PACIFIC COAST SCENIC BYWAY

~ AN ALL AMERICAN ROAD ~

A GUIDE TO OREGON’S
363 MILES OF SPECTACULAR
U.S. HIGHWAY 101

START EXPLORING ALL 363 MILES AT
www.VISITTHEOREGONCOAST.COM
Once upon a time in Oregon, a law was passed that declared the entire 363-mile coastline to be public land. Forever. If that sounds incredible, you’re right. And it’s why we call this “The People’s Coast.”

The Oregon Coast Scenic Byway is not meant to be traveled in a single day. As an All American Road, it has been designated as one of the most scenic byways in the United States with features that do not exist elsewhere and is a tourist destination unto itself.

So stop and savor the stunning viewpoints. Explore the secluded beaches and bountiful state parks. Experience the charming diversity of the towns—from historic to artists’ enclaves, from pastoral to fishing village.

So for a few days, turn off drive-through mentality and switch to leisure mode, as you travel a road that’s in no hurry to get from point A (Astoria) to point B (Brookings).
Along the way: See how many place names you can find that begin with “Ne.” (Ne was a prefix meaning place in the language of the Clatsop Indians.)

Waysides and state parks—actually any headland or high point—along the Coast make excellent vantage points for watching gray whales migrate south December—January and north March—May.

The highest waterfall on the Oregon Coast is an easy side trip from the Byway. Seven miles/11.26 kilometers south of Tillamook, watch for a sign to Munson Creek Falls and follow the narrow road 1.5 miles/2.4 kilometers to a small parking lot. A short stroll takes you to the 319-foot cataract. Not suitable for RVs or trailers.

FROM A MIGHTY RIVER TO PEACEFUL PASTURES

Begin the Pacific Coast Scenic Byway in the historic town of Astoria near the mouth of the Columbia River, in the shadow of the Astoria–Megler Bridge. As the oldest settlement west of the Rockies, Astoria offers more points of historical interest than any other city along the Oregon Coast. Its buildings, including elegant Victorian houses and B&Bs, are spread over San Francisco-style hills. A walking or driving tour is a good way to see the city. Visiting the museums is a great way to relive the history. And for a grand view, climb the 164 steps to the top of the Astoria Column.

Leave Astoria and cross Youngs Bay to Warrenton for more historic sites—Fort Stevens State Park and Fort Clatsop. These are part of the new Lewis and Clark National Historical Park. Fort Stevens Historic Area includes remains of the original fort and gun emplacements dating back to the Civil War, and Fort Clatsop is the replica of Lewis and Clark’s 1805–06 winter outpost.
Continue on to Seaside, Oregon’s first seashore resort, where you can enjoy year-round activities and events. Walk the downtown district with dozens of boutiques, specialty shops, art galleries, antique stores, outlets, sweet treats and fresh seafood. Plan a stroll on the 1.8-mile/2.8 kilometer long ocean front “Prom” and gaze at the Pacific from the same place that Lewis and Clark did. Those young at heart will enjoy the carousel, arcades, bumper cars, paddle boats, beach bikes, volleyball and feeding the seals at the Aquarium.

Back on the Byway, look for Tillamook Rock Lighthouse offshore. It was deactivated in 1957 after 77 years of service. It’s now a private columbarium.

Turn off at Cannon Beach, the picturesque town that is Oregon’s answer to California’s Carmel. Expect to see art galleries, great restaurants, resorts that pamper, and the town’s awesome landmark—Haystack Rock. Each year in June, the town hosts the Sandcastle Contest that attracts some of the best sand sculptors. To learn more about Astoria, Seaside, and Cannon Beach, check the website VisitTheOregonCoast.com.

Continue south and turn into Hug Point State Recreation Site to see the remains of the original road that hugged the headland, and stop by Oswald West State Park, named after the governor responsible for making Oregon’s beaches public. Enjoy the spectacular views as you descend the slopes of Nehkahnie Mountain.
These vistas are definitely worth a stop as are the secluded beach town of Manzanita and the river towns of Nehalem and Wheeler. Farther south is Rockaway Beach with its seven miles/11.26 kilometers of beach. For more about this stretch of coast, check VisitTheOregonCoast.com.

Round the bend to Tillamook Bay, and see the fishing town of Garibaldi. Notice the historic Coast Guard buildings and the bronze statue of Captain Robert Gray in front of the Garibaldi Museum, which is open from May through September. During the same period, Garibaldi and Rockaway Beach are stops on the Oregon Coast Scenic Railroad excursion train, a ride that some call the “Fun Run.”

Follow the Byway around the bay to enter Tillamook, home to the Tillamook Cheese Factory, the west’s largest, the Tillamook County Pioneer Museum, and the Tillamook Air Museum housed in the huge blimp hangar south of town. Just a little farther is the turnoff to Munson Creek Falls, the Coast’s highest waterfall. To learn more about this area, check VisitTheOregonCoast.com.

From Tillamook, you have the option of an alternate route. Take Three Capes Loop for 38 miles/61 kilometers down the coast that passes Cape Meares and its lighthouse, Cape Lookout, and Cape Kiwanda at Pacific City, or stay on the Byway. Heading inland, meander through pastoral countryside and the small towns of Beaver, Hebo, and Cloverdale. Return to the shore at Neskowin, home of Proposal Rock and the Sitka Center for Arts and Ecology.

Climb the forested ridge of Cascade Head and start gradually downhill toward Lincoln City. The Central section of the Pacific Coast Scenic Byway begins here.
LINCOLN CITY TO FLORENCE
95.4 MILES/153.5 KM

Along the way: See how many dramatic headlands you can find.

The Central section is home to three unique historic lighthouses: Yaquina Head at the north end of Newport, the tallest on the coast at 92 feet; Yaquina Bay at the south end of Newport, the only wooden lighthouse on the coast; and Heceta Head 11 miles north of Florence, the most photographed lighthouse on the coast.

With approximately 32,000 acres, the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area offers a place for everyone. You can camp, arrange a tour, take an exhilarating off-highway vehicle ride, and walk along tranquil lakes, forest trails, beaches, and through dunes hundreds of feet high.

FROM DRAMATIC CAPES TO DYNAMIC DUNES

Colorful kites welcome you back to the ocean and the resort town of Lincoln City. This kite-flying mecca has three exciting kite festivals each year that attract the world’s best fliers. With the ocean to the west, Devils Lake to the northeast and Siletz Bay to the south, the town is surrounded by water, which attracts plenty of wildlife and recreation seekers. So bring your kites, kayaks, and binoculars. People also come because of Chinook Winds Casino Resort for its entertainment and gaming and because Lincoln City is the antique capital of the Oregon Coast, celebrated each February during Antique Week. Once five individual towns, Lincoln City today is a major coastal destination with more motel rooms than any other coastal town.
Farther south, Depoe Bay is the site of the world’s smallest navigable harbor and one of the largest spouting horns that shoots geysers 40 feet or more above the sea wall in winter at high tide. There’s only one spouting horn, but close by a miniature Devil’s Churn brings oncoming waves right up and over the sea wall, so be careful where you walk and park your vehicle. Since gray whales are often spotted in the bay, it’s only fitting that Depoe Bay is home to the Whale Watching Center and numerous charterboats that specialize in whale watching. To find out more about Lincoln City and Depoe Bay, go to VisitTheOregonCoast.com.

Farther on, keep your camera handy to capture shots of the daunting headland of Cape Foulweather, the churning waves of Otter Rock’s Devils Punchbowl, the tallest lighthouse on the coast at Yaquina Head, and Newport’s graceful Yaquina Bay Bridge.

Newport, one of the most popular coastal destinations, has two must-see districts—Nye Beach and the Bayfront. Nye Beach is an historic area with beach access, a performing arts center, and lodging. The Bayfront is a working waterfront decorated with several huge colorful murals. Both districts have art galleries, gift shops, and highly rated restaurants. Just south of the Yaquina Bay Bridge are the world-class Oregon Coast Aquarium and Oregon State University’s Hatfield Marine Science Center. You could spend a day at each of these popular attractions.
Continue on to Waldport and Yachats. Crabbing and fishing are popular in Waldport’s Alsea Bay, crossed by the graceful Alsea Bay Bridge, built in 1991. It’s the only major Conde McCullough-designed coastal bridge dating from the 1930s to be replaced. Eight miles/14 kilometers down the road is laid-back Yachats with its numerous beachside resorts, interesting shops, and great places to eat. Learn more about these coastal villages at VisitTheOregonCoast.com.

Superb scenery continues between Yachats and Florence. At Cape Perpetua Scenic Area watch the waves rush in and out of Devils Churn and Cook’s Chasm, view the exhibits at the Visitor Center, and, if time permits, hike one or more of the miles of trails—especially the trail to the Giant Spruce Heritage Tree. Back on the road, it’s not much farther to picturesque Heceta Head Lighthouse, the most photographed lighthouse on the Coast, and nearby, Sea Lion Caves, site of the world’s largest sea cave.

As the solid, rugged cliffs give way to ever-changing sand dunes, you’ll arrive in Florence, a city tucked in the bend of the Siuslaw River and known for its rhododendrons and historic Old Town. Crossing the Siuslaw River is the gateway to the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area (ODNRA), a 47-mile/75-kilometer sandbox with areas designated for hiking, ATV riding, camping, and horseback riding. Just south of town, Honeyman State Park is a scenic place to camp, and includes access to two lakes. Go to VisitTheOregonCoast.com to learn more about the Florence area and the ODNRA.

The largest expanse of coastal dunes in North America is found south of Florence in the ODNRA on your way to the South section of the Pacific Coast Scenic Byway.
THIS IS NOT A ROAD TRIP;
THIS IS A DREAM EXCURSION
FLORENCE TO BROOKINGS
156.85 MILES/254 KM

Along the way: See how many cranberry bogs and myrtlewood shops you can find. Five of Oregon’s eleven lighthouses are found here.

An unforgettable side trip for the senses begins in Charleston near Coos Bay. The trip takes in three state parks: Sunset Bay State Park, Cape Arago State Park and the floral gardens at Shore Acres State Park, which are especially breathtaking with the addition of a quarter million lights during December’s Holiday Lights display.

The Rogue River offers salmon and steelhead runs in late summer, and equally exciting jet boat tours into the nationally recognized “Wild and Scenic” section.

FROM SHIFTING SANDS TO STEADFAST REDWOODS

As you travel by the dunes, notice the large lakes prized by bass fishermen along this stretch from Florence to the towns of the Lower Umpqua River. The towns are located along the second largest river in the state. First is historic Gardiner, where sailing ships tied up to docks in the late 1800s. Next is Reedsport, home to the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area (ODNRA) Headquarters, the Dean Creek Elk Viewing Area, and the Umpqua Discovery Center. Last is Winchester Bay, one of only a few fishing villages remaining on the Coast and home to the Umpqua River Lighthouse. To find out about all there is to see and do in the Lower Umpqua River area, check the website VisitTheOregonCoast.com.
Continuing south, you’ll pass more large lakes as well as the appropriately named town of Lakeside on the east side of the Byway. On the west, the dunes continue to North Bend, followed by Coos Bay, the Coast’s deepest natural harbor. As you cross the Conde McCullough Memorial Bridge, you enter Oregon’s Adventure Coast.

The cities of North Bend and Coos Bay flow together seamlessly, creating the Coast’s largest urban area. The quaint fishing village of Charleston, which sits near the mouth of the bay, is a commercial port and a haven for sport-fishing enthusiasts. The village is also the gateway to a trio of stunning state parks and Bastendorff Beach County Park. Check VisitTheOregonCoast.com for all there is to see and do in the Coos Bay, North Bend, Charleston area.

Next stop is Bandon, the cranberry capital of Oregon. With its world-class golf courses, lighthouse, Old Town, and scenic beaches, you can see why it’s a popular destination. On the outskirts of town, notice the cranberry bogs, some of the richest this side of New England. Each September, this little red berry is celebrated at Bandon’s Cranberry Festival.

The Byway drifts away from the ocean as it rolls through pastureland and by myrtlewood shops. Stop to see how local craftsmen have turned the wood of myrtlewood trees into beautiful bowls, clocks, tables, and even golf putters.
The turnoff to Cape Blanco takes you to the westernmost point in Oregon and two historic landmarks—Hughes House, the restored home of an early settler, and Cape Blanco Lighthouse, the oldest standing lighthouse on the Coast.

The Byway returns to stunning views of the ocean at Port Orford, one of Oregon’s oldest incorporated towns. You’ll pass historic Battle Rock, site of a battle between the first white settlers and Native Americans. Don’t miss seeing the only open-water port on the Oregon Coast, where boats are raised from and lowered to the ocean daily by giant cranes at one of only six “dolly” ports in the world.

After leaving Port Orford, the Byway winds its way around imposing Humbug Mountain before tracing the coastline to Gold Beach, where the Rogue River meets the sea. The world-renowned Rogue is known for year-round fishing and jet boat rides extending far upriver. Cross the recently restored I.L. Patterson Bridge into town. Lodging choices are endless—both in town and upriver.

Get your camera ready because the drive to Brookings saves some of the best scenic views for last. Samuel Boardman State Scenic Corridor shows off approximately 10 miles/16 kilometers of rocky viewpoints and secluded beaches. Along this stretch you’ll cross Thomas Creek Bridge—the highest bridge in Oregon at 345 feet.

Brookings is called the Banana Belt because of its warmest-on-the-coast climate. It is also known for its wild azaleas celebrated at its annual Azalea Festival and its lily-growing fields south of town. Head inland at the Chetco River, to visit Alfred A. Loeb State Park and see impressive myrtlewood groves and to walk the Redwood Nature Trail, leading through a beautiful grove of the most northerly redwoods. Go to VisitTheOregonCoast.com to see all there is to see and do on this wilder, less populated section of the coast.

After crossing the Chetco River, the Byway continues on to the Winchuck River, near the state line. Here, a short drive upriver leads to the Oregon Redwood Trail with its two groves of awesome redwoods. The California state line marks the end of the spectacular Pacific Coast Scenic Byway, which travels the entire length of Oregon.
TRAVEL & LODGING INFORMATION

HAVE A NICE TRIP

Regional visitor associations, chambers of commerce, and visitor centers up and down the Coast are happy to provide details on scenic attractions, recreational opportunities, bike routes, and special events in their areas. For a complete listing of associations and additional information, contact Oregon Coast Visitors Association (OCVA) online at VisitTheOregonCoast.com.

The most exciting way to explore coastal scenery is cycling. For cycling tips, maps, and other information, call the Oregon Bicycle Map Hotline (503-986-3556) or visit Travel Oregon’s Bike website at rideoregonride.com. Some folks cycle the entire Coast, but many carry their bikes with their vehicle and cycle shorter segments.

No matter how you travel, it helps to be aware that the Byway passes through areas that are sparsely populated. GPS devices are not always accurate in these rural areas. The Oregon Department of Transportation recommends that you obtain maps, become acquainted with services, and make lodging reservations in advance. Please keep in mind that services may be several miles apart or closed at night.
SLEEP WELL

Lodging choices along the Coast range from high-end resorts to rustic camping. The coast’s high-end resorts are no strangers to national acclaim; visitors can be pampered at spa getaways, treated to world class golf, or relax by the ocean, river, bay or forest. There are also many full-service hotels and cozy motels located right on the beach or with ocean views.

Charming bed-and-breakfast inns range from Victorian mansions in Astoria to modern beachside inns built as B&Bs on other parts of the Coast. Nowadays, vacation rentals have become one of the most popular lodging options—especially if you have a family, a small group, or a special occasion. These range from beachside cottages, to two- or three-bedroom homes, to large multi-bedroom houses filled with amenities.

RV enthusiasts can choose between small and large RV parks as well as public campgrounds that provide spaces with hookups and dump sites. All along the coast are state parks with campgrounds; some also offer yurts and cabins to stay in. The U.S. Forest Service and counties also operate campgrounds. Since many towns are situated at river mouths, numerous RV parks and campgrounds are located along the rivers.

Summer is peak season, so reserve early, especially for weekends and holidays. Check the OCVA website VisitTheOregonCoast.com for lodging options for the entire Coast.
GOOD EATS, ETC.

Everyone coming to the Coast expects salt-water taffy, and you can find taffy in nearly every town. There are shops in Seaside, Cannon Beach, Lincoln City, Depoe Bay, and Newport that have become well-known institutions for making their own taffy. Go to VisitTheOregonCoast.com to find these shops.

Folks also expect fish ‘n’ chips. Often the fish is so fresh, it just came off the boat that day. Some of the best places are small eateries that specialize in fish ‘n’ chips and clam chowder.

And then there are great salmon, halibut, oyster, and Dungeness crab dinners available in numerous restaurants from one end of the Coast to the other. Often the fish or shellfish is listed as a special because it’s dependent on what the fishermen are catching. Of course, seafood isn’t the only food on the Coast; most eateries offer a broad range. Check out the restaurant listings for whatever town you’re staying in at VisitTheOregonCoast.com.

The Coast is also home to a selection of craft breweries. The following towns brew their own and serve it with great food—Astoria and Newport each have two brewpubs and Cannon Beach, Pacific City, and Lincoln City each have one.

Today’s increased interest in food spills over into an increased interest in food preparation. Two towns host culinary schools that provide classes. If you plan ahead, you can schedule a cooking class in Cannon Beach or Lincoln City. VisitTheOregonCoast.com has specifics about brewpubs and culinary schools. The website also lists the seasonal Farmer’s Markets that can be found.
OREGON COAST VISITORS ASSOCIATION

Oregon Coast Visitors Association (OCVA) is the regional organization representing the Oregon Coast to the public. Funding comes from membership dues and room taxes. OCVA distributes information to inquiring visitors, travel professionals, and the travel trade news media regarding the Coast’s accommodations, attractions, scenic features, recreational opportunities, and annual events. For more information, contact OCVA. (541-574-2679 or 888-628-2101; VisitTheOregonCoast.com)

TELL YOUR OWN STORY

Now you, the coastal visitor, can tell your own story. If you happen to travel with a laptop, share your own adventures during the trip. Otherwise, do so when you return home. Either way, go to VisitTheOregonCoast.com and find the section that says, “Do You Have a Story? Share it.” and begin typing. You can also include a photo.
WHAT THE WEATHER IS LIKE

With the ocean providing year-round air conditioning, temperatures are comfortably in the 60s to low 70s (16 to 21 celsius) in summer and rarely drop below freezing in winter. Fog may roll in quickly and drop temperatures by 20 degrees or more. Conversely, the fog may burn off and the sun comes out, and before you know it, you have shorts, sunglasses, and sunburn weather.

Be prepared for fog, drizzle, or rain showers any time of year, but mainly in winter and spring. Steady breezes are common, especially on summer afternoons. Winter weather occasionally brings wind gusts above 50 mph, perfect for storm watching.

At the coast, count on changeable weather. Coastal sayings include, “If you don’t like the weather, wait five minutes.” and “There’s no bad weather, just inappropriate dress.” So plan on dressing in layers.

For Oregon highway conditions call 511 or tripcheck.com.
We hope that you enjoy your trip along the Pacific Coast Scenic Byway — An All American Road. Oregon is one of the leaders in the number of scenic byways and tour routes and we hope you will return often to enjoy another of the more than 23 All American Roads, National Scenic Byways, Oregon State Scenic Byways and Oregon Tour Routes. There’s nothing like the Oregon Coast!