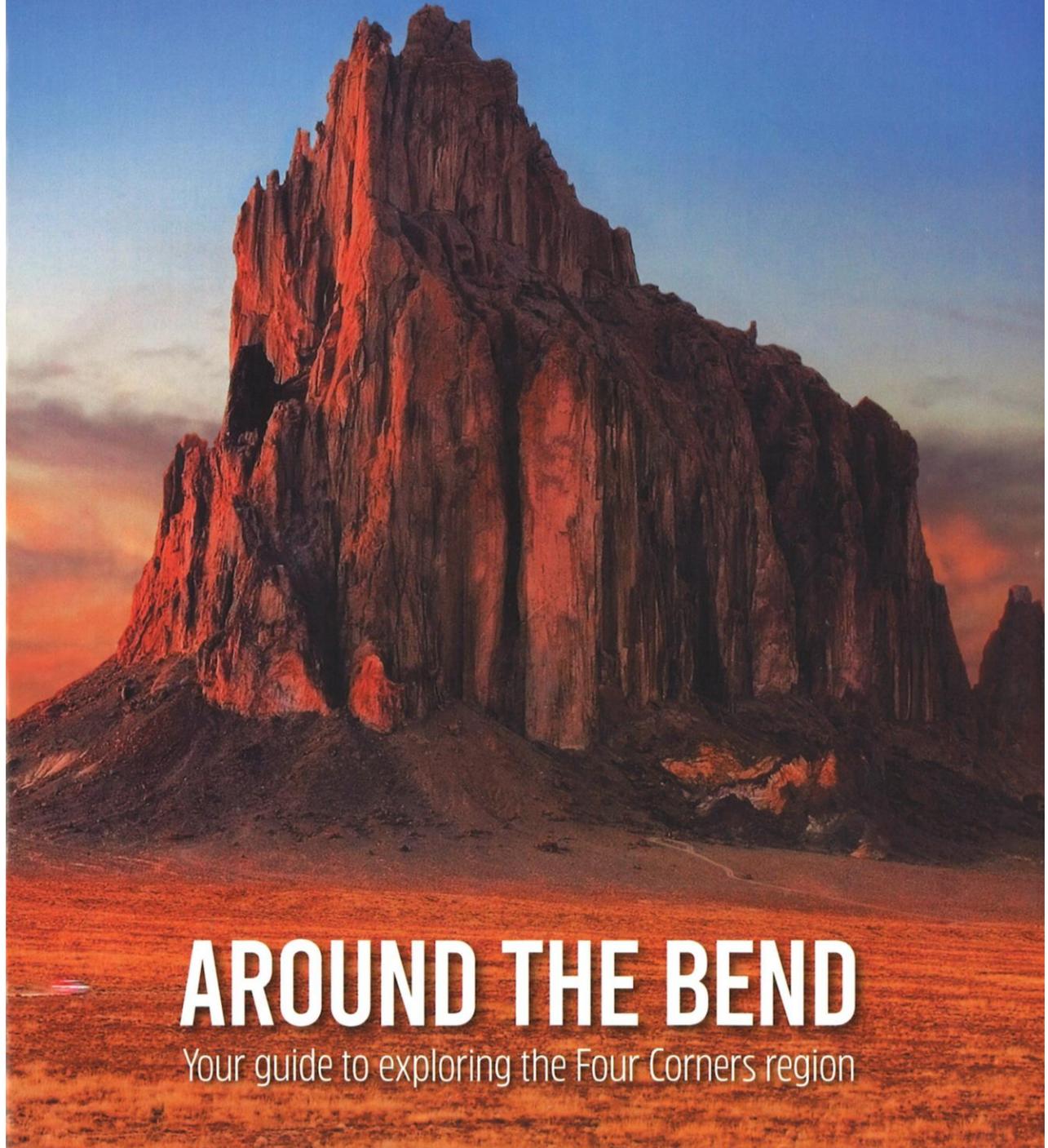




Westways

January/February 2020

The Magazine for Auto Club Members



AROUND THE BEND

Your guide to exploring the Four Corners region

Washington's Emerald Isles

Head to the San Juan Islands to kayak among whales or stroll picturesque waterfronts

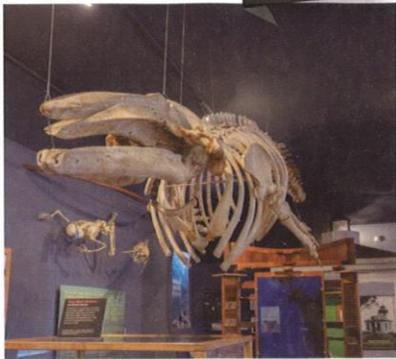
By Eric Lucas



Emerald isles in a sapphire sea: Washington State's San Juan Islands lend themselves to metaphors. But the islands have infinitely more to offer than easy turns of phrase. Ask Oprah Winfrey, who recently bought an estate on Orcas Island. Kayakers admire the majesty of breaching whales. Organic farmers and ranchers provide artisan ingredients to bustling markets and cozy cafés. From May through September, the sun shines almost every day, and the gentle rains of spring and fall polish the crystalline air for visitors (and residents, of course) who hike and bike and comb the beaches. You can't visit all 172 named islands on a quick trip—and only three even *have* visitor amenities. Your best bet: Start with San Juan Island and Orcas Island.

GRAZE HERE: On Saturdays between April 11 and October 24, don't miss the San Juan Island Farmers Market for pastries, grilled oysters, and more. sjifarmersmarket.com.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: SAN JUAN ISLANDS VISITORS BUREAU PHOTO BY SLATER MOORE; SAN JUAN ISLANDS VISITORS BUREAU PHOTO (2)



WHALE MUSEUM



FRIDAY HARBOR HOUSE



VIEW FROM FRIDAY HARBOR HOUSE

Getting There

BY BOAT: The ferry from **Anacortes** to Friday Harbor on San Juan Island takes about an hour and costs about \$64 round-trip for a car and two people. Reservations far in advance are essential for summer months. The 95-mile drive from SeaTac airport to Anacortes takes a few hours. (888) 808-7977; wsdot.wa.gov/ferries.

BY PLANE: **Kenmore Air** offers regularly scheduled flights to San Juan Island from Seattle. The 35-minute commuter plane flight is spectacularly scenic, and costs \$300-\$360 round-trip. If you fly, rent a car in Friday Harbor (about \$60 per day). (866) 435-9524; kenmoreair.com.

Day 1

CHECK IN: Friday Harbor, San Juan Island's main town, makes a great base for exploring the islands. Get a room at **Friday Harbor House**, a snazzy boutique inn with a standout restaurant on the bluff overlooking the bay. The inn's 24 rooms have jetted tubs and gas fireplaces. Rates start at \$209 (360-378-8455; fridayharborhouse.com). More economical lodging is available at **San Juan Island Hostel** (360-370-5602; sanjuanislandhostel.com), or at a B&B.

EAT WITH THE LOCALS: Start with breakfast at **Rocky Bay Café**, which serves hash with corned beef, potatoes, eggs, and all the fixin's. (360) 378-5051.

ART, ORCAS, AND LUNCH: A one-minute walk away, you'll find **Arctic Raven Gallery**, which is devoted to modern Northwest Coast indigenous art. (360) 378-3433; arcticravengalleryfridayharbor.com. From there, stroll to the **Whale Museum** to learn about the region's resident orcas. (360) 378-4710; whalemuseum.org. Then step into **Cask and Schooner** for excellent island-style pub food. (360) 378-2922; caskandschooner.com.

ISLAND RAMBLE: Walk to the **San Juan Islands Museum of Art**, which features regional artists and, occasionally, big names. (360) 370-5050; sjima.org. Then browse shops such as **Mystical Mermaid** (New Age crystals and such), **Kings Marine** (nautical paraphernalia), and **Griffin Bay Bookstore** (regional interest and fine fiction).

TIME TO DINE: After a stroll along the docks, end your day back at **Friday Harbor House**, with fine seafood and steak, as well as wine, craft cocktails, and beer.



INSTA-WORTHY

Head to the top of **Mount Constitution**, where on a clear day you can photograph four mountain ranges: the Cascades, British Columbia's Coast Range, the Vancouver Island Range, and the Olympics. The Salish Sea adds the perfect dash of blue.



PARK AND RIDE

From mid-May through September, the **Friday Harbor Jolly Trolley** offers hop-on, hop-off service around San Juan Island to major sights such as Roche Harbor, English Camp, Lime Kiln Point State Park, and Pelindaba Lavender. The buses make seven circuits a day. *All-day rides cost \$10.* (360) 298-8873; fridayharborjollytrolley.com.