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# San Juan County, Washington



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San Juan County (Spanish: Condado de San Juan) is a county located in the Salish Sea in the far northwestern corner of the U.S. state of Washington. As of the 2020 census, its population was 17,788.<sup>[1]</sup> The county seat and only incorporated town is Friday Harbor,<sup>[2]</sup> located on San Juan Island. The county was formed on October 31, 1873, from Whatcom County<sup>[3]</sup> and is named for the San Juan Islands, which are in turn named for Juan Vicente de Güemes, 2nd Count of Revillagigedo,<sup>[4]</sup> the Viceroy of New Spain.

Although the islands themselves have no state highways, the ferry routes serving the islands are designated as part of the state highway system.

### History [edit]

The San Juan Islands were the subject of a territorial dispute between Great Britain and the United States from 1846 to 1872, leading to the Pig War in 1859. The bloodless conflict ended through arbitration led by Kaiser Wilhelm I, which awarded the islands to the United States.<sup>[5]</sup> San Juan County was home to Henry Cayou, one of the first elected officials of Native descent in Washington.<sup>[6]</sup>

# Geography [edit]

According to the United States Census Bureau, the county has a total area of 621 square miles  $(1,610 \text{ km}^2)$ , of which 174 square miles  $(450 \text{ km}^2)$  is land and 447 square miles  $(1,160 \text{ km}^2)$  (72%)is water.<sup>[7]</sup> It is the smallest county in Washington by land area and fourth-smallest by total area.

San Juan County is a cluster of more than 400 islands and rocks with elevations above mean high tide. 134 of these islands and rocks are named. The county has a rugged, rocky shoreline and several mountains. The highest point in the county is Mount Constitution on Orcas Island at 2,407 feet (734 m) above sea level.

#### Geographic features [edit]

- Boundary Pass
- Haro Strait
- Rosario Strait
- San Juan Islands
- Strait of Georgia
- Strait of Juan de Fuca

# Major islands [edit]

There are approximately 743 islands and rocks in the San Juan Island chain. Most of the county's population lives on the largest four islands, which are the only county islands served by the Washington State Ferries. The four largest islands are:

- Orcas Island (149.43 km<sup>2</sup>; 57.70 sq mi)
- San Juan Island (143.62 km<sup>2</sup>; 55.45 sq mi)
- Lopez Island (76.57 km<sup>2</sup>; 29.56 sq mi)
- Shaw Island (19.64 km<sup>2</sup>; 7.58 sq mi)

#### Adjacent counties [edit]

- Whatcom County northeast
- Skagit County east
- Island County southeast
- Jefferson County south
- Clallam County south/southwest
- Capital Regional District, British Columbia west

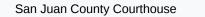
#### National protected areas [edit]

- San Juan Island National Historical Park
- San Juan Islands National Wildlife Refuge
- San Juan Islands National Monument



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Washington's location within the U.S Coordinates: 🥥 48°34′N 122°58′W

Country State	United States Washington
Founded	October 31, 1873
Named for	San Juan Islands
Seat	Friday Harbor
Largest town	Friday Harbor
Area	
• Total	621 sq mi (1,610 km <sup>2</sup> )
• Land	174 sq mi (450 km <sup>2</sup> )
• Water	447 sq mi (1,160 km <sup>2</sup> ) 72%
Population (2020)	
• Total	17,788
• Estimate (2022)	18,662 🔺
Density	96/sq mi (37/km <sup>2</sup> )
Time zone	UTC-8 (Pacific)
• Summer (DST)	UTC-7 (PDT)
Congressional district	2nd
Website	www.sanjuanco.com 🗗



• San Juan Wilderness

# Demographics [edit]

The county's population grew from around 4,000 in 1970 to nearly 19,000 by 2022, including a significant contingent of remote workers. Due to high housing costs, San Juan County has the highest income inequality rate in Washington.<sup>[13]</sup>

#### 2020 census [edit]

As of the 2020 census, there were 17,788 people, and 8,378 households in the county.<sup>[1]</sup> The population density was 102.3 people per square mile (39.5 people/km<sup>2</sup>). The racial makeup was 93.5% White, 0.9% African American, 1.1% Native American, 1.7% Asian, 0.1% Pacific Islander, and 2.6% from two or more races. Those of Hispanic or Latino origin made up 6.8% of the population.<sup>[1]</sup>

12.5% of the population were under 18, and 2.8% were under 5. People over 65 made up 35.1% of the population. The gender makeup of the county was 50.9% female, and 49.1% male.<sup>[1]</sup>

The median household income was \$68,577, and the per capita income was \$52,881. 10.8% of the population were below the poverty line.<sup>[1]</sup>

#### 2010 census [edit]

As of the 2010 census, there were 15,769 people, 7,613 households, and 4,438 families residing in the county.<sup>[14]</sup> The population density was 90.7 people per square mile (35.0 people/km<sup>2</sup>). There were 13,313 housing units at an average density of 76.5 units per square mile (29.5 units/km<sup>2</sup>).<sup>[15]</sup> The racial makeup of the county was 92.6% white, 1.1% Asian, 0.7% American Indian, 0.3% black or African American, 0.1% Pacific islander, 2.6% from other races, and 2.5% from two or more races. Those of Hispanic or Latino origin made up 5.4% of the population.<sup>[14]</sup> The largest ancestry groups were:<sup>[16]</sup>

- 19.6% German
- 19.3% English
- 14.1% Irish
- 5.6% Norwegian
- 5.6% Scottish
- 5.0% French
- 4.4% Swedish
- 3.1% Scotch-Irish • 2.9% Dutch
- 2.8% American

• 4.2% Mexican

• 3.6% Italian

- 2.1% Welsh
- 1.8% Polish

Of the 7,613 households, 19.3% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 48.3% were married couples living together, 6.6% had a female householder with no husband present, 41.7% were non-families, and 34.0% of all households were made up of individuals. The average household size was 2.05 and the average family size was 2.56. The median age was 52.7 years.<sup>[14]</sup>

1.7% Russian

• 1.6% Danish

• 1.4% British

• 1.1% Swiss

1.0% Canadian

The median income for a household in the county was \$50,726 and the median income for a family was \$61,096. Males had a median income of \$44,190 versus \$32,911 for females. The per capita income for the county was \$35,487. About 7.6% of families and 10.1% of the population were below the poverty line, including 13.3% of those under age 18 and 5.2% of those age 65 or over.<sup>[17]</sup>

#### 2000 census [edit]

As of the 2000 census there were 14,077 people living in the county in 6,466 households and 4,015 families, resulting in a population density of 80 people per square mile (31 people/km<sup>2</sup>). The census reported 9,752 housing units at an average density of 56 units per square mile (22 units/km<sup>2</sup>). The residents of the county reported their race as 95.0% White, 0.3% Black or African American, 0.8% Native American, 0.9% Asian, 0.1% Pacific Islander, 0.9% from other races, and 2.0% from two or more races. 2.4% of the population identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino of any race. In response to the census question concerning ancestry, 16.7% reported English ancestry; 15.0%, German; 11.6%, Irish; 5.7%, United States or American; 5.4%, French; and 5.0%, Norwegian.

Of the 6,466 households, 22.90% had children under the age of 18; 51.80% were married couples living together; 6.90% had a female householder with no husband present; 37.90% were not families; 30.60% were individuals; and 10.70% were individuals 65 years of age or older, living alone. The average household size was 2.16 persons and the average family size was 2.65.

19.1% of the county's population was under the age of 18; 4.5% ranged in age from 18 to 24; 21.7%, 25–44; 35.7%, 45–64; and 19.0%, 65 or older. The median age was 47 years. For every 100 females, there were 95.10 males. For every 100 females age 18 and over, there were 93.00 males.

The median income for a household in the county was \$43,491, and the median income for a family was \$51,835. Males had a median income of \$36,250 versus \$26,516 for females. The per capita income for the county was \$30,603. About 6.0% of families and 9.2% of the population were below the poverty line, including 12.4% of those under age 18 and 3.1% of those age 65 or over.

San Juan County has the highest per capita income in the state of Washington. Deer Harbor, located in the county, has a per capita income exceeding \$100,000. Waldron Island, with a population of 104 in the 2000 census, is considered one of the most impoverished areas in Washington, with about 56% of the people living in poverty. [citation needed]

In a survey by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, San Juan County was ranked the healthiest in the state of Washington.<sup>[18]</sup>

#### **Religion** [edit]

According to a 2020 survey by the Public Religion Research Institute, San Juan County has the highest concentration of religiously unaffiliated people of any county in the United States. The unaffiliated make up 49% of the population.<sup>[19]</sup>

#### Law enforcement [edit]

Straits Steamship Company
house flag, shipping firm that operated
steamships on Puget Sound and the
Strait of Juan de Fuca.

Historical population				
Census	Pop. <u>%</u> ±			
1870	554			
1880	948	71.1%		
1890	2,072	118.6%		
1900	2,928	41.3%		
1910	3,603	23.1%		
1920	3,605	0.1%		
1930	3,097	-14.1%		
1940	3,157	1.9%		
1950	3,245	2.8%		
1960	2,872	-11.5%		
1970	3,856	34.3%		
<b>1980</b>	7,838	103.3%		
1990	10,035	28.0%		
2000	14,077	40.3%		
2010	15,769	12.0%		
2020	17,788	12.8%		
2022 (est.)	18,662 <sup>[8]</sup>	4.9%		
U.S. Decennial Census <sup>[9]</sup>				

1790–1960<sup>[10]</sup> 1900–1990<sup>[11]</sup> 1990-2000<sup>[12]</sup> 2010-2020<sup>[1]</sup>

The San Juan County Sheriff's Office is responsible for maintaining the county jail, providing security at the San Juan County Superior Court, serving civil processes, coordinating emergency management among the county's emergency services, and maintaining law and order throughout the county, as there are no municipal police departments in San Juan County.<sup>[20]</sup> Due to San Juan County's island geography, the sheriff also operates a robust marine unit equipped with four small patrol craft, used for search and rescue and for transporting deputies and prisoners to and from remote islands.<sup>[21]</sup> The sheriff has a mutual aid agreement with the National Park Service Law Enforcement Rangers assigned to the San Juan Island National Historical Park and, in the event of an exigency, can also request assistance from the Washington State Patrol's District 7 field detachment.<sup>[21][20][22][23]</sup>

The county's first sheriff was Stephen Boyce, who was known among area Native Americans as Hyas Tyee ("great and powerful man" in the Coast Salish language). [dubious - discuss] Boyce helped investigate the sensational "Kanaka Joe" murders of 1873, and supervised the hanging of Joe "Kanaka Joe" Nuanna.<sup>[24][25]</sup>





Stephen Boyce, San Juan County's first sheriff.

A San Juan County sheriff's office patrol boat photographed in 2009.

# Politics [edit]

The county has voted heavily Democratic in presidential elections since the 1990s. The only area of the county won by George W. Bush in 2004 was the Decatur Island/Blakely Island precinct, with just over 50 votes. Waldron Island's precinct voted 96.5% for John Kerry. In 2006, Maria Cantwell, the Democrat running for re-election to the U.S. Senate, won all precincts.<sup>[26]</sup> The county's legislative body is the San Juan County Council, which was created in 2006.<sup>[27]</sup>

# Transportation [edit]

San Juan County is connected to the rest of Washington by the state ferries system, wh operates the Anacortes-San Juan Islands ferry. The ferry's runs include inter-island service as well as bypass runs that only serve Friday Harbor and Anacortes. It also includes service to Sidney, British Columbia, which was suspended in 2020.<sup>[29]</sup> Due to high demand, vehicle spaces on the ferry runs generally require reservations during the summer months.<sup>[30]</sup>

A public transit system, named San Juan Transit, was established in 1993 and primarily operates buses on San Juan Island for residents and visitors.<sup>[31]</sup>

# Communities [edit]

### Town [edit]

• Friday Harbor (county seat)

#### Unincorporated communities [edit]

- Argyle
- Beach Haven
- Blakely Island
- Buckhorn
- Camp Orkila
- Crane Island
- Decatur
- Decatur Island
- Deer Harbor
- Doe Bay
- Dolphin
- Lakedale Lopez Island

Eastsound

Islandale

- Olga
- Orcas Village
- Orcas Island
- Port Stanley
- Prevost
- Pump Station
  - Richardson
- Rosario Sea Acre
- Shaw Island

Roche Harbor

Rockland

- Thatchei
- The Tee
- Waldron West Beach
- West Sound
- Yacht Haven

#### See also [edit]

National Register of Historic Places listings in San Juan County, Washington

### References [edit]

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# United States presidential election results for San Juan

	County, Washington <sup>[28]</sup> [hide]						
nich Year ♦ 2020 2016 2012		Republican		Democratic		Third party	
lien	Year <del>¢</del>	No. 🗢	% ♦	No. 🗢	% ♦	No. 🗢	% ♦
	2020	3,057	23.16%	9,725	73.69%	415	3.14%
	2016	2,688	24.14%	7,172	64.42%	1,274	11.44%
è	2012	3,111	29.10%	7,125	66.64%	456	4.26%
	2008	2,958	27.94%	7,374	69.66%	254	2.40%
/	2004	3,290	32.56%	6,589	65.21%	225	2.23%
	2000	3,005	35.67%	4,426	52.54%	993	11.79%
	1996	2,523	34.31%	3,663	49.81%	1,168	15.88%
	1992	1,901	26.71%	3,353	47.11%	1,863	26.18%
	1988	2,660	45.75%	3,008	51.74%	146	2.51%
	1984	2,900	<b>52.48</b> %	2,514	45.49%	112	2.03%
	1980	2,363	<b>46.97</b> %	1,666	33.11%	1,002	19.92%
	1976	1,998	<b>53.68</b> %	1,467	39.41%	257	6.90%
	1972	1,786	63.90%	906	32.42%	103	3.69%
	1968	1,164	59.30%	685	34.90%	114	5.81%
	1964	839	47.94%	906	51.77%	5	0.29%
	1960	1,112	<b>63.91</b> %	624	35.86%	4	0.23%
	1956	1,105	65.27%	584	34.49%	4	0.24%
	1952	1,133	64.16%	619	35.05%	14	0.79%
	1948	881	<b>55.94</b> %	636	40.38%	58	3.68%
	1944	703	<b>51.92</b> %	644	47.56%	7	0.52%
	1940	808	48.24%	860	51.34%	7	0.42%
	1936	690	43.26%	775	48.59%	130	8.15%
	1932	607	40.44%	786	52.37%	108	7.20%
	1928	814	66.72%	400	32.79%	6	0.49%
	1924	744	66.67%	86	7.71%	286	25.63%
	1920	833	66.64%	196	15.68%	221	17.68%
	1916	591	42.37%	669	<b>47.96</b> %	135	9.68%
	1912	341	27.52%	311	25.10%	587	47.38%
arch	1908	581	<b>65.95</b> %	178	20.20%	122	13.85%
	1904	554	71.95%	113	14.68%	103	13.38%
	1900	428	61.49%	245	35.20%	23	3.30%
	1896	411	58.30%	291	41.28%	3	0.43%
	1892	348	54.89%	226	35.65%	60	9.46%

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# External links [edit]

• San Juan County official website 🖉

Places adjacent to San Juan County, Washington		[show]
V·T·E	Municipalities and communities of San Juan County, Washington, United States	[show]
V•T•E	State of Washington	[show]
	Authority control databases 🖍	[show]

Categories: Washington (state) counties | San Juan County, Washington | 1873 establishments in Washington Territory Populated places established in 1873 | Western Washington

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