



RED TRICYCLE

Fuel up for These 11 Late Summer Road Trips

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Back-to-school season will be here before you know it, so make the most of these last hot, sunny days by planning an end of summer road trip. Whether it's a last-minute weekend excursion to the mountains or an extended day trip to a seaside town, there are many family destinations—within a few hours drive or less of the city—just waiting to be explored. So pack your bags, scroll through the gallery and get ready to plan one last hurrah!



Semiahmoo & Birch Bay

Craving a beach experience without the high surf? Consider a trip up North (less than two hours from Seattle, just prior to the Canadian border) to the Semiahmoo and Birch Bay areas. Semiahmoo (pronounced Semi-ah-moo) is located at the tip of a one-mile "spit" of land bordered by Drayton Harbor and Semiahmoo Bay with views of White Rock, BC. No roaring ocean surf here; just gentle waves from passing fishing boats lapping at the shore of the rocky beach. When the tide goes out at either Semiahmoo or nearby Birch Bay, you can explore the sand flats for miles. Bring your beach shoes for the rocky part and plan to go barefoot when the [tide](#) is low!

In addition to beach walking, shell-finding, clamming-digging, kite-flying and wildlife-watching (bald eagles, seals, and more), Semiahmoo has a paved trail, perfect for biking and walking, that runs the length of the spit (about a mile). The addition of [Paddle and Pedal Adventures](#), which set up shop right next door to the hotel back in '09, is the place to go if you don't want to haul your own bikes; they can rent you one along with kid trailers and kid-tandems, too. They also rent kayaks and sell an assortment of sand toys. (Hint: This little spot tucked behind the water tower by Semiahmoo Resort has the best sandy beach on the spit... great for sandcastles!). During the summer months, short rides around the bay are offered on a charming, vintage passenger ferry named [Plover](#). Kids get to steer for part of the journey and will become honorary captains—taking home their own certificate. Open Memorial Day through Labor Day, the [Birch Bay Waterslides](#) offers fun for all ages with advanced slides and a kiddie area with three tame slides. The nearby [Miniature World Family Fun Center](#) has an 18-hole mini golf course, go-karts and a miniature train ride through a quirky "Forest of Imagination."

Stay at: [Semiahmoo Resort](#) for an ideal beach weekend. You can literally park your car at the resort and not leave again for the whole stay. The hotel, reminiscent of a New England seaside resort, is welcoming to families. Kids love the outdoor swimming pool and the sprawling beachside lawns are fun for volleyball, croquet, horseshoes and just running around. The hotel offers G & PG-rated family movies along with evening bonfires with s'mores fixings and daily scavenger hunts. Grown-ups will like the fitness center and a fantastic full-service spa. Another option on Semiahmoo spit is to rent a condo at the adjacent Beachwalker Villas. You may purchase passes to use the hotel pool/gym, etc. Nearby Birch Bay (more boisterous than Semiahmoo and not as self-contained) is home to numerous condo rentals of many vintages. Check out [vacationville.com](#), [vrbo.com](#) or even Craigslist for assistance. In Birch Bay, you'll have to cross the road to get to the beach and will often find people "cruising the strip" in the summer months. Like Semiahmoo, low tides in [Birch Bay](#) provide plenty of beach fun.