

A person is paragliding over a vast, rolling landscape of green hills and fields. The hills are bathed in warm, golden light, creating a dramatic play of light and shadow. The sky is a clear, bright blue with a few wispy clouds. The overall scene is one of natural beauty and adventure.

*Alaska.* **BEYOND** »

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# WASHINGTON

SPECTACULAR ATTRACTIONS



## Exciting Eastern Washington

Remarkable recreation areas east of the Cascades

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**Eastern Washington,** commonly known as the “dry side” of the Evergreen State, offers a unique experience all its own. The sky seems bigger, and dramatic open spaces dominate a varied landscape that includes mountains, forests, semiarid scrublands, deep canyons, fertile fields and basalt bluffs. There are orchards with trees bent heavy with fruit and waving wheat fields shining golden in the sun. Vineyards climb steep hillsides and

miles of farmland stretch to the horizon.

Agriculture may have helped build this side of the state, but another important aspect of life quickly followed—recreation. Eastern Washington is a playground rich in lakes, mountains, rivers and plenty of sunshine. It is the perfect place to explore the great outdoors. The following are some of the places my husband and I like to enjoy in this vast land we call home.

### Lake Chelan

With hundreds of miles of shoreline and views of the Cascade Range, Lake Chelan is the largest natural lake in the state.

At the upper end of the long, narrow and incredibly deep body of water (reaching nearly 1,500 feet in places), the tiny village of Stehekin is a favorite starting point for those wanting to fish, hike or take part in other activities. The community is accessible by the *Lady of the Lake* ferry that



Lake Chelan, top, is a popular spot for Eastern Washington water fun during the summer months. Apples, above, are one of Eastern Washington's major fruit crops, with up to 12 billion apples harvested annually in Washington state.

sails daily from the town of Chelan. The scenic ferry ride often includes seeing wildlife on the rocky hillsides, such as bighorn sheep and raptors.

My husband and I spent most of the first day of a recent long weekend exploring nearby wineries and little shops in the Chelan area. Later, we sat in low, comfy chairs in the sand next to the lake to bask in the late-afternoon sun. I dipped my toes into the cool water and tipped back my head, my face shaded by the brim of my hat.

On the shore, families picnicked and children played. In the water, people swam and splashed, canoes and kayaks glided across the lake's surface, and powerboats towed water-skiers. I joined those around me and splashed a bit in the water before admiring a beautiful sunset from my chair.

The next day, we picked up treats from Lake Chelan Artisan Bakery ([lakechelanbakery.com](http://lakechelanbakery.com)) and visited a few of the region's breweries to sample outstanding ales and ciders. We ended the day with a guided Twilight Tour of Lake Chelan's beautiful shoreline on electric bikes from Chelan Electric Bikes ([chelanelectricbikes.com](http://chelanelectricbikes.com)).

## Spokane

Washington's second-largest city is the place we've called home for almost 20 years. The economic and cultural hub of the Inland Northwest, Spokane has a lively arts scene and wine community and is the perfect place to explore outdoor recreation in this vast area.

My husband and I enjoy walks in the city's Riverfront Park and the views from the footbridges that cross above the Spokane River's roaring falls. The river provides opportunities for rafting, kayaking and canoeing, while the many area hikes include Iller Creek Conservation Area Trail, a 4.8-mile loop trail that winds by the scenic creek and is appropriate for all skill levels.