



# DESTINATION FOCUS

AAA Washington Travel Services

## *Walla Walla*

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**WALLA WALLA** (pop. 30,660; alt. 949 ft.) is located in its namesake valley in southeastern Washington, five miles north of the Oregon border. Walla Walla has been jokingly labeled “The town they liked so much they named it twice.” There’s much to like about this pleasant small city. From a distance it looks like an oasis, set amidst an expanse of open, agricultural country. To the east, foothills of the Blue Mountains rise up to forested heights exceeding 5,000 feet. The region’s fertile soils nourish a wide range of crops, ranging from tomatoes, potatoes, asparagus and onions to grapes and wheat. It became an early center of commerce in the late 1800s. Residents built a substantial city whose comfortable homes line tree-shaded streets. In the late 20th century, the city won accolades for preservation efforts in its historic core. Since the mid-1990s the district’s rapidly expanding vineyards and wineries have fostered another moniker, “The Next Napa Valley.”

Walla Walla is a Cayuse Indian phrase meaning ‘many waters.’ The bountiful valley’s game had supported Native Americans for thousands of years. The first Europeans to see the area were in Lewis and Clark’s Corps of Discovery, passing through what is today Walla Walla County in 1805 and 1806.



*Historic brick facades line Walla Walla’s Main Street [Photo: Tourism Walla Walla]*

Marcus and Narcissa Whitman came west by covered wagon in 1836, establishing the first mission in the Oregon Country at Waiilatpu, seven miles west of Walla Walla. It lasted until 1847, when the Cayuse killed the missionaries after many of their tribe had perished in a measles outbreak. In 1855 the Great Council of Walla Walla formulated a peace treaty between representatives of the territorial government and tribes of the region. Fort Walla Walla was established in 1856 and the area was opened to settlement in 1859.

The settlement that grew up outside the fort was called Steptoeville, for Col. Edward Steptoe, commander of the post. The town soon changed its name to Walla Walla and was designated seat of its namesake county, created by the territorial Legislature in 1859.

The federal War Department ordered construction of an overland route linking the upper Missouri River with the Columbia Basin in the Pacific Northwest in 1853. The western terminus was to be at Fort

Walla Walla; the eastern would be Fort Benton, near Great Falls, Montana. Construction on what came to be called the Mullan Road began in 1859. There was much bustle in Walla Walla, with anticipation that this would be an important transportation focus.

Meanwhile, gold strikes in British Columbia and Idaho were drawing more people into the area and the town prospered as an outfitting point. By 1870 Walla Walla boasted a population of nearly 1,500, making it the largest settlement in Washington. Agriculture became increasingly important in the 1870s and the Union Pacific and Northern Pacific extended rail lines through the area. The Mullan Road never lived up to its promise as a route for immigrants to the region and Spokane gradually emerged as the dominant city in the Inland Northwest after attracting Northern Pacific's transcontinental line in 1883.

Throughout the 20th century, Walla Walla settled into its role as a trading center for the surrounding agricultural region. Although the city is somewhat off the beaten track – bypassed by mainline railroads and not served by the national interstate highway system – it enjoys a prosperous economy and thriving arts scene. One of the district's iconic agricultural products is the Walla Walla sweet onion. Italian immigrant Giovanni Arbini, who settled here in 1890, is credited with developing an early ripening hybrid of an Italian sweet onion in the 1920s. By 1960 this was widely known as the Walla Walla Sweet Onion, prized for its size and flavor. Its "sweetness" comes from a high water content, which reduces the sulfur component.

The valley's wine industry is injecting new vitality into the area's economy. As Walla Walla's reputation for producing quality vintages spreads, wine-based tourism grows and businesses catering to this trade open and expand.

## THE INFORMED TRAVELER

### WHOM TO CONTACT

**Emergency:** 911

**Police (non-emergency):** (509) 527-4434

**Weather:** <http://wa.weather-forecast.ws/walla-walla>

**Hospitals:** St. Mary Medical Center is at 401 W. Poplar Street, phone (509) 525-3320; Walla Walla General Hospital is at 1025 S. 2nd Avenue, phone (509) 525-1480; Veterans Administration Medical Center, 77 Wainwright Drive, phone (509) 525-5200.

### MEDIA

**Newspapers:** The *Walla Walla Union-Bulletin* is published daily except Saturdays - [www.union-bulletin.com](http://www.union-bulletin.com)

**Radio:** AM stations include KGDC, News (1320 kHz) ; KUJ, News, talk (1420 kHz); KTEL, Country (1490 kHz).

FM stations include KWWS, National Public Radio (89.7 mHz); KWCW, Whitman College (90.5 mHz); KGTS, Contemporary Christian (91.3 mHz); KRKL, Contemporary Christian (93.3 mHz); KNLT, Oldies (95.7 mHz); KXRX, Rock (97.1 mHz); KUJ-FM, Top 40 (99.1 mHz); KHSS, Spanish (100.7 mHz).

**Television:** Walla Walla receives broadcast television stations from the Tri-Cities area.

### Visitor information

**Walla Walla Valley Chamber of Commerce** ([www.wvwchamber.com](http://www.wvwchamber.com)): 29 E. Sumach Street, P.O. Box 644, Walla Walla, WA 99362. Phone (509) 525-0850 or (877) 998-4748.

**Umatilla National Forest, Walla Walla Ranger District**, 1415 W. Rose Street, Walla Walla, WA 99362. Phone (509) 522-6290.

**AAA Washington**, 1361 Dalles Military Road, Walla Walla, WA 99362. Phone (509) 662-8550 or (800) 439-9293.

## TRANSPORTATION

### Approaches By Car

**U.S. Highway 12** crosses Walla Walla from west to east. The highway forms a freeway bypass on the north side of the city. The 2nd Avenue exit provides direct access to downtown.

**State Route 125** branches south from US-12, on the near west side of town. Hwy. 125 connects the valley with Milton-Freewater and Pendleton, Oregon, providing access to I-84

### By Air

**Walla Walla Regional Airport** ([www.wallawallaairport.com/links.cfm](http://www.wallawallaairport.com/links.cfm)) is 4 miles northeast of downtown via US-12 to Airport Way exit. Horizon Air has several daily flights to Seattle-Tacoma. The airport also serves general aviation and has several charter operations.

### By Bus

**Grape Line** ([www.grapeline.us/index.htm](http://www.grapeline.us/index.htm)) offers daily bus service between Walla Walla and Pasco. Phone (877) 433-4775.

### Rental Cars

**Hertz:** Walla Walla Regional Airport, 45 Terminal Loop, Suite 9; phone (509) 522-3321.

### Public Transportation

**Valley Transit** offers scheduled bus service on nine routes throughout the urban area, daily except Sundays. Fare is 25 cents. Phone (509) 525-9140. Web site: [www.valleytransit.com](http://www.valleytransit.com).

### Taxis

Taxi service is available from **ABC Taxi**, phone (509) 529-7726 and **A-1 Taxi**, phone (509) 529-2525.

### Shopping areas

The historic downtown district has an eclectic mix of shops, boutiques and galleries in the blocks centered on Main Street between Colville and Fourth. **Macy's** occupies the historic 1917 Liberty Theater building at 50 E. Main Street.

**Walla Walla Farmer's Market** is held downtown at Main St. and Fourth Ave., Saturday 9am-1pm from May through October. **Blue Mountain Mall**, on the west end of the city at 1631 W. Rose Street, features Gottschalks, Sears and ShopKo. There are a number of **antique shops** in the city, the largest is Antique Mall of Walla Walla at 315 S. 9th Avenue.

### Climate

Walla Walla has a middle latitude semiarid climate with cool, moist winters and dry, warm summers. Thunderstorms occur mainly during the summer months. Most winters have several outbreaks of subfreezing weather and snowfall. Summer humidity is relatively low. Temperature extremes since the mid 1900s have ranged from 113°F to -16°F. The table below presents monthly averages.

#### WALLA WALLA (elev. 949 ft.)

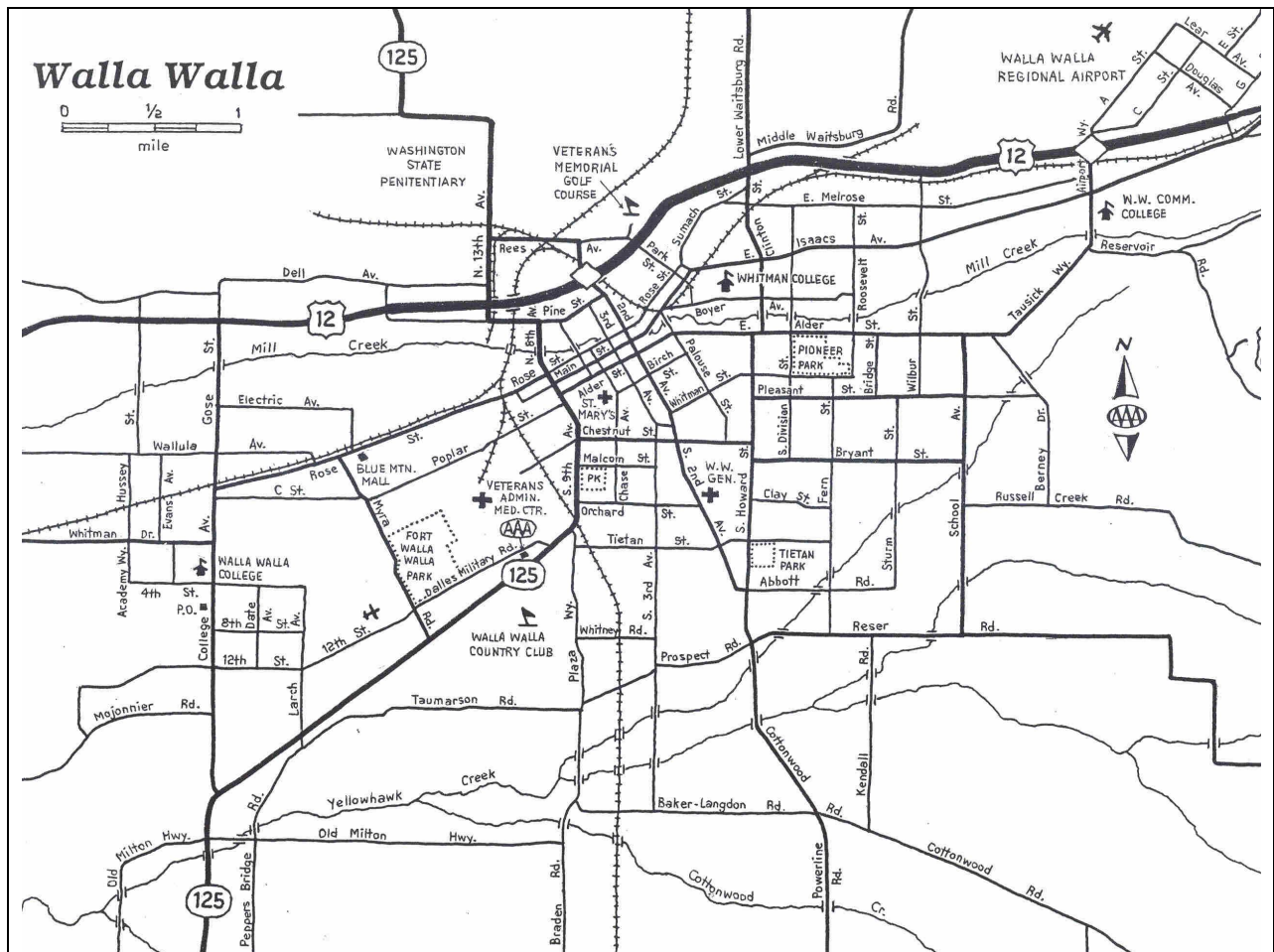
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
Max.	39.4	47.1	54.7	62.7	71.2	79.6	88.5	86.5	77.0	63.9	49.1	41.8	63.5
Min.	27.8	33.6	37.7	42.5	49.4	55.9	62.0	61.4	53.3	44.2	36.1	30.6	44.5
Precip.	2.01	1.63	1.65	1.31	1.39	1.04	0.41	0.63	0.87	1.47	2.03	2.19	16.62
Snow	7.4	2.9	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	2.2	5.4	19.3

## THINGS TO SEE AND DO

### DOWNTOWN DISTRICT

Walla Walla's downtown district is delightful, a pleasing mix of historic buildings which have been carefully restored and preserved. A series of fires swept through the city in the 1880s, destroying many of the wooden structures. The rebuilt buildings of stone and brick are an architectural legacy showcasing a prosperous small American city at the turn-of-the-20th-century. Sidewalk cafés and landscaping add to the pedestrian appeal.

The best way to enjoy this district is afoot. A stroll along Main Street, from Colville west to Sixth, passes numerous buildings of interest. Most have a plaque indicating their original name and date they were built. The **Liberty Theatre**, 54 E. Main Street, was built in 1917 on the original site of Fort Walla Walla. It operated as a movie house until the early 1980s. Its façade was restored to its original appearance in 1991. It reopened as the Bon Marché department store and today is reincarnated as Macy's. Look for a plaque commemorating the 1856 fort inside the main entrance.



Just west is the 1903 **Die Brücke** (The Bridge Building), so named as it “bridges” Mill Creek. Just across First Street is the 1890 **Sayer Building**, locally known as the Bee Hive Building, as it housed the like-named dry goods store from 1905 to 1977.

The 1880s **Union Block**, on Main between First and Second, is typical of the city's early mercantile architecture. The block's Victorian-Italianate **Barrett Building** is the most impressive. The **Seil Building** was one of the first brick structures erected after the 1885 fire. The **Reynolds-Day Building** (1874) is one of the oldest structures on Main Street. Science Hall, located on its second floor, was the meeting place for Washington's first State Constitutional Convention (1878).



*The beautifully restored Marcus Whitman Hotel*

*[Photo: Walla Walla Union-Bulletin]*

The **Paine Building** (1879), at the corner of Main and Second, has an unusual geometric pattern. It formerly housed the First National Bank, established in 1878. Across the intersection is the handsome, seven-story **Baker Boyer Building**, the city's first skyscraper. It occupies the site of a store established in 1861. The Baker Boyer Bank was established in 1869, the first in Washington. The present building went up in 1910. South on Second Avenue, ornate Corinthian columns grace the former **First National Bank Building**.

A block north, at Second and Rose, is the city's tallest building, the **Marcus Whitman Hotel**. Built in 1928, it was one of the great hotels of the Inland Northwest, hosting the likes of President Eisenhower and Shirley Temple. Like many inner-city hotels, the Whitman eventually fell on hard times, and by the early 1990s had closed its doors. It reopened in 2001 after a major renovation and has resumed its position as the city's most elegant hostelry.

Several blocks north, at N. Second and Oak, is the 1914 Northern Pacific Depot. This was one of the first major historical restorations, completed in 1989. Continuing west on Main, the restored 1889 **Baumeister Building** is at the corner of Third.

The **Dacres Hotel** (1899), at Main and Fourth, is an outstanding example of Victorian Italianate architecture. The façade features friezeband and neo-Classic half-columns facing Main Street contrasting with a series of arched windows and corbeled brickwork on the Fourth Street flank. The Dacres replaced the Stine House, which burned in 1892.

The **Walla Walla County Government Complex** occupies the block bounded by Main, Alder, Fifth and Sixth. The Classic Revival-style **Court House** dates from 1916. The statue of Christopher Columbus in front of the courthouse was a gift to the city in 1911 by the local Italian community, who had brought the first sweet onions to Walla Walla. Other historic buildings on the block include the County Jail and Sheriff's Office (1906) and the County Law Library, built as the Hall of Records in 1891.

**St. Patrick's Church** (Roman Catholic), at Sixth and W. Alder, is a stately red brick structure built in 1881.

**KIRKMAN HOUSE MUSEUM** ([www.kirkmanhousemuseum.org](http://www.kirkmanhousemuseum.org)), 214 N. Colville Street, is an elaborate 1880 Victorian filled with period furnishings. The home also displays textile arts. Open Wednesday-Saturday 10am-4pm, Sunday 1-4pm. Admission. Phone (509) 529-4373.

## **ELSEWHERE IN THE CITY & NEARBY VICINITY**

The leafy residential neighborhoods east of downtown contain many beautiful old homes. Palouse and Catherine Streets between E. Birch and Locust, feature a concentration of residences built in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The oldest, at 392 Catherine Street, dates from 1871. Architectural styles range from Victorian, Neoclassical and Tudor to Craftsman.

The **CARNEGIE ART CENTER** ([www.carnegieart.com](http://www.carnegieart.com)), 109 Palouse Street, was built in 1905 with financial assistance from the Andrew Carnegie-Mellon Fund. The library moved to a new location in 1970 and the art center opened in 1971. Its galleries host changing exhibitions by regional artists. A plaque behind the building commemorates the 1855 Great Council of Walla Walla held nearby. The center is open Tuesdays-Saturdays from 11am to 4:30pm. Free. Phone (509) 525-4270.

**WHITMAN COLLEGE** ([www.whitman.edu](http://www.whitman.edu)) is just east of downtown; take Boyer Avenue, which branches east from Main Street. Established in 1859 as Whitman Seminary, this is the oldest institution of higher education in Washington. It became a degree-granting four-year college in 1883. Whitman is a renowned liberal arts school and was the first in the nation to require comprehensive oral and written examinations of undergraduate students in their major field (1913). The college maintains the highest graduation rate in the Northwest. The student body numbers just under 1,500 and the student to teacher ratio is 10 to 1.



*Whitman Memorial Building is a city and campus landmark.  
[Photo: Whitman College]*

Boyer Avenue bisects the campus from west to east. College Creek meanders across the campus. Its ponds provide habitat for ducks. **Cordiner Hall**, at Boyer and Park Street, contains a 1,400-seat auditorium, venue for baccalaureate ceremonies, speeches and concerts, including the Walla Walla Symphony. The 1889 **Whitman Memorial Building** (the “Mem”) the oldest building on campus. Its clocktower is a local landmark. Spanish House, Japanese House, Fine Arts House and others, are special focus student residences. The elegant, 1921 **Penrose Hall**, at Boyer and Stanton Street, houses the Offices of Admissions and Financial Aid. It was the residence of Whitman’s president until 1995. This is the starting point for campus tours.

**Ankeny Field**, an expansive central lawn, serves as a campus gathering place and sports playfield. **Sheehan Art Gallery**, located on Isaacs Avenue in Olin Hall, hosts five to seven exhibits each year, the final exhibit showcases the work of Whitman students. The gallery is open Tuesdays-Fridays noon to 5pm, weekends noon to 4pm. **Penrose Library**, on the west side of Ankeny Field, is one of the few in the nation that never closes. Its special collections include U.S. presidential portraits and rare books on Northwest history and Napoleon Bonaparte. Hours for the general public are 9am to 10pm.

**PIONEER PARK**, southeast of the campus on E. Alder Street, was established in 1901 on the site of a cow pasture. The park covers 58 acres and includes expanses of lawns and groves of stately maple, walnut and sycamore trees. Its development followed a 1906 plan by renowned landscape architect John J. Olmstead, brother of Frederick Law Olmstead, designer of New York’s Central Park. Sasayama Drive bisects the park between Alder and Whitman streets. Highlights include gardens, sports fields, a 1909 bandstand gazebo, the Ladies Relief Society Fountain set amid a ring of trees, a historic brass cannon and a series of ponds and reed-lined channels home to numerous ducks. The park’s rose garden blooms from June through September.

The **Pioneer Park Aviary**, in the southwest corner of the park at Whitman and Division streets, showcases hundreds of exotic birds, including varieties of pheasants, ducks, geese and doves in two large netted enclosures. The aviary is open daily dawn to dusk. Free. Phone (509) 527-4403.

**WALLA WALLA FOUNDRY** ([www.wallawallafoundry.com](http://www.wallawallafoundry.com)), west of downtown at 405 Woodland Avenue, has a sculpture garden and art gallery. The foundry, established in 1980, specializes in casting art in bronze, silver and aluminum and has attracted artists from around the world. The open-air garden features bronze sculptures and the gallery showcases changing exhibits of artists that work with the foundry. The gallery is open Monday through Friday 10am-4pm, Saturday 10am to 3pm. Phone (509) 529-0736.

**FORT WALLA WALLA PARK** is on the western edge of the city on Myra Road. The city’s largest park (208 acres) has a range of recreation fields and play areas. A nature trail loops through a 70-acre wildlife preserve. The park occupies the site of its namesake military post, moved from its original downtown site in 1858. The fort was decommissioned in 1910, but served as a training center during World War I. It was transferred to the Veteran’s Bureau in 1921. Fifteen of the fort’s original buildings remain on the campus of the Veteran’s Administration Medical Center, which adjoins the park to the east. Five buildings on Officer’s Row date from 1858, making them the oldest in the city. Wainwright Drive provides access to this historic area from W. Chestnut Street.

The medical center campus also houses the **Children’s Museum of Walla Walla** ([www.cmwallawalla.org](http://www.cmwallawalla.org)), at 77 Wainwright Drive. Its hands-on, interactive exhibits are geared to children age 10 and younger. Mock-ups include a grocery store, fire truck and a kid-size town called Wee Walla Walla. The museum is open Thursdays through Saturdays from 10am to 5pm and Sundays, noon to 4pm. Admission. Phone (509) 526-7529.

**Fort Walla Walla Museum** ([www.fortwallawallamuseum.org](http://www.fortwallawallamuseum.org)), on Myra Road, contains a sprawling collection of 40,000 catalogued items, chronicling Northwest history from Native American times through the pioneer period to the present. Its exhibits and displays are presented in 17 original and replica buildings representing a pioneer village. Historic structures include the Ransom Clark Cabin (1859), Union School (1857), Prescott Jail, Eureka Flats Depot and a barbershop. Five buildings house a large collection of early agricultural equipment and displays of pioneer lifestyles and military items from

the 1850s to World War II. Other exhibits include historic photographs, textiles and the state penitentiary. The museum is open daily 10am to 5pm from April through October. Admission (AAA discount). Phone (509) 525-7703

**COLLEGE PLACE** (pop. 8,770, alt. 935 ft.) is a separate city adjoining Walla Walla on the west. The town grew up around and took its name from a college established by the Seventh Day Adventist Church in 1892. **WALLA WALLA COLLEGE** ([www.wwc.edu/about-wwc](http://www.wwc.edu/about-wwc)) occupies a tree-shaded campus on N. College Street.



*The 1944 Peterson Memorial Library, on the campus of Walla Walla College.  
[Photo: Walla Walla College]*

The college offers more than a hundred areas of study in liberal arts, professional, and technical programs. The largest undergraduate programs are business, education, and engineering. Graduate programs are offered in education, biology, and social work and the school plans to change its name to Walla Walla University in the near future. The student body numbers just under 2,000, with a faculty count of over 190. As a Seventh-day Adventist institution, religion classes are part of the curriculum and no classes or offices are open from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday, a time regarded by the denomination as the Sabbath.

The blond brick buildings give the campus an architectural theme. Highlights include the **Peterson Memorial Library** (1944), with a collection of over 200,000 books, and the **Melvin K. West Fine Arts Center** (1966), which houses the **Clyde and Mary Harris Art Gallery**. The gallery has changing displays of local, regional and national artists. The campus has a collection outdoor sculpture. Phone (509) 527-2600.

## SIGHTSEEING

### Scenic Flights

- **SkyRunners** offers sightseeing flights of the area from Walla Walla Regional Airport; phone (509) 525-5746.

**Walking tours** – Brochures outlining self-guided walking tours are available at the Chamber of Commerce and the AAA office. Tours include Fort Walla Walla, Downtown Historic Trail, Up Boyer to Pioneer Park (includes Whitman College campus) and Historic Homes.

### Motor coach, limousine, van tours

- **Black Tie Limos** (<http://www.blacktielimos.net/>) offers customized limousine tours to area wineries (minimum 3 hours). Phone (509) 525-8585.
- **Blue Stocking Tours** ([www.bluestockingtours.com/](http://www.bluestockingtours.com/)), offers guided special interest van and 12-passenger motor coach tours (wineries, historical sites fly fishing). Contact: 6 W. Rose Street, Suite 101, Walla Walla, WA 99362; phone (509) 522-4717.
- **Caveman Coach** ([www.cavemancoach.com/](http://www.cavemancoach.com/)) provides customized limousine wine tours. Phone (509) 529-7170 or 522-1195.

## SPECTATOR SPORTS

### Auto Racing

- **Bonanza Raceway** ([www.bonanzaraceway.com](http://www.bonanzaraceway.com)), 1212 Middle Waitsburg Road, offers drag racing on selected Saturdays or Sundays from April to early October. Phone (509) 522-4804.

## RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

**Bicycling** – Walla Walla has several designated bike routes. A paved bike trail crosses the city from Roos Park on the east to Myra Road on the west. The level valley floor offers easy cycling. Old Milton Highway, from College Place south into Oregon, is a pleasant ride. Mountain bikers head to the nearby Blue Mountains. The Chamber of Commerce has a map showing bike trails and streets with bike lanes.

- **The Bicycle Barn**, 1503 E. Isaacs St., rents hybrid road bikes Monday through Saturday; phone (509) 529-7860.
- **Walla Walla BMX** ([www.wallawallabmx.org](http://www.wallawallabmx.org)) has a racing track on Myra Road in Fort Walla Walla Park.

**Birding** – The varied habitats of Walla Walla County, ranging from the Columbia and Snake rivers to the Blue Mountains, attracts Washington’s greatest diversity of bird species east of the Cascades. Some 318 species have been documented. The northward spring migration begins in mid-February and peaks in April and May. The southward fall migration starts the third week in June and continues through September.

#### Golf

- **Tour Fairways** is a lighted driving range at N. 13th Ave. and Abadie. Facilities include a pro shop. Phone (509) 529-5810.
- **Veterans Memorial Golf Course** (<http://vetsgolf.com>), on the north side of town at 201 E. Rees St., is an 18-hole, par 72 public course. Facilities include a club house, pro shop, club rentals and restaurant. Phone (509) 527-4507.
- **Walla Walla Country Club**, in the southwest part of the city at 1390 Country Club Road, is an 18-hole, par 72 private course. Phone (509) 525-1562.

#### Skiing

- **Ski Bluewood** ([www.bluewood.com](http://www.bluewood.com)) is in the Blue Mountains 52 miles east of Walla Walla, via US-12 to Dayton, then 23 miles south (*see listing under Dayton*).
- **Spout Springs** ([www.skispoutsprings.com](http://www.skispoutsprings.com)) is 33 miles southeast of Walla Walla in the Blue Mountains (*see listing under Milton-Freewater*).

**Swimming** – Public pools are located in Jefferson Park at S. 9th Avenue and Malcom Street and at E. Sumach and Rees streets. These open air pools are closed in winter.

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

APRIL (late April) – **Renaissance Faire** (Whitman College campus)  
MAY (first weekend) – **Spring Release Weekend** (area wineries)  
MAY (mid-May) – **Walla Walla Hot Air Balloon Stampede**  
JUNE (early June) – **Art Promenade** (downtown galleries)  
JUNE (mid-June) – **Multicultural Festival** (Pioneer Park)  
JULY (early) – **Fourth of July in the Park** (Pioneer Park)  
JULY (mid-July) – **Walla Walla Sweet Onion Festival** (Fairgrounds)  
AUGUST (early) – **Taste of Walla Walla** (Courthouse lawn)  
AUGUST-SEPTEMBER (Labor Day weekend) – **Walla Walla Fair & Frontier Days** (Fairgrounds)  
SEPTEMBER (early September) – **Wheelin Walla Walla Weekend** (classic car show)  
SEPTEMBER (mid September) – **Marcus Whitman Gem & Mineral Show** (Fairgrounds)  
SEPTEMBER (late September) – **Walla Walla Quilt Festival** (St. Patrick’s Church)  
OCTOBER (mid-October) – **Italian Heritage Days Festa** (Fairgrounds)  
DECEMBER (early) – **Holiday Barrel Tasting** (area wineries)  
DECEMBER (early) – **Macy’s Christmas Parade of Lights** (downtown)

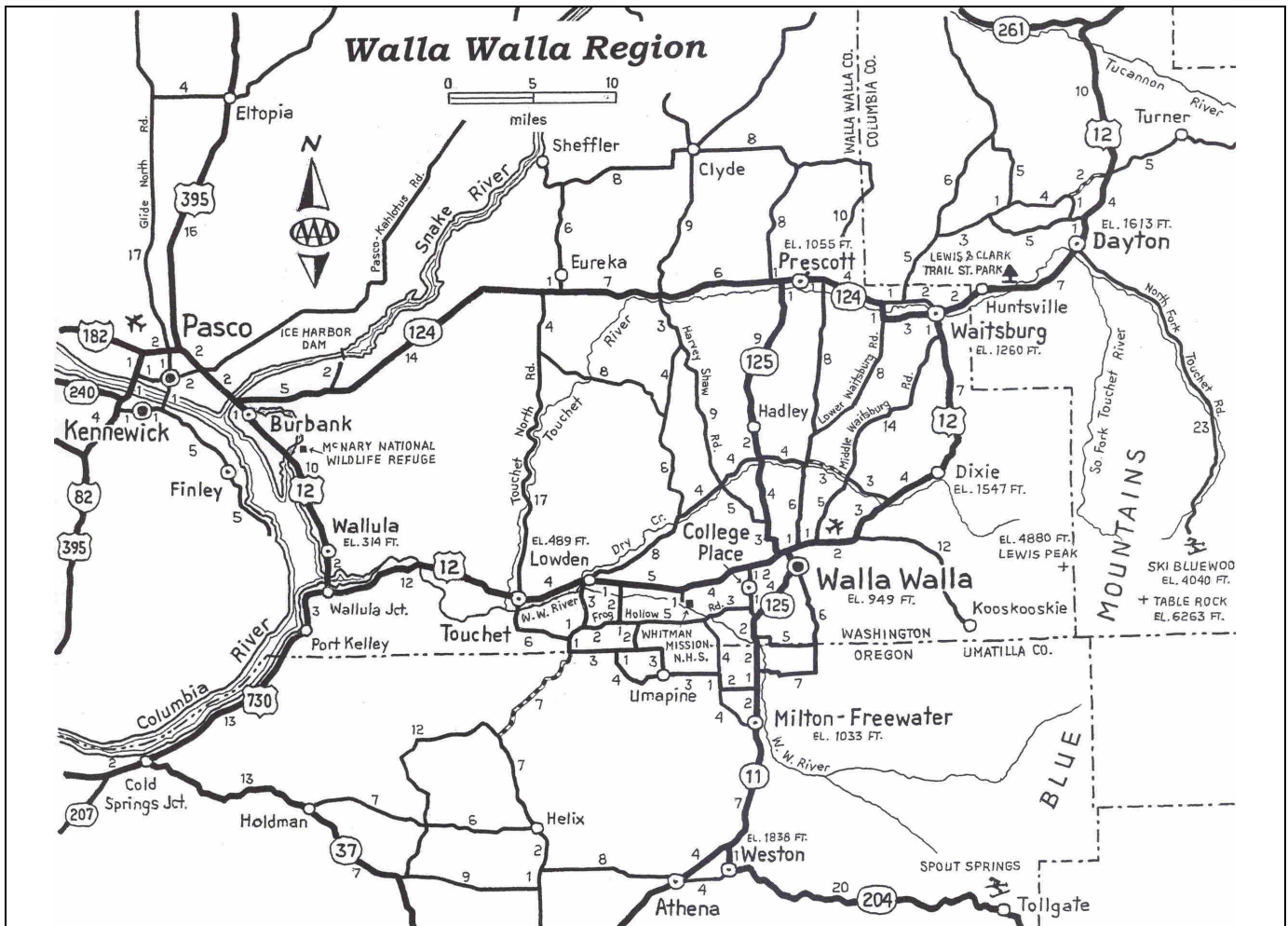
### AROUND THE AREA

#### *West of Walla Walla*

The pleasant countryside surrounding Walla Walla offers numerous scenic drives. U.S. Highway 12 leads thirty miles west from the city to the Columbia River.

**WHITMAN MISSION NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE** ([www.nps.gov/whmi/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/whmi/index.htm)) is seven miles west of Walla Walla. This National Park Service unit interprets the first mission in the Oregon Country established here in 1836 by Dr. Marcus Whitman and his wife Narcissa. The couple spent their honeymoon on their overland trip to Oregon. They called the mission Waiilatpu, a Cayuse word meaning ‘place of the people of the rye grass.’ The Whitman’s struggled constantly against the difficulties of frontier life and their endeavors were never more than marginally successful. The Cayuse came to resent their aloofness and what seemed to them, uncompromising nature. Increasingly, the mission became a way station for Oregon Trail immigrants, which further alienated the Indians. These trail immigrants brought an epidemic of measles in

1847, which decimated the indigenous people, despite Dr. Whitman's care, but largely spared the whites who had some resistant to the disease. To the Cayuse, this was incredulous and on 29 November, 1847 they reacted by killing all the whites at the mission.



*The Great Grave contains the remains of the Whitmans and others killed in 1847.*

*[Photo: National Park Service]*

The **Visitor Center** has museum displays and interpretive information about Wailatpu and the Cayuse people. Outside, a one-mile interpretive trail loops through the park, passing the mission site, apple orchard, millpond, outbuildings and the graveyard containing the missionaries' remains. The park also has a preserved section of a branch of the Oregon Trail, together with a replica of a covered wagon. Another trail leads to the crest of a knoll where a 27-foot monument commemorates the Whitman mission.

Demonstrations of pioneer and American Indian crafts are offered summer weekends. The site is open daylight hours daily. The Visitor Center is open daily 8am to 6pm, June through August; daily 8am to 4:30pm, September through May. Admission. Phone (509) 522-6360.

West of Whitman Mission Highway 12 follows the Walla Walla River, which rises in the Blue Mountains of northeastern Oregon.

**LOWDEN** (pop. 50, alt. 489 ft.) is 12 miles west of Walla Walla on US-12. Vineyards, wheat fields and row crops surround this quiet town. The community was first called Frenchtown, for the many French-Canadians who settled the valley in the early 1800s. Its present name honors pioneer homesteader Francis M. Lowden Sr. Several wineries are in town (*see wine touring, below*).

#### WINERIES

- **L'Ecole No. 41** ([www.lecole.com](http://www.lecole.com)) is on US-12 in Lowden. Located in the historic 1915 Frenchtown School. Self-guided tours of schoolhouse and teaching vineyard. Open daily 10am-5pm. Phone (509) 525-0940.
- **Woodward Canyon** ([www.woodwardcanyon.com](http://www.woodwardcanyon.com)) is on US-12 in Lowden. Open daily 10am-5pm. Phone (509) 525-4129.

**TOUCHET** (pop. 396, alt. 449 ft.) is four miles west of Lowden near the west end of the Walla Walla Valley. Its name comes from the Touchet (TWO-shee) River, probably from the French word *toucher*, referring to cattle drives in the early 1800s. Lewis and Clark called the stream White Stallion in 1806, for a horse gifted them by the local Indians.

**STATELINE WIND FARM** extends for miles along the Van Sycle Ridge along the Washington-Oregon border. With nearly 400 Danish-designed Vesta turbines, this the largest single wind farm in the U.S. The site was selected for its windiness, averaging 16-18 miles per hour. Turbines are grouped in lines of five to 37, spaced at intervals of 250 feet. Each of the 166-foot tall towers has three 76-foot long rotor blades. The wind farm can generate up to 300 megawatts of electricity for Seattle City Light and the Bonneville Power Administration. The wind farm stands on wheat and cattle ranch land.

#### RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

##### Golf

- **Pheasant Creek Golf Course** ([www.pheasantcreekgolfcourse.com/](http://www.pheasantcreekgolfcourse.com/)), 1.4 miles north on Touchet North Road, is a 9-hole, par 36 public course. Phone (509) 394-4653.

**WALLULA** (pop. 197, alt. 314 ft.) faces the wide Columbia River, 32 miles west of Walla Walla, a mile north of the mouth of the Walla Walla River. Downstream from here the Columbia turns west, squeezing between the towering rock walls of the Wallula Gap. Wind farm turbines cloak the hills on both sides of the Columbia.

A **Historical Marker** on the west side of US-12 describes the trading post once located beside the river. Donald McKenzie, with the North West Company, established a post here in 1818. Initially it was called Fort Nez Percés, but was changed to **Fort Walla Walla** (not to be confused with the similar named Army post established in Walla Walla decades later). Its trading empire extended throughout the Intermountain West as far south as the Gulf of California. The Hudson's Bay Company absorbed the North West Company in 1821. The fort burned in 1841 but was quickly rebuilt with adobe bricks. It was abandoned in 1855. All that remain are weathered foundation stones beside the marker.

Wallula relocated and prospered after the railroad arrived in 1874. Faster rail transportation gradually replaced river steamboats. The town moved to its present location in 1953, to escape the rising waters behind McNary Dam.

#### *East of Walla Walla*

East of the city, US-12 glides through rolling country, where the spurs of the Blue Mountains meet the Palouse Plateau. Sprawling wheat fields dominate the landscape. In spring the fields are verdant, in summer and fall golden.

**DIXIE** (pop. 220, alt. 1,547 ft.) nestles along Dry Creek, ten miles northeast of Walla Walla. Its name recalls the many Southerners who homesteaded in the area after the Civil War. The town was platted in 1881 and became a trading and sawmilling center. A grain elevator stands beside the long abandoned Northern Pacific branch line that formerly linked Dixie with Walla Walla and Waitsburg. Several miles north of town, the highway reaches a 1,900-foot summit then follows Coppei Creek downstream to Waitsburg.

**WAITSBURG** (pop. 1,230, alt. 1,260 ft.), is 22 miles northeast of Walla Walla on US-12. Settled in 1865 along the Touchet River, its municipal government is the only one in Washington still operating under terms of its original territorial charter. Waitsburg became a prosperous farm trading and shipping center, served by two branch railroad lines. Several blocks of one- and two-story structures of brick and stone from the 1880s to the 1930s form the town's business district, a block west of the junction of US-12 and SR-124. A four-story grist mill stands beside the river at the north end of Main Street. Waitsburg also has Washington's oldest grange chapter (organized in 1889). Its still active hall, erected in 1938, is on the eastern edge of town.

**Visitor information:** Waitsburg Merchants Club, P.O. Box 451, Waitsburg, WA 99361; phone 509-337-6371. Web site at [www.cityofwaitsburg.com](http://www.cityofwaitsburg.com).

**BRUCE MEMORIAL MUSEUM**, 318 Main Street, is an elegantly restored and furnished Victorian mansion built in 1883 for William P. and Caroline Bruce. Mr. Bruce was an early county commissioner and school board member. The museum is open Fridays and Saturdays from 1pm to 4pm, from June through September, or by appointment at other times. Donations. Phone (509) 337-6157 or 337-6631.

East of Waitsburg, US-12 follows the Touchet River, closely flanked by grassy hills. Five miles east is **Lewis and Clark Trail State Park** ([www.parks.wa.gov/parkpage.asp?selectedpark=Lewis%20%26%20Clark%20Trail](http://www.parks.wa.gov/parkpage.asp?selectedpark=Lewis%20%26%20Clark%20Trail)) is a 37-acre site with a quarter-mile of Touchet River shoreline. The Corps of Discovery passed through here in May, 1806 on the eastbound leg of their epic trek. They remarked on the riparian woodland of ponderosa pine and black cottonwood, refreshing in the otherwise semi-arid landscape. The park has interpretive markers, picnic tables and a small campground. Open daily (fee for camping).



*The Columbia County Courthouse is the state's oldest still in use.*

**DAYTON** (pop. 2,720, alt. 1,613 ft.) is ten miles east of Waitsburg on US-12. Homesteading started in this district in 1859. Pioneer settler Jesse Day platted the townsite in 1871. Dayton prospered as a flour milling center after the railroad arrived in the late 1870s. A fire destroyed most of the downtown and some nearby residences in 1881, but the town was quickly rebuilt with more substantial stone and brick.

Dayton has three historic districts featuring 117 buildings on the National Register of Historic Places. The residential neighborhoods south of Main Street along First, Second and Third, contain homes from the 1870s through the late 1930s, built in a range of architectural styles ranging from Gothic, Italianate and Queen Anne to Craftsman.

The **Columbia County Courthouse**, at Main and Third streets, is the oldest in Washington (erected 1887). The second floor hallway contains historical photographs and documents. The exterior was restored to period in 1991-1993. The building is open weekdays 8:30am to 4:30pm. Self-guided tours are free.

Symbolic of Dayton's agricultural economy is the **Green Giant**, 300-foot long figure located on a hillside just west of town. The Green Giant is a logo for a brand of Seneca Foods, which has a cannery in Dayton. The figure, composed of 8-inch by 12-inch patio blocks, was constructed in 1991.

**Visitor Information:** Dayton Chamber of Commerce ([www.historicdayton.com](http://www.historicdayton.com)), 166 E. Main Street (P.O. Box 22), Dayton, WA 99328; phone 509-382-4825 or 800-882-6299. A brochure outlining a self-guided tour of historic Dayton is available at the Chamber of Commerce or the Dayton Historic Depot.

**DAYTON HISTORIC DEPOT** ([www.daytonhistoricdepot.org/](http://www.daytonhistoricdepot.org/)), just north of the courthouse at 222 E. Commercial Street, is the oldest in Washington. Built in 1881 in the Stick/Eastlake style, it operated until 1972. The second floor gallery, formerly the stationmaster's living quarters, displays changing exhibits. The depot is open daily except Monday from May through October. The rest of the year it's open Tuesday through Saturday. Admission. Phone (509) 382-2026.

**PALUS MUSEUM**, 305 E. Main Street, displays locally found Native American artifacts. Exhibits in one room commemorate the passage of the Lewis and Clark Expedition through Dayton. The museum is open Friday and Saturday afternoons, or by appointment. Donations. Phone (509) 382-4820.

## WINERIES

- **Dumas Station** ([www.dumasstation.com/](http://www.dumasstation.com/)) is five miles west of Dayton at 36229 Highway 12. This estate winery specializes in Cabernet sauvignon. Tasting room. Phone (509) 382-8933.
- **Patit Creek Cellars** ([www.patitcreekcellars.com/](http://www.patitcreekcellars.com/)) is at 507 E. Main Street. The winery (pronounced PAT-it) specializes in Merlot and Cabernet sauvignon and has a demonstration vineyard. The winery is open Friday and Saturday afternoons. Their tasting room is in downtown Walla Walla. Phone (509) 382-1357.

## RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

### Golf

- **Touchet Valley Municipal Golf Course**, on the west side of town, is a 9-hole, par 36 public course. Phone (509) 382-4851.

### Skiing

- **Ski Bluewood** ([www.bluewood.com](http://www.bluewood.com)), 23 miles south of Dayton via paved road, offers alpine and cross-country skiing from late November to early April. Elevation range is 4,450 ft. to 5,650 ft. Lifts include two triple chairs, a platter pull and a snow-boarding area. Facilities include a day lodge, cafeteria with ski shop (rentals and lessons). Snow phone (509) 382-2877

## *North of Walla Walla*

Highway 125 heads due north from Walla Walla to SR-124 near Prescott. Just north of the city **Washington State Penitentiary** spreads over a 540-acre site. The state's largest correctional institution has a staff of nearly 1,000 and an offender population of over 1,800. This is the location of Death Row, where state sponsored executions are carried out. Continuing north, the highway crosses mile after mile of rolling wheat fields. The northern part of the route parallels the Blue Mountain Railroad linking Walla Walla with Dayton. Hadley, Berryman and Ennis, hamlets that have all but vanished, were former stations on this line.

Nineteen miles north of Walla Walla is **PRESCOTT** (pop. 315, alt. 1,055 ft.), a small farming town beside the Touchet River on SR-124 a mile east of the junction with SR-125. Homesteading started in the area in 1859 and the Oregon Railway & Navigation Company platted the town site in 1882, naming it for the line's superintendent.

## *South of Walla Walla*

Multi-lane SR-125 leads south through the lush farmland of the Walla Walla Valley. Six miles from downtown it enters Oregon and becomes SR-11. Roadside produce stands on both sides of the state line offer the valley's agricultural bounty in season. Crops include apples, cherries, prunes, plums, grapes, wheat, peas, onions, peonies, alfalfa, corn and asparagus.

**MILTON-FREEWATER** (pop. 6,585, alt. 1,033 ft.) nestles between grassy hills at the southern end of the Walla Walla Valley, four miles south of the Washington border. Its canneries and packing plants hum with activity. Settlers arrived in the area in the late 1850s, eventually establishing a hamlet known as Freeport. By 1873 its name was changed to Milton with the prospect of a grist mill opening. The railroad arrived from Walla Walla in 1881, ushering in a boom period. In 1889 a dispute over water rights led to the establishment of New Walla Walla, a separate community less than a mile northwest. Its name was changed to Freewater the following year. Milton was a "dry" town, while Freewater sold liquor by the gallon. Over the years the two towns grew together, finally merging into a single municipality in 1950. The town's mascot is a Frog, known as Muddy Frogwater.

**Visitor information:** Milton-Freewater Area Chamber of Commerce ([www.mfchamber.com](http://www.mfchamber.com)), 157 S. Columbia, Milton-Freewater, OR 97862; phone (541) 938-5563.

**FRAZIER FARMSTEAD MUSEUM** ([www.museum.bmi.net/](http://www.museum.bmi.net/)) is at 1403 Chestnut Street. The museum occupies the site of the 1868 homestead established by town founder W.S. Frazier. The 1892 farm house, restored in 1913, features many original furnishings. The grounds include several out buildings, a rose garden, a perennial herb garden and the McCoy Cabin, oldest structure in Umatilla County (1856). Open Thursday-Saturday from 11am to 4pm, April through December. Phone (541) 938-4636.

## WINERIES

- **Zerba Cellars** ([www.zerbacellars.com](http://www.zerbacellars.com)) is 5 miles north of Milton-Freewater on SR-11, a quarter mile south of Stateline. Tasting room open Monday through Saturday noon-5pm, Sunday noon-4pm. Phone (541) 938-9463.

## RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

### Golf

- **Milton-Freewater Municipal Golf Course**, on the west side of town at 301 Catherine Avenue, is a 18-hole, par 72 public course. Phone (541) 938-7284.

### Skiing

- **Spout Springs** ([www.bluewood.com](http://www.bluewood.com)), 27 miles southeast of Dayton via SR-11 to Weston, then SR-204. Spout Springs offers alpine and cross-country skiing Fridays through Sundays from early December to early March. Elevation range is 5,000 ft. to 5,600 ft. Lifts include two double chairs, one T-bar and one rope tow. Cross-country skiing, snowboarding and tubing are also available. Facilities include a day lodge, restaurant, lounge and ski shop (rentals and lessons and child care). Snow phone (541) 566-0320.

**Swimming** – Milton-Freewater Aquatic Center, SW 2nd Avenue and Dehaven Street, has a public swimming pool. Open daily early June to late August. Phone (541) 938-9166.

## WINE TOURING

Thousands of visitors come to Walla Walla each year to learn more about the distinctive wines crafted in this region. Grape growing in the valley dates back to pioneer plantings in the late 1850s. Italian immigrants established the region's first bonded post-Prohibition winery in the early 1950s, which lasted only a few years. The first commercial winery started in 1977 and by the end of that decade several boutique wineries had gained a reputation for quality wines.

The federal government designated the Walla Walla Valley American Viticultural Area (AVA) in 1984. AVA's, or appellations, are wine growing regions recognized for the specific characteristics the local geography imparts to the vintages produced from grapes grown in that district. Appellation designations on bottle labels identify the origin of the grapes used to craft the wine.



*Three Rivers Winery [Photo: Walla Walla Valley Wine Alliance]*

The Walla Walla Valley AVA is a diamond-shaped area embracing 462 square miles. It extends throughout its namesake valley and adjoining hills from west of Touchet eastward into the foothills of the Blue Mountains. About a quarter of the AVA lies in Oregon, extending south to the Milton-Freewater area. The valley lies at the same latitude as the great wine producing region of Bordeaux in southern France.

Elevations range from 550 feet in the west to 1,400 feet in the foothills. Its soils – wind blown loess, stream washed silts and gravels and weathered basalt lavas – reflect a complex geologic past. Streams lace the valley, importing clear, fresh water from the flanking Blue Mountains. The valley enjoys a growing season averaging 190 to 220 days with abundant sunshine and near desert summer heat. Rainfall ranges from seven to over 18 inches, averaging 12.5 inches over the AVA.

Slope orientation and wind drainage patterns create microclimates. The more northerly latitude brings up to two hours more daylight than more southerly appellations. Collectively, these aspects, together with the winemakers craft, create the AVA's unique wines.

In 1984, the Walla Walla Valley had four wineries and 60 acres in grapes. Early growth of the industry was slow, but accelerated in the mid-1990s. Today there are more than 1,200 acres in vineyard and the number of wineries exceeds 70 and these numbers are increasing every year.

Winemakers have found the area to be particularly adapted to producing high quality red wine. The primary varietals are Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah. Increasing amounts of Sangiovese, Cabernet Franc, and whites such as Chardonnay, Gewürtztraminer, Pinot Gris, Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc, Sémillon and Viognier are being produced. Small plots of more exotic varietals such as Cunoise, Carmenère, Nebbiolo, Barbera, Malbec and Petit Verdot. Blends are also popular.

Reflecting the increasing sophistication of the area's wine industry, Walla Walla Community College has established a **Center for Enology and Viticulture** ([www.wbcc.edu/programs/proftech/EV/mission.cfm](http://www.wbcc.edu/programs/proftech/EV/mission.cfm)) on US-12 on the eastern edge of the city. The Institute, the continuing wine education program at the college, is dedicated to premium wine education and training and includes a teaching winery and vineyard.

### *On the Wine Touring Trail*

A winery visit is a highlight of a trip to Walla Walla. The great majority of area wineries are open to the public and most have regular hours for wine tasting. Several offer tours. The staff is normally more than pleased to tell you about their product. At many wineries there is no charge for wine tasting, although you will usually pay a fee to sample so-called "library" or "reserve" wines.

Estate wineries feature the production facility on the property where their grapes are grown. Some wineries are located on a site distant from the vineyards. A new trend is urban tasting rooms. In some cases these sites feature several different wineries.



*The estate Woodward Canyon estate vineyard near Lowden [Photo: Woodward Canyon Winery]*

While most visitors come to wineries on their own, limousine and van tours are also available (*see listings under SIGHTSEEING, above*). If you are not on a tour, always have a designated driver. Walking between downtown wine tasting venues is another option. Always use moderation. You do not have to drink all the wine poured. Pick three or four wineries to visit during the day, perhaps with a picnic lunch.

Above all, don't let the complex world of wine intimidate you. Relax, ask questions and enjoy the conversation, sights, sounds and smells of wine touring.

The following list of wineries, organized geographically, includes those open to the public for at least five days per week. For more visit the Walla Walla Valley Wine Alliance at <http://www.wallawallawine.com/>.

#### **CENTRAL WALLA WALLA WINERIES & TASTING ROOMS**

- **Amavi Cellars** ([www.amavicellars.com](http://www.amavicellars.com)) – 635 N. 13th Avenue, features a tasting room in a reconstructed 1890s log cabin. Open daily 11am to 5pm. Phone (509) 525-3541.
- **Ash Hollow** ([www.ashhollow.com](http://www.ashhollow.com)) – downtown tasting room at 14 N. 2nd Avenue. Open Wednesday-Saturday 11am-7pm, Sunday 11am-4pm, May-September; Wednesday-Sunday 11am-4pm, October-April. Phone (509) 529-7565.
- **Canoe Ridge Vineyard** ([www.canoeridgevineyard.com](http://www.canoeridgevineyard.com)) – 1102 W. Cherry Street, specializes in estate-grown Merlot. Open daily 11am to 5pm. Phone (509) 527-0885.
- **Forgeron Cellars** ([www.forgeroncellars.com](http://www.forgeroncellars.com)) – 33 W. Birch Street, is located in historic blacksmith shop. Tour available; phone ahead to confirm. Open daily 11am to 4pm. Phone (509) 522-9463.
- **Fort Walla Walla Cellars** ([www.fortwallawallacellars.com](http://www.fortwallawallacellars.com)) – downtown tasting room at 127 E. Main Street. Open Thursday through Monday, 10am to 4:30pm. Phone (509) 520-1095.
- **Foundry Vineyards** (<http://wallawallafoundry.com/vineyards/index.html>) is at 13th Avenue and Abadie Street. Open Tuesday-Saturday 11am-5pm. Phone (509) 529-0736.

- **Seven Hills Winery** ([www.sevenhillswinery.com](http://www.sevenhillswinery.com)) – 212 N. Third Avenue. Located in historic Whitehouse-Crawford Building. Window in tasting room overlooks winery. Open Thursday-Saturday, 11am-4pm, May-September; Saturday noon-4pm, October-April. Phone (509) 529-7198.
- **Walla Walla Village Winery** (<http://wallawallavillagewinery.com/>) – downtown tasting room at 107 S. Third Avenue. Open Monday-Saturday 11am-5pm, May-November; Friday-Saturday 11am-5pm and Sunday-Thursday 1pm-5pm, December-April. Phone (509) 525-9463.
- **Whitman Cellars** ([www.whitmancellars.com](http://www.whitmancellars.com)) – 1015 W. Pine Street. Open daily 11am to 5pm. Phone (509) 529-1142.

#### **SOUTH OF WALLA WALLA**

- **Basel Cellars Estate Winery** ([www.baselcellars.com](http://www.baselcellars.com)) – 5 miles south via SR-125 at 2901 Old Milton Highway. Beautiful estate winery open Monday-Saturday 10am-4pm, Sunday 11am-4pm. Phone (509) 522-0200.
- **Northstar Winery** ([www.northstarmerlot.com](http://www.northstarmerlot.com)) – 6 miles south via Plaza Way, Braden Road, Stateline Road to 1736 J.B. George Road Focuses in Merlot. Winery tour available on request; phone ahead to confirm. Open Wednesday-Saturday, 10am-4pm; Sunday 11am-3pm. Phone (509) 525-6100.
- **Pepper Bridge Winery** ([www.pepperbridge.com](http://www.pepperbridge.com)) – 6 miles south via Plaza Way, Braden Road, Stateline Road to 1704 J.B. George Road. Open daily 10am-4pm. Phone (509) 525-6502.

#### **EAST OF WALLA WALLA**

- **Dunham Cellars** ([www.dunhamcellars.com](http://www.dunhamcellars.com)) – Near Walla Walla Regional Airport at 150 E. Boeing Avenue. Open daily 11am-4pm. Phone (509) 529-4685.
- **Leonetti Cellar** ([www.leonetticellar.com](http://www.leonetticellar.com)) – 1875 Foothills Lane. Storied Leonetti is the oldest winery in the region, established in 1977. Not open to them public.
- **Russell Creek Winery** ([www.russellcreek-winery.com](http://www.russellcreek-winery.com)) Near Walla Walla Regional Airport at 301 Aeronca Avenue. Open daily 11am-4pm. Phone (509) 386-4401.
- **Sapolil Cellars** ([www.sapolilcellars.com](http://www.sapolilcellars.com)) – Near Walla Walla Regional Airport at 425 ‘B’ Street. Open Tuesday-Sunday 1pm to 4pm. Phone (509) 520-5258.

#### **WEST OF WALLA WALLA**

- **L’Ecole No. 41** ([www.lecole.com](http://www.lecole.com)) – 16 miles west on US-12 in Lowden. Located in 1915 Frenchtown School. Self-guided tours of schoolhouse and teaching vineyard. Open daily 10am-5pm. Phone (509) 525-0940.
- **Reininger Winery** ([www.reiningerwinery.com](http://www.reiningerwinery.com)) – 6 miles west on US-12 at 5858 West Highway 12. Open daily 10am-6pm (till 5pm winter). Phone (509) 522-1994.
- **Three Rivers Winery** ([www.threeriverswinery.com](http://www.threeriverswinery.com)) – 6 miles west on US-12 at 5641 West Highway 12. Self-guided tours available. Open daily 10am-6pm. Phone (509) 526-9463.
- **Woodward Canyon Winery** ([www.woodwardcanyon.com](http://www.woodwardcanyon.com)) – 16 miles west on US-12 in Lowden. Open daily 10am-5pm. Phone (509) 525-4129.

jpk – 13 November, 2007