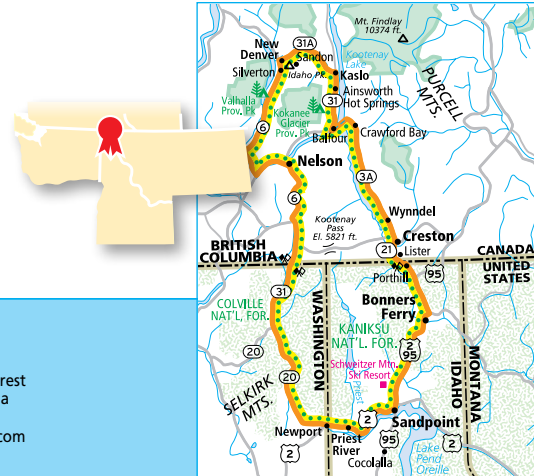


# Three States, Two Countries, One Adventurous Drive

## Sandpoint, Idaho through B.C. and Washington and back



### EDITOR'S PICKS

- **Schweitzer Mountain Resort**  
10000 Schweitzer  
Mountain Rd.  
Sandpoint, ID  
(800) 831-8810  
[www.schweitzer.com](http://www.schweitzer.com)
- **Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area**  
760 W. Creston Rd.  
Creston, BC, Canada  
(250) 402-6905  
[www.crestonwildlife.ca](http://www.crestonwildlife.ca)
- **Idaho Peak Trail and Lookout**  
Operated by BC Forest  
Sandton, BC, Canada  
(250) 365-8600  
[www.slocanvalley.com](http://www.slocanvalley.com)
- **Selkirk Mountain Elk Ranch**  
HCR 60  
Bonners Ferry, ID  
(208) 267-7438  
[www.selkirkmountainelkranch.com](http://www.selkirkmountainelkranch.com)
- **North Woven Broom Company**  
BC 3A  
Crawford Bay, BC, Canada  
(250) 227-9245;  
(866) 471-1117  
[www.northwovenbroom.com](http://www.northwovenbroom.com)
- **Oso Negro Café**  
604 Ward St.  
Nelson, BC, Canada  
(250) 352-7661;  
(877) 232-6489  
[www.osonegrocoffee.com](http://www.osonegrocoffee.com)

The International Selkirk Loop in Idaho, Washington, and southern British Columbia, Canada, is rightly billed as remote, uncrowded, and undiscovered. The drive on mostly two-lane roads in towns between the Selkirk Mountain range and the Purcell Mountains oozes adventure. Hike near big game such as moose and elk, canoe among protected wildfowl, hunt for sweet huckleberries in summer. Here the beer's as strong and locally brewed as the coffee.



*Wolf pups at Wolf People*

Nancy Taylor loves wolves, owns about 20, and shows one or two of the pack daily at her store, Wolf People, in Cocolalla, Idaho. None of her wolves were born in the wild, though. "People think a wolf will be a snarling monster, and they usually end up kissing and greeting them," Taylor says. "I want to educate people so wolves can one day live safely." The seven-room gift shop features books, posters, toys, and Native American goods.

Twelve miles of paved biking/walking trails head west and south of Sandpoint, along Lake Pend Oreille. Visitors enjoy fishing for "Kamloops Trout," kayaking, and lazing on the long stretch of white sand at City Beach Park downtown. Watch handcrafted blue cheese being made, then sample it at the Litehouse Blue Cheese Factory and store. At the other end of downtown, Pend d'Oreille Winery offers tours upon request and tastings for \$5 (which is subtracted from the price of a bottle if you buy one).

The nine-mile twisting drive up to **Schweitzer Mountain Resort** reaps a multitude of rewards. The quad chairlift takes riders and their bikes up, and the trip down can be made via mountain bike, foot, or an easy ride on the chairlift. At the base, a climbing wall and bungee jump entertain youngsters.

The Kootenai Tribe owns the casino in Bonners Ferry, but it's not the only visitor attraction. At the Tribal Sturgeon Hatchery, Jack Siple and Eric Wagoner proudly conduct tours (call ahead at (208) 267-7082) of the hatchery, dedicated to preserving the rare white sturgeon. The ancient creature with an aerodynamic pointed nose can live up to 120 years, though numbers dwindled dramatically in the early 1970s when a dam was built.

In town, peruse new and used titles at Bonners Books, and check out unique housewares and organic espresso at Under the Sun. Stop and sip a Moose Drool stout from Missoula at Mugsy's. Overnighters can finally sleep in school at the Northside School Bed & Breakfast, a restful 1912 schoolhouse-turned-lodging. Owner Ruth Perry can show you her first-grade room, now an elegant dining room.

Dawn is the best time to ride bikes on top of the old town dyke to Kootenai National Wildlife Refuge, where waterfowl find a resting spot on the Pacific Flyway, and moose wander to feed among the marshy grass.



*Selkirk Mountain Elk Ranch*



*Kokanee Glacier  
Provincial Park*



*Schweitzer Mountain Resort*

**H**ead north from Bonners Ferry to reach **Selkirk Mountain Elk Ranch**. One of the owners, Fred Robbins, takes visitors out to pet and feed apples to his favorite bull elk, Swift, as well as photograph other grazing elk. Elk meat, lower in fat and cholesterol than even bison, is for sale, along with elk jerky and antlers.

Look to the left near the U.S./Canada border at Porthill and you'll see the world's largest contiguous hops fields, owned by Anheuser-Busch. Drive down the side road for a closeup.

Just over the border in Lister, British Columbia, follow signs to Sproule's Scenic Acres, and pick your own hydroponic strawberries and blueberries (in season). A little farther up the road in Creston, Columbia Brewery offers free tours on weekdays in summer. A peaceful scene awaits at the **Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area**. Wildlife nest and feed in the ponds, and boardwalks wind through much of the marshy area, which is open 24/7. During visitor center hours, guided voyager canoe trips glide past great blue herons, osprey, beaver dams, and more. Overnight at RoseHaven Farm Bed and Breakfast, just 15 minutes' drive away, which overlooks the valley and is backed by mountains.



*North Woven Broom Company*

Motorcyclists love the twisting road up toward Crawford Bay, where the Crawford Bay artisans community rates a stop of several hours. Watch a blacksmith at the forge, a glassblower making vases, enamellists, and weavers. But don't miss **North Woven Broom Company**. Yes, they made promotional brooms for Harry Potter books, but the scent of broomstraw and the careful handcrafting will make you want to buy several for home. Prices range from \$10 for whisk brooms to more than \$100 for unusually shaped wood-handled full-size brooms. Between two owners and their two assistants, they make around 6,500 brooms per year.

Just past the artisans, the road leads visitors to the world's longest free ferry ride, across Kootenay Lake to Balfour. Views of ospreys, the Kokanee Glacier, and other mountain vistas make this the ultimate cheap thrill.

Ainsworth Hot Springs lies just a few miles north on BC 31. Hot spring water flows through a natural cave that makes a great warming spot on a cool day. Veer left on BC 31A toward Sandon Historic Mining Town. A dirt road leads up 13 km on hairpin turns to **Idaho Peak**. On a summer's day, this 1.5-km trail (rocky, a bit vertical) may be crowded with alpine wildflower lovers. It's a dazzling sight at the crest of a hill where an old fire-lookout tower stands, with the towns of New Denver and Silverton below, the peaks of Valhalla Provincial Park and Kokanee Glacier Provincial Park in the distance. Time permitting, stop in New Denver on BC 6 at Nikkei Memorial Internment Centre, where cabins filled with artifacts tell the story of the Japanese Canadians who were interned there during World War II.

Nelson became a hometown for draft dodgers during the Vietnam War, and it's still a haven for gray-haired hippies and New Age flower children. Java lovers venture to 604 Ward St. and **Oso Negro Café**. Order a cup, pick from 20 different bean blends to take home, relax on the tiered patio outside, and reflect on the mountains in sight. The café is open daily. (The coffee company also has a roastery just a few blocks away in the same building as Nelson Brewing Company, so you can do two tours in the same spot.)

The final leg of this journey travels back over the U.S./Canada border into Washington state, through charming little towns and lots of wilderness. Trucks loaded with logs trundle through downtown Newport, at the Idaho/Washington border. Order a malt at the old-fashioned soda fountain inside Owen's Grocery or grab a box of tater babies (diced and breaded potatoes) to go. The Pend Orielle County Historical Museum across the street features log cabins filled with artifacts, and even a fire tower that you can walk inside to see what life was like high in the mountains. Remote, uncrowded, undiscovered. Like this drive.