

OREGON COAST JOURNEY · FREE GUIDE

The Complete Oregon Coast Guide

363 miles of beaches, headlands, lighthouses & small towns — the whole coast, sorted.

How the coast is laid out, the can't-miss stops north to south, when to go, and the local know-how that makes a trip easy — from someone who lives it.

YOURS FREE

Melinda · Oregon Coast Journey

Your Oregon Coast & Cruise Guide

oregoncoastjourney.com

START HERE

Welcome to the Oregon Coast

The most beautiful 363 miles you can drive — and every mile of it is public.

Here's the first thing that makes Oregon special: **the entire coastline is public land**. Every beach, every cove, from the Columbia River to the California border, belongs to everyone. That means you can wander, explore, and stumble onto your own stretch of sand almost anywhere. This guide is your map to doing exactly that.

I'll walk you down the coast north to south, flag the stops worth your time, and share the small stuff — tides, fog, parking, timing — that turns a good coast trip into a great one.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Skim the map, pick your stretch (North, Central, or South), and lean on the tips. Planning a full road trip? Pair this with my North / Central / South Coast itineraries.

What's inside

01 How the coast is laid out — the three regions

02 The can't-miss stops, north to south

03 When to go — season by season

04 Local know-how — tides, fog, safety & more

05 Ready to go — and a cruise idea

SECTION 01

How the coast is laid out

Three regions, each with its own character. Pick your stretch.

ASTORIA → LINCOLN CITY

North Coast

The dramatic, iconic coast: Astoria, Cannon Beach's Haystack Rock, Tillamook cheese and cows, and long family beaches. Closest to Portland.

DEPOE BAY → FLORENCE

Central Coast

Lighthouses, tide pools, the Newport aquarium, sea lions, and the start of the giant dunes. The coast's do-everything middle.

REEDSPORT → BROOKINGS

South Coast

Wild, uncrowded, and jaw-dropping: sea stacks at Bandon, the Samuel Boardman cliffs, and the warmest, sunniest weather on the coast.

EVERYWHERE

The through-line

Highway 101 links it all — a two-lane ribbon of viewpoints, state parks, and pull-offs. The drive is the attraction.

BRING THE BINOCULARS

Whales pass close to shore twice a year, and the tide pools and sea-stack colonies reward a closer look. A [compact binoculars](#) pair earns its space in the bag.

The can't-miss stops

North to south — the ones I send everyone to.

- **Astoria** — the historic river town: the Column, the Goonies house, sea lions on the docks, and great food.
- **Cannon Beach** — Haystack Rock and its puffins and tide pools; the coast's most famous view.
- **Tillamook** — cheese, ice cream, and the scenic Three Capes loop just off 101.
- **Depoe Bay & Newport** — whale-watching capital, the Yaquina Head lighthouse, and the Oregon Coast Aquarium.
- **Florence & the Dunes** — charming Old Town and 40 miles of towering sand dunes to ride or hike.
- **Bandon** — sea stacks, Face Rock, and world-class golf; the South Coast's gem.
- **Samuel H. Boardman corridor** — the most dramatic cliffs and coves in the state, near Brookings.

Do the tide pools right

The best tide pools — Haystack Rock, Yaquina Head, Cape Perpetua — only reveal themselves at low tide. Check a [tide chart](#) or a tide app, aim for a minus tide, tread gently, and put everything back exactly where you found it.

SECTION 03

When to go

Every season on the coast has its own reward.

JUN – SEP

Summer

Warmest, driest, busiest. Book lodging early. Mornings can be foggy; afternoons open up. Peak beach season.

SEP – OCT

Early fall

My favorite: warm, clear, quiet, and cheaper. The secret season on the Oregon Coast.

NOV – MAR

Storm season

Dramatic storm-watching, cozy inns, and the winter whale migration. Pack real rain gear and enjoy the wild side.

MAR – MAY

Spring

Wildflowers, baby gray whales heading north, and green everything. Changeable weather — layer up.

Whale watching, twice a year

Gray whales pass close to shore **southbound in December–January** and **northbound in March–April**, and a resident group summers off Depoe Bay. Volunteer-staffed "Whale Watching Spoken Here" sites help you spot them. Bring layers and patience.

RAIN IS PART OF IT

Even in summer, a [packable rain jacket](#) beats an umbrella against coast wind. Pack it and you'll never cut a beach walk short.

Local know-how

The little things that keep a coast trip smooth and safe.

- **Never turn your back on the ocean.** Sneaker waves are real and dangerous — keep off logs and stay well back of the waterline.
- **Watch the tide.** Rising tides can strand you against a headland. Know the low-tide window before exploring coves and caves.
- **Fog burns off.** A grey morning often turns brilliant by afternoon. Don't judge the day at 9 a.m.
- **Fuel up and cash up.** Some stretches are remote; top off the tank and carry a little cash for small towns.
- **Layers beat a big coat.** Coast weather swings; a base layer, a [warm fleece](#), and a shell cover everything.
- **Respect the wildlife.** Give seals, sea lions, and nesting birds plenty of space; never touch a stranded seal pup.

Make it effortless

Want the whole trip mapped — where to stay, what to skip, the best stops for your dates — without the research? That's exactly what I do, free. Just tell me when you're going.

Ready to explore the coast?

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

DREAMING OF A CRUISE, TOO?

Trade the drive for the deck

Love the ocean? A cruise gives you a new view every morning — Alaska glaciers, Mexican beaches, Hawaiian islands — and 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 Oregon 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.

Melinda • Oregon Coast Journey

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