

Five Family Experiences Not to Miss at Semiahmoo

Semiahmoo Resort gives families a place to detach — and connect

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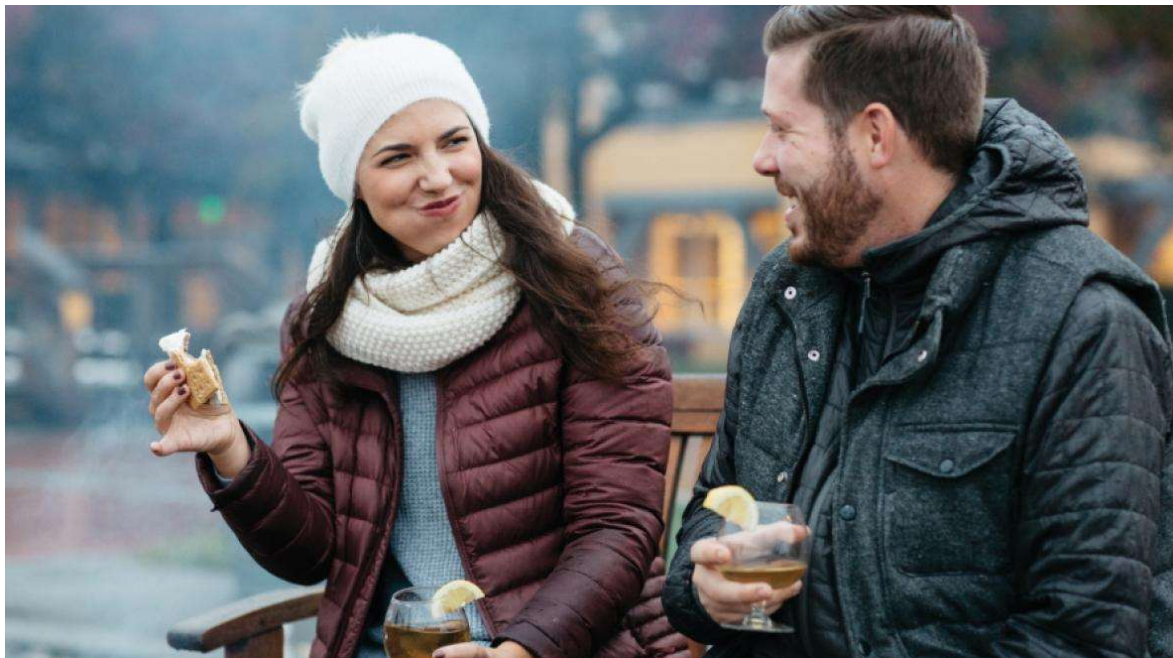


PHOTO: Saskia Potter

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Semiahmoo, about as far north as you can get in the contiguous United States, is surrounded by the Salish Sea. That might make the family- and pet-friendly resort sound like a summer destination, but [Semiahmoo Resort, Golf & Spa](https://www.semiahmoo.com/) (<https://www.semiahmoo.com/>) has just as much to offer during the winter months.

“The resort is a set-apart location. It’s really a place for families to detach from everyday life and just relax and reconnect with each other,” says Laura DeMott, director of operations at Semiahmoo. With 300 acres surrounding the nearly 200-room hotel, the resort feels cozy and isolated, even when it’s full of families during school breaks. Parents who need their own break might decide to indulge in some more grown-up recreation in the spa or at one of the resort’s monthly wine dinners.

But most of the time, DeMott says, “Families are just excited to spend time with each other here.”

Here are five memories your family should make this winter at Semiahmoo.

Big holiday events or small special moments

For a lot of people, missing big holiday get-togethers with extended family has been one of the hardest aspects of the pandemic. Others perhaps have preferred the quieter version of holiday cheer these past couple of years. Now that we can gather again safely, even the extroverts among us are discovering they perhaps didn’t miss the work of planning and preparing big holiday meals. Semiahmoo has both camps covered with its holiday and seasonal events, for which you can simply show up, relax and enjoy.

The resort is partnering with a theater group to wrap up the spooky Halloween season with a murder-mystery-themed weekend Nov. 4–6. There will be a formal hosted Grand Feast on Thanksgiving (as well as more casual feasting fare at the in-house restaurant). And on Dec. 10, Semiahmoo will host a festive holiday tree-lighting ceremony, complete with cocoa and candy canes. Local art vendors will set up shop, and Santa and the Grinch will also make appearances. If you miss the big events, you can make any evening a special one with complimentary s’mores kits. Weather permitting, the outdoor fire pit is lit every day of the year.

Biking the beach

One of the resort’s most popular activities is biking around Semiahmoo Spit. Semiahmoo has free rental bikes available for all ages — some are even equipped with training wheels. Families can bike the flat, paved trail that runs the length of the spit. Even though it’s an easy ride, plan for frequent stops to explore tide pools and spot

wildlife. Bird-watching is especially good in the winter, when you might see cormorants, great blue herons, hawks or even the resident bald eagles. Keep an eye out for harbor seals, too!

“You really can’t beat being surrounded on all sides by water, and the sunset views that you get, well, it kind of feels like you’re in a lost land,” says DeMott.



Photo credit: Saskia Potter

Family movie nights

If you got used to watching movies on individual devices during the pandemic, Semiahmoo lets you bring back the family movie night experience to the big screen. On weekends, the resort screens movies in its 50-seat theater. Outside of these scheduled showings, your family can reserve the theater to watch your choice of any movie in the resort’s collection. You can make your reservation for a private showing, but there’s plenty of room for other guests if you’re open to drop-ins.

“It’s a great way to meet other kids and families and make those vacation connections,” says DeMott. Some instant childhood friendships have formed under the glow of a classic family movie in the theater.

Storm watching

When it comes to winter on the spit, “So much depends on the weather,” says DeMott. “A lot of what makes the Pacific Northwest great is those stormy days. There’s nothing like sitting and watching those storms come in from the water and having those cozy days inside,” says DeMott.

Semiahmoo has as much to do indoors as out. The resort has a stash of board games, a pool table and an indoor basketball court. There’s even a heated indoor/outdoor swimming pool, where kids can safely swim while the ocean rages outside. But even with all of these distractions, kids often prefer to sit by the windows, either in the lobby, where they can watch the winter storms roll in off the Salish Sea while basking in the heat from the fireplace, or at the resort’s Packers Kitchen + Bar, where they can enjoy delicious local specialties and seafood, such as fresh PNW oysters.



Photo credit: Brent Loe

Get your golf on

Golf was once the exclusive purview of old men, but kids have been getting into the game in a big way lately. This year, Semiahmoo hosted the state junior golf tournament, and lots of families are bundling up to try Semiahmoo’s course in the cooler months. Its challenges include water in play on five holes and 67 strategically placed bunkers.

“It’s common to see three generations out there golfing together,” says DeMott. “It’s really a draw for all ages, and it’s becoming a new way for families to get outside to do something together.” Tee box placements adjust the difficulty to make the course playable for golfers of different skill levels. But if a golfer isn’t ready for the course (or if

the weather outside is really too much), they can practice in the resort’s high-tech virtual golf simulator. Players use real balls and clubs to play on simulations of famous courses from around the world.

Bonus: Learn a little history

White Rock, Canada, is visible from Semiahmoo; Vancouver is just 30 minutes away by car; and guests at the resort can access three border crossings near Blaine. If you head out on a day trip to Canada or even just into Blaine, be sure to visit the Semiahmoo Park Maritime Museum in the park at the beginning of the spit. “They have a lot of great information about the land and the Indigenous tribes here, all the way through when it was a packing plant to where we are now,” says DeMott.

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