A
fter years of living all over the
globe, I finally found
my way home to the Ore-
gon Coast.

Believe me, I’ve done my time in
Arizona’s spin-dry summer heat.
And after discovering Oregon’s
beautiful-beyond-words and end-
lessly 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 fa-
vorites 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 sweep-
ing coastline is public. These sandy
shorelines offer a tsunami of outdoor
dawn breaks, scenic splendor,
daring dunes, mouth-watering seafood and cozy coastal communi-
ties...like Cannon Beach.

Famous for Haystack Rock towering 235 feet above the water’s edge, Cannon Beach is a quintes-
sential small-town village by the sea filled with art galleries, specialty shops, cafes and National Wild-
life Refuge. Author Steve
Phen Leatherman lists it as Oregon’s “Best Overall Beach” in his book, America’s Best Beaches. Na-
tional 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 en-
trance road rambles through a
lush 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 Dis-
covery 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 intro-
duced to while reporting on an ev-
er-returning whale: a dead hump-
back 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 lo-
cated off Hwy. 101, south of Can-
non Beach and north of Manzanita.

To get there, pull over into the Os-
wald 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.

“Beach-Bum It” is also
the title of a book by Louise
Shahady, a retired Oregon State
Park official. It’s available for
purchase at many local bookstores.

Peace Out!
North Fork 53 Gardens and
Retreat Center
77282 Oregon Highway 53,
Nehalem
(503) 386-5832

Say hello to starry nights, sun-speckled strolls along
woodsy pathways, gardens galore, farm-to-table fresh-
ness, 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 farm-
house perched on the Nehalem
River, surrounded by a
four-acre farm that nurtures herbal, vegetable and
tea gardens.

Guests can book the entire farmhouse for a
summer vacation, 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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(503) 351-9019
www.pacificcityfishing.com

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

“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
unique; seeing a whale
breach is unique 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 dorays of yester-
year were flat-bot-
tomed, double-enders
designed for over-
run from 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 ances-
tors.

Either way, it’s a sight
to see as the
massive bows
diffuse the
waves, head up
most vertically, and
through the turbulent
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“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 benchside 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, complemented 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 Hollywood 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 treasure.”

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 commercial 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 (1876)
- Heceta Head Lighthouse (1893)
- Umpqua River Lighthouse (1857)
- Cape Arago Lighthouse (1934)
- 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.visitheregoncoast.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.

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.