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# Pacific Northwest

## Everything From Mountain Views to Idyllic Settings Will Inspire Attendees

BY CHRISTINE LOOMIS

**T**he Pacific Northwest is a stellar place to meet in large part because it's a wonderful place to live. Portland and Seattle ranked No. 8 and No. 9 on the U.S. News & World Report's 2019 Best Places to Live in the U.S. list. Boise topped Liveability.com's 2019 Top 100 Places to Live list and snagged the No. 2 spot on WalletHub's Best Capital Cities to Live in — the only Northwest city in the top 10 on either list.

Many positive lifestyle factors are also often prime meeting factors, including plenty of infrastructure, restaurants, cultural institutions, walkability, easily accessible outdoor activities and low crime rates. Boise's affordability also impacts its meeting costs, while Portland and Seattle offer excellent airlift and a wide range of lodging and meeting options. And these aren't the only cities planners should consider. Bottom line: Why wouldn't you meet in the Pacific Northwest?

### WASHINGTON

Planners and attendees looking to be in the middle of the action in Seattle need look no further than the Hyatt Regency Seattle, located in the heart of downtown just steps away from the Washington State Convention Center

(WSCC) and blocks from the iconic Space Needle. The hotel, the first and only LEED Gold-Certified hotel in Seattle, offers 103,000 sf of function space, including two 19,000-sf ballrooms, two junior ballrooms at 7,200 sf and 3,400 sf, respectively, and 35,000 sf of naturally lit, pre-function space.

In addition, Hyatt Regency Seattle has 46 meeting rooms, all with large windows, ranging from 422 to 1,825 sf, a high-end, permanent boardroom with a private balcony that can accommodate 22 people, and onsite A/V specialists.

Attendees looking for a bite? The hotel has several award-winning restaurants and bars, including Andare Kitchen & Bar, a modern, casual setting offering wood-fired pizzas, homemade pasta and salads or signature desserts for lunch and dinner; Daniel's Broiler and Rickhouse Whiskey Bar, an upscale steakhouse featuring USDA prime steaks and seafood and a large bar area with piano bar, extensive wine list and whiskey collection that offers breakfast, lunch and dinner; and the 24-hour Market, offering espresso, pastries, freshly prepared sandwiches and salads, hot entrees and more.

By the end of this year, downtown Seattle's guest room count is expected to reach 15,157, more than half of those within 5 1/2 blocks of the WSCC.

The Space Needle recently reopened while undergoing the final touches on its \$100 million renovation, and the city's waterfront revitalization project is ongoing with completion expected in 2024.

One person who knows a lot about why Seattle is an excellent destination for corporate meetings and incentives is Dianna Hermesmeyer, CMP, general manager of Hosts Seattle, who says, "First, Seattle is easy to get to with over 90 direct domestic flights, 25 non-stop international flights and an airport that's only 20 to 25 minutes from the downtown hotel corridor. The city offers a wonderful blend of art, technology, innovation and nature that makes it attractive to groups from all backgrounds and fields."

The city is also in a period of growth, so groups that haven't been there in a few years have something new to experience. "Seattle has seen a 20% increase in hotel rooms in recent years and offers a mix of luxury, boutique and convention hotels with more properties on the way," she adds.

That growth, Hermesmeyer says, is energizing suppliers and partners in the meetings and events industry. And there's another element of particular interest to planners and their groups. "Part of the excitement we're

## GREEN FOR GOOD

**T**he Hyatt Regency Seattle, through Hyatt's Thrive program, has undertaken major initiatives toward sustainability. The hotel, which received Gold certification under the LEED for New Construction 2009 rating system in June 2019, has:

- Permanently protected 5,285 acres of forest and 5 acres of local farmland as part of King County's transfer of development rights (TDR) program.
- Supported regional development goals by increasing density in existing urbanized areas while conserving forests in perpetuity and compensating landowners for protecting forests.



### Hyatt Regency Seattle

To help reduce carbon emissions, the hotel is located within a few blocks of a light-rail station with direct service to the airport, a streetcar stop, two bus rapid-transit stops and dozens of bus lines with all-day service. There is also secure bike storage for 136 bikes, and shower facilities for hotel and retail staff, and the hotel provides Level 2 chargers for electric vehicles, as well as preferred parking for fuel-efficient vehicles.

To see more about Hyatt's corporate responsibility strategy and platform, visit [hyattregencyseattle.com](http://hyattregencyseattle.com) or [about.hyatt.com](http://about.hyatt.com).

all the moving parts," Murray says. "We kept everything on Suncadia property as it provided all needed venue space and catering options."

The abundance of activities is a big draw for meetings, according to Murray. "There are so many activities for attendees to choose. If you want your own adventure, there's indoor and outdoor swimming, hot tubs and water slides. In addition to a lake in the heart of the resort, there are 47 miles of trails, as well as rental bikes, scooters, paddleboats, canoes and kayaks," Murray says. "The recreation team has a laundry list of other activities, including horseback riding, river rafting and ATV tours."

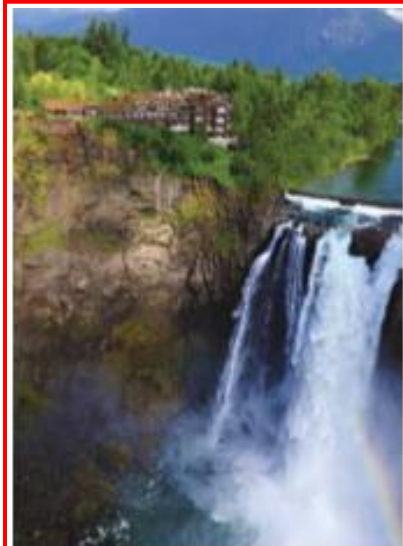
She adds, "There's a great spa with 14 treatment rooms along with soaking tubs for the outdoor experience." Additionally, Murray notes, there are two restaurants within the resort core, and attendees also make use of the food truck located at the Swim and Fitness Center for quick food and drink items.

The Suncadia staff, Murray says, makes planning easy. "They're attentive to our needs and very friendly with our guests. The directors from each department are available to discuss our needs and work to make our program a success. Our planner at the resort, Debbie Losse, is one of the reasons we've come back over the years. She makes us feel special and is willing to do anything to ensure that our guests are taken care of."

But she's not the only one. "We've always had exceptional service from Garrett O'Brien with PSAV, the resort's onsite A/V vendor," Murray says. "We use a phone app for updating guests on schedule changes and other notifications and haven't had any Wi-Fi concerns with this system."

An additional plus is the broad range of accommodations. "Suncadia has quite a mixture of sleeping accommodations, from The Lodge and The Inn to townhomes and homes featuring two to six bedrooms. "If you have specific needs," Murray suggests, "book early."

Another choice for groups that want to be close to, but not in, Seattle is Sal-



Salish Lodge & Spa offers breathtaking views of the Snoqualmie Falls and the river.

ish Lodge & Spa, about 30 minutes away. Perched at the top of magnificent Snoqualmie Falls, which plummets 268 feet into the river below, the lodge is an inarguably inspiring setting for corporate and incentive groups.

"Salish Lodge is one of the most beautiful hotels I've ever been to," says Steven Van Cohen, CEO of Meyvn Global, which specializes in corporate training. "It's perfect for our event because it's truly an escape for the team. It's far enough from Seattle where you're out of the city, but close enough to make it really easy in terms of travel. We want to be in a place where people can walk around and be one with their thoughts. It allows the team to focus on the work at hand and not feel the distractions of day-to-day work. The meeting spaces are so comfortable, the surrounding nature makes you feel alive and the energy is incredible. We always have phenomenal sessions when staying there. We've been coming to Salish every few months for two years because we're so productive when we're there."

He adds, "The food is five-star, the staff is incredible and the experience is always out of this world. Snoqualmie is a perfect little town because it's far enough from Seattle where you feel like you're at a retreat, but you're also close to the convenience of bars, restaurants and stores."

**Ilani's Meeting & Entertainment Center offers 30,000 sf of meeting space. Below, its 100,000-sf casino has slots, table games and more.**

The group has used the lodge's catering, ballroom and meeting rooms, "and just about everything else the lodge offers as an amenity," Van Cohen says. "Everything is world class. Linda, the catering guru who serves us, is amazing. She takes such good care of our team and makes the stay seamless. Monica and Faith always make sure all logistics are handled and are pros at making each experience perfect."

In considering what planners who haven't been to Salish Lodge should know, Van Cohen says, "Their team will be thrilled to have their event at Salish. The area is gorgeous. The smell of the fireplaces is calming and the overall commitment to excellence from the staff is welcoming. All of the available meeting rooms are great and you'll not go wrong with any food options, plus pricing is very reasonable. I can't speak highly enough about how wonderful this place is. Salish Lodge is the best place around Seattle, hands down, for a beautiful event that people will remember forever. The decision is easy – Just choose Salish."

Groups choosing Salish Lodge & Spa now have a new option for their VIPs – Club 268, its name a nod to the waterfall just outside. The upgraded experience includes access to the con-



cierge-style club, which serves food and drinks during the day and evening, and accommodations in recently renovated guest rooms on the spa level. Ask about options for adding a wellness-focus to your meeting, an element slated to begin this year.

Tacoma is another great meeting destination in Washington. Only about 30 minutes from Sea-Tac Airport, two new hotels are opening in the city this year. Scheduled to open this summer is Silver Cloud Hotel Point Ruston Waterfront, with more than 15,000 sf of function space including a 5,400-sf ballroom, and both covered and uncovered outdoor spaces.

Also opening is the Courtyard Tacoma Downtown, which will connect to the Greater Tacoma Convention Center via skybridge. The largest meeting space is a 10,500-sf ballroom, about half of the total space, and there's also a rooftop events center with approximately 6,500 sf of outdoor space.

Just north of the Oregon border sits Ilani in Ridgefield, Washington. The resort's new Meeting & Entertainment Center offers 30,000 sf of flexible meeting and event space. The 22,400-sf Cowlitz Ballroom can host a crowd of up to 2,500 for concerts, comedy shows or other entertainment. For smaller parties, there is the 650-sf Cedar Board Room.

When it comes to gaming, Ilani's 100,000-sf casino floor offers slots, high-stakes table games and more.

There are also 11 dining options, which include fine dining at Michael Jordan's Steak House for lunch and dinner; Rose & Thorn, offering modern interpretations of classic Mediterranean and Italian offerings; Longhouse, offering ocean-fresh, handcrafted and made-to-order sushi rolls, and traditional rice and noodle dishes; Chef Jet, offering food based on modern Asian cuisine; and Line & Lure Seafood Kitchen and Tap, offering locally sourced and seasonal seafood.



## OREGON

There's no indication that Portland is slowing down in terms of its popularity with planners and groups, nor is the city slowing down in terms of growth. Last year, the new Hyatt Regency Portland at the Oregon Convention Center opened, providing planners with more than 38,000 sf of its own flexible space. This year, another Hyatt property also opened, the Hyatt Centric Downtown Portland, with four meeting spaces and an onsite Spanish restaurant, Masia, with a full bar.

Groups looking to meet in Portland should consider summer or fall when the city's My People's Market runs, a gathering of entrepreneurs, makers, artists and culinary artists celebrating