

Real Food Traveler

Rocket Donuts, Bellingham, WA: Out of this World



Sometimes you just need a good donut.

When Jim Smith came to Bellingham, Washington, a little more than six years ago, he couldn't find one. Smith, a self-proclaimed product of the 1950s, remembered the donuts of his childhood, especially those from The Big Donut (now Randy's Donuts) in L.A. and Spudnuts from the mid-west.

There was a standard in the 1950s for what made a good donut, he says. And, since the introduction of Winchell's Donuts, that's gone downhill.

Jim Smith figured what Bellingham needed was



really good, 1950's-style donuts.

So he decided to bring classic 1950s donuts to Bellingham, but the former marketing guy knew he needed a hook. Rocket Donuts, a celebration of science fiction B movies of the 50s and 60s, was born.

Outside the downtown Bellingham Rocket Donut shop is a giant, silver rocket ship its riveted metal body pointed skywards, looking like its ready to take off to Mars or the moon.

Enter the store and you're transported by all the memorabilia authentic posters from iconic movies like *Forbidden Planet*, *First Spaceship on Venus*, *Phantom from Space*, and *Twelve to the Moon*. Two flat screen TVs broadcast black and white sci-fi movies, their outrageous costumes and elementary special effects almost comical.



RFT Editor Bobbie Hasselbring makes friends with Gort the robot from the sci-fi movie "The Day the Earth Stood Still."

Pass the glass case filled with raised and cake donuts, twists, crullers, bismarks, and bars, and step into a small dining room and you're met by Gort, the imposing, 12-foot robot from the movie *The Day the Earth Stood Still*.

Blueberry cake donuts will send blueberry lovers to the moon.



"I love the science fiction of the 50s," Smith says. Many of the sci-fi memorabilia comes from his private collection. "If we were making 1950s-style donuts, I figured 50s science fiction movies would be a great link back to that era."

Bellingham residents (called Bellinghamsters!) and visitors alike have embraced both the fun and funky atmosphere and Smith's freshly made donuts. On weekends, a line snakes out the door. The donuts, which are made by hand not machine, are made from Dawn Donut Mix and, frankly, they're delicious. The coffee comes from Bellingham's Mocha Joe's and Rocket has one of those classic Italian espresso machines that make a rich, flavorful brew.



It's hard to beat the crispy-soft blueberry fritter at Rocket Donuts.

I'm a big fan of **fritters** and Rocket makes two kinds, apple and blueberry (my favorite). They're what a fritter should be as big as your hand, crispy outside, soft and chewy inside with intense fruit flavors. The bakers at Rocket were kind enough to develop a

[Blueberry Fritter recipe](#) for home bakers especially for [realfoodtraveler.com](#)! Give it a try!

The **blueberry cake donut** with its intense blueberry flavor is sure to be a berry lovers favorite.

What makes Jim Smith a happy man? Great donuts and 1950's sci-fi stuff.

The old fashioned donuts at Rocket are the old style, soft, with a nice cocoa accent. The **cinnamon-sugar twists** are 8 inches of soft, chewy dough with plenty of cinnamon flavor.



The over-sized maple bacon bars are a favorite at Rocket.

The equally big **maple bar** has a strongly maple flavored icing and the maple bacon bar is chewy with a salty, bacony accent.

Their glazed donuts put chain store donuts to shame. They're nice and yeasty with a soft, chewy texture that's not too airy.

The raspberry bismark is so full of raspberry filling it'll have you licking your fingers.

The **buttermilk bar** is a substantial donut and the cake with crumble top is a vanilla donut with soft vanilla frosting and a spicy topping.

Their giant **raspberry bismark** is a five-inch disk of softness dusted liberally with powdered sugar and absolutely stuffed with raspberry filling (bring on the napkins.)

They also carry a small line of **vegan donuts** (cake, chocolate topped, chocolate-almond, and coconut) and they always have a donut special.

When we visited, it was a **strawberry donut** topped with fresh strawberries that had a terrific fresh fruit taste.



Bottom Line: If you're ready to take off and go back to the future, try Rocket Donuts next time you're in Bellingham, Washington. You'll be entertained by their sci-fi memorabilia and transported out of this world with their old-timey donuts.



Whoever thought of putting fresh Northwest strawberries on a cake donut? It's delicious.

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