

OREGON COAST JOURNEY · FREE GUIDE

Central Coast Road-Trip Itinerary

Lincoln City to Florence — 3 days of
lighthouses, tide pools & sea lions.

A do-everything middle-coast plan: whales at Depoe Bay, the Newport aquarium, dramatic Cape Perpetua, and the start of the great dunes.

YOURS FREE

Melinda · Oregon Coast Journey

Your Oregon Coast & Cruise Guide

oregoncoastjourney.com

START HERE

Your 3-day Central Coast plan

The coast's greatest hits, all within an easy drive.

This route runs **Lincoln City → Depoe Bay → Newport → Yachats → Florence**. It's the most varied stretch of the coast — whales, lighthouses, an outstanding aquarium, tide pools, and the first of the giant dunes — and it's ideal for first-timers and families.

HOW TO USE THIS

Base yourself in Newport (central, lots of lodging) and day-trip north and south, or drive it straight through.
Book the aquarium ahead in summer.

The route

D1 **Lincoln City & Depoe Bay** — beaches & whales

D2 **Newport** — aquarium, lighthouse, Bayfront

D3 **Yachats & Florence** — Cape Perpetua & dunes

+ Tips and a cruise idea

DAY 1

Day 1 · Lincoln City & Depoe Bay

Kites, glass floats, and your first whales.

- **Morning:** Long beach walk in **Lincoln City** — famous for kite flying and hidden hand-blown glass floats along the sand.
- **Midday:** Drive to **Depoe Bay**, "the whale-watching capital," and the world's smallest navigable harbor.
- **Afternoon:** Watch for the resident gray whales from the seawall, or take a boat — offshore whale-watch boat trip.
- **Evening:** Dinner overlooking the harbor, then to your Newport base.

WHALE SEASON

A resident pod summers off Depoe Bay, and the big migrations pass in winter and spring. Bring [binoculars](#) and scan the horizon for spouts.

DAY 2

Day 2 · Newport

The coast's best all-around town.

- **Morning:** The **Oregon Coast Aquarium** — genuinely excellent; book ahead in summer.
- **Midday:** The historic **Bayfront** — barking sea lions, fresh seafood, and fish markets (buy crab to take home).
- **Afternoon:** **Yaquina Head** lighthouse and its tide pools, or the Yaquina Bay lighthouse in town.
- **Evening:** Chowder and a Bayfront sunset.

TIDE POOLS = LOW TIDE

Yaquina Head's tide pools are among the coast's best — but only at low tide. Check the chart, wear [water shoes](#), and step carefully.

Take home dinner

Buy fresh Dungeness crab on the Bayfront and keep it cold in a [soft cooler](#) — a coast classic (see my Foodies' Guide for how to crack it).

DAY 3

Day 3 · Yachats & Florence

Drama, then dunes.

- **Morning: Cape Perpetua** near Yachats — Thor's Well and the Spouting Horn put on a show at the right tide; big views up top.
- **Midday:** The **Heceta Head Lighthouse**, one of the most photographed on the coast, and nearby Sea Lion Caves.
- **Afternoon: Florence** — charming Old Town on the river, and the start of the **Oregon Dunes**. Ride a dune buggy or just hike the sand.
- **Head home**, or continue south onto the wild South Coast.

TIME THOR'S WELL

Cape Perpetua's features are most dramatic on an incoming tide an hour before high tide — and safest viewed from a distance. Never turn your back on the water.

Ready to drive the Central Coast?

A few easy next steps — and how I can help.

DREAMING OF A CRUISE, TOO?

Trade the wheel for the water

If you love lighthouses and sea life, a cruise doubles down — whales, coastlines, and a new port each day. I plan those for free, too.

[See Today's Cruise Deals »](#)

Let me plan it for you — free

Whether it's a coast getaway or a cruise, tell me your dates and who's coming and I'll build you a simple plan at the best price. No fee, no obligation.

[Plan my Central Coast trip »](#)

Or just reply to any email from me — I read every one myself.

Refer a friend — you both win. Know someone planning a coast trip or a cruise? When they book with me, **you both** get a thank-you. Just have them mention your name.

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