

WASHINGTON ★★☆☆☆

Summary Facts and Ratings

Climate:	West coast marine climate with mild temperatures and steady breezes west of the Cascades; semi-arid climates to the east. Few major storms, but cloudy 9 months of the year in the west, more sun in the east. Winters are moderate in the west but wet and overcast; colder and drier in the east.
Population Density:	Average. 103 ppl/sq. mile (3000 ppl/sq. mile in Seattle area) but only 35 ppl/sq. mile east of the Cascades. Hispanic 11%, Asian 7%, mixed 4.7%, Black 4%,
Cost of Living Index:	Above average. 110 (average is 100) Mostly due to the expensive Seattle area. Rural Washington is cheaper
Private Land Availability:	Fair. 37% of land is state or federally owned, including most of the best forests.
Building Permits:	Required statewide. Much stricter regulations around Seattle area. Basements can be built in most places in the state.
Land and Urban Planning:	“Smart Growth” land use planning is in vogue here, with statewide planning boards controlling local boards.
Food Production:	Very good in the west, irrigation required in the east. Growing season in west 150-210 days. Shorter in the east, but has more sun. Rainfall is about 40 in/yr west of the Cascades and 17 in/yr to the east. Fishing and hunting are excellent.
Health Environment:	Water quality is good, except in 64% of communities that have fluoridated water. Air Pollution is moderate because of constant sea breezes into the Seattle Metro area which blows it northeastward. There has been nuclear pollution in the ground water around the Hanford site in eastern WA (tri-cities area).
Traffic:	Terrible in Seattle-Everett (rated 2nd worst in nation behind LA). Tacoma and Spokane also have their share but it is low in rural areas. WA cities use red light and speed cameras.
Politics:	Very leftist Democrat majorities in Seattle area overpower conservatives in rural WA. Dem 49%, Rep 34%, Ind/3rd party 17%.
Taxes:	Average. Ranked 24th lowest with an average state tax burden of 9.4% of income. No income tax. Gross receipts tax of 2-3% for all businesses. State and local sales tax is a high 8.8%. Property taxes are high in Seattle, but statewide average ranks 25th in the nation.
Corruption:	Medium high in Seattle, low in eastern WA. Fair amount of corruption in Seattle police and judges. Overall, WA ranks below average in corruption compared to other states.
Crime:	Above average, due to huge urban area in Seattle. Crime rate/100k: murder 2.5, rape 30.7, robbery 80, assault 164, burglary 783, theft 2489, vehicle 434. Crime index for Seattle is 2, Tacoma 2, Spokane 1.
Personal Liberty:	Low, rated 36th. High debt, bad asset forfeiture laws, too many residential regulation laws. Anti-discrimination laws on sexual orientation and transgenders affect all employers; only religious organizations are exempt.
Gun Liberty:	Good. No permit to purchase firearms, except semi auto rifles, now all labeled as assault weapons. Some local jurisdictions have rebelled against the assault weapons laws. “Shall Issue” state. Open carry is lawful except for a loaded weapon in a vehicle. No Stand Your Ground law, but WA Supreme Court has ruled there is no duty to retreat. Washington is a preemption state, with Red Flag law. Seattle has gun and ammo tax.
Alternative Medicine:	Excellent access to natural health practitioners. Several alternative medical schools. Lay midwives are legal and have many free-standing birth centers or perform home birth. School vaccine exemptions: philosophical, religious and medical.
Home Schooling:	Moderate. State requires parents to qualify and then send notification annually with test scores, teach required subjects.
Military Targets:	Fort Lewis (Joint Base Lewis-McChord) , Tacoma. Only Army power projection base west of Rockies for infantry, Special Forces and Stryker Brigade via C-17 airlift or ship transport; secondary target. Bangor Submarine Base and Bremerton Naval Base , Puget Sound. Trident missile submarines, naval ship storage; primary target. Indian Island Naval Ammo Depot , north of Bremerton. Air refueling; primary target. Whidbey Island Naval Air Station , Puget Sound. Naval aviation; primary target. FEMA Regional Bunker at 130 228th St. SW, Bothell. Cold war bunker; not currently a target.

Military Targets continued:	Naval Reservation or Jim Creek Naval Station , west of Lakewood. Very low frequency submarine communication station; primary target. Fairchild AFB , Spokane. Airlift and refueling; primary target. McChord AFB , Tacoma. Airlift Command; secondary target. NSA Listening Post , at Yakima Firing Center; primary target
Nuclear Power Plants:	Columbia Station , north of Richland on Hanford Site. 1 reactor.

Notes

Washington has been downgraded again in this latest edition due to heavy-handed Democratic control over all aspects of state government. Eastern Washington, which is conservative has been nearly disenfranchised, as in Oregon, by unrestrained democratic lawmaking pushing anti-gun and restraints on citizen's fundamental right to discriminate on their own property.

Washington is a state of tremendous variety, from rain forests in the Olympic Peninsula to the deserts in the east. The geography here is very similar to Oregon, except that it is even more wet and cloudy west of the Cascades. It is gorgeous in Seattle when the sun shines, which isn't very often. Worse than this, the traffic situation in Seattle and Everett are terrible if you have to commute in it every day.

The volcano danger is significant in western WA. Mt. Saint Helens is rebuilding after blowing its top and Mt. Rainier is threatening. When the latter blows and its glaciers melt, the mud flows will be devastating to most of the valleys around the mountain where there are many people. Both WA and OR have become home to dedicated environmentalists and liberals that have tied up development for years, but this mostly affects the rural areas of the east, which need more local freedom. It is way too late for the overcrowded Seattle corridor.

While we love the lush forests and waterways of the Cascade Mountains and Puget Sound, the oppressiveness of Seattle's left/liberal establishment dominates the state and its major newspapers. This influence continues to grow and has led to reduced ratings almost every time we update this book, including sweeping gun bills in the state legislature in 2013 that were only narrowly defeated because they tried to restrict so much at once. This is likely only a temporary setback, however, and we expect state laws to become increasingly restrictive of many freedoms.

The picturesque coastal side of the state is also infamous for its rain and cloud cover making it dreary much of the year, so we prefer the drier climate east of the Cascades. We especially like the northeastern parts of the state where you can find coniferous forestation at low altitudes. It is still cloudy there most months of the year, but at least it has a longer and drier summer.

Washington has no income tax, which is a big plus, particularly if you live close to Oregon where you can shop without a sales tax. The cost of living is quite high in the Seattle area but lower in the east, particularly for housing.

Major threats to your long-term safety include multiple first-strike military targets very close to Seattle, and its three dormant volcanoes in the Cascade Mountains. Northwestern WA is also in an elevated earthquake risk zone, which creates potential tidal wave threats to the Sound. The Bangor Trident Submarine base is a key nuclear target and will most certainly be hit in the next world war with multiple warheads. There are also various auxiliary service and nuclear weapons storage facilities north and south that will be hit. All of this means you should not locate in the Seattle Metro area. Massive social unrest will be the guaranteed result of any major crisis. If traffic is heavily congested in good times, it will be impossible to travel in a severe panic. There are only three main exits out of the area: north and south on I-5 and east on I-90. That means the towns in those areas will be inundated with refugees. Avoid even the small cities of Ellensburg and Yakima to the east as they will be overwhelmed.

Strategies for Populated Living Areas

Seattle: If you must live in or near the Seattle area for work, stay far away from the main freeway corridors, north and south. These freeways cross many bridges and will trap many thousands of cars in a crisis. Pick a commute from east or west that avoids most freeways. On the west, across the sound, the valleys around Skokomish on the Olympic Peninsula are one compromise. This area is outside the range of destruction and fallout from military targets, and we believe large groups of refugees will not go in that direction during a crisis. You can always go deeper into the peninsula to a retreat for further safety. To the east, a good compromise is to locate toward the foothills of the cascades, staying at least 4-5 miles away from I-90. Fallout is easy to contend with compared to the potential social unrest fanning out from the traffic corridors. If social unrest creeps toward the hills, you must be prepared to have a retreat or exit through the Cascades, but not along I-90.

North of Seattle: You have to go as far as Mount Vernon and Bellingham to give you a sufficient buffer zone from the high density population areas of Seattle, although those areas are now growing rapidly as well, diminishing their value. If you choose a southern Washington location, go as far as Centralia, and then stay east or west of the freeway by 4 or 5 miles.

Vancouver: This city is north across the Columbia River from Portland. Locate east of I-5 to have access to retreat areas east in the Columbia Gorge. Don't go farther north where Mt. St. Helens is still a threat.

Spokane: This is a city with a much better climate than Seattle, but with growing urban crime and problems. Stay on the east or northeast side of the city to avoid Fairchild AFB which is a military target in the west.

Retreat Areas

Eastern Washington: The best areas in WA are east of the Cascades. We recommend the vast valleys and pine forests north of a line between Chelan in central WA and Newport on the eastern border with Idaho, excluding the large Indian reservation marked in red. These are where you also find the best long term retreat areas. Spokane is the largest city in the area where jobs are available, but it too has a nuclear target in Fairchild AFB.

Farther south is the community of **Walla Walla** which is great farm country and far away from the danger zones. The Tri-cities area (Richland, etc.) is a bigger economic center—still relatively safe, but you have to be careful of the proximity to the Hanford nuclear reservation with all its nuclear clean-up problems.

Besides the northern zone previously mentioned, another good retreat area is east of **Clarkston**, sister city of Lewiston, Idaho. Although these two cities are in the dry plains, they are the gateway to the Orofino/Kamiah area of Idaho.

In the south, there are nice areas in and around Yakima, but Yakima itself is not included, being downwind of Mt. Saint Helens, a dormant volcano. Yakima also has a NSA listening station and is in line to receive huge inflows of people fleeing Seattle someday. That doesn't mean you can't find an out-of-the-way place for safety, but you must prepare for the increased threats.

WA/OR Border—the Columbia Gorge: For people wanting to take advantage of the two-state tax preference policy, there are nice cities on the Washington side of the Columbia Gorge. You want to be about an hour's drive east of the Portland and Vancouver area to avoid refugee flows coming from that direction. Most of that will flow down the Oregon side, unless the freeway is closed, and then all the refugee flow will switch to the non-freeway Washington side. If you locate in White Salmon, WA, across from Hood River, make sure you find property outside the Columbia Gorge Scenic Area and its draconian building restrictions.