

CRUISING THE NORTHWEST

This guide was prepared by Joe Coons for the **Bellingham Yacht Club**, a focus for boating activities for the waters of Northwestern Washington since 1925; and for **NW Explorations**, a charter company. The following pages offer tips and possible itineraries for longer cruises, plus comments on some of the local harbors and delightful destinations which are so abundant throughout our region. If you decide to follow up on any of these, study your charts carefully. Prudent planning for your trip, including tide and current tables and the appropriate charts is the sole responsibility of the skipper!

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Deer Harbor, Orcas I.



Above & Left: Roche Harbor, San Juan I.



Fisherman Bay, Lopez I.



These photos will give you an idea of the treasures you'll find in our islands. On this page are some U.S. destinations, and none is more than four hours by the slowest of boats.

On page 12, there are photos of Canadian destinations, equally near!

If you have a "smart phone", you might want to download apps with our region's charts from *Navionics*; pick the "USA" and "Canada" regions. They are good for early, rough planning. Of course, when actually on the boat you will want a full set of charts for the area you're planning to cruise; charter boats come furnished with charts for most areas, but if you're in doubt, inquire! If you want a good planning chart for the San Juan Islands and the Bellingham area, buy [NOAA chart #18412](#).

(On every NWExplorations charter boat, there is a full set of charts and a copy of Waggoner's Cruising Guide—you needn't buy them if chartering.)



Friday Harbor, San Juan I.

WELCOME TO THE PACIFIC NW...

Here you'll find some of the finest cruising in the world! Safer than most cruising regions because with only the exception of the Straits of Georgia, and the west end of the Straits of Juan de Fuca, you are always only a short distance from a secure anchorage. VHF radio coverage is everywhere, your cell phone will work almost anywhere except in a few steep-sided bays, and there are numerous marinas and public mooring buoys...not to mention helpful Pacific Northwest boaters.

This is cruising that you'll really enjoy.

FIRST TIME CRUISING HERE?

There are a few things to remember as you prepare for your trip:

1. You don't have to plan your whole itinerary! Stay flexible to have more fun: Marinas here can usually accommodate you in the evening with a morning call, except on busy summer weekends. By staying "loose", you can stay an extra day in a special spot, add a new stop, or wait out bad weather without pressure! **On Friday & Saturday, Sucia I. is very busy.** Go on to Reid Harbor, for example...
2. The NW is *casual attire country*. Even the poshest restaurant in our cruising region will be delighted to seat men in chinos and a nice shirt and sweater, or ladies in a nice blouse and skirt or slacks. Aboard, jeans, shorts are *de rigueur*.
3. Keep luggage soft and easy to stow. You don't want to fill your lockers with empty suitcases!
4. Consider buying a current-year copy of *Waggoner's Cruising Guide* (see note bottom page 1.)

DIFFERENCES FROM OTHER PLACES...

1. The bottoms are often *rocky*, and that means that depths can change quickly, and obstructions sometimes stick up. Watch your charts: Asterisks in the water mean hidden rocks!
2. You will see *logs* in the water *especially after extra high tides or rain*. That's why fast boats aren't so popular here: it's easy to hit a log if you're going fast...combined with the sheltered nature of most waters. Also, there may be a lot of fishing boats with nets out. Operate prudently.
3. If this is your first time in waters where there are significant tides, you'll want to keep the tidal changes in mind especially in shallow places (learn about the importance of noting "minus" tides), when anchoring, and when going through passes. *Deception Pass* is the only significant pass in the southern waters covered by this paper, while there are numerous passes in B.C. waters to the north. Study your *Chapman's* or talk to locals and get their advice. And learn how to use the Tide Tables. Just do a little

planning, and passes will not be a problem, they'll be fun! (Tide Tables are aboard charter boats.)

SOME NEARBY DESTINATIONS...

None of the spots below are more than fifty miles from Bellingham; most are within 25! Approximate transit times are expressed in hours at 8-10 knots: 1.5h=90 minutes.

U.S. San Juan Island Destinations

Inati Bay. The Bellingham Yacht Club outstation, on the E side of Lummi Island, just S of Point Francis, open to any boater. Be cautious, and pass carefully to the S of the reef marked by the white buoy on the N side of the entrance. Well protected, holds about 12 boats if anchored separately, more if rafted. If the bay is busy, a shore line is needed. Pit toilets, no dock. Good anchoring. Early sunset here! Only BYC Members can go ashore.

Chuckanut Bay S (1h) of Bellingham, a fine anchorage. Pass close to Clark's or Governor's Point: your chart will show obstructions extending either side of the islands in the bay's mouth. Good anchoring. The S end (Pleasant Bay) is particularly nice. No shore lines needed. Spring, look for grey whales sand browsing. *Great for charter's last night.*

Sucia Island The most popular destination in the San Juans, N of mid-Orcas Island. A lot of buoys and dock, State-maintained. Good anchoring. It's a marine park donated by the yacht clubs of Puget Sound. Fire rings, grills, tent sites, some water, pit toilets, etc. Check charts carefully. *2.0h from B'ham.*

Matia Island A lovely little harbor, just east of Sucia. Rolfe Cove has a narrow entry on the island's NW corner and holds four boats, two at the dock and two at a buoy. If you fit, it's lovely. Pit toilets. A trail takes you around the island, through the woods. Good except with W or N winds. Early birds get in!

Pelican Beach This is at the NE end of Cypress Island, just below Eagle Cliff. State buoys for mooring, with fire pits, tables, pit toilets, etc. Little protection from the weather, so make it meal/hike stop. There's a fine hike open July 15 - February 1 to Eagle Cliff, about 45 minutes, not too strenuous, for a great island vista. Other months Eagle Cliff is off limits, but hike to Duck Lake (easier), see lots of eagles, ducks, etc. *1.5 h from B'ham.*

Blind Bay & Shoal Bay Two good anchorages. Blind Bay is on the S. side of Harney Channel between East and West Sounds. Shoal Bay is on the N. end of Lopez Island. Bays are well protected except from N. No facilities. *2.0-2.5h from B'ham.*

Olga on Orcas Island has a nice dock, and a nearby arts center with excellent casual lunch/dinner dining, just walk up the road .5 mile or so. A great lunch stop...renowned soups and pies!

West Sound on Orcas Island has Orcas Island Yacht Club

and County docks; tie up and go up to the little store for the bakery & deli.

Jones Island A favorite, Jones I. is between the W side of Orcas Island and the N end of San Juan Island, between Spring Passage and San Juan Channel. The smallish bay on the NE side is the best spot (watch the well-marked obstruction, keeping it on the left as you enter). There is a dock and buoys. On the SW side of the island there are some buoys, but you'll rock and roll because of passing traffic. On the island there are trails, beaches, pit toilets, and deer so tame they come up to you for food, but *don't feed them: Park rules!* Coming here through Harney Channel/Pole Pass, not as treacherous as it looks. *Obey speed limits!*

Reid Harbor & Prevost Harbor Another favorite, Reid Harbor is well protected, on the SE side of Stuart Island, N of San Juan Island. There is a dock, lots of buoys, good anchoring, and lots of room. There are good trails, (and a long but lovely, favorite hike to Turn Point Lighthouse) with the usual complement of fire rings, tables, toilets, etc. Prevost Harbor is on the NW side of Stuart Island, and is another excellent anchorage, especially in a southwesterly blow. *Be careful of Prevost's bottoms; avoid the boat passage at the island's S end!*

Fisherman's Bay on the NW side of Lopez has a challenging, but interesting entry channel, slow and careful does it! In the bay, good anchorage and moorage at two marinas, and several restaurants. *Enter at mid rising to high tide.*

Spencer Spit, Lopez Island is a favorite mooring spot on the State buoys. Pick the N or S side depending on the overnight winds. Dinghy ashore and enjoy watching herons in the lagoon ...

Friday Harbor, Roche Harbor, & La Conner "Urban" destinations. Friday Harbor is a neat island community with plenty of visitor space except during the jazz festival (late July). Roche Harbor Resort has extensive moorages and several bays around the corner to the southwest. La Conner is a quaint little community, with somewhat crowded moorage (no anchoring) that is mid-way on a slough between Deception Pass & Samish Bay. Check your charts, have fun! Extensive shopping for boaters, sights to see, and good restaurants. *All are 3.0h from B'ham.*

British Columbia Gulf Island Destinations

You will need to clear Canada Customs...

Bedwell Harbor on S Pender Island is a lovely spot; it's also the most convenient Canadian Customs check-in location. It has lots of moorage, and the *Poets Cove Resort* with a small store, two restaurants, and lovely spa facilities.

Port Sidney Marina is the newest harbor in the near Canadian waters. They offer a gorgeous facility, with numerous amenities including beautiful flowers, water, electricity, and TV cable at every slip, excellent showers, boutiques, restaurants, and only two blocks into town with excellent bookstores and shops for browsing. Due West of Roche Harbor, around the N Side of Sidney Spit, just N of the municipal docks. Watch the entrance buoys, keeping the red marker on your N side as you enter. The harbor has Customs check in, etc. Contact them ahead for moorage reservations. *3.0-3.5h from B'ham.*

Ganges Harbor on Saltspring Island, is a favorite port, biggest town in the B.C. Islands. Several marinas including government wharves, and excellent arts, crafts, and supply shopping (go to Mouatt's Store) in this community that is distinctly "arty". Good restaurants.

Todd Inlet off Brentwood Bay, around the Saanich Peninsula on Vancouver Island is a great spot, with **Butchart Cove** off Todd Inlet the "back door" to the "must-see" Butchart Gardens. Get there early for mooring buoys, anchor carefully, use a shore line, enter the gardens through the "boaters only" gate using the dinghy dock. A unique and fine highlight!

Winter Cove, N. end of Saturna Island. Only has modest east winds protection, but one of nicest anchorages. At the S. end is a provincial park with picnic tables, fire pits and a trail that loops around to a scenic inlet into the Straits of Georgia. Look at your cruising guide for hints getting past the nearby reef. Watch not to anchor on the cable crossing.

Glenthorne Passage on Prevost Island: Closest to Ganges Harbour on Saltspring Island. Enter at the NW end, or at the opening halfway down where there is a red cabin. (There is also another opening even further S, but at low tide it's barely six feet wide!) Glenthorne provides excellent anchorages at its S end, protected well from all winds except strong northwesterlies. You may see numerous eagles, then in the morning a family of otters and a mink work the shorelines for food, yet you're but three miles from Ganges, the largest Gulf Island city!

Victoria Harbour is a great place to visit except during the summer season, when moorage can be very crowded. It is a fairly long run "around the corner" from Sidney or Friday Harbor, so you may want to stay at Port Sidney and take a cab or the inexpensive city bus to get downtown . . . it's what we do, giving us more time in Victoria.

(Itineraries begin on the next page)

ITINERARIES...

#1: A Week in the U.S. & B.C. Islands

Day 1: Bellingham - Bedwell H. (Customs) & Ganges or Glenthorne Passage: You might stay at any of these three places, depending upon your taste for anchorage, moorage at a dock, and level of shoreside activity. In morning, visit Ganges. (Call for Telegraph H. reservations for tomorrow if going there!)

Day 2: On to Telegraph Harbor in the early afternoon. Visit Chemainus and the mural walk, enjoy the foot ferry from Telegraph H. Or, stay in the newer, nice Chemainus Harbor.

Day 3: To Todd Inlet & Butchart Gardens. A wonderful, lovely anchorage and an internationally-acclaimed place to visit. Get to Butchart before noon to get a buoy, or go to marina in Brentwood Bay and dinghy to Todd Inlet, or even stay at Port Sidney. (Call Port Sidney for reservations for tomorrow night.)

Day 4: To Port Sidney Marina. The best Gulf Islands marina. Town is fun to browse, good food, convenient Victoria & Butchart. shuttles.

Day 5: Roche or Friday Harbors. Back in the US: Roche best for customs. Both places are fun to browse, Roche Harbor has an interesting/amusing sundown ceremony. Both places should be able to accommodate you on this weekday overnight.

Day 6: Chuckanut Bay, Sucia Island, or Inati Bay on Lummi Island. The best wrap up: a lovely, quiet anchorage, no people, no docks. Sucia is furthest from Bellingham, 2.0h; Chuckanut or Inati are .75-1.0 h. from B'ham.

#2: A Week in the U.S. Only

This itinerary is relaxed, fun, and avoids the cross-border hassle. Good, too, for those who go slow! All locations are detailed on the previous pages.

Day 1: Reid Harbor, Stuart Island at anchor or on buoy. In the morning, walk to the lighthouse!

Day 2: Over to Roche Harbor, walk around, visit the old chapel, perhaps eat ashore. If quiet desired, anchor in Garrison Bay.

Day 3: Down the W side of San Juan I, and around it to **Friday Harbor** for town exploring, **or to Fisherman Bay** on Lopez Island (at mid-to-high tide) for quiet dock or anchoring.

Day 4: From Lopez or Friday H. To Deer Harbor. Great

country marina or anchor, good on-shore dining and walking.

Day 5: From Deer Harbor to Rosario Resort or Blakely Island marina, the former a resort w/dining. On the way, perhaps an Olga stop.

Day 6: To Chuckanut Bay's S end, Pleasant Bay. On the way, stop at Pelican Beach on Cypress Island to check out the trails.

#3: Desolation Sound & North

This cruise features visits to beautiful **Desolation Sound** and/or **Princess Louisa Inlet**, perhaps the single most-photographed boating spot in the world. This *three week* itinerary is arranged so you can use it for either two or three weeks. Another for just *two weeks* follows.

Three important notes:

- 1) "Whiskey Golf": Going N to Desolation Sound, you will have to pass near the Canadian Warning Area "Whiskey Gulf" marked "WG" on charts, NE of Nanaimo. If the area is "active", it absolutely must be avoided. To get status when near it, call "Winchelsea Control" on VHF channels 10 or 16 or listen to BC marine weather. See your cruising guides...
- 2) The Georgia Straits: They extend N from approximately the U.S. border to the entrances to Desolation Sound and Cape Mudge and are so long they can really "blow up" with the wind and tides, generating substantial swell and waves. Most boaters go up on the West side, behind the sheltering Gulf Islands to Nanaimo (through Dodd Narrows near slack), leaving early in the morning from Nanaimo to cross the Straits (avoiding Whiskey Golf) before the wind starts blowing. *If the weather seems okay in the mid-afternoon when nearing Nanaimo before passing Porlier Pass,* I put out a call on Channel 16, "Any Vessel on the Straits of Georgia", then switch responders to 68 and get a report on what the water conditions are from a boater. If it's smooth, I cut through Porlier Pass for Secret Cove or Pender Harbor; otherwise I go to Nanaimo. Out of Porlier Pass in late afternoon; the crossing is only about 25-35 miles, depending on the route. Porlier Pass can have significant currents, but is easier than Gabriola Passage. **Check your charts & guides!**
- 3) We recommend cautious boaters avoid Silva Bay, Pirates Cove, and Gabriola passage, each of which has significant hazards. On the other hand, Porlier Pass, although still to be navigated with caution if not slack tide, is usually passible.

Fuel locations are marked with [F]; places with dock and moorages are [M]; often moorages are full, so call ahead by phone or VHF!

- Day 1 Bellingham to Bedwell Harbor [M,F]** for Canadian Customs. Clear here for flexibility if the weather isn't great. After Bedwell Harbor, on to **Nanaimo [M,F]** if Straits are rough, or to **Secret Cove [M,F]** via Porlier Pass if the straits are calm. If we go all this way, total distance: About 100 NM. Long day!
- Day 2 To Harmony Islands or Egmont [M,F] or Start to Princess Louisa up Agamemnon Channel.** The Harmony Is are lovely anchorage, an easy cruise from Secret Cove. If coming from Nanaimo (because of weather), a longer run! You may want to go to Egmont to moor at either marina and take a walking trip (about two hours round trip, go at full flood or ebb tide) to view the amazing Sechelt Rapids. Or begin winding your way up the "Reaches" toward Princess Louisa. If your boat is salty, wash down at Egmont or later at Lund; other places water is scarce.
- Day 3 Continue to Princess Louisa Inlet or Tenedos Bay or Melanie Cove/Prideaux Haven via Lund [F]** Lund & Campbell River are best fuel stops]. Today if going to P.L., you should reach Chatterbox Falls, (go through Malibu Rapids at slack). Otherwise, go on to (A) Tenedos Bay, mooring behind the N side island if possible, swim at the bay's east end, or (B) Prideaux Haven and stay there or (C) go in further into Melanie Cove from Prideaux Haven. Each can be crowded during peak season.
- Day 4 Returning from P.L. or Roscoe Bay.** If you went to P.L., you'll be on your way down the "reaches" to overnight at the Harmony Islands or Egmont [M,F]. If you were at Tenedos, move on to Roscoe Bay, enter at mid or high tide to clear the bar. Great swimming in Black Lake, a ten-minute hike. Roscoe Bay is often crowded: use your shore line on the stern. Or, go early to dock at Refuge Cove on the SW side of West Redonda I. or Squirrel Cove on east Cortes Island.
- Day 5 Pendrell Sound.** Here is some of the best swimming there is in the N, although it may be a little cool. The best spot, if you get there early enough, is over behind the little tiny island where the brook enters about 1.5 n.m. from the N end on the west side. Otherwise, anchor at the head.
- Day 6 Walsh Cove.** If you don't like oysters, mussels, or shrimp, you may not agree on this favorite spot. Anchor inside the cove, preferably stern to Gorges Island, and collect the low tide shellfish bounty. If lucky, a shrimper will come to sell fresh shrimp!
- Day 7 Frances Bay** via Pryce Channel and Raza Passage, or then on to **Dent I. Resort (M)** via Calm Channel (calling for a reservation is essential). Francis Bay is quiet; Dent Island is a lovely resort with a restaurant and bigger boats. It's refined, expensive, and romantic! On the way, go through the Rapids within 15-30 minutes of slack.
- Day 8 Chameleon Harbor, or Hemming, Handfield or Thurston Bays.** Up through Yuculta and/or Dent Rapids (go within 20 minutes of slack tide!) and then around the corner and S into Nodales Channel for your next overnight. Beautiful, quiet, uncrowded.
- Day 9 Campbell River/Gowlland Harbor [M,F].** Go S to Discovery Passage, through famous Seymour Narrows (within 15 minutes of slack current) to civilization! This city is a fine provisioning/fueling point. Cheapest fuel can be found by calling the area marine fueling stations from a pay phone; you can save over 15 cents/litre! There may be moorage available in C.R., especially at the new *Discovery Harbour Marina* behind the new breakwater ½ mile N of the ferry landing. It is in a shopping center (we like the pub just N of the marina office) and there are pretty good food stores, but the best food shopping is at the "Overwaitea" store about five blocks from the new Marina. Take a cab back with your stuff unless you have a cart. Liquor store in mall; lots of good restaurants. Or, stay across from Campbell River at Gowlland Harbor (go around the N end of Gowlland Island) overnight for quiet, free anchorage. If you want a treat, maybe the **April Point Marina** can take your reservation; it's plush, across from C.R., with an excellent restaurant.
- If you must end your trip in 13 days, skip now to day 16, and proceed in the morning to Telegraph Harbor via the W side of the Ga. Straits.*
- Day 10 Von Donop Inlet.** S around Cape Mudge, up NNE into Sutil Channel to Von Donop Inlet, a protected area for swimming and anchoring; go slowly through the narrows.
- Day 11 Octopus Islands via Hole-in-the-Wall.** Up Drew Passage and then into Calm Channel (see Day 7) to Hole-in-the-Wall, then through during slack to the Octopus Islands (careful going in). Oysters and clams are here at the Octopus Islands!
- Day 12 Village Bay** overnight, or perhaps on to **Drew Harbor at Rebecca Spit [M,F]**. Village Bay has a fresh brook feeding it with some "tubs" for bathing. Drew Harbor has facilities including a good store near the marina and/or government docks.

Day 13 Teakerne Arm via Uganda Pass. Tea-kerne Arm has good anchorage behind the island to S. of the entrance, and great swimming above the waterfall. On the way, Uganda Pass is fun. Perhaps you'd enjoy anchoring for lunch, going ashore at Shark Spit on the N end of Marina I.!

Day 14 Malaspina Inlet: Grace Harbour or Isabel Bay. Read the charts and *be careful* to miss rocks, so make your last anchorage one of these bays as we prepare to go S. Good swimming either location if algae or red tide isn't in bloom.

Day 15 Pender Harbor [F,M] via Lund [F]. One of B.C.'s most famous harbors, anchor in Hospital Bay. Or, do the Day 4, Day 3, Day 2 itinerary now! Be ready for an early run tomorrow across the Straits!

Day 16 Telegraph Harbor. We will cross over, going through Porlier Pass, S and around to Telegraph Harbor [M,F] on the W side of Kuyper Island. The balance of your trip will mostly be in the Canadian Gulf Islands. The fishing around Porlier and Active Passes is reputed to be very good.

Day 17 Prevost Island or Todd Inlet/Butchart Gardens. Anchorages abound in James Bay, Annette Inlet, or on Galiano I. at Montague H. [F,M]. More land-lubberly: head for Todd Inlet (see above) or Brentwood Bay, to dinghy to Butchart Gardens.

Day 18 Bedwell Harbor [M,F] or Reid Harbor after customs at Roche Harbor. Bedwell Harbor on S Pender Island is a very nice spot. Otherwise, you might go through U.S. Customs at Roche Harbor, then double back a few miles to Reid Harbor on Stuart Island (see page 3).

Day 19 On your own! Ideas include Sucia, Friday H. for Customs (if you were in B.C. last night), or even, if you're boated out, home to Bellingham.

#4: Two Weeks in Desolation Sound

Day 1: Bellingham to Secret Cove, Pender Harbor or Nanaimo. *Important: Be Underway by 11AM!* Bellingham to Bedwell Harbor for Customs. Then on up the Trincomali Channel through the Gulf Islands to Porlier Pass. Your goal will be Secret Cove Marina for tie-up (if late) or anchoring in Garden Bay, Pender Harbor (an hour further than Secret Cove) if earlier. Nine Hours total.

If the Straits are rough, go to Nanaimo instead of through Porlier Pass. You must time your trip to transit Dodd Narrows (much narrower than Porlier Pass) at slack! Anchor in the bay by Newcastle Island. Six hours total.

Day 2: Nanaimo or Secret Cove/Pender Harbor to Tenedos Bay: (A) If you were in Nanaimo for the night because of rough water on the Straits, get underway no later than 5:30AM --- this is important as the Straits are calmest early. Check the weather channel for the wind reports. Listen for the actual observations at the lighthouses that are part of the Canadian weather on Weather Channel 1 or 3. Proceed across the straits to the Secret Cove/Pender Harbor vicinity and continue with (B) below. Three hours. If you were in Pender Harbor or Secret Cove, be underway by 9AM.(B) Today you will go on up behind Texada Island, past Powell River and Lund, into Desolation Sound. Rounding Sarah Point head toward Tenedos Bay, to anchor behind the Island. You'll need a stern line (on the boat). Or go a little further N into Prideaux Haven and/or Melanie Cove, be careful of Prideaux Haven entrance, watching for rocks, safe entrance as long as you're cautious. Anchor w/stern tie. 7.0h.

Day 3: Tenedos Bay/prideaux Haven - Squirrel Cove. Do some sightseeing today. You might look in on Teakerne Arm to see the waterfall in the Northeast corner of this fjord on your way to Squirrel Cove. If you get to SC early enough (by 2PM) you should have time to get an anchorage on the right side of the island as you enter the harbor where there's room to swing with only 120' or so of chain out, no stern tie required. Two or three hours.

Day 4. Tuesday: Squirrel Cove - Dent I. or Octopus Islands. Cruise up past Walsh Cove, etc., to Dent Island Resort (go through rapids when current is less than 2 knots) and stay at the Marina or at anchor in the bay overnight, you can eat ashore, somewhat pricey. Only if Hole in the Wall current is slack, go through Hole in the Wall to the Octopus Islands. Entrance to Islands is narrow and rocky, study your charts carefully and proceed dead slow through the channel and into the anchorage area. This is a lovely, tranquil anchorage! You may need a stern line.

Day 5: Dent I./Octopus Islands - von Donop Inlet. Timing your trip to go through the rapids at no more than two knots' current, head for Von Donop Inlet, another wonderful anchorage. 3 hours.

Day 6: Von Donop - Gorge Harbor. No rush today, as you meander over to Gorge Harbor going through interesting Uganda Passage. The entrance to Gorge is fascinating, as though cut right through the big rock! Stay at Marina or anchor in the bay. Dinner always good at the Gorge H. Marina/Resort's dining room. 2-3 hours.

Day 7: Von Donop Inlet - Discovery Harbour Marina, Campbell River. Leaving the inlet, proceed S around Cape Mudge to be at Campbell River Discovery Harbour Marina (With long breakwater N of the Ferry landings and the "Chevron Marina" but S of the timber mill on the west side of Discovery Passage). 2-3 hours.

Day 8: Campbell River - Harmony Islands or Egmont. This is a long run, and requires fair sea conditions on the Straits of Georgia. The Harmony Islands or Egmont will be the first stop on your way to Princess Louisa Inlet. 8 hours.

Day 9: To Princess Louisa Inlet. Time your arrival at Malibu Rapids to get through at slack. Anchor at the dock or at the foot of Chatterbox Falls. Beautiful!

Day 10: To Pender H. or Egmont. Leave Princess Louisa Inlet at the earliest slack at Malibu Rabids. Egmont is 32 miles, Pender Harbor is about 44 miles from Malibu R.

Day 11: To Nanaimo. We're on our way home, now, planning to leave today so we can wait until tomorrow if the Straits are too rough. Be prepared to depart for Nanaimo at first light, because usually the earlier in the day, the smoother the seas!

Day 12: We're in the Gulf Islands! Through Dodd Narrows at slack, then on to Telegraph Harbor or Points S!

Days 13-15: Enjoy island cruising, then home!

#5: Southern Lights Cruise

This is an "urban/suburban" cruise, with almost all overnights at docks (space permitting). This cruise is designed for two weeks; we have arranged it so you should be able to join or leave it anytime. Water, fuel, and anchorages all plentiful.

Day 1: Bellingham to Oak Harbor. Entrance to the Harbor is to the extreme right of the marina, with guest moorage just inside the outer breakwater. It's a bit of a walk to the store, but the marina is accommodating, secure.

Day 2: To Poulsbo. Enroute, try a side trip to Coupeville in Penn Cove. There are interesting old homes and some good shops, but only a small amount of moorage. A long leg to Poulsbo, so for slower boats a good portion of the day will be spent underway. We go through Agate Pass and then by Keyport (go slow here); then on into Liberty Bay. The public docks are far up the bay on the right. Good moorage w/power and water.

Day 3: In Poulsbo. Explore second hand shops, Sluys Bakery, and enjoy the restaurants. All amenities are close to the dock. Neat!

Day 4: To Port Orchard. Main entrance is located at the west end, then double back inside of the breakwater and go back as close to shore as possible. There are many antique malls and shops. (When leaving P. Orchard, a trip around the harbor is a must, to see what is going on over at the Bremerton naval base side. Don't get too close).

Day 5: To Tacoma. We'll go down Clove's Passage to Tacoma, where there is moorage at the new Dock Street Marina or N of town, the Tacoma Yacht Club is on the west side of the bay if you're a Y/C member. If you wish to go into Tacoma, you may go by taxicab or the nearby bus; Tacoma has been significantly redeveloped, with the Museum of Glass, Union Station, and State Historical Museum; . (When leaving, consider a side trip to Gig H., a busy little bay with lots of marine-related businesses along the shore. It used to be the home of a large fishing fleet. Moorage is very tight and dropping your "hook" may be the best way of getting ashore.)

Day 6: To Olympia. Follow the chart N to Budd Inlet, remembering the current through the narrows. Look for the dark and gloomy McNeil Island Prison to your starboard as you go by. In Olympia, go up to the S end of Percival's dock and look for moorage, right in downtown! Many curio, book, and antique shops. The Capitol and the Washington State Museum are within walking distance, and offer a great educational and cultural treat.

Day 7: Quarter Master Harbor. We head N to this destination; or you may detour through Hammersley Inlet to Oakland Bay to see what Shelton looks like; there is supposed to be a public float, but we have never been able to locate it. Even so, the six mile trip is worth it just to see the inlet. One needs to keep an eye on the chart in and out, as there are shoals here and there. It is a lovely area and well worth the extra time. (The N. end of Quarter Master Harbor offers good protection for an overnight raft-up. A Ruston stack is a good locator.)

Day 8: Seattle. We go N to Seattle. On the way, smaller boats may want to stop and check out Blake I with its very protected moorage to see the Indian Long House. Blake I's proximity to Seattle creates a problem because of limited moorage. Try the locks into Lakes Union & Washington if you wish; just be sure to have two 40' lines ready with eyes

in one end, your fenders out, and tell the lock tenders that you're first-timers: it's fun!

Note about Elliott Bay: it's fun to "bum boat" around from Alki Point to West Point looking at all the sights. To visit Seattle, moor at Shilshole's visitors' docks, the very nice Elliot Bay Marina (good restaurants, great marina) and catch a cab or bus, or moor downtown at the Bell Street Marina (call ahead!).

Day 9: Port Ludlow. Site of the old Port Ludlow Sawmill, operated by Pope and Talbott. To get to the moorage, you round Burner Point, and get directions at the gas dock. Port Ludlow, a resort, has a very nice dining room and usually plenty of moorage "for hire".

Day 10: Port Townsend. Pass Mats Bay through the Port Townsend Canal, to Pt. Hudson in downtown Port Townsend. Lots of book stores, antique shops, and vintage car parts can be found here! The old homes are a real draw, and many are open. A very historical community in our young state of Washington.

Day 11: LaConner. Time your arrival at Deception Pass so that it will be slack, giving you a smooth ride under the bridge. Then around to the S, to pick up the range (follow the charts carefully) and proceed to LaConner along the Swinomish Slough. There are a number of moorages at LaConner; prepare to deal with the current as you dock, for it moves along unless near slack.

Day 12: Chuckanut Bay. See above. Our last night out should be a quiet and serene one!

Day 13: Back to Bellingham!

CRUISING TIPS...

General Cruising Tips

1. After shower use, squeegee or wipe shower walls and floor dry. Your boat will be fresher.
2. Refrigerator too small? Freeze water-filled plastic bottles and use them in your picnic cooler. Rotate frozen and thawed bottles.
3. If your toilet uses fresh water, save up flushes until necessary.
4. Don't let the sun or wind wake you! Have a way to cover hatches to keep light out (summer days are long here in the North), and furl and cover or lower your flags every night. *A reminder: When in Canada, the appropriate flag for your boat is the "Stars and Bars", not the "Yachting Ensign" with its circle of stars in the*

field!

5. You'll usually enjoy yourself more if you limit the time traveling each day. Once you're in your cruising grounds, allow time for shore walks, reading, watching the birds and seals.
6. Carry an old pair of shoes, or buy some "Teva"-style sandals to wear when you're on the beach or in the water, to protect your feet.
7. Put extra sweaters and jackets on your boat in case a guest needs one. It's easy to get cool, but it's hard to get warm; chills or constantly being cold can ruin a trip.
8. Don't make a big deal about menus. A bowl of soup is great on the water, and sandwiches are always welcome. Give the cook some free time, and follow easy-to-prepare menus!
9. If you have a mooring, and you spot someone desperate, let them raft up if sea conditions permit. You may meet someone new.
10. Always use care and charts when you're in unfamiliar water. We live in a boater's Utopia, but there are hazards. Don't hit them!
11. Always look out for logs and nets. They are everywhere...
12. If you see a fishing boat, and don't see its net, slow down, steer toward the boat. The fisherman will direct you, or at least you'll see the net trailing off one end. Assume nothing about nets.
13. Be thoughtful. Don't use generators before 8:00AM or after 10:00PM at the most, less if possible. Keep early departures quiet.
14. Watch Your Wake! In narrow passages (Peavine Pass, Pole Pass, Swinomish Slough, etc.) run at no-wake speed! Reduce wake, too, when passing anchored boats, or small fishing boats, or kayakers. In bays, or approaching anchorages, slow down. Be courteous.
15. Emergency Contacts. Leave an itinerary with friends, and in a true emergency the Coast Guard will call you. Your friends can contact the Coast Guard station nearest you; there are U.S. stations in Seattle, Port Angeles, and Bellingham; and in Canadian waters in Vancouver, Victoria, and Comox. Call information. Monitor VHF Channel 16 for emergency calls and check the weather broadcasts daily! (Use Comox weather in all waters N of the Gulf Islands.) The CG will put a message on the end of the weather broadcasts if they have "traffic" for you.
16. Fishing licenses are required now for both fish and shellfish in both the U.S. and Canada. You can get

them in most marinas; we suggest Bedwell H. is a convenient place for the B.C. license. Get a copy of the rules, too! You will see enforcement on both sides of the border.

17. Be sure you have an up-to-date guide book! The most popular are *Northwest Boat Travel* and its competitor, *Wagonner's Cruising Guide (on the NWE boats)*. They tell you radio frequencies, have dock layouts, and lots of other helpful information to make your trip better.

If going north to Desolation Sound

1. Conserve water. Fresh water is limited in the Desolation Sound area except at Nanaimo, Lund, Egmont, Campbell River and Powell River: in smaller ports it comes from wells and isn't always crystal-clear (although it is supposedly tested). We conserve by swimming for baths (at P.L. Inlet, Tenedos Bay, Roscoe Bay, Pendrell Sound, Von Donop Inlet, Village Bay, etc.) and by careful use. We sometimes carry a half-dozen plastic gallon jugs just for tea and coffee water; we save ice water (by keeping our ice in Ziplock bags) and we frequently fill a five gallon pail at gas docks or a stream and keep it in the cockpit for miscellaneous boat washing, etc.
2. Conserve fuel. The reason to visit the North is the scenery and the tranquility, and Canada fuel is often \$1/gallon more than the U.S. Run slower, to saver. Once you're North, you'll note the typical day's itinerary is only an hour or two.
3. You will want a grill (NWE boats have them) for oysters, chickens, steaks, hotdogs, hamburgers, etc. A mesh bag like the ones that potatoes come in will keep your mussels and oysters and clams fresh. Hang it off your boat when anchored, put it in a pail with water when underway, and change the water every few hours.

Customs Requirements

Going into Canada: It's best to clear Canadian Customs at Bedwell Harbor or Port Sidney: all they handle are pleasure boats! You can also clear at a number of other locations in person or by phone, check your cruising guide for locations, but be prepared to be asked to stop for an inspection! The most popular other entry ports are Victoria, Nanaimo, and Vancouver.

You cannot anchor or touch land, or raft with any vessel in Canadian waters, until you clear Canadian Customs. Like the U.S., only the captain can get off the boat until cleared (although the mate can get on the dock long enough to tie up.)

You will need a passport or picture ID (the best is a passport, second best a birth certificate accompanied by a good picture ID). Have a birth certificate and notarized letter of permission for any children on board if both parents are not with them.

You cannot bring into Canada pitted fruits (i.e., peaches) or apples. To bring in potatoes, they must be in a metal-sealed mesh bag such as sold in a market, not loose. Only 40 ounces of liquor or wine, or a case of beer is allowed per adult passenger. Absolutely *no* firearms or drugs. Pets require vaccination certificates, as you would have for international air travel. *Always declare everything; usually, if you're a little over the limits Customs will not bother. But if they catch you under-reporting, they will penalize you severely!*

Ask for a clearance period long enough to stay an extra few days in case you're delayed.

Returning to the U.S.: Since 9/11 when you return to the U.S. you must check-in *in person* at an entry point (Roche H. or Friday H.) The old "telephone reporting for everyone is no longer true. Call customs for info if unfamiliar. *Be sure to save your Customs clearance numbers (both ways).*

SUGGESTED RESTAURANTS

In the San Juan & Gulf Islands

Based on Joe and Judy's experiences, reports from other boaters, and experiences that charter customers have reported:

Bellingham: At the west end of the harbor, near the BYC, just past gate 3 is **Nicky's Bella Marina**, but its only marginally good. Nearby in the "Marina Square" building just past the well-marked Harbor Office is the **Web Locker**, a good casual breakfast and lunch spot favored by boat workers and boaters (best BLT in Bellingham!) In the middle of the harbor near the launching ramps is **The Loft** with pretty good lunches and dinners, also casual. By the east end of the harbor on Bellwether Way is **Anthony's Homeport** with fine seafood at lunch and dinner; just beyond it are **Giuseppe's Italian Restaurant**, very nice, and then at the end of the spit is **Anthony's Hearthfire**, very popular for steaks and more. At the end of Bellwether Way is a fair sushi restaurant and the luxurious **Lighthouse Bar & Grill** in the hotel Bellwether for fine dining.

Laconner: Always good for breakfast and lunch is **The Calico Cupboard** (there's one in Anacortes, too). Hearty, healthy food, great omelets, salads, soups and sandwiches.

Anacortes: Anacortes has another **Calico Cupboard** on the main drag a block west of the Harbor; but its other restaurants are in flux. **Adrift** is good for breakfast, burgers and sea food.

Rosario: Rosario Resort (360) 376-2152. Recommended for dinner, reservation suggested. Quality can be very good, but sometimes inconsistent.

Orcas island: Docking at Olga, the **Catkin Cafe**, is about a 10 minute walk from the dock. Excellent lunches in the island's artist co-op, interesting building with good art. The **Inn at Ship Bay**, (877) 276-7296, offers delicious locally sourced meals and has a more fine dining feel. It is located outside of Eastsound.

New Leaf Cafe in Eastsound has a beautiful bay front view and good breakfasts and dinners. The **Deer Harbor Inn** (360) 376-1040, has good food and is a short walk from the marina on the road N then take the short cut path across the field or go the longer way on the roads.

Friday Harbor: Cask & Schooner, 1 Front St. (360) 378-2922, just to left of marina is consistently good. As is the sushi restaurant above it. You'll find outstanding meals at **Backdoor Kitchen** (360) 378-9540, a real quality restaurant in this charming town where our food has always been excellent. We are told the **Friday Harbor House** (360) 378-8455 is excellent as well. For lunch try **Market Chef** or the **Bakery San Juan** bread oven pizza, located near the airport. We've heard great things about **Duck Soup Inn**, but it is outside of town and requires a cab ride.

Roche Harbor Resort: (360) 378-2155. Most folks admit the reason to dine here is the atmosphere, for although the food is usually good, it's expensive. The sundown flag ceremony may make it worth it; the pub is fun for those who enjoy a bit of noise with their drinks. The marina here is definitely the spot to see the cockpit-martini crowd early evenings.

The Inn at Semiahmoo: (360) 318-2000. STARS is the gourmet dining room, and quite good. Expensive. A more casual place, **Packers**, is above the beach, and on weekends, a casual but tasty pasta bar/buffet (**Portside**) is offered in a casual area.

Montague Harbour: One of the great fun times is to take the "Pub Bus" to the **Hummingbird Pub**, pretty good pub food, but mostly for the fun of that funky bus! We have heard good things about **The Crane and Robin**, which is located right at the harbour.

Hang on...

Saltspring Island (All in Ganges): Hastings House (800) 661-9255 used to be the gourmet spot, very expensive, but in some seasons serves only for their hotel guests. It's a 10 minute walk to the N of Ganges Marina at 160 Upper Ganges Rd. We prefer **House Piccolo** (250) 537-1844 at 108 Hereford Avenue, a few steps off the road leading to town from the Ganges Marina. Absolutely first rate and very consistent in our experience. Also good and more moderate, a Greek place, **Autie Pesto's Café & Deli** in the Grace Point Square mini-shopping center in town. Ganges also has a number of good lunch and supper spots including **The Marketplace Café** across the park from the Gov't docks and **The Tree House** by Mouat's store (and don't miss shopping at this surprisingly good clothing store & general store).

Bedwell Harbor, S Pender Island: Poet's Cove Resort (888) 512-7638. This completely new, very luxurious resort is first-class in every way. There's the luxury **Aurora** dining room, the more casual **Syrens Lounge**, and in summer the food is also available on the terrace overlooking the harbor. Expensive, but worth it!

Butchart Gardens: When you visit the gardens, you can get good food at reasonable prices! The cafeteria has lighter foods, and the dining room in the mansion is very nice, but open only during high season, reasonable, considering quality and service. Make a reservation while you tour the gardens, or call ahead to (250) 652-6120.

Maple Bay: The Shipyard Restaurant & Pub is located right at the marina, though we haven't tried it.

Sidney, B.C.: The Pier Bistro (250) 655-4955 is a great little place with moderate prices and excellent food, especially fish & chips. It's on the end of the public dock at the foot of the main drag by the foot-ferry boarding office. Also good is **The Captain's Table** (250) 656-3320, right next to the marina (and handy!) Or take a cab to the Deep Cove Chalet (see below) for fabulous dining.

Deep Cove, Saanich Inlet: Absolutely outstanding is the **Deep Cove Chalet** (250) 656-3541, a 20-minute walk from the modest marina, or a cab from Port Sidney. The finest french-style food and most extensive (and expensive) wine list we've had in the NW. Dinner for two, \$90 - \$100(C) plus wine, and worth it! A special night, dressy casual.

Nanaimo: Dinghy over to Protection I. For **The Dinghy Dock Pub**. We like lunch at **Javawocky** at the top of the harbor ramp for won ton soup and bread. **Asteras**, a Greek restaurant at 347 Wesley St. is also excellent.

Victoria: Victoria is a great walking town with lots of good

places. We skip the very expensive “High Tea” at the **Empress Hotel**, kind of a classy touristy thing, and go instead to two highly-rated restaurants, **Il Terrazzo**, (250) 361-0028, an Italian place near Pandora Street, simply excellent Italian food in a nice setting, and **The Herald Street Café**, (250) 381-1441, at Government & Herald streets, with excellent, creative continental cuisine in a slightly funky atmosphere. For Sunday Brunch, go to the **Marina Restaurant** at the Oak Bay Marina. All should have no problem with folks in nice boat garb.

Dining “Up North”

Restaurants in **Secret Cove, Pender Harbor, and Egmont**, all OK, casual, pleasant. They tend to be a little pricey (they have to “make it” in just four or five months a year), but they’re a nice break. You’ll have more fun if you think of dining in the smaller ports as an adventure: The quality can vary from year to year. *You can get the phone numbers for the marinas from Waggoners or Northwest Boat Travel or ask the marina by VHF to make a reservation for you.*

Of note are the **Restaurant at Gorge Harbor Marina** (which was outstanding during a recent visit) and the **April Point Resort**. At the latter spot, you’ll get first class marina service at the docks and they’ll make a restaurant reservation for you.

In the sparsely-settled areas N in Desolation Sound the food is excellent at the luxurious **The Dent Island Resort**, but pricey. You’ll need to be at their dock or anchored very close to conveniently get there, and reservations are a must (it’s our “big night out” whenever we’re there). The place is gorgeous!

Boaters consistently like the **Blind Channel Resort**; like most upscale dining in the islands, it seems expensive, but remember how far the food came!

Campbell River: You’ll like the **Pub** at the head of the Discovery Harbour Marina dock ramps in the shopping center just N of the marina office, at least we do. Nearby is a good family-style casual spot, kind of like Applebee’s in the U.S.; it’s across the street from the same shopping center adjacent to Discovery Harbour Marina. There are other restaurants in town there, but they seem to change hands or shut down each year (we remember a great one, Charron’s, that held out for four years before the seasonality of the business did them in!)

If going further N to the **Broughton Island** area, check the guidebooks for their restaurant suggestions at the varying marinas.

Our Restaurant Ranking, Based on Personal Experience or References of Friends:

Best: *Deep Cove Chalet, House Piccolo, Dent Island Resort, Il Terrazzo, Herald Street Caffè, Inn at Ship Bay, The Quamichan Inn.*

Very Good: *Anthony’s (both), Poets Cove Resort, Butchart Gardens dining room in the mansion, Sunday Brunch at Oak Bay Marina, Inn at Semiahmoo, Asteras, Pier Bistro, Auntie Pesto’s, the Marketplace Cafe, Back-door Kitchen, Friday Harbor House, Duck Soup Inn.*

Good: *Butchart Gardens Cafeteria, Cask & Schooner, Javawocky, New Leaf Cafe.*

Sometimes very good: *Rosario, Roche H. Resort*

There is more information available for Northwest cruising in bookstores and on web sites:

For Alaska Information, check the Bellingham Yacht Club web site, BYC.ORG |Cruising, or email Joe Coons at joejudyc@comcast.net and request a copy of my Alaska Cruising Guide — It’s fairly up to date and includes the logs from two powerboat trips. (Sailing to Alaska is usually discouraged: Light winds during the May-September season mean you will run under power at least 80% of the time!)

Our favorite bookstore for nautical books about the Northwest is The Armchair Sailor in Seattle, armchairsailor.com, 206-283-0858. They know the area, and what you’ll need! (Remember, charter boats come with reference books and charts...if you’re chartering, there is no need to bring your own!) For charts, Bellingham has three chandleries that can help you: LFS, Redden Marine (both near the docks), and West Marine, about a mile away.

The information in this document is current as of recent mariner visits reported to us as of 1/11/2012. The authors disclaim any liability for any errors that may be contained herein. Always use your charts and guide books before proceeding with any boat operations, including anchoring, and ask local sailors for any useful “local knowledge” before entering unfamiliar waters.

Information updated as of 4/5/18 by Hannah King at NW Explorations.

For questions or comments, please contact Joe Coons, 1220 Birch Falls Drive, Bellingham, WA 98229, joejudyc@comcast.net.

More photos...



Port Sidney Marina in Sidney, BC is very nice and popular.



Butchart Gardens is always worth a side trip!



*Above: Telegraph Harbor is many boaters' first choice.
Right: The view from the luxurious Dent. I. Resort.*



One of the most photographed inlets in the world: The fabulous Princess Louisa Inlet.

Wherever you cruise in our territory, from Olympia in the South to Skagway in the North, from Lake Washington in the East to Barclay Sound in the West, you'll find plenty of secure anchorages, fine marinas, and most of all, the great Pacific Northwest scenery and hospitality. Our boats are in the water...and harbors are beckoning...every month of the year.

We invite you to join us in cruising the great San Juan Islands of Washington State and the Gulf Islands of British Columbia, and if you want to go further South, East, West, or North just ask us for more information about other locations.

We look forward to seeing you "out on the water"!

Pictures in this document were graciously provided by The San Juan Islands Visitors Bureau and by the marinas and sites pictured; we thank them all.

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