

Road Trip: Salem

by Eileen Garvin

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Take a tour of the Oregon State Capitol, a classic example of modern Greek architecture built in 1938. (Photo credit: Ron Cooper)

If you've never paid a visit to the state capital, it's time for a winter road trip. Set in the heart of the Willamette Valley, Salem (pop. 157,000), is the legislative pulse of Oregon. It's also a great place to take in the state's history, art and culture.

Art and architecture: Don't miss the Hallie Ford Museum of Art, Oregon's third largest museum with a permanent collection of more than 6,000 items as well as traveling exhibits, including the current Breath of Heaven, Breath of Earth exhibit. Designed to resemble the castle in Shakespeare's "Hamlet" and formerly home to vaudeville theater, the historic Elsinore Theatre now shows classic films and live performances. Take a tour of the Oregon State Capitol, a classic example of modern Greek architecture built in 1938 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The rotunda incorporates a series of murals and polished marble.

History lesson: Enjoy a self-guided tour of downtown Salem and two residential districts, which are all on the National Register of Historic Places. Pay a visit to the Historic Deepwood Estate, a 19th century Queen Anne home surrounded by gardens, or the Bush House Museum, a beautifully maintained Victorian home at Bush's Pasture Park. Willamette Heritage Center at the Mill teaches visitors about

early settlers as well as its industrial past. The [Oregon State Hospital Museum of Mental Health](#) tells the 120-plus year history of this health campus made famous by “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest.”

Food and drink: Salem has its share of terrific Oregon craft brewers. Check out [Gilgamesh Brewing](#), [Raen Brew](#), [McMenamins Boon’s Treasury](#) and [Ram Restaurant & Brewery](#). Enjoy hearty pub fare along with great Oregon beer. Salem is home to many great Willamette Valley wineries too, so pick from your choice of [area tastings rooms](#).

Shop and sleep: Downtown Salem will satisfy a browser’s cravings. Check out the diverse collection of antique shops, art galleries, boutiques and specialty stores. Take in the beauty of [The Grand Hotel](#), first opened in 1870 and restored for modern travelers. Spend the night, have a meal or just enjoy a drink in the comfortable lounge.

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Eileen Garvin is the editor of Travel Oregon’s Seasonal Features, enewsletters and annual visitor guide. When she’s not cooking up trip ideas, Oregon Dreamer profiles and outdoor adventures to write about, she’s out exploring Oregon.

OREGON STORY

1	(221)	Willamette River	Eastgate	Basin Park	Sunnyview Rd NE	Howell Train Rd E
2		Wallace Rd NW	Liberty St NE			
3						
4						
5						
6	(22)					
7						
8						
9						
10						
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12						
13						

Hallie Ford Museum of Art
a [Museums & Interpretive Center](#) (within [Oregon Heritage](#))
Oregon State Capitol
an [Oregon Wintercation](#) (within [Recreation](#))
Historic Deepwood Estate
an [Oregon Heritage Area](#) (within [Oregon Heritage](#))
Rush House Museum
Lee School

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