



# Central Oregon & the Oregon Cascades

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## Why Go?

Love mountain tops? Well, that's what Central Oregon and its Cascades are all about. You can practically skip your way from peak to snowy peak here, from Mt Hood, to Jefferson, to Bachelor, to Three-Fingered Jack and the lovely Sisters volcanoes. As you can imagine, there's plenty of awesome skiing and mountaineering, along with stellar hiking and camping. And it's not just mountain-lovers who come – world-class biking, golfing, rafting, kayaking, fishing and rock climbing are also on offer. Did we mention there's also nearly 300 days of sunshine every year?

As much as the outdoors may beckon, the lively city of Bend provides plenty of good food and accommodations. Or head nearby to the sweet little town of Sisters for a more quaint and personal atmosphere. Add a must-stop visit to Mt Hood's historic Timberline Lodge, or a getaway stop in the region's many peaceful lakeside resorts, and you'll find that Central Oregon's many attractions are hard to beat.

## Best Places to Eat

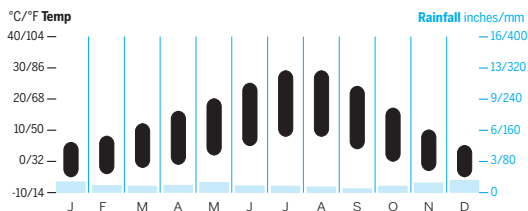
- » Blacksmith (p272)
- » Ariana (p272)
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- » Rendezvous Grill & Tap Room (p264)
- » Kokanee Cafe (p267)

## Best Places to Stay

- » Timberline Lodge (p263)
- » McMenamins Old St Francis School (p272)
- » Oxford Hotel (p271)
- » Five Pine Lodge (p268)

## When to Go

### Bend



**July & August**  
Summer weather; hike and camp around Mt Hood, or raft the Deschutes

**December–April**  
Awesome skiing at Mt Bachelor, Willamette Pass and around Mt Hood

**April–June**  
Prime time for rock climbing at Smith Rock or summiting Mt Hood

## Mt Hood

The state's highest peak, Mt Hood (11,240ft), pops into view over much of northern Oregon whenever there's a sunny day, exerting an almost magnetic tug on skiers, hikers and sightseers. In summer, wildflowers bloom on the mountainsides and hidden ponds shimmer in blue, making for some unforgettable hikes; in winter, downhill and cross-country skiing dominates people's minds and bodies. Timberline Lodge, a handsome wood gem from the 1930s, offers glorious shelter and refreshments to both guests and nonguests all year round – and can't be missed.

Mt Hood rises above the Western Cascades, a ridge of older volcanoes stretching between Mt Rainier and Mt Shasta. These volcanoes erupted between 20 and 40 million years ago, and their peaks have long since eroded. Mt Hood began to burp toward the end of the last ice age, and geologists reckon that the mountain's last major eruption was about 1000 years ago.

Mt Hood is accessible year-round on US 26 from Portland (56 miles), and from Hood River (44 miles) on Hwy 35. Together with the Columbia River Hwy, these routes comprise the Mt Hood Loop, a popular scenic drive. Government Camp is at the pass over Mt Hood, and is the center of business on the mountain.



### Activities

If you park at designated winter recreational areas on Mt Hood (ie for cross-country skiing or snowshoeing), you'll need a Sno-Park permit (daily pass \$4, three-day pass \$7, season pass \$20). These are available at gas stations, some Government Camp businesses and at Timberline Lodge.

During the rest of the year, a Northwest Forest Pass (daily \$5, annual \$30) is required to park at most hiking trailheads; buy them at ranger stations and from some Government Camp businesses.

### Downhill Skiing

**Mt Hood Meadows** DOWNHILL SKIING  
(☎503-337-2222, snow report 503-227-7669; www.skihood.com; lift tickets adult/child \$69/39) The largest ski area on Mt Hood; often has the best conditions. Facilities include two day-lodges with nine snack bars and restaurants.

### Timberline Lodge

DOWNHILL SKIING  
(☎503-272-3158, snow report 503-222-2211; www.timberlinelodge.com; lift tickets adult/child \$56/36) Boasts the longest ski season in North America; its legendary lodge is a must-visit for bar drinks, fireplace sit-downs and upscale dinners.

### Mt Hood Skibowl

DOWNHILL SKIING  
(☎503-272-3206; www.skibowl.com; lift tickets adult/child \$44/24) The USA's largest night-ski area and the closest skiing to Portland, making it popular with people who buzz out from the big city for an evening of skiing. Overall, it's smaller than Meadows or Timberline. Lift tickets are cheaper during the week.

### Cooper Spur Ski Area

DOWNHILL SKIING  
(☎503-352-7803; www.cooperspur.com; lift tickets adult/child \$25/20) On the northeast slopes of Mt Hood; caters to beginners and families with mostly beginner/intermediate runs and a tubing area. A special pass (\$35) includes equipment rentals and tubing.

### Cross-Country Skiing

**Trillium Lake**, near the campground of the same name, is a very popular cross-country ski loop. **White River Canyon** is another good trail, and starts at a sno-park on Hwy 35 (about 4 miles north of Hwy 26).

**Mt Hood Meadows Nordic Center** (☎503-337-2222; www.skihood.com/The-Mountain/Nordic-Center; day pass \$10) offers around 10 miles of groomed wooded trails. Several other free (ungroomed) trails start from the same parking area, including an easy mile-long trail to Sahalie Falls and a longer, more challenging one to Elk Meadows.

**Teacup Lake** (www.teacupnordic.org; trail fee \$8) has 12 miles of groomed trails and a variety of terrain.

### Hiking

An outstanding guide that includes Mt Hood hikes is William L Sullivan's *100 Hikes in Northwest Oregon*. It's also worth visiting a ranger station for maps and information on the many hikes in the area. A Northwest Forest Pass (\$5) is required at most trailheads.

A popular trail loops for 7 miles via lovely **Ramona Falls**, which tumbles 120ft down a face of mossy columnar basalt. To reach the trailhead from Zigzag, turn north onto Lolo Pass Rd for 4 miles, then turn right on USFS Rd 1825 for 3 miles.