

# South Coast Itinerary: Florence to Brookings (Day 6-7)

## Day 6: Florence & Bandon

### Oregon Dunes: Experience the Largest Coastal Dunes in North America

Our South Coast adventure begins near Florence, where the vast and impressive Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area dominates the landscape. This unique geological wonder is the largest expanse of coastal sand dunes in North America, stretching for approximately 40 miles along the Oregon Coast.

**Exploring the Dunes:** The Oregon Dunes offer a playground for all types of adventurers. You can explore them on foot, hiking through towering sand mountains and discovering hidden pockets of forest and freshwater lakes.

For a more exhilarating experience, consider renting an ATV or taking a guided dune buggy tour to traverse the expansive sandy terrain. The constantly shifting sands create a dynamic and ever-changing environment, making each visit a unique experience.



## **Bandon: Photograph Iconic Face Rock and Explore Old Town**

Bandon, a charming and artistic town on the Southern Oregon Coast, is renowned for its dramatic sea stacks, pristine beaches, and a vibrant Old Town. It's a photographer's paradise and a haven for those seeking natural beauty and a relaxed atmosphere.

**Face Rock State Scenic Viewpoint:** The most iconic landmark in Bandon is Face Rock, a distinctive sea stack that, with a bit of imagination, resembles a human face looking skyward.

This dramatic rock formation is part of a series of impressive sea stacks that dot the coastline, creating a truly breathtaking seascape. At low tide, the beach around Face Rock reveals fascinating tide pools teeming with marine life, offering opportunities for exploration and discovery.



**Bandon Old Town:** Bandon's Old Town is a delightful area filled with art galleries, unique boutiques, and excellent seafood restaurants. Stroll along the waterfront, watch the fishing boats come and go, and sample fresh local seafood. The town has a strong artistic community, and you'll find many galleries showcasing local talent, particularly in photography and painting inspired by the rugged coastal scenery.

## Day 7: Port Orford, Gold Beach & Brookings

### Port Orford: Visit Battle Rock Park and Enjoy Fresh Seafood

Port Orford is a small, authentic fishing town known for its unique dolly dock, where boats are lifted in and out of the water by cranes, and its stunning natural beauty.

**Battle Rock Park:** This historic park is named for a skirmish between early settlers and Native Americans. It offers incredible views of the Pacific Ocean and the rugged coastline. You can walk around the base of Battle Rock at low tide, exploring tide pools and enjoying the dramatic scenery. The park is also a great spot for picnicking and

whale watching during migration seasons.



**Fresh Seafood:** As a working fishing port, Port Orford is an excellent place to enjoy fresh, locally caught seafood. Many restaurants in town offer a variety of dishes featuring the day's catch, from Dungeness crab to various fish species. Don't miss the opportunity to savor the flavors of the Oregon Coast.

### **Gold Beach: Take a Jet Boat Tour up the Rogue River**

Gold Beach, located at the mouth of the wild and scenic Rogue River, is an outdoor enthusiast's dream, offering a unique blend of river and ocean adventures.

**Rogue River Jet Boat Tour:** A highlight of any visit to Gold Beach is a thrilling jet boat tour up the Rogue River. These tours, ranging from a few hours to a full day, take you deep into the rugged wilderness of the Rogue River Canyon, famous for its whitewater rapids, abundant wildlife (including bald eagles, bears, and deer), and stunning scenery. It's an unforgettable way to experience the raw beauty of the Oregon wilderness.



## Samuel H. Boardman Scenic Corridor: Discover Secret Beaches, Natural Bridges, and Breathtaking Viewpoints

South of Gold Beach, the Samuel H. Boardman State Scenic Corridor is a 12-mile stretch of rugged coastline that is arguably the most spectacular section of the Oregon Coast. It's a series of viewpoints, short hikes, and hidden gems that will leave you in awe.

**Natural Bridges:** One of the most famous features of the corridor is the Natural Bridges viewpoint, where powerful ocean waves have carved magnificent archways and bridges into the sea stacks. A short, steep trail leads to an overlook offering incredible views of these geological formations. It's a truly iconic Oregon Coast scene.



**Secret Beaches:** The corridor is also home to several secluded and stunning "secret beaches," accessible via short but sometimes steep trails. These hidden coves offer a sense of solitude and pristine beauty, perfect for beachcombing or simply enjoying the tranquility of the Pacific. Whaleshead Beach and China Beach are popular choices.

**Breathtaking Viewpoints:** Throughout the corridor, numerous pull-offs and viewpoints offer panoramic vistas of the dramatic coastline, towering sea stacks, and crashing waves. Each viewpoint provides a unique perspective of this wild and untamed stretch of the Oregon Coast. Don't rush through; take your time to explore and soak in the scenery.

## **Brookings: Explore Harris Beach State Park and the Northernmost Redwoods**

Our journey concludes in Brookings, the southernmost city on the Oregon Coast, known for its mild climate, beautiful beaches, and proximity to the majestic redwood forests.

**Harris Beach State Park:** This stunning state park is a highlight of Brookings, featuring a long, sandy beach, dramatic sea stacks, and tide pools teeming with marine life. The park is named after pioneer George Harris, who settled here in the late 1800s. Bird Island (or Goat Island), a designated National Wildlife Refuge, is visible offshore and is a nesting site for various seabirds. It's an ideal spot for beach activities, photography, and enjoying the sunset.



**Northernmost Redwoods:** While not as extensive as the redwood forests in Northern California, Brookings is home to some of the northernmost groves of coastal redwoods. You can find accessible trails in areas like Alfred A. Loeb State Park, offering a chance to walk among these magnificent, towering trees. It's a unique opportunity to experience a different kind of natural beauty on the Oregon Coast.

## Planning Your South Coast Journey

### Best Time to Visit the Oregon South Coast

The South Oregon Coast, like the rest of the coastline, has distinct seasons, each offering a unique experience. The best time to visit depends on your priorities:

- **Summer (June - August):** This is the most popular time, with the warmest and driest weather, ideal for beach activities, hiking, and exploring the dunes. Expect larger crowds and higher accommodation prices.

- **Fall (September - November):** Often considered the "secret season," fall brings fewer crowds, often clear and crisp days, and spectacular sunsets. It's also a great time for storm watching as the weather begins to shift.
- **Winter (December - February):** Perfect for dramatic storm watching, cozying up by a fireplace, and enjoying the rugged beauty of the coast without the crowds. Be prepared for rain and wind.
- **Spring (March - May):** A time of renewal, with wildflowers blooming and migrating whales passing through. The weather can be unpredictable, but you'll find fewer crowds than in summer.

Regardless of the season, packing layers is essential, as coastal weather can change rapidly.

## Transportation Tips



Driving is the most practical way to explore the South Oregon Coast, allowing you to fully experience the scenic beauty of Highway 101 and access various viewpoints and attractions.

- **Driving:** A personal vehicle or rental car is highly recommended for flexibility. Be aware of winding roads and scenic pull-offs. Always drive carefully, especially during wet conditions.
- **Public Transportation:** While limited, some public bus services operate along portions of the South Coast, connecting larger towns. However, to truly explore the hidden gems and natural areas, a car is almost a necessity.

## Budgeting Guide (Estimates per person, per day)

Budgeting for the South Oregon Coast is similar to the other regions, with costs varying based on your travel style:

- **Budget Traveler (\$75 - \$150):** Focus on camping or budget motels, self-catering, and free activities like beachcombing and hiking.
- **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 factor in costs for gas, car rental (if applicable), and any specific activities like jet boat tours or museum admissions.

# Safety Tips for the Oregon Coast



Safety on the South Oregon Coast is crucial. The same general safety tips for the North and Central Coasts apply here:

- **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 South Coast



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

### Florence:

Florence is filled with many [ocean front vacation homes](#). Each one unique and beautiful.

## **Bandon:**

- \* [Bandon Inn](#): Located on a bluff overlooking Old Town Bandon, offering beautiful views of the marina and Coquille River.
- \* [Best Western Inn At Face Rock](#): Offers direct beach access, a pool, and stunning views of Face Rock.
- \* [Sunset Oceanfront Lodging](#): Provides oceanfront rooms with direct beach access, perfect for enjoying the Bandon coastline.

## **Port Orford:**

- \* [The Cove at Port Orford: Gray Whale Suite](#): An eco-friendly luxury retreat overlooking the ocean, offering a serene and private experience.

## **Gold Beach:**

- \* [Pacific Reef Hotel & Light Show](#): An oceanfront hotel offering comfortable rooms and a unique light show experience.
- \* [Tu Tu' Tun Lodge](#): A highly-rated lodge on the Rogue River, offering a tranquil setting and access to outdoor activities.
- \* [Gold Beach Inn](#): Provides ocean views and easy beach access, a good option for those looking for value.

## **Brookings:**

- \* [Beachfront Inn](#): Offers oceanfront rooms with private patios or balconies, providing direct access to the beach.
- \* [Ocean Suites Motel](#): Provides comfortable accommodations with ocean views, close to the harbor and local attractions.

# Places to Eat in the South Coast



The South Coast offers a variety of dining experiences, with a strong emphasis on fresh, local seafood.

## **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.

## **Bandon:**

\* **Lord Bennett's:** A destination coastal restaurant known for its fresh seafood and stunning ocean views.

\* **Alloro Wine Bar & Restaurant:** Offers a sophisticated dining experience with Italian-inspired cuisine and an extensive wine list.

\* **The Loft Restaurant & Bar:** Provides a diverse menu with seafood, steaks, and pasta, along with a lively bar atmosphere.

## Port Orford:

\* **The Crazy Norwegian's Fish & Chips:** A popular spot known for its delicious fish and chips and other fried seafood.

\* **Redfish:** Delivers a high-quality coastal dining experience with a focus on local and sustainable ingredients.

\* **The Dive Grub Pub:** A casual spot offering gourmet burgers, pizzas, and a selection of craft beers.

## Gold Beach:

\* **Spinner's Seafood Steak & Chop House:** A well-regarded restaurant offering a variety of seafood, steaks, and chops with river views.

\* **Barnacle Bistro:** A local favorite known for its creative dishes, fresh ingredients, and friendly atmosphere.

\* **Port Hole Cafe:** A family-style restaurant famous for its clam chowder, fish & chips, and homemade pies.

## Brookings:

\* **Black Trumpet Bistro:** A relaxed, family-owned eatery offering refined New American dishes with an Italian influence.

\* **Zola's on the Water:** Known for its wood-fired pizzas, fresh seafood, and pasta, with a focus on local ingredients.

\* **Catalyst Seafood:** Strives to serve the best and freshest locally caught seafood daily, supporting local fishing.

Please note that this itinerary may contain affiliate links. If you make a purchase through these links, Oregon Coast Journey may earn a small commission at no extra cost to you. This helps support our efforts in providing valuable travel content.

## Explore More with Oregon Coast Journey

We hope this Central Coast itinerary helps you plan an unforgettable trip! For more detailed guides, tips, and inspiration for your [Oregon Coast adventures](#), be sure to

visit our website:

Follow us at [Oregon Coast Journey](https://oregoncoastjourney.com) for the latest updates and stunning photos of the Oregon Coast!

Happy Travels,

Melinda Pearson

[melinda@oregoncoastjourney.com](mailto:melinda@oregoncoastjourney.com)

[oregoncoastjourney.com](https://oregoncoastjourney.com)

[oregoncoastjourney.com](https://oregoncoastjourney.com)