

ROAD TRIP ESSENTIALS

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The Pacific Northwest Driving Guide

Short on interstates, long on scenic byways, the Pacific Northwest yields some of the most beautiful drives on the continent.

DRIVER'S LICENSE & DOCUMENTS

If you're stopped by the police, you'll be expected to provide a valid driver's license and proof of insurance. Foreign visitors can legally drive a car in the USA for up to 12 months using their home driver's license. However, an International Driving Permit (IDP) will have more credibility with police, especially if your home license doesn't have a photo or isn't in English. Your national automobile association can provide one for a small fee, and they're usually valid for one year. Always carry your home license together with the IDP.

Driving rules in Canada are similar to the USA, although they vary slightly from province to province. Just like in the USA, you will need a driver's license and proof of insurance. A foreign license will suffice, though an IDP can save you headaches if your license is in a foreign language.

INSURANCE

Insurance is required by law. Without it, you risk financial ruin and legal consequences if there's an accident. Basic liability insurance covers damage you may cause to another vehicle. Rental companies are required by law to provide the minimum level set by each state, but it usually isn't enough in the event of a serious accident.

Many Americans already have enough insurance coverage under their personal car-insurance policies; check your own policy carefully. Foreign visitors should

check their travel-insurance policies to see if they cover foreign rental cars. Rental companies charge about \$15 per day for extra accident insurance.

Insurance against damage or loss to the car itself, called Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) or Loss Damage Waiver (LDW), can cost up to \$25 per day (and may have a deductible). The CDW may be voided if you cause an accident while breaking the law. Again, check your own coverage to see if you have comprehensive and collision insurance.

Some credit cards cover CDW for rentals up to 15 days, provided you charge the entire cost of the rental to the card. Check with your credit-card company to determine the extent of coverage.

RENTING A CAR

Major international rental agencies have offices throughout the Pacific Northwest. To rent a car, you must have a valid driver's license, be at least 21 years of age and

Driving Fast Facts

- ➔ **Right or left?** Drive on the right
- ➔ **Legal driving age** 16
- ➔ **Top speed limit** 75mph USA, 110km/h Canada
- ➔ **Best bumper sticker** Sasquatch for President