

# *WL* The Joy of Doing Nothing on Mayne Island



Photo Credit: John Sinal

*Why this delightfully sleepy Gulf Island should be your next getaway.*

By [Julia Dilworth](#) // May 17, 2016

Mayne Island is a place where boats are propped up in front yards in every state of disrepair, doors are left unlocked (and open, actually, with a screen door), residents use the honour system for trading books or selling flowers in public wooden huts, and, instead of bus stops, you'll find designated car stops (occasionally with complimentary plastic seating) for picking up hitchhikers along the road. It's the quintessential small-town beach community that's been head-scratchingly left off the tourist map.

Here, you're going to see a lot more nature than civilization, and yet this isn't the destination to do a ton of active, outdoorsy stuff like hiking, as I find a grand total of only one skyscraper-height peak at the centre of the island and a smattering of even-keeled walking trails (that won't have you breaking a sweat or an ankle). A pre-trip Internet search of [Mayne Island](#) activities actually lists "doing nothing" as the headliner. So what's the draw? For one, unlike its neighbouring isles, even at the height of "busy" season here, there isn't the seasonal influx of tourists crowding up the few beaches, taking up all the good patio spots or disrupting the lives of locals with a youthful bevy of drunken antics. There are no bucket-list sights or activities that you absolutely must see or do on the island, and that is a big part of its charm. You can literally put zero effort into exploring and just enjoy yourself walking around without a trace of FOMO.



And the best way to explore the island without a major trajectory is by bike. I find frequent excuses to stop, like the well-curated book store, [Miners Bay Books](#), which is just a demi-pedal from the [Farm Gate Store](#) and café, packed with supplies and locally made jams, soaps and snacks. A stop in at [Nomads Essentials](#) in “downtown” Miners Bay will give you a sense of what locals do in fact get up to. A walk up the wooden stairs into the converted house reveals shelves of Mayne Island-crafted goods: chicly packaged dry shampoo and body polish from the Healthy Ox, a line of natural toothpaste and deodorant from the local Dr. Ariel Jones, and Nomads Essentials, whose artisan soaps and home products are crafted by owner Barbara McIntyre (who, the cashier tells me, is normally there herself to give hugs to customers).

Getting off the bike is good, too. You can stroll [Campbell Point Trail](#), a grassy walk that wraps around Bennett Bay. Here I find a local meditating on a rock in front of churning waters that twist and thrash continuously between the shore and Georgeson Island. I briefly consider joining her—even after only a few days on Mayne, it seemed like the logical thing to do.

## Mayne Island Fast Facts

**Named After** Lieutenant Richard Charles Mayne, son of the first commissioner of the London Metropolitan Police and an officer on the *HMS Plumper*

**Size** 21 sq km

**Population** 1,071

**Local Luminaries** Writer Grant Buday, designers Kerry Johnson and Ian McLeod, photographer John Sinal

**Signature Dish** Western sandwich from [Sunny Mayne Bakery](#): seared green and red peppers, onions and mushrooms mix in with eggs and cheese in between two toasted slices of whole wheat, seed-packed bread.

**Rest Your Head** [Mayne Island Resort](#) is the easy choice. It's right on the water in picturesque Bennett Bay, and bikes and helmets are free for guests. But this is also prime Airbnb territory, so a search for rental properties is a savvy choice.

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