

The Perfect 3-Day Weekend in the San Juan Islands

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Orcas and eagles. Hiking and kayaking. Island grown wine and farm-to-table dining. And not a chain, whether it be a chain restaurant or store, in sight. This is the **San Juan Islands**.

The San Juans are an archipelago of 172 named islands and reefs located between Seattle and Vancouver. Stepping off the ferry and on to one of the four ferry-served San Juan Islands: Orcas Island, San Juan Island, Lopez Island and Shaw Island, is like stepping back in time. You quickly forget that a mere three hours ago you left the chaos of bustling Seattle behind.

The San Juans were made for long weekends. A visit to these jaw-droppingly gorgeous islands is like taking a vacation out of the continental US...without actually leaving the continental US. Follow our San Juan Islands itinerary for a perfect weekend getaway filled with foodie adventures on San Juan Island and Orcas Island.



Sunrise over Friday Harbor

Day 1: Friday Harbor

The great thing about the San Juan Islands is that the main towns: Friday Harbor and Roche Harbor on San Juan Island and Eastsound on Orcas Island can be explored in 30 minutes or in a full day of hopping around from gallery to shop, and restaurant to bar.

It takes around 3.5 – 4 hours to reach Friday Harbor from Seattle Seatac Airport. But if you're visiting the San Juans from April to October, the long days with around 16 hours of daylight are perfect for exploring.

San Juan Island and Friday Harbor have the largest population in the San Juan Islands, though it's really still a small town. And you walk right off the ferry in to the heart of the incredibly charming town.

There's no chains to be found here; just a smattering of art galleries, shops, restaurants and a market hall. Friday Harbor is easily walkable and an excellent base for exploring the entire island.

San Juan Island Distillery and Westcott Bay Cider

San Juan Island Distillery and Westcott Bay Cider aren't the kind of place you just stumble upon on San Juan Island. Tucked away among the apple orchards, it's a destination you need to seek out – and you absolutely should.

Rich Anderson, owner of Westcott Bay Cider, and Suzy and Hawk Pingree, owners of San Juan Island Distillery, are business partners. They work together to bring islanders and island visitors cider and spirits under one roof.

San Juan Island Distillery makes 12 different gins, a variety of liqueurs and flavored brandies. They also make an award-winning apple brandy in their copper still from Germany, and with Washington apples right from the Westcott Bay orchard on the island.

Try their unique Spy Hop Harvest Selecting N5 gin, which is made with distilled cider and botanicals hand foraged from right on San Juan Island.

Westcott Bay Cider makes traditional hard ciders from their Washington cider apple varieties grown in their orchard on San Juan Island. Like Orcas Island, San Juan Island has a long history of being a major fruit producer for Puget Sound and some of Westcott Bay's original orchards date back to 1870.

Rich replanted the orchards in the 1990s and released his first cider in 1999. Just over a decade later, he teamed up with Suzy and Hawk to purchase the copper still. And nearly two decades later, they're all producing their ciders and spirits together.

Westcott Bay Cider produces three different ciders: traditional very dry, traditional dry and traditional medium sweet.

Stop by on Saturday afternoons from 1pm – 4pm for a tasting of the ciders and spirits.



Some rooms have balconies with sweeping views over the harbor

Stay: Friday Harbor House

Friday Harbor House is just a short two-block walk from the ferry and right in the heart of Friday Harbor. The boutique hotel is set atop a bluff with stunning views over the harbor.



You'll never want to leave your room at Friday Harbor House

The rooms are cozy and romantic, with their fireplaces and oversized jacuzzi bathtubs made for two. Some rooms, like ours, even have balconies that are perfect for sitting on with a glass of wine. And amenities like the kettle, tea and Chemex with freshly ground coffee make it so you never want to leave the room.

We promise you're in for an excellent night's sleep with the Dream Kit that's left, with chamomile bath salts, lavender pillow spray, and an eye mask. There's even a pillow menu that you can select goose down, organic buckwheat, and bamboo pillows from.

Breakfast is our favorite kind – a delicious a la carte menu with all your breakfast favorites on offer. We can never resist eggs benedict when available, though the burrito is another delicious choice.



Crab mac and cheese bites with house made pickles

The patio is a gorgeous place for a late summer evening dinner as the sun goes down. Make a meal of the tapas-style starters like the crab mac and cheese bites, crispy brussel sprouts and avocado toasts.



Don't miss trying the craft cocktails at Friday Harbor House

Be sure to try Friday Harbor House's cocktails. Chef Jason Aldous combines a relaxed style approach to food with locally grown ingredients and pairs it all with craft cocktails. Not sure what to order? The bartenders will be happy to craft something up for your personal tastes.