

## Not the Oregon You Think You Know: A Trip to The Northwestern Wilderness

Bekah Claussen

Taking a stroll down SW Coast Drive is a trip back in time. A woman sells fudge out of a red brick storefront, a bowl of agates (only a quarter a piece) resting by her hand. Grab a bowl of clam chowder at Restaurant Beck while enjoying the sunset over Whale's Cove, an idyllic spot reminiscent of the pastoral ideal long since devoured by shooting skylines and cranky taxis.

Depoe Bay, a tiny town about a 90-minute drive west of Salem, encompasses the homey feel of grandmother's kitchen without sacrificing the hip awareness that Oregon is known for. Couples ride tandem bikes along quaint streets with names like Nesting Glade and Walking Wood. While you're walking home after a concert in the park to your bungalow on the beach, mothers call out to children as the streetlights dim. You take a moment to soak in the cool night air.

The weather never really gets hot, a deterrent for avid sunbathers. However, for those looking for a relaxing stroll across a refreshingly family friendly beach, the stunning grey sand beaches of the Oregon coast are perfect. Still come with sunscreen and swimsuits packed—especially in mid- to late-August. Spend time marinating in the sweet atmosphere while chomping corn-on-the-cob.

You hop on a boat taking out small groups to go whale watching. Depoe Bay is, after all, the self-proclaimed whale watching capital of the world. While waiting, you feed the otters who are bobbing up, chattering for a treat. As the waves bound up and then down again, you catch a glimpse of a massive, slate grey fin. Suddenly, bursting out of the water, a majestic whale twirls in the air, only to land with an enormous crash. You remember how to breathe again as the whale descends into the depths.

But the Oregon coast is more than just animal watching—although that's a huge part of the experience. Try hang-gliding from the rocky cliffs and feel the rush as you drift over the ocean. You can explore beaches. Go rock climbing. Locals will be happy to tell you their favorite spots to visit and things to do. If you can't find something to entertain yourself independently, Depoe Bay offers plenty of activities, from Oktoberfest in the autumn to salmon bakes in the summer.

Depoe Bay is perfect for families. It's location and activities lend itself to a low-stress environment. Kids can choose what they want to do and adults can relax. Not only will your kids love Depoe Bay, it also makes for a beautiful, romantic getaway. Its slow pace means very little will be bothersome. Its breathtaking vistas ensure all of your outings will have picture perfect backgrounds.

Whatever your budget, Depoe Bay can accommodate. Luxury hotels welcome visitors with their plush bedding and all-inclusive spa services. But the local bed and breakfast is a more affordable option that's just as hospitable as the luxury hotels.

No matter where you decide to stay, or what you decide to do—Depoe Bay will welcome you with open arms and a hot bowl of clam chowder.