



**S**et in the shadow of the mountain it's named for, Rainier's stunning view earned its original name from local tribes as "the best yet."

By the 19th century, the little town was growing thanks to the Gehrke family and the Tacoma-Kalama railroad. Several structures and a park honor the first pioneer settlers, including the church and schoolhouse, both of which are registered Washington historical landmarks. The church, built in 1896 and similar in turn-of-the-century German style to the historic Little White Church in Elbe, retains its early American style.

The Americana feel is mirrored in the quaint downtown, home to such pleasures as Main Street Cookie Company and charming oddities like the historic Gehrke outhouse. If you're riding the entire length of the Yelm-Rainier-Tenino Trail, this is a good place to stop for a break, as it's the exact midpoint of the trek. Savor a cookie and a cup of coffee—but stick to the working bathrooms.

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## YOUR GUIDE TO

"The Best Yet"

**EXPERIENCERAINIERWA.COM**



# THINGS TO DO

## 1 WILKOWSKI PARK

Ideal for throwing the football, letting the kids run loose, or hosting a family picnic, Wilkowski Park is a wide open space right off the Yelm-Rainier-Tenino Trail. Pick up the bike path from here for a ride in either direction.

## 2 ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

This charming church, built by the Gehrke brothers in 1896, resembles other German-built churches—namely, the “little white church” in Elbe, Washington. It was the first local building to land on the Washington State Heritage Register, and it’s available to rent for special occasions. 207 Olympia St W, [cityofrainierwa.org/parks/pages/church-rental](http://cityofrainierwa.org/parks/pages/church-rental)

## 3 GEHRKE PARK

This older but centrally located park in Rainier has traditional play structures for young kids and lots of open grassy space for setting up a picnic or whiling the day away.

## 4 MAIN STREET COOKIE COMPANY

Housed in a historic building that could pass for an old saloon, Main Street Cookie Company churns out handcrafted cookies, danishes, cinnamon buns, cheesecake bites, savory breads, and so much more—don’t read this, go there now! And if you can’t go right now, check their website for regional locations that carry their products. 112 Binghampton St, 360-446-0232, [mainstreetcookies.com](http://mainstreetcookies.com)



## 5 HISTORIC OUTHOUSE

Peer around the corner from Main Street Cookie Company and check out another piece of local history: Rainier founder Albert Gehrke’s outhouse. The 120-year-old privy managed to survive a few moves, not to mention lots of tushies, before it was relocated to the parking lot beside the cookie shop. It’s a fun artifact of Rainier’s past, but not exactly open for business.

## 6 RAINIER BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL

This bluegrass festival held at Wilkowski Park is a family-friendly affair with “pickin’ and jammin’” sessions, gospel, live bands, and general fun. Get there early to stake out a spot in the park to set up your campsite. [rainierpickinparty.com](http://rainierpickinparty.com)

## 7 RAINIER ROUND UP DAYS

The same weekend as the bluegrass festival but not officially related, Round Up Days has been an institution since the 1960s. With a parade, family games, and more, the fourth weekend in August is the time to be in Rainier.

## 8 YELM-RAINIER-TENINO TRAIL MIDPOINT

Rainier marks the halfway point of the Yelm-Rainier-Tenino Trail. It’s a good place to stop for a breather (and a cookie) or to hop on your bike to pick up half the trail in either direction.

[wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/yelm-tenino-trail](http://wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/yelm-tenino-trail)

## 9 EATS AND SIPS

In addition to its legendary cookies, Rainier offers a couple of options. Rainier Pizza and Espresso, which makes a lot more than just highly rated pizza and espresso, is a favorite stop for ramblers on the Yelm-Rainier-Tenino Trail. Up the road, Glenda’s brews coffee from 5am to 5pm.

Rainier Pizza and Espresso, 207

Binghampton St SE

Glenda’s, 901 Binghampton St

## 10 CHEHALIS WESTERN TRAIL

In addition to being a stop on the Yelm-Rainier-Tenino Trail, Rainier is also an end/start point on the Chehalis Western Trail, a 22-mile biking and hiking path that connects Rainier with Olympia and passes through Lacey, Yelm, and Tenino, with a myriad of ecosystems and urban stops along the way, including the Monarch Sculpture Park. The rails-to-trails project once was the Chehalis Western Railroad from the late 1800s through the 1980s.

[wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/chehalis-western-trail](http://wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/chehalis-western-trail)

