

TRAVEL



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SUNDAY TRAVEL

TIME TO GET AWAY

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Let your Loonie do the talking

SEATTLE: There's more to the Emerald City than factory outlets and cheap gasoline

With the Loonie soaring past the greenback, we decided to follow the herd of Canucks south of the border for a weekend of discount shopping. After spending the better part of a day fighting our countrymen for last season's must-haves, we bade a somewhat exhausted farewell to the world of bargain bedlam in Tulalip and set our sights on Seattle.

Birthplace of Starbucks, Jimi Hendrix and the grunge movement, Seattle promises an eclectic mix of hip districts brimming with chic shops, culinary gems, urbane wine bars and cozy cafés. For three-days we toured, dined and danced our way through the Belltown, Capitol Hill and Queen Anne districts to seek out Seattle's top spots.

Belltown

This once seedy neighbourhood is now a vibrant shopping and nightlife district sprinkled with luxury condominiums, live-work lofts and the occasional dive bar, which helps to retain the area's gritty history.

Cool, hard-to-find labels and custom threads are found at Kuhlman's under the Ace Hotel, where hipster tailor and owner Ian Khulman creates unique pieces to fit your style. Screened tees, perfectly-sized custom jeans and beautifully tailored suits for guys and gals are some of the fine finds at Khulman's.

Baby & Co, on the border of Belltown has been a Seattle staple since 1978. Posh lines from international

Before you go

We chose to stay at the luxurious and centrally-located Hyatt at Olive 8. As the first LEED certified hotel in Seattle, Olive 8 offers chic, modern rooms with iPod docking stations, an indoor-pool and eco-friendly spa and restaurant. A great way to save on Seattle sight-seeing is to purchase a \$59 City Pass, which includes admission to the Space Needle, Pacific Science Center, Seattle Aquarium, Seattle Harbour Tour and the Experience Music Project.

fashion houses are hand selected by couturier veteran Jill Donnelly, who worked under the original owners Baby and Uri before taking the helm of this unconventional shop.

Check out the contemporary handmade jewelry at Fancy. Owned by dynamic duo Sally Brock and Erich Ginder, both of whom are accomplished designers and savvy businesswomen, Fancy offers an array of custom pieces made from ethically sourced, recycled and repurposed metals and gemstones.

Given that Belltown is host to some of the region's finest culinary masters, we booked a tour with Seattle Food Tours to quench our thirst for local knowledge and fill our bellies with some of Seattle's delicious dishes. The two-and-a-half hour walking tour includes a colourful, comedic commentary on Belltown's history and a visit to six restaurants.

Belltown

Seattle Food Tours: www.seattlefoodtours.com

Rob Roy: www.robroyseattle.com

Karma Martini Lounge: www.karmamartinilounge.com

Capitol Hill

Asian Art Museum: www.seattleartmuseum.org

The Local Vine: www.thelocalvine.com

Barrio: www.barriorestaurant.com

The Chapel Bar: www.thechapelbar.com

Queen Anne

Queen Anne Farmers Market: www.qafma.org

Experience Music Project: www.empsfm.org

Seattle

Seattle Tourism: www.visitseattle.org

City Pass: www.citypass.com/seattle

Hyatt at Olive 8: www.olive8.hyatt.com

Capitol Hill

Artsy, indie and free-spirited best describes the Capitol Hill district of Seattle. Northeast of the downtown core this area, which was at the forefront of the grunge movement, offers a plethora of small coffee bars, book stores, galleries, shops and eateries.

With over 150,000 titles in stock, the family-owned Elliot Bay Book Company has won a place in the hearts of Seattle locals and visitors alike. Grab a coffee at the in-store cafe and browse through the wide selection of best-sellers, hand-bound books and signed first editions, or attend one of the many weekly readings by local and international authors.

Retail Therapy, a shopper's nirvana flogs an assortment of unique wares from around the globe. In addition to silky slippers, cheeky cos-

metics and handmade jewelry, this quirky boutique features an art gallery in the back that showcases local up-and-coming artists.

To add a bit of culture to your trip, visit the Asian Art Museum in Capitol Hill's Volunteer Park. Housed in a restored Art Deco building, the museum's large collection includes tapestries, ceramics and stone-carvings from China, Japan, India and Southeast Asia. Admission is \$7, and complimentary on the first Thursday of each month.

Forgo the afternoon coffee house and stop for a glass of wine at The Local Vine. Offering a selection of more than 100 wines by the glass, this wine bar is the perfect place to unwind after taking in the sites. We felt at home sipping on a chilled glass of chardonnay, snacking on tapas and using the free Wi-Fi to update our Facebook status.

Queen Anne

The Queen Anne district is a mélange of grand 19th century architecture, stylish restaurants and famed Seattle attractions. Upper Queen Anne is a charming residential community with historic homes, tree lined streets and parks, quaint shops and spectacular city views. In the Lower Queen Anne you'll find tourist hot spots like the Space Needle, Children's Museum and Pacific Science Centre.

In the heart of the Queen Anne, is Seattle's only community-organized farmers market. Each Thursday afternoon in June through October, local producers gather to sell freshly baked breads, heirloom vegetables, organic cheeses, wine and a variety of gourmet prepared food. Live music, chef demonstrations and book signings add to the celebratory atmosphere of this neighbourhood block party.

Music is engrained in the Seattle culture, and anyone with an appreciation for sweet sounds should definitely visit the Experience Music Project across from the Space Needle. This cutting-edge audio sensory museum includes interactive exhibits on the legendary Jimi Hendrix, Nirvana and other music icons, as well as an incredible collection of industry memorabilia. The \$15 ticket price also includes admission to the Science Fiction Museum, which will open an Avatar Exhibition in June.

— *Arrivalstravel.com*



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