

PACIFIC NORTHWEST TOUR SUGGESTIONS

MOUNT HOOD AND TIMBERLINE LODGE

Located just 50 miles east of Portland, Mount Hood is Oregon's tallest peak. This 11,235-foot mountain has the longest ski season in North America and is the second most-climbed glaciated peak in the world (Japan's Mount Fuji is first). Timberline Lodge, a National Historic Landmark whose exteriors were used in the movie *The Shining*, sits at the 6,000-foot level. The lodge is known as much for its rustic Cascadian architecture and stunning views as it is for its nearly year-round ski season. Tours of the lodge are available, as are guided hikes of the Mount Hood National Forest (advance notification required). Allow a full day. www.mthood.info; www.timberlinelodge.com

COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA

Also east of Portland is the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, which still looks much as it did when explorers Lewis and Clark first mapped this Northwest wilderness. A favorite tour route for groups follows the Historic Columbia River Highway, a scenic byway that passes by seven major waterfalls, including Multnomah Falls, the second highest waterfall in the United States. Continuing east on Interstate 84, tours can stop at Bonneville Dam to view the world-famous fish ladders. Slightly farther is the town of Hood River, nicknamed the "windsurfing capital of the world," where adventurous groups can even take windsurfing or kiteboarding lessons. Allow a full day. www.fs.fed.us/r6/columbia

WINE COUNTRY

Set your pace to leisurely and visit the vineyards and tasting rooms of Oregon's scenic wine country. Famous for its Pinot Noir, the North Willamette Valley wine region shares many climatic characteristics with France's Burgundy region. Taste and discover why Oregon wines have consistently increased their market share against the wines of France and California. Explore on your own or book a guided tour. Allow a half to full day. www.oregonwine.org

MOUNT ST. HELENS

The volcanic eruption of May 18, 1980, blew more than 1,000 feet off the once 9,644-foot Mount St. Helens – and left behind an incredible story. Ash fallout from the 1980 eruption has been detected worldwide. Guided bus and aerial tours. Allow a full day. www.fs.fed.us/gpnf/mshnvm

OREGON COAST

The rugged Oregon coast boasts beaches, capes, dramatic rock formations and dunes, as well as with the end of the Lewis and Clark Trail (which originates in St. Louis, Mo.). Deep-sea fishing is available from various points and several first-class resorts are dotted along the coast. Coastal towns like Astoria and Seaside are about 90 minutes from Portland. Allow a full day. www.visittheoregoncoast.com