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WEEKEND WANDERINGS: NORTH COAST

Ghostly shipwrecks, iconic movie settings, some of the state's richest history, and crispy beer-battered and fried Pacific Ocean albacore—Oregon's North Coast is a true treasure chest of must-sees and must-eats.

EN ROUTE

It's but a two-hour trek northwest to Astoria from Portland, but to fuel your journey, stop off in Hillsboro at **Helvetia Tavern**, a no-frills, cash-only local landmark that specializes in beer, burgers and bucolic surroundings. A half hour up Highway 26, brake for a bit of boutique wine sampling at **Wines of Oregon**, a tasting room run by a collective of Oregon wineries hailing from the Rogue Valley to the Columbia River Gorge. And if you've never met a cinnamon roll you didn't fall head over heels for, take a slight detour to **Camp 18 Restaurant** in Elsie, a log-cabin-themed pit stop that advertises its signature sweet as "huge and delicious."

EAT + DRINK

Line up with the Astorians for fish 'n chips at charming boat-bound **Bowpicker**, give your regards to the sea lions that lounge beneath a glass panel in the floor before bellying up to the bar at **Buoy Beer**, and make tough choices at **Frite & Scoop** (get both the frites and scoops, obviously), before working it all off with a brisk stroll along the Astoria Riverwalk. Taste your way through **Pilot House Distilling's** lineup, then sober up with oyster chowder poutine and grass-fed beef burgers at cozy **Albatross**.

A day of sand castle building, kite-flying and biking along the historic Seaside prom works up an appetite, so make your way to **Bell Buoy**, a no-nonsense fish market and restaurant about a mile from downtown. Satisfy your every seafood whim with some of the coast's best clam chowder and fresh Dungeness crab served with slaw and cheesy bread; if the weather's cooperating, eat at the back deck bar overlooking the Necanicum River. Back in town, carefully sample the selection before making your choice at **Sea Star Gelato**, where many of the homemade gelatos and sorbets are crafted with local fruit, then settle into a seat near the fire pit with a pint of **Seaside Brewing Co.'s** Sneaker Wave IPA.

The perennially popular coastal hamlet of Cannon Beach charms with shingled cottages, beachy boutiques, old-fashioned candy shops, local seafood and local spirits. After linguini and clams and line-caught halibut at **Harding Trading Company**, taste award-winning rums and short-lived seasonal spirits at **Cannon Beach Distillery**, or make tough decisions at

new **MacGregor's Whiskey Bar** in Manzanita, which features more than 150 types of scotch, whiskey, bourbon and rum.

Time stands still in rustic Rockaway Beach, where locals and passersby alike pile into **Offshore Grill and Coffee House** for seafood omelets and homemade biscuits and sausage gravy before exploring Nehalem Bay State Park. After a morning of fishing and clamming in Nehalem Bay, crack crab at the **Jetty Fishery**. Or, enjoy bubbles and freshly shucked local bivalves at new **Source Oyster and Wine Bar** in Garibaldi.

In nearby Tillamook, join the happy herds at wildly popular **Tillamook Creamery** for a self-guided tour, plentiful cheese samples and oversized scoops of Oregon marionberry cheesecake ice cream piled high on chocolate-dipped cones. Just down the road, there's a little something for everyone at **Blue Heron Creamery**—kids will make a beeline for the petting zoo, while adults will veer toward the wine bar. Gather picnic provisions from the deli and head west, passing U-Pick oysters signs en route to Cape Meares, which offers some of the most dramatic coastal views in the state.

A haven for surfers, fishing enthusiasts and beachcombers, Pacific City's petite patch of sand a half hour southwest of Tillamook is just the spot for a relaxing weekend of surf and suds—stop into friendly beachfront **Pelican Brewing Company** for a taster tray and hearty pub grub like the smoked oyster bruschetta and Tsunami Stout bacon jam-slathered Backyard BBQ burger. After a big breakfast at cheery **The Grateful Bread** bakery and café, charter a dory, book a surfing or SUP lesson, climb the famous Cape Kiwanda dune, or just sit on your hotel balcony and savor the sea views.

SLEEP WELL

Settle into your river-view room at the **Cannery Pier Hotel & Spa** with a bottle of **Fort George Brewery's** barrel-aged imperial stout and one of the front desk's copies of *The Goonies*, pausing occasionally to watch a freight ship steam by. Watch the sunset from your Haystack Rock-facing balcony at the cozy **Stephanie Inn**, then head downstairs for a complimentary port nightcap in the oceanfront library. If you've always been intrigued by the tiny house movement, try your hand at living light for a night at **Sheltered Nook** in Bay City. And come January, book a long weekend at the luxurious **Headlands Coastal Lodge & Spa**, featuring a full spa, "adventure coaches" in lieu of a traditional concierge, and the beautifully designed beach-facing **Meridian Restaurant and Bar**.



John Valls



Kathryn Elssner



FROM LEFT Grab a bite on the beach at Pacific City's Pelican Brewing Co. Tillamook Rock Lighthouse, or "Terrible Tilly," is built on a basalt rock more than a mile from land.



Christian Heeb, courtesy of TravelOregon.com

Day 2

CLAM CHOWDER • TERRIBLE TILLY

Breathe the fresh ocean air in the morning on the way to Newport, where two lighthouses are open to visitors year-round. Yaquina Bay Lighthouse is the oldest building in Newport, constructed in 1871, and operated as a lighthouse until 1874. Today it serves as a museum, where visitors explore what life was like more than a century ago. Tread with care, though, as stories of the haunted lighthouse have circulated since the late 1890s.

Tours of Yaquina Head Lighthouse take visitors back in time, as interpretative guides in period costume walk guests over the original marble floors and up the 114 steps to the lens. The tallest light on the Oregon Coast, at 93 feet, was lit in 1873. Many keepers kept the lighthouse wicks going with lard oil or kerosene until electricity came on the scene in the 1930s.

Sign up for the tour at Yaquina Head Interpretive Center and Interpretive Store, and carve out some time to view the natural and historical exhibits in the building. See the lighthouse keepers' logs that meticulously documented weather and activity, learn the workings of the intricate lens, or watch an informational film.

For lunch, drop by Mo's for famous clam chowder at its Lincoln City location, or stop for a beer and a bite at Pelican Brewing Co. in Pacific City. Cape Meares Lighthouse is near Tillamook, home of the Tillamook Cheese Factory that provides free cheese samples and a casual café menu that offers everything cheese.

To get to Cape Meares Lighthouse, take a path for about a quarter-mile through moss-laden trees

to the charming 38-foot-tall lighthouse. Unlike other lighthouses, visitors approach eye-level to the lens for a new perspective, then drop down to the base.

Continue the journey to the final and unforgettable stop, Tillamook Rock Lighthouse. Nicknamed "Terrible Tilly," the lighthouse was built on a basalt rock more than a mile from land, surrounded by crashing sea and exposed to the precarious weather. Its dangers were real—a mason drowned in the ocean on the way to the island to conduct survey work—and the expensive construction took more than 500 days to complete.

The lighthouse is one of the most exposed lighthouses in the United States, and housed four lighthouse keepers at one time with provisions lasting six months. The lighthouse was operational between 1881 and 1957, and can now be viewed safely from land. It is also a columbarium, acting as a resting place for ashes of loved ones in the midst of the sea.

The history of these exquisite and graceful Oregon lighthouses, each different and vital to maritime survival, remains an integral part of coastal communities. Cameron La Follette, author of articles about lighthouses for Oregon Historical Society's Oregon Encyclopedia, reminds us the importance of preserving lighthouses. They served as beacons in a place of great danger, and need help to stay alive.

"They are highly valuable to the communities," La Follette said. "As part of history and beauty—and they are extremely symbolic to everyone." ■



OREGON LIGHTHOUSES

EAT

Tony's Crab Shack
tonyscrabshack.com

Edgewater's Restaurant
edgewater.net

Yachats Brewing
yachatsbrewing.com

Mo's
moschowder.com

Pelican Brewing Co.
pelicanbrewing.com

Tillamook Cheese Factory
tillamook.com

STAY

Headlands Coastal Lodge & Spa
headlandslodge.com

Heceta Lighthouse B&B
hecetalighthouse.com

Overleaf Lodge & Spa
overleaflodge.com

Many of the lighthouses are located on state parks that offer camping options, so be sure to check it overnight availability at oregonstateparks.org.

PLAY

Forget-Me-Knots Quilt Shop
forget-me-knots.net

Hikes along the Oregon Coast
oregonstateparks.org

Sea Lion Caves
sealioncaves.com