

Central Coast Itinerary: Pacific City to Florence (Day 3-5)

Day 3: Pacific City & Lincoln City

Pacific City: Climb the Dune at Cape Kiwanda, Watch Dory Boats Launch

Pacific City, a charming coastal town, is famous for its iconic Haystack Rock (not to be confused with the one in Cannon Beach) and the unique dory boat fleet. It offers a blend of natural beauty and a laid-back, authentic Oregon Coast experience.

Cape Kiwanda State Natural Area: The star attraction in Pacific City is Cape Kiwanda, a magnificent sandstone headland that offers stunning views and a unique opportunity to climb a massive sand dune.

The dune, part of the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area, provides a challenging but rewarding climb, leading to panoramic vistas of the Pacific Ocean, the dramatic coastline, and the iconic Haystack Rock. Be sure to stay on marked trails and respect the sensitive natural environment.



Dory Boats Launch: Pacific City is home to a historic and active dory boat fleet. These flat-bottomed boats are launched directly from the beach into the ocean, a tradition

that dates back generations.

Watching the dory boats launch and return, often with their daily catch, is a fascinating and authentic coastal experience. You can often see them near the Pelican Brewing Company, which is also located right on the beach.



Lincoln City: Hunt for Glass Floats, Hike God's Thumb

Lincoln City is a vibrant coastal community known for its seven miles of beautiful beaches, its thriving arts scene, and the popular Finders Keepers program where glass floats are hidden along the beach for visitors to find.

Hunt for Glass Floats (Finders Keepers): Lincoln City is famous for its "Finders Keepers" program, where local glass artists create beautiful hand-blown glass floats that are hidden along the seven miles of public beaches.

If you find one, you get to keep it! This unique treasure hunt adds an exciting element to beachcombing and encourages visitors to explore the entire coastline. Keep an eye out for these sparkling treasures, especially after high tide.



Hike God's Thumb: For those seeking a more adventurous experience, the hike to God's Thumb offers breathtaking panoramic views of the Oregon Coast. This iconic geological formation, resembling a giant thumb pointing skyward, provides a challenging but rewarding trek through lush forests and open meadows. The views from the top are spectacular, offering sweeping vistas of the coastline, the Pacific Ocean, and the surrounding natural beauty. Be prepared for muddy conditions, especially during wetter seasons, and always respect private property boundaries.

Day 4: Depoe Bay & Newport

Depoe Bay: Spot Resident Gray Whales, Watch Waves Explode at the World's Smallest Harbor

Depoe Bay, often called the "Whale Watching Capital of the Oregon Coast," is a small town with a big reputation for its resident gray whales and dramatic oceanfront.

Spot Resident Gray Whales: Depoe Bay is unique because a pod of gray whales resides here for much of the year, making it one of the best places on the Oregon Coast for whale watching. You can often spot them from shore, especially from the Whale Watching Center, or take a charter boat for a closer encounter. The whales come close to the shore to feed on kelp and other marine life, offering incredible viewing

opportunities.

World's Smallest Harbor: Depoe Bay proudly claims to have the "world's smallest navigable harbor." This tiny harbor, carved into the basalt rock, is a bustling hub for fishing charters and whale watching tours. During storms or high tides, waves can dramatically crash against the seawall, creating spectacular "spouting horn" effects as water explodes upwards through narrow rock channels. It's a truly mesmerizing natural phenomenon.

Newport: Visit the Historic Bayfront, Yaquina Head Lighthouse, and Oregon Coast Aquarium

Newport is a larger coastal city offering a wide array of attractions, from a bustling historic bayfront to a world-class aquarium and iconic lighthouses.

Historic Bayfront: Newport's Historic Bayfront is a lively and colorful area filled with fishing boats, seafood restaurants, art galleries, and unique shops. You can watch commercial fishing boats unload their catch, observe sea lions barking from the docks, and enjoy fresh seafood straight from the ocean. It's a great place to soak in the authentic atmosphere of a working fishing port.

Yaquina Head Lighthouse: Standing majestically on a dramatic basalt headland, the Yaquina Head Lighthouse is the tallest lighthouse in Oregon. Visitors can explore the interpretive center, learn about the lighthouse's history, and, during certain times, take guided tours to the top for incredible views. The surrounding Yaquina Head Outstanding Natural Area is also home to diverse tide pools, a thriving seabird colony, and scenic walking trails.

Oregon Coast Aquarium: The Oregon Coast Aquarium is a leading marine science facility dedicated to conservation and education. It features a diverse collection of marine life, including sharks, sea otters, seals, and various fish species. The

Passages of the Deep exhibit allows visitors to walk through underwater tunnels surrounded by sharks and other large marine animals. It's an immersive and educational experience for all ages.

Day 5: Yachats & Florence

Yachats & Cape Perpetua: Witness Thor's Well, Devil's Churn, and Tide Pools

Yachats, a charming village nestled between the forest and the sea, is known for its dramatic coastline and proximity to the stunning Cape Perpetua Scenic Area.

Cape Perpetua Scenic Area: This area offers some of the most spectacular coastal scenery in Oregon. With an elevation of 800 feet, the Cape Perpetua Lookout provides panoramic views of the Pacific Ocean, the rugged coastline, and the dense Siuslaw National Forest. Numerous hiking trails wind through old-growth forests and along the dramatic cliffs.

Thor's Well: A natural wonder, Thor's Well is a gaping sinkhole in the basalt rock that appears to drain the ocean. At high tide or during stormy weather, waves crash over the rocks and funnel into the well, creating a mesmerizing and powerful display of nature's force. It's a popular spot for photographers, but caution is advised due to the dangerous conditions.

Devil's Churn: Located near Thor's Well, Devil's Churn is a long, narrow chasm in the volcanic rock where waves violently surge and recede, creating a frothing, churning spectacle. The power of the ocean is on full display here, with spray often shooting high into the air.

Tide Pools: The rocky shores around Yachats and Cape Perpetua are home to abundant tide pools. At low tide, these natural aquariums reveal a fascinating world of marine life, including colorful anemones, starfish, sea urchins, and various crabs. Exploring the tide pools is a great activity for all ages, offering a glimpse into the diverse ecosystem of the Oregon Coast.

Florence: Explore the Historic Old Town, Nearby Oregon Dunes, and Heceta Head Lighthouse

Florence, located at the mouth of the Siuslaw River, marks the southern end of our Central Coast journey. It offers a mix of historic charm, outdoor adventure, and stunning natural landmarks.

Historic Old Town: Florence's Old Town is a picturesque waterfront district with a charming boardwalk, historic buildings, and a variety of shops, art galleries, and restaurants. You can watch fishing boats come and go, enjoy fresh seafood, and browse for unique souvenirs. The Siuslaw River Bridge, a beautiful Art Deco-style bridge, spans the river and is a prominent landmark.

Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area: Just south of Florence begins the vast Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area, the largest expanse of coastal sand dunes in North America. This unique landscape offers endless opportunities for adventure, including ATV riding, sandboarding, hiking, and wildlife viewing. The shifting sands create a constantly changing environment, making each visit a new experience.

Heceta Head Lighthouse: North of Florence, the Heceta Head Lighthouse is one of the most photographed lighthouses on the Oregon Coast. Perched on a dramatic cliff overlooking the Pacific Ocean, this beautifully preserved lighthouse offers stunning views and a glimpse into maritime history. The lightkeeper's house, adjacent to the lighthouse, operates as a charming bed and breakfast, offering a unique overnight experience.

Planning Your Central Coast Journey

Best Time to Visit the Oregon Central Coast

Similar to the North Coast, the Central Oregon Coast offers a diverse experience throughout the year. The best time to visit largely depends on your preferences:

- **Summer (June - August):** This is the most popular time due to warmer temperatures, less rain, and longer daylight hours, perfect for beach activities, hiking, and exploring. Expect larger crowds and higher prices for accommodations.
- **Fall (September - November):** Often a favorite for locals, fall offers pleasant weather, fewer crowds, and stunning sunsets. Early fall can still be quite warm and sunny, while late fall brings the start of storm-watching season.
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Winter (December - February): Ideal for storm watching and dramatic coastal scenery. While colder and wetter, it's a quieter time to visit, and many accommodations offer off-season rates. Be prepared for rain and wind.

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Spring (March - May): A time of renewal, with wildflowers blooming and migrating whales passing through. Weather can be unpredictable, with a mix of sunny days and rain, but crowds are generally smaller than in summer.

Always pack layers, as coastal weather can change quickly, regardless of the season.

Transportation Tips

Driving is the most convenient way to explore the Central Oregon Coast, offering the flexibility to stop at numerous viewpoints and attractions along Highway 101.

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Driving: A personal vehicle or rental car provides the most freedom. Be mindful of scenic pull-offs and watch for wildlife on the roads, especially at dawn and dusk.

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Public Transportation: Public bus services connect many towns along the Central Coast, offering a car-free option for some travelers. Services like the Lincoln County Transit and Benton County Transit can help you navigate between communities. While it requires more planning, it's a viable option for those who prefer not to drive.

Budgeting Guide (Estimates per person, per day)

Budgeting for the Central Oregon Coast is similar to the North Coast, with costs varying based on your travel style:

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Budget Traveler (\$75 - \$150): Focus on camping or budget motels, self-catering, and free activities like beachcombing and hiking.

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Mid-Range Traveler (\$150 - \$300): Allows for comfortable hotel stays, dining

at local eateries, and enjoying paid attractions.

- **Luxury Traveler (\$300+):** For those seeking high-end accommodations, fine dining, and exclusive tours.

Remember to account for gas, car rental (if applicable), and any specific activities like whale watching tours or museum admissions.

Safety Tips for the Oregon Coast

Safety on the Central Oregon Coast is paramount:

- **Sneaker Waves:** Always be vigilant for unexpectedly large waves that can sweep you off your feet. Never turn your back on the ocean.
- **Tides and Rip Currents:** Check tide tables before exploring beaches, especially around tide pools and sea caves. If caught in a rip current, swim parallel to the shore until you are free of the current.
- **Driftwood and Logs:** Avoid climbing on or near large logs and driftwood, as they can be unstable and dangerous.
- **Cliffs and Rocks:** Stay on designated trails and away from cliff edges. Rocks can be slippery, especially when wet.
- **Hypothermia:** The Pacific Ocean is cold year-round. Dress in layers and be prepared for sudden temperature drops.
- **Wildlife:** Observe marine and terrestrial wildlife from a respectful distance. Do not feed animals.

Things to Bring

Packing layers is crucial for the Central Oregon Coast, as weather can change rapidly.

- **[Waterproof Rain Jacket](#):** Essential for protection against rain and wind.
- **[Warm Layers](#):** Fleece jackets, sweaters, and long-sleeved shirts are a must, even in summer.

- [**Sturdy, Waterproof Shoes**](#): Ideal for walking on sandy beaches, rocky tide pools, and hiking trails.
- [**Hat and Gloves**](#): Especially useful for cooler mornings, evenings, or windy conditions.
- [**Swimsuit and Wetsuit \(optional\)**](#): If you plan to surf, boogie board, or participate in other water sports.
- [**Sunscreen and Sunglasses**](#): Protect yourself from UV rays, even on cloudy days.
- [**Binoculars**](#): For spotting whales, seabirds, and other wildlife.
- [**Camera**](#): To capture the stunning coastal landscapes.
- [**Reusable Water Bottle**](#): Stay hydrated and minimize plastic waste.
- [**Snacks**](#): Convenient for long drives or hikes.
- [**Beach Towel**](#): For relaxing on the sand or drying off after a beach walk.
- [**Small Backpack**](#): For carrying daily essentials during excursions.

Places to Stay in the Central Coast

Here are some recommended places to stay in the Central Coast region, offering a range of options for different preferences and budgets:

Pacific City:

* [**Headlands Coastal Lodge & Spa**](#): A luxurious oceanfront lodge offering stunning views of Cape Kiwanda and Haystack Rock

* [**Inn at Cape Kiwanda**](#): A boutique hotel with ocean views, located directly across from Cape Kiwanda and Pelican Brewing. [Monetization Link Placeholder]

* [**Hart's Camp Airstream Hotel & RV Park**](#): Offers unique Airstream rentals, cozy cottages, and RV/tent sites, a short walk from the beach.

Lincoln City:

* [**The Coho Oceanfront Lodge**](#): A highly-rated oceanfront hotel with modern amenities and direct beach access.

* [**Pelican Shores Inn**](#): Offers oceanfront rooms with balconies and fireplaces, providing beautiful views and comfortable stays.

* [**Salishan Coastal Lodge**](#): A larger resort offering a golf course, spa, and various dining options, located just south of Lincoln City.

Depoe Bay:

- * **Channel House:** A charming oceanfront inn known for its incredible whale watching opportunities directly from the rooms.
- * **SCP Depoe Bay Hotel:** A modern, eco-friendly hotel with ocean views and a focus on wellness.
- * [Whale Cove Inn](#): An exclusive luxury boutique inn offering stunning ocean views and private decks.

Newport:

- * [Hallmark Resort Newport](#): A popular oceanfront resort with easy access to the beach and close to the Oregon Coast Aquarium.
- * [Elizabeth Oceanfront Suites, Ascend Hotel Collection](#): Offers spacious suites with ocean views and convenient access to local attractions.
- * **Inn at Nye Beach:** A boutique hotel in the historic Nye Beach district, offering ocean views and a relaxing atmosphere.

Yachats:

- * **Overleaf Lodge & Spa:** An oceanfront lodge with a spa, offering stunning views and a tranquil setting.
- * [Fireside Motel](#): A pet friendly oceanfront motel with direct beach access, offering a cozy and comfortable stay.
- * [Adobe Resort](#): Features oceanfront rooms and a restaurant with panoramic views of the Pacific.

Florence:

- * **Florence Old Town Inn:** A charming inn located in the historic Old Town, offering easy access to shops and restaurants.
- * **River House Inn:** Offers comfortable accommodations with views of the Siuslaw River and close proximity to the Old Town.

* **Heceta Head Lighthouse Bed & Breakfast:** For a truly unique experience, stay in the historic lightkeeper's house adjacent to the Heceta Head Lighthouse. Book well in advance!

Places to Eat in the Central Coast

The Central Coast boasts a fantastic culinary scene, with an abundance of fresh seafood and diverse dining options.

Pacific City:

* **Pelican Brewing Company (Pacific City):** A landmark brewpub located right on the beach, offering craft beers and delicious pub fare with stunning views of Cape Kiwanda.

* **Meridian Restaurant & Bar:** Located at the Headlands Coastal Lodge, offering upscale Northwest coastal cuisine with panoramic ocean views.

* **The Grateful Bread Bakery & Restaurant:** A local favorite for breakfast, lunch, and baked goods, known for its hearty portions and friendly atmosphere.

Lincoln City:

* **Kyllos Seafood & Grill:** A long-standing Lincoln City institution known for its fresh seafood and ocean views.

* **The Bay House Restaurant:** An upscale dining experience offering Pacific Northwest cuisine with a focus on local ingredients and a beautiful bay view.

* **Side Door Cafe:** A charming cafe known for its delicious breakfast and lunch options, including homemade soups and sandwiches.

Depoe Bay:

* **Tidal Raves Seafood Grill:** Offers fresh seafood and stunning ocean views, a popular spot for both locals and tourists.

* **Restaurant Beck:** An acclaimed fine-dining restaurant known for its innovative, seasonal menu and intimate atmosphere.

* **Chowder Bowl:** A casual spot famous for its clam chowder and other seafood classics.

Newport:

* **Local Ocean Seafoods:** A must-visit for fresh, locally sourced seafood, offering a fish market and a popular restaurant with bayfront views.

* **Georgie's Beachside Grill:** Located at the Hallmark Resort, offering American cuisine and seafood with beautiful ocean views.

* **Clearwater Restaurant:** Another excellent choice for waterfront dining, serving fresh seafood and American dishes with views of Yaquina Bay.

* **Rogue Ales Bayfront Public House:** Offers craft beers and pub food in a lively setting on the historic Bayfront.

Yachats:

* **The Drift Inn Restaurant & Hotel:** A popular spot with a diverse menu, live music, and a relaxed atmosphere. Known for its seafood and pizzas.

* **Luna Sea Fish House:** Offers fresh, locally caught seafood in a casual setting, with a fish market attached.

* **Ona Restaurant & Lounge:** Features a creative menu with a focus on fresh, seasonal ingredients and a great selection of craft cocktails.

Florence:

* **The Waterfront Depot:** An upscale restaurant located in Historic Old Town, offering fine dining with views of the Siuslaw River.

* **Mo's Restaurant (Florence):** Another location of the classic Oregon Coast chain, serving its famous clam chowder and other seafood dishes.

* **Homegrown Public House & Brewery:** Offers craft beers and a menu of locally sourced, seasonal dishes in a casual setting.

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Happy Travels,

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