

# Eugene, Cascades & Coast | OREGON Itinerary Ideas



Skidders Butte looking east by Norman Goo

## Eugene/Willamette Valley

Eugene is Oregon's second largest city and home to the **University of Oregon**, the birthplace of the Nike shoe. It's easy to see why they call it **TrackTown USA**. As any track fan will tell you, this is Mecca for runners. Historic Hayward Field on the university campus hosts world-class track and field events; NCAA Championships, 2008, 2012 & 2016 Olympic Team Trials and the Prefontaine Classic that is part of the elite international Diamond League. Olympian Steve Prefontaine, a running icon, trained in Eugene. The early Nike shoes were developed specifically for him. Innovative shoes have been part of Oregon's lore for thousands of years. Stop by the **University of Oregon Museum of Natural and Cultural History** to see the World's Oldest Shoes, which were found in a cave in the high desert of Central Oregon. Meet the sabertooth salmon, the giant sloth and other animals that once inhabited the state in the Explore Oregon exhibit hall.

Encounter more recent creatures at the **Cascades Raptor Center**, a wildlife refuge for birds of prey located in Eugene's south hills. The center's 60 resident and non-releasable birds of 33 species are housed in large outdoor aviaries on the wooded property.

Just two hours south of Portland, the Eugene area is home to more than 17 wineries that specialize in pinot noir and pinot gris. South Willamette Valley Wineries range from the tiny, red barn next to the vines at **Saginaw Winery** to the grand Tuscan-inspired and Oregon's largest winery, **King Estate**. Closer to downtown, urban wineries like **Territorial Vineyards** and **Oregon Wine LAB** bring wine country to the city. Learn how to taste and truly appreciate delicate pinots at a Pinot Clinic given by Robin Pfeiffer at his vineyard. Take in a Bubbles 101 at **Valhalla** or just soak in the view with your glass at **Sweet Cheeks Winery**. Sample cider created from crowd-sourced apples, pears and lilacs at **Wildcraft Ciderworks**.



Benton-Lane Windery view by Travel Lane County



Covered Bridges Scenic Bikeway by Natalie Inouye

With 20 of Oregon's 50 covered bridges, the Eugene, Cascades & Coast region is home to more covered bridges than any other county west of the Mississippi. Of those, seven can be seen in a morning's tour of Cottage Grove, also known as the "Covered Bridges Capital of the West." Self-drive or opt for a Step-On Guide for a total experience. For a full history and construction details, don't miss the Lowell Covered Bridge on Highway 58. This interpretive center housed in the covered bridge is a great stop for a picnic, too.

There are many options for staying in the Eugene area. Newer to the scene is the Inn at the 5th, a 69-room boutique hotel, which in just four short months won a Four Diamond rating from AAA. Built adjacent to the Fifth Street Public Market, the Inn also has an on-site spa. The Campbell House Inn recently added "Restaurant" to its name after debuting full dinner menu at the historic boutique property. The **Hilton Eugene** makes a great central location. It is one block from the Amtrak train station, next to the **Hult Center for the Performing Arts**, the Eugene

**Saturday Market** (the longest running outdoor craft market in the U.S.), galleries, fine dining and recreation. The **Valley River Inn** underwent a thorough remodel recently from the carpet up and looks great on the Willamette River. A paved bike and walking path runs along the southern border of the property. The **Phoenix Inn Suites** between the University and downtown Eugene, as well as the full-service **Holiday Inn Eugene-Springfield**, **Hilton Garden Inn** and the **Courtyard by Marriott** anchor a full range of group-friendly and easily accessible lodging options.

For the covered bridge fans, the **Comfort Inn & Suites** in Creswell (right at I-5 Exit 182) is also close to Emerald Valley Golf Course and Hobby Field General Aviation Airport. The **Village Green Resort & Gardens** in Cottage Grove (right at I-5 Exit 174). Even has its own small bridge in the gardens.

To plan a tour, contact:

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Belknap Hot Springs Resort by Kayla Krempley

## Cascades

Visitors have two routes to choose from when going from the Willamette Valley to Central Oregon; Hwy 126 and Hwy 58. The snow-capped Three Sisters stand guard over the Central Cascades. At more than 10,000 feet, they are accessible to hikers and climbers of all abilities. They're also just beautiful to look at!

Along the McKenzie River Corridor (Hwy 126), outdoor enthusiasts have a lot to choose from – wilderness hiking, camping, whitewater rafting, fly-fishing, mountain biking and the top-rated 26-mile McKenzie River Trail (MRT). Hoist yourself 60 to 200 feet (18.3-61 m) up in towering old growth Douglas fir with the folks from **Pacific Tree Climbing Institute**. Or, nestle into a comfy chair in a cozy cabin and watch the river flow. A hot soak in a mineral hot springs pool is just what the doctor ordered after a day of adventure. Relax in the soothing Belknap Hot Springs Resort to bookend a perfect day up river.

Lodging in the McKenzie River area offers rustic and well-appointed cabins right on the river at the **Wayfarer Resort** and **Holiday Farm Cabins**. The Belknap Hot Springs Resort has rooms in their lodge, cabins and RV sites. The McKenzie River Mountain Resort caters to mountain bikers and hikers with shuttle service to the top of the McKenzie River Trail (MRT).

Head east on Hwy 58 toward Central Oregon. This is a scenic way to get to the north entrance of Crater Lake National Park. Stop for a picnic at the **Willamette Fish Hatchery** to learn about the life cycle of salmon and the sustainable health of the river. Stop at **Salt Creek Falls**, Oregon's second highest waterfall, which has a viewing platform and smooth path that are easily accessible for wheelchairs and walkers.

Oakridge is the gem of this route – a small logging town reinventing itself as the Mountain Bike Capital of the Northwest. Hundreds of miles of single-track trails surround this community, including the Alpine and Waldo Lake Trails, which was named an Epic Ride by the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA). Oregon Adventure Vacations offers a shuttle service to the trail heads in addition to guided rides. They also coordinate the summer mountain bike festivals there. The **Willamette Pass Resort** boasts the fastest chair lift in Oregon – their '6-Pack' whisks skiers and boarders up the mountain with little or no waiting time! After a hard day on the snowy slopes or trails, a cold cask-style ale and home-style cooking at the **Brewers Union Local 180** pub fits the bill.

Stay at the **Best Western Oakridge Inn** or, for small groups, at the **Westfir Lodge**.



Salt Creek Falls courtesy of Travel Lane County

## Coast

The Central Oregon Coast has so much to offer for the adventurous traveler. Tour the often photographed and newly restored **Heceta Head Lighthouse**, with its light beam reaching 22 miles (35.4 km) out to sea. Discover the loud, smelly and curious sea lions in North America's Largest Sea Cave at **Sea Lion Caves**. Soar down the 500 feet high (152.4 m) Oregon dunes on a dune buggy ride or at the World's First Sand Board Park at **Sand Master Park**. Stroll through **Historic Old Town Florence**, which is lined with local boutiques, restaurants, and galleries. Get a bird's eye view of the ocean cliffs, dunes and coastal forests with **ApexHeli** air tours.



Historic Old Town Florence by Travel Lane County

Rest, relax and rejuvenate in a newly remodeled and upgraded beachfront room at **Driftwood Shores**. Walk along the wide open **Heceta Beach** or watch the waves roll in from your own private deck. Walk to **Bay Street** shops and cafes from the **River House Inn**, which offers great views of the dunes along the **Siuslaw River**. Enjoy the vista and sparkling lights of Florence from the **Best Western Plus Pier Point Inn**. Try your luck at **Three Rivers Casino & Hotel**.



Heceta Head Lighthouse by Natalie Inouye

