



## [A Weekend Getaway with Year-Round Family Fun](#)

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Why, hello there, Hood Canal! We're sorry we've overlooked you for so long — you seem so far away over there on the peninsula... but in reality, you're the perfect weekend getaway, aren't you? Not only are we in love with the fun way to get to you (a ferry one way or a cool bridge the other...), but once we get to the Hood Canal, we love every moment of the slowed-down pace, the kid-friendly activities and, oh, did we mention this little old place called Alderbrook Resort? Really, Hood Canal... We've got a major crush on you.



### The Hook Up on the Hood Canal

If you don't already know where the Hood Canal is, you'll be surprised to learn that it's practically in Seattle's backyard. Despite technically being between the Olympic and Kitsap Peninsulas, it takes less than two-hours to get to the Hood Canal. And being right at the base of those Olympic Mountains that shine across the sound at us in Seattle on sunny days, that two-hour drive is well worth it... even if you're packing a minivan full of mischief.

The Hood Canal itself is actually a fjord (quick geography lesson: a long, narrow inlet of water that was formed by glaciers, not man, like a true canal) and reaches about as far south as Tacoma and as far north as Everett. While it's unlikely that you and your kids are going to stand at the edge of the water on the Hood Canal and have a major life changing "we're finally visiting a fjord!" moment, you are going to love the sea-

creature filled tide flats, the calm waters and the beaches filled with rocks that are just begging to be thrown in the water.

Add kid-friendly hikes, some unique low-key attractions and a feeling that whispers tourist, rather than shouting it, three-year old style, and you have a weekend family getaway in one pretty little package with the Hood Canal. A package wrapped in Star Wars paper and tied with a cattywampus bow, naturally!



## By Boat or By Bridge

Deciding how to get to the Hood Canal is going to be the hardest part of this entire trip. If you're venturing to the south end of the Hood Canal, which is a great place to explore with kids, you have two route choices: by boat or by bridge.

### **Choice #1**

Take the Bremerton Ferry from downtown Seattle. The ride is about 60-minutes long and once you're on the other side of the water, it's a short drive (approximately 30-minutes) to Hood Canal fun. (Psst! You can also take the South Worth ferry from West Seattle!)

The Upside: You can really use the ferry as part of the adventure — pack a lunch to eat upstairs and enjoy the view!

The Downside: Waiting in that ferry line could add significant time onto your trip. Try your best to avoid peak commuter times, if possible and get to the ferry dock in plenty of time.

## Choice #2

Drive around, through Tacoma! Take the very cool Tacoma Narrows Bridge across to the peninsula, then venture towards the Hood Canal via Port Orchard and Belfair.

The Upside: If traffic is behaving itself (are you listening, traffic?), driving will likely get you to the Hood Canal quicker.

The Downside: Driving is way less awesome than taking the ferry.



## All About Alderbrook

While the Hood Canal itself is certainly a star, the true showstopper is [Alderbrook Resort and Spa](#). Tucked away towards the south end of the Hood Canal, near a tiny little town called Union, Alderbrook is the place to stay if you're heading to the Hood for the weekend. Don't let the "resort and spa" part of the name throw you off — Alderbrook flawlessly marries the plush-adult-summer-camp vibe with the kids-are-completely-welcome-here vibe. Families choose Alderbrook as a getaway destination over and over again because of how accommodating they are to children, while maintaining a setting that lowers any mother's blood pressure the moment she drives into the parking lot.



Here's what you need to know about staying at Alderbrook:

- **Room vs. cottage:** If you're up for splurging or need a little more room, the cottages at Alderbrook are our first choice. They're all surrounding a big green stretch of grass that's perfect for romping around. Rather go with a classic guestroom, hotel-style? Ask for a room with a deck or a room on the floor that opens up into the resort grounds.
- **The 411 on food:** The resort has one yummy restaurant that features everything from fresh seafood to kiddie faves. Kids are always welcome, but we recommend going the big, late lunch route to beat the fancier dinner crowd.
- **BYO Snacks:** Not that we have to tell you this, because it's practically the first rule of the Parenting Handbook (have you gotten the latest edition on Amazon yet?), but, we'll say it again, just in case. Bring your own snacks.
- **Thanks a latte:** Here's a little insider tip... If you go to the reception desk at the restaurant at Alderbrook and say "pretty please," they'll make you a latte to go that will satisfy your 4pm caffeine hankering. You don't actually have to say "pretty please," but you do need to know your room number so that you can charge it to your account.
- **Little hikers:** Kids of all ages will think the hiking trails at Alderbrook are awesome and with routes that loop back around, there are countless new ways to discover. Older kids will love being the trail blazers and leading the family through the woods. Younger kids will appreciate the smooth, wide trails that are perfect for beginners. Bring your camera — there's a great vantage point that's screaming for you to take a family picture!
- **Pool time:** You tell your kids you're going away for the weekend — their first question? "Is there a pool?" Thankfully, you can say "yes." Alderbrook has an indoor pool that is open year-round, so even if the wind is whipping through the Hood Canal, they can swim their little hearts out. In the summer, they open up the big glass doors of the pool house for some fresh air. **Parent tip:** You can order food from the restaurant in the pool house... including anything from the bar! Margaritas poolside, anyone?

- **Get your game room on:** Don't miss the game room at Alderbrook, which is located just above the check-in desk in the lobby. Stop at the desk first to grab some video games and controllers, then head upstairs for some serious gaming fun. If you have tweens or teens in your family, you're going to be hard-pressed to get them out of there! \$5 per hour, per player.
- **Celebrating a century:** Happy birthday, Alderbrook! You're looking pretty good for turning 100 this year! Be sure to keep a close eye on the [Events Calendar on the Alderbrook Resort and Spa website](#) — they are celebrating this big birthday with endless family-friendly and family-focused events and activities.



## Even More to Explore

Add these fun activities to your Hood Canal to-do list:

Visit the walkable labyrinths at [Harmony Hills Retreat Center](#). It's free to explore their gorgeous grounds, although donations are suggested. Be sure to call ahead (360-898-2363) to make sure that the grounds are open to visitors — there's nothing more awkward than showing up to a meditation retreat in progress with your toddler. Oops!

One of the warmest salt water beaches in the entire state? Yes, please! Even if it's too cold to take a dip, [Twanoh State Park](#) is a fun place to play on the Hood Canal. Be sure to bring water shoes for exploring! On the way back home, stop at the [Bug Museum](#), located in Bremerton, where you'll hop on the ferry. Admission is free and they are open daily from 10:00 am – 5:00 pm. Get the heebie jeebies over creepy crawly creatures? Make dad take the kids inside while you wait in the car!

**Does your family love the Hood Canal? Tell us what you love to do there!**

– Katie Kavulla, photos and story