

OUTLET: Southern California Life Magazine

DATE: Holiday 2025

CIRCULATION: 25,000

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SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA LIFE

WHERE TO **EAT + STAY + PLAY**

**ROCKET TAILS
AND MISSION
TRAILS IN
LOMPOC**

**HOLIDAY
MEETS
HERITAGE
FESTIVE FOOD
TRADITIONS**

+

**WINTER
TRAVEL**

FEATURING

**KAUAI, HAWAII
CHRISTMAS MARKETS CRUISE
NETHERLANDS BLOOM CRUISE
BELLEVUE, WASHINGTON**

DISPLAY UNTIL MARCH 24TH



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For Southern Californians accustomed to endless sunshine and flip-flop weather, the idea of heading north to Washington might seem like trading paradise for gray skies. But Bellevue, located just 15 minutes from Seattle, offers something that even the most devoted SoCal resident has to admit is increasingly rare: a meticulously maintained, family-oriented city that actually works.

Bellevue offers a shot of city polish that'll make even the most harried Southern Californian take a deep breath and consider walking ... yes, actually walking. Taking a stroll through downtown Bellevue feels like stepping into what cities were supposed to become. The sidewalks are immaculate because they're privately owned and maintained. The entire atmosphere radiates what locals call "the state of goodwill," a distinctly Washington approach to civic life that prioritizes community harmony. For visitors from Los Angeles or Orange County, where urban challenges have become unavoidable, Bellevue's orderliness is refreshing rather than boring.

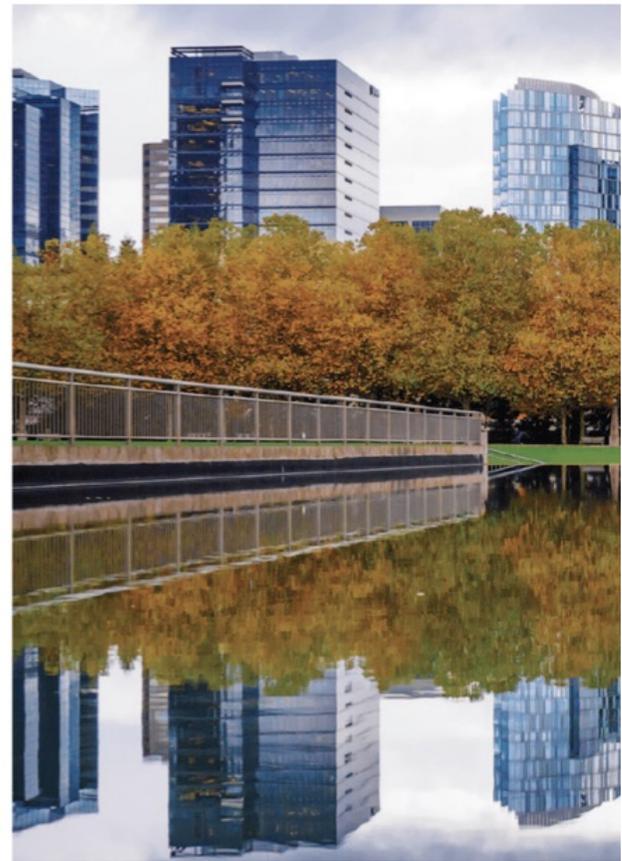
One of the city's most notable detail is that it sits at the heart of the tech world. Jeff Bezos started Amazon out of his Bellevue garage before building the sprawling offices that now dot the city. While Amazon's famous Spheres are located in nearby Seattle, the company maintains substantial offices throughout Bellevue. The Microsoft campus is also nearby, cementing the region's status as a global innovation hub.

The city has committed itself to accessible travel through partnerships with organizations like Wheel of the World, ensuring everyone can explore its offerings. The complimentary Bellhop program provides free rides within Bellevue, eliminating the parking headaches Southern Californians know all too well. (Download the My Bellevue app before arriving to navigate like a local.)

Southern California prides itself on food culture, but Bellevue has quietly become recognized as a culinary destination that rivals anything found along the Southern Pacific Coast. This is a city where celebrity chefs have chosen to plant roots and where authentic international cuisine thrives thanks to the region's large Indian and Japanese populations.

Start mornings at Farine Bakery and Cafe, where authentic Belgian waffles are crafted with Old World techniques and the freshest ingredients. These aren't the sad, frozen versions found at hotel continental breakfasts. These are the real deal — crispy on the outside and cloud-like within.

Chef Shota Nakajima, a culinary force who earned three consecutive James Beard nominations after opening his restaurant in 2015, brings serious credentials from "Top Chef," "Iron Chef" and Food Network appearances. He regularly works food events throughout the city, and his presence has elevated Bellevue's dining reputation significantly.



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For seafood lovers making the pilgrimage north, Seastar Restaurant showcases Chef John Howie's mastery of sushi and Pacific Northwest catches. The fish here tastes like it was swimming hours ago, not days, a stark reminder that proximity to cold northern waters creates flavors Southern California can't quite replicate.

Monsoon Restaurant serves Vietnamese cuisine that honors the connection between Bellevue and its sister cities, Yao and Osaka. The attention to authenticity and technique shows in every dish.

Bis on Main offers French-inspired cuisine and happens to be Bill Gates' favorite restaurant. Yes, that Bill Gates, who lives in the area and whose museum is open to the public for those curious about the Microsoft founder's collections and interests.

Radiant Table brings together celebrity chefs for collaborative dining experiences, while Savor Food Tours





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guides visitors through the city's most memorable culinary stops for those who want the insider track.

Shopping is also a big draw. Southern Californians who think they've seen luxury retail haven't visited the Bellevue Collection or the Shops at the Bravern. This is the only place in the entire Pacific Northwest where Hermes and Prada have locations. The shopping district rivals anything found in Beverly Hills or South Coast Plaza, but without the aggressive valet parking hustle or the traffic nightmares.

Those who prefer to spend time outdoors can enjoy more than 100 expansive and thoughtfully designed parks across town, providing green space that Southern Californians have watched disappear beneath concrete and drought.

The city's family-oriented culture shows in everything from the convention center's youth events to the overall vibe of safety and community.

The diversity of Bellevue creates a cultural richness that feels cosmopolitan rather than homogeneous. Large Indian and Japanese communities bring authentic restaurants, festivals and cultural centers that enrich daily life. And an important detail is Washington has no state income tax!

Bellevue is an easy flight from any Southern California airport, close enough for a long weekend but far enough to feel like an actual escape. The city offers everything a sophisticated traveler wants: exceptional food, world-class shopping, cultural attractions, natural beauty, and civic infrastructure that actually functions.

For Southern Californians willing to pack a jacket and embrace the occasional drizzle, Bellevue presents an intriguing alternative vision of West Coast living. It's a place where things work, where quality matters, and where the Pacific Northwest's natural beauty meets urban sophistication.

Sometimes the best discoveries happen when you're willing to look beyond the usual suspects. Bellevue is one of those discoveries. ❖

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