

Do-It-Yourself Oregon Coast Summer Tour

Written by Ann Powers

After years of living all over the globe, I finally found my way home to the Oregon Coast.

Believe me, I've done my time in Arizona's triple-digit summer heat. And after discovering Oregon's beautiful-beyond-words and endlessly interesting coastline, I have two words – visit Oregon!!

If you're done being hot and sweaty in Southern Arizona this summer, try a refreshing Do-It-Yourself Tour in the Pacific Northwest. There aren't enough years in this lifetime, or space in this publication, to review every brilliant beach, picturesque cove, forested cape and meaningful memory to be made along Oregon's shores, so I've highlighted a few favorites for your bucket list.

Beach-Bum It

They don't call it the "People's Coast" for nothing. Every beach along Oregon's 363 miles of sweeping coastline is public. These sandy shorelines offer a tsunami of outdoor adventures, scenic splendor, daring dunes, mouth-watering seafood and cozy coastal communities... like **Cannon Beach**.

Famous for **Haystack Rock** towering 235 feet above the water's edge, Cannon Beach is a quintessential small-town village by the sea filled with art galleries, specialty shops, cafes and National Wildlife Refuge. Author Stephen Leatherman lists it as Oregon's "Best Overall Beach" in his book, *America's Best Beaches*. National Geographic called it "one of the world's most beautiful places."

Minutes from downtown Cannon Beach is **Ecola State Park** with its panoramic views along nine miles of captivating coastline wrapped around **Tillamook Head**. The entrance road rambles through a plush Sitka spruce forest toward a grassy bluff with take-your-breath-away glimpses of the Pacific Ocean and rugged mountain horizons.

If hiking is your thing, the park's trail network includes an eight-mile stretch of the Oregon Coast and a 2 1/2 mile historical interpretive route known as the **Clatsop Loop Trail**. Part of the trail retraces the steps of Captain William Clark and 12 members of the Corps of Discovery as they traveled through the area in 1806 searching for a

beached whale near Cannon Beach.

And speaking of beached whales, a personal favorite of mine is **Short Sands Beach**, which I was introduced to while reporting on an ever-returning whale: a dead humpback washed ashore several times, finally finding a semi-permanent postmortem home on Short Sands. State park officials decided to leave the carcass there as a winter food source for local wildlife.

Also known as Shorty's, the beach is one of the Pacific Northwest's most sought-after surfing and boogie boarding destinations. It's located off Hwy. 101, south of Cannon Beach and north of Manzanita.

To get there, pull over into the **Oswald West State Park** parking lot on the ocean side of the freeway. Next, journey through a majestic forest canopied in dense green moss and emerge onto the beach's shores framed by indigo-blue waters and monolithic drift woods. It's a great place to spend a sunny afternoon or gather with friends around a bonfire at night.

River, surrounded by a four-acre farm that nurtures herbal, vegetable and tea gardens.

Guests can book the entire farmhouse for summer vacations, birthdays, anniversaries, reunions, staff retreats, workshops and just about any other reason to get away and get together. Individual room options are also available. It's the idyllic setting to share your yoga, meditation, art, culinary skills, musical talents and crafts with others.

"It's nice to have a little bit more of a peaceful vibe," said Ginger Edwards, who opened North Fork 53 in 2015 with her husband, Brigham Edwards. "We want people to feel like it's their own, private retreat. That's mostly what we offer, a peaceful, organic, nature-based experience."

Pacific City Fishing

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No voyage to the coast is complete without seafood – both the catching and eating of it – and Captain Mark Lytle's Pacific City Fishing charter is the answer.

During a 4-to-6 hour fishing excursion off **Cape Kiwanda**, you'll be reeling in Bottom Fish, Ling Cod, Dungeness

"It's a perfect day on the ocean," Lytle said. "Within five minutes your rod is out and you're fishing. You remember your wedding date, the birth of your children and the first time you go dory fishing."

If you're lucky, you may also get to remember some whale watching action.

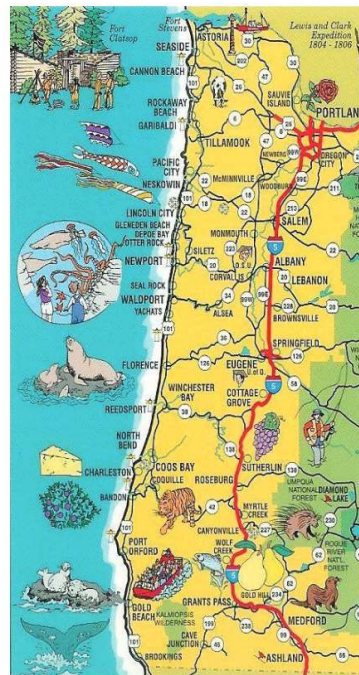
"They come up real close to the boat and look up at you with that one eye," Lytle added. "It's like they're looking into your soul."

The captain and his crew will clean and filet your catch to take with you. They'll even cook up a bit of your crab on site, so you can taste it warm.

Experiencing a dory launch is a unique spectacle of seafaring bravado dating back to the early 1900's. Pacific City, known as Home of the Dory, is one of the few places on earth where this maritime marvel takes place.

The dories of yesteryear were flat-bottomed, double-enders with two sets of oars to carve past the surf. The modern version often takes advantage of outboard motors, but many dedicated dory men and women still row through the surf like their ancestors.

Either way, it's a sight to see as the massive bows diffuse the waves, head up almost vertically, claw through the turbulent



North Fork 53 Gardens & Retreat Center - Photo courtesy of Maya Dooley Photography

Peace Out!

North Fork 53 Gardens and Retreat Center
77282 Oregon Highway 53,
Nehalem
(503) 368-5832

Say hello to starry nights, sun-speckled strolls along woody pathways, gardens galore, farm-to-table freshness, riverside saunas and rediscovering what 'simple' feels like at **North Fork 53 Gardens and Retreat Center**.

About 15 minutes northeast of Manzanita, this Norman Rockwell-esque bed and breakfast is a lovingly restored 1930's farmhouse perched on the Nehalem



Kitchen at North Fork 53 Gardens & Retreat Center - Photo courtesy of Melissa Righero Photography

Crab and Salmon from an open 22-foot dory boat. All gear is provided.

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Capt. Mark Lytle with a large female Ling Cod, released. Photo courtesy of Pacific City Fishing



Capt. Mark Lytle with a happy customer, Suzanne Tyler, and a small shark. Photo courtesy of Pacific City Fishing

tide and surge out to sea.

“Launching a dory into the surf is certainly something that can get your heart started,” Lytle noted.

If you’d rather watch (instead of do) a dory launch, head over to the **Pelican Brewing Company**, 33180 Cape Kiwanda Dr. Take a seat in the beachside taproom and sip on one of the many seasonal favorites like the Sun Flare - a dry-hopped pale ale.

The brewpub was born at the beach in Pacific City in 1996. It serves a wide variety of craft brews, complimented by fantastic beer cuisine and fabulous seaside scenery.

Treasure Hunting

Get your vintage fix by exploring

the plethora of antique stores in almost every coastal town. Be sure to check out the **Seaside Antique Mall**, 725 Holaday Dr., in Seaside. The complex is actually three different buildings joined together with 97 dealers housing thousands of old-fashioned finds.

“We have so many items it’s hard to leave here without something,” said Jodie Mathison, the mall’s manager. “Everybody finds a trea-

sure.”

No kidding. There’s a room with over 3,000 model cars and other areas brimming with antique silver, jewelry, license plates, furniture, heirlooms, toys and much more.

Light Up and Get Wrecked

Before the days of GPS, lighthouses served as beacons and navigational aids for mariners of all varieties - from com-

- Coquille River Lighthouse (1896)
- Cape Blanco Lighthouse (1870)
- Pelican Bay Lighthouse (1999)

A majority of the lighthouses are public, while a few are private. Most can be seen from the highway. For more information, visit www.visittheoregoncoast.com/lighthouses.

Thousands of ships were also victims of the Pacific’s angry waters, leaving behind rusted hulls and weathered wooden ribs as ghostly reminders. The **Peter Iredale** is the most iconic and can be found

at **Fort Stevens State Park**. Only the steel hull remains from the 275-foot British sailing ship, which ran aground in 1906.

mercial cargo ships to small fishing boats.

The coast’s first federal lighthouse lit up in 1857 and collapsed into the ocean just four years later. No surprise - the Pacific is known for her powerful punch and many lighthouses have gone down for the count

Eleven of these sentinels of the sea remain and some are still active. They include:

- Tillamook Rock Lighthouse (1881)
- Cape Meares Lighthouse (1890)
- Yaquina Head Lighthouse (1873)
- Yaquina Bay Lighthouse (1871)
- Cleft of the Rock Lighthouse (1976)
- Heceta Head Lighthouse (1893)
- Umpqua River Lighthouse (1857)
- Cape Arago Lighthouse (1934)

In 2008, storms revealed about 100 feet of the Emily G. Reed on Rockaway Beach. She wrecked on Valentine’s Day in 1908. The same stormy season uncovered the George L. Olson on Horsfall Beach in North Bend. The steam schooner struck Coos Bay’s north jetty in 1944.

To learn more about Oregon’s battled boats, head to **“Secrets of Shipwrecks”** at the **Oregon Coast Aquarium** in Newport. The exhibit is part history and part mystery offering visitors a chance to navigate marine archeology.

Okay, I could go on forever about all the summertime surprises exclusive to the Oregon Coast and I still wouldn’t do it justice. You just have to experience it firsthand.

My best advice? Book a flight to Portland immediately, motor west toward the coast, hop on Highway 101... and enjoy the ride.



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