

TRAVEL

This Windswept Oregon Retreat Offers Adventure at the Edge of the World



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Oregon locals have long known Pacific City as the state's under-the-radar basecamp for [outdoor pursuits](#). In the [Pacific Northwest](#) and beyond, this once sleepy beach town is receiving quite the buzz, thanks to the recent opening of [Headlands Coastal Lodge & Spa](#), a 33-room lodge with 18 spacious oceanfront cottages. Each features cast-iron soaking tubs, custom-made racks for surfboards and bikes, and private outdoor balconies and patios with unobstructed views of one of the region's most celebrated natural formations: the 327-foot-tall Haystack Rock.

This oasis in Tillamook County is tucked between a trifecta of [natural sites](#)—Cape Kiwanda State Natural Area, Bob Straub State Park, and Nestucca Bay National Wildlife Refuge. To get to Headlands Lodge, venture two hours west of Portland or 90 minutes south of the bustling resort town of Cannon Beach, right along the edge of Three Capes Scenic Drive.



Headlands Lodge's restaurant, Meridian

When you're not dining on fresh oysters sourced from nearby Netarts Bay at the outpost's signature restaurant, [Meridian](#), or reveling in relaxation during an intensive deep-tissue massage and replenishing seaweed wrap at the lodge's own spa, [Tidepools](#), it's easy to gain swift access to the rugged natural beauty of Oregon's coast—high capes, sandy spits, and protected bays included. When you enlist one of Headlands on-staff adventure concierges to craft the perfect outdoor experiences for you, exclusive excursions are in reach, from tucked-away beach bonfires to scenic hikes.

Ease into your exploration of Pacific City: Take your time moseying around the region's beaches, peering into the oft-hidden marine gardens in Cape Kiwanda's tide pools, set beneath a series of towering cliffs. They're only accessible during low tide: When the waves are at bay, a secret ecosystem is revealed. On a typical day, you could encounter purple rock crabs, prehistoric sculpin, and scores of ochre sea stars—species that hover over rocks in search of prey.



Tidepools Spa & Wellness at Headlands Lodge in Oregon

For a dose of adrenaline, catch a wave at Cape Kiwanda near Haystack Rock; here, a natural breakwater shelters Pacific City's beaches. The winds move across the water, behind the tides, making it an ideal outpost to stand-up paddleboard and kayak. If the water proves too icy, opt to join a 100-year-old tradition during a day at sea with a local dory fisherman. You'll set sail with Pacific City's finest seaman, aboard a pen-hulled, flat-bottomed vessel that takes incredible skill to maneuver. The dory operates best when full of fish or passengers, and only the most experienced of sailors can prevent the boat from tipping. Cruise through the Pacific Ocean's jostling waves in search of chinook, Dungeness crab, albacore tuna, and rock fish.

On land, make the most of the area's bevy of trails with day hikes. Begin by exploring Cascade Head Preserve, where a trail owned and maintained by the Nature Conservancy provides sweeping views of the rocky shoreline. The track weaves through stunning wildflower meadows, an ecosystem home to the endangered Oregon silverspot butterfly. If you opt for the Two Rivers Nature Trail at [Nestucca Bay National Wildlife Refuge](#), you'll hike a series of looped tracks winding through dense, moss-covered forest. And at [Sitka Sedge State Natural Area](#), home to one of the largest intact estuaries on the Oregon Coast, you can traverse tidal flats, saltwater marshes, and forested dunes. If you visit in March, be sure to do the [Cape Lookout Trail](#)—a coastal old-growth forest where Sitka spruce and western Hemlock grow in abundance along a 400-foot cliff edge—when nearly 20,000 gray whales make their annual migration north to shallow Arctic feeding waters in Alaska.



Two Rivers Nature Trail at Nestucca Bay National Wildlife Refuge

Regardless of your journey, Pacific City proves the ideal outpost to experience rugged outdoor exploits along the Oregon Coast. Whether you take surf lessons in the bracing Pacific waves or journey into the Pacific's open ocean to source fresh fish and crabs, it's easy to see why a stay at Headlands Lodge is adventure at the edge of the world.