

Wings Over Washington Takes Flight at Pier 57 in Seattle - ParentMap

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Wings Over Washington Takes Flight at Pier 57 in Seattle

The new "flying theater" attraction on the waterfront lets viewers soar over our state's most iconic landscapes

By Gemma Alexander



A still from Wings Over Washington: Seattle night

It's hard to know how to label Wings Over Washington (WOW), the new attraction that just opened at Miner's Landing on Pier 57 in Seattle. Is it a ride? A theater? A flight simulator? A little bit of all of these things, WOW combines mobile seats with an IMAX-like theater screen and 3D-type photography tricks to present a fly-over view of iconic Washington landscapes.

"There's only one thing wrong with it," my 7-year-old pronounced as we left the "flying theater," as WOW calls itself.

"What is that?" I asked.

"It's too short!"

At about 20 minutes, Wings Over Washington (which is on the same pier as the Great Wheel and built by the same owners), is actually longer than most rides, but I knew what she meant; it felt like no time at all. The experience begins in an anteroom disguised as a log cabin. There you watch an introductory video. A park ranger character presents safety instructions and questionable Native American mythology interwoven with animatronic totem animals and humor so deliberately hokey that even my guileless 12-year-old was rolling her eyes.

After that somewhat dubious beginning, you are herded into the actual theater, where you buckle in to oversized theater chairs and stow all loose items (including flip-flops) in pouches under the seat. The lights dim, the seats rise up and you find yourself suspended over the screen.



A view of Roche Harbor seen at Wings Over Washington

The actual film is drone footage of iconic Washington landscapes, including Seattle's own waterfront, Olympic National Forest, the San Juan Islands, Snoqualmie Falls and the Walla Walla Valley Balloon Stampede. In theory, it's a pretty thorough tour of the state, but **in practice it might be more of a treat for locals who can recognize the sights than for tourists who won't.** There is no narration telling the audience what they are looking at; the emphasis is on experience, not education.

And the experience is surprisingly immersive. In fact, it was so convincing that the abrupt scene changes were a little disorienting. I couldn't hear the musical score, performed by the Native American group Sacred Water Canoe Family, over the squeals of my two girls, who reacted as though the theater were a real roller coaster. To me, the experience felt more like dreams of flying. The seats replicated an airplane's elevation changes, banking and even acceleration as they shifted positions with none of the jerkiness of a coaster. **Well-timed sprays of mist heightened the sense of reality and I'd be lying if I said that I didn't lift my feet up to avoid a breaching orca.**



Wings Over Washington

Is it right for your kid?

Although Wings Over Washington has some thrilling moments — scaling Snoqualmie Falls and dangling over mountain passes — **it does not have the vertical drops and other extremes of motion that turn many people off of roller coasters.** Barring sensory disorders or severe fear of heights, the flying theater is not a scary ride. Here are some tips on going with your crew:

- Seat belts thread through a strap between the legs, which can be awkward in a long or full skirt. Although not required, **pants or shorts are a more comfortable choice.**
- **You must be between 47 inches and 76 inches tall** and weigh less than 300 pounds to ride.
- **Children under the age of 12** must be accompanied by an adult or guardian aged 14 years or over.
- As with carnival rides, there are **contraindications for some health conditions and limits to accessibility**; contact WOW at info@pier57seattle.com with specific concerns.

If you go...

Where and when: Pier 57, Miner's Landing, 1301 Alaska Way, Seattle 98101

Summer hours: June–September: Sunday–Thursday, 10 a.m.–11 p.m.; Friday–Saturday, 10 a.m.–midnight

Winter hours: October–May: Monday–Thursday, 11 a.m.–10 p.m., Friday: 11–midnight; Saturday, 10 a.m.–midnight; Sunday, 10 a.m.–10 p.m.

Tickets: Adult (ages 12–64), \$17; youth (11 and under), \$13; senior (65 and over), \$15

Parking: Limited and expensive parking, downtown traffic and construction on 99 make this is one excursion where public transportation really is easier than driving. Use Metro's [Trip Planner](#) to find your route. If you must drive, [Downtown Seattle Parking](#) can help you find a spot.

Info: [Wings Over Washington](#)

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