



## Specific Information About Your Washington Taste Vacation September 27 – 30, 2015

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### Meeting & Finishing Times and Places

We meet on the first day of the trip at one of two places and times:

- 12:30 PM in the lobby of the Hampton Inn in Richland, or...
- 1:00 PM in the small Tri-Cities Airport (airport code PSC) in nearby Pasco. We will pick you up just outside the terminal – look for a Taste Vacations guide and van

If you will be arriving prior to the first day of the trip, we suggest you book a room at the [Hampton Inn](#) in Richland. This will allow you to leave your car at the hotel during the tour.

You should eat lunch before the meeting.

The tour ends with a 12:00 PM noon drop-off at the Hampton Inn in Richland or drop off by 12:30 PM at Tri-Cities Airport in Pasco. You can choose to fly out that afternoon or spend the night in Richland, return to pick up your car at the Hampton Inn, or rent a car from the Tri-Cities airport if you'd like to extend your stay in the area.

### Flying to/from the Trip Location

The Tri-Cities Airport is quite well connected for a small airport, served by Delta, Alaska Air/Horizon Air, United and Allegiant with flights to Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Denver, Salt Lake City, Los Angeles, Las Vegas and Mesa, Arizona.

If you plan to arrive on the first day of the trip, please book your flights to arrive no later than 12:15 PM.

On the return, you should book your flight home to depart no earlier than 1:30 PM.

### Delays In Your Travel Plans

If you should happen to get delayed in your travel and can't meet us at the appointed time, please call your Taste Vacations host Sarah Wolcott at 541-550-6660 to let us know what happened and when you expect to arrive. Because we immediately leave the airport for Walla Walla, one hour away, you will need to either take a taxi or the three-times-per-day Grape Line Shuttle (<http://www.grapeline.us>) to Walla Walla.

### Where We Stay

We stay in two separate hotels on our Classic Accommodations tour:

- **Nights 1 & 2: [Marcus Whitman Hotel](#), Walla Walla, WA – (509) 525-2200**  
The Marcus Whitman hotel is the top hotel lodging property in Walla Walla, including beautiful accommodations, expansive modern conference center, on-site wine tasting rooms, and a nationally recognized award-winning restaurant and casual wine lounge, all set to a sophisticated old-world backdrop. It is one of our favorite historic small-town hotels anywhere.
- **Night 3: [Inn at Desert Wind](#), Prosser, WA – (509) 786-7277**  
In Prosser we stay at the Inn at Desert Wind in small guest rooms nestled above the Desert Wind Winery. *Travel + Leisure* highlighted the Inn as the best lodging in the Yakima Valley and the *Seattle Times* raved about the rooms' "over-the-top indulgence." You can gaze out over the Yakima River from your balcony and enjoy a bottle of the winery's vino before retiring for the night.



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### **Extending Your Stay**

We only see a small part of Washington – although the bulk of Washington’s grape growing region – during our four-day tour. If you wish to extend your vacation, here are a number of good options to consider:

- Seattle: Our tour takes place entirely east of the Cascade Mountains. You could easily fly from Pasco to Seattle at the end of the tour to take in Washington’s major city.
- Mount Rainier: Speaking of the mountains, you could visit Mount Rainier National Park, home of the tallest mountain in the state. There are excellent camping areas plus the wonderful Paradise Inn hotel, outstanding scenery, and world-class hiking.
- Portland, Oregon: Another great city in the region is Portland, only a 3.5 hour drive from Pasco.
- Willamette Valley: Oregon’s premier grape growing region is just south of Portland. You could easily plan an entire second vacation touring wineries in the Willamette Valley. (In fact, we have such a tour!)

### **The Food**

Eastern Washington is known as an agricultural powerhouse. The seasonal fresh fruits, vegetables, and food products make for outstanding meals. While not previously known as a culinary mecca, dining in Eastern Washington has come full circle with the farm-to-table dining scene.

This is a wine tour and all lunches and dinners take place at local wineries or wine-centric establishments. Wine during meals is not included in the tour price but you can choose to include all wines at dinner for a \$150 per person supplementary charge. Otherwise the winery and/or your Taste Vacations guide will be pleased to suggest perfect pairings. All meals are included from dinner on the first day through breakfast on the final day.

### **The Wine**

Washington is the second largest producer of wine grapes in the US. The weather in Southeast Washington is dry and temperatures are much warmer on the east side of the state where most of the grapes are grown versus the wetter, west side. And with 13 distinct American Viticultural Areas, Washington State has some serious diversity in soil types, topography, microclimates, and wine touring regions.

The range of Washington grape varietals is tremendous with over 30 different varietals in production. White and red varietals each make up about half the total. The most common varietals grown in the state are Riesling, Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Syrah.

The local soil conditions in the grape growing region of Washington State are excellent, and come from one of the best stories of *terroir* you will hear. 15,000 years ago a gigantic ice dam during the ice ages ruptured, spilling billions of gallons of water westward through Washington State and Oregon. The soils left behind by these floods are producing the excellent wines you taste today.

Ste. Michelle Wine Estates really put the Washington wine industry on the map, starting production of viniferous grapes back in 1967 and planting in Eastern Washington as early as 1972. While the main winery is on the west side of the mountains outside Seattle, most of the grapes come from the area where we will be traveling. We also visit the Col Solare winery on the last morning of the tour, a joint venture between Chateau Ste. Michelle and the Tuscan winery, Antinori.

Tastings at wineries outside meals are included in the tour price.



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### **The Weather**

September is a beautiful time to visit the wine region of Washington. Average high temperatures are in the low to mid 70's and lows are typically in the 50's. On average, September sees only four days of precipitation. You should be prepared for weather variations but we have selected a wonderful season of the year for our tour dates.

### **History of the Region**

The Tri-Cities, where we begin our tour, was the site of one of the major archeological discoveries of North America. Kennewick Man is the name given to the person who lived 9,000 BC and whose skeletal remains were found near the Columbia River in 1996. There is much controversy over the remains of Kennewick Man and it is slowly being determined that he is of Native American descent. Southeastern Washington State is home of several Native American tribes. Walla Walla is a Native American name meaning "Land of Many Waters."

The Tri Cities (Richland, Pasco, and Kennewick) are located just above the junction where the Snake River flows into the mighty Columbia River. Lewis and Clark in 1805 traveled down the Snake River from Idaho, into the Columbia, and on to the Pacific Ocean. Fort Walla Walla was founded in 1818, making the area one of the first settlements between the Rockies and the Cascade Mountains.

In 1836 the Whitman Mission was built in Walla Walla by Marcus Whitman, one of the first leaders of a wagon train on the Oregon Trail. In 1847, Whitman, his wife and 11 other missionaries were killed by local Cayuse and Umatilla Native Americans. The deaths have been attributed partly to a clash of cultures and partly because Marcus, a physician, was not able to stop the spread of measles among the Native Americans, who then held Whitman responsible.

The Yakima River runs through Prosser, WA and is referred to as "Tap tut", loosely translated as "many rapids" in the native dialect. Prosser is the county seat of Benton County and also houses Washington State University's Agricultural Extension Service. WSU is a major agricultural college in the United States and its focus on irrigation in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century greatly aided the farming opportunities that have contributed to Washington State's economy. Prosser is also affectionately referred to as "The Birthplace of Washington Wine" as Dr. Walter Clore, a horticulturist with WSU, lobbied for and scientifically demonstrated that winegrape growing in Washington State could, and should, compete with the California winegrape industry.

Washington State's agricultural heritage remains vastly important and has led to the recognition of the State's ability to produce top-rated and respected wine.

### **Recommended Pre-Trip Readings**

In addition to a guidebook, you might wish to read about Washington and its wine industry either before the trip or while on the road (or in the air). Following are some suggested titles:

- *Washington Wines and Wineries* by Paul Gregutt. Gregutt is a wine writer based in Southeast Washington and will give you all the details you want on the local wine industry.
- *Washington Project: Washington's Wine Making History* by Ronald Irvine and Walter J. Clore. This will give you a different look at the local industry.
- *Wiyaxayxt / Wiyaakaa'awn* by Jennifer Karson. This is a history of the native peoples of Southeast Washington from their own stories and histories.