



The Willamette Valley & Wine Country

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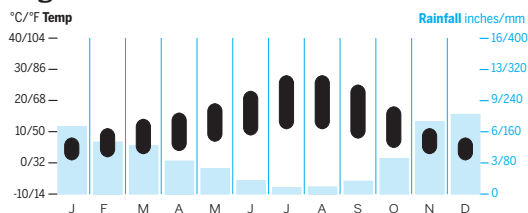
Why Go?

Visiting the region's wineries is undoubtedly the major draw in the Willamette Valley, but it's not the only highlight. Visit humble Salem, Oregon's capital city, and its surrounding attractions (which include a waterfall-filled state park and a 2.5lb hairball – but not in the same place!). Pause and let your hair down in dynamic and liberal Eugene, full of energetic college students, pretty riverside parks and fine restaurants. And Oregon City, within Portland's southern suburbs, is the place to go for the history of the Pacific Northwest; this was the last pit stop for settlers on the Oregon Trail.

The Willamette Valley is well located: head east to the Columbia River Gorge, north to Washington and west to the coast. Everything is so close by you'll want to linger for longer than you planned, so stretch that schedule and put on your explorer's hat – you'll need it.

When to Go

Eugene



December–March Hot-spring heaven at Bagby, Beitenbush or Belknap Resort

June–September Wine tasting, river rafting, walking behind falls at Silver Falls State Park

September The Elizabethan Shrewbury Renaissance Fair and the artsy Fall Festival

Oregon City

POP 32,000

This nondescript little Portland suburb, nestled next to the Willamette River, was the final stop on the Oregon Trail and the first US city founded west of the Rockies. Despite its historic status and good location, Oregon City is visually plagued by an expanse of ugly paper-mill buildings and electric generators cosseted around the 42ft Willamette Falls. The city features a bit of historic character downtown, a variety of old homes in surrounding neighborhoods and a free municipal elevator (between Railroad and 7th Sts) that offers good views of the area.

Sights

FREE **McLoughlin House** HISTORIC HOUSE
(☎503-656-5146; www.mcloughlinhouse.org; 713 Center St; ☺10am-4pm Wed-Sat, 1-4pm Sun) This 1845 house was built by John McLoughlin, who was called the ‘father of Oregon’ for his hand in helping found Oregon City – the West’s first. At the time, most settlers lived in log cabins, and this two-story clapboard home (a National Historic Site) was then considered a mansion. Free tours are offered; check the website for free events that take place here.

Museum of the Oregon Territory MUSEUM
(☎503-655-5574; 211 Tumwater Dr; ☺by appointment) History exhibits at this engaging museum offer a good interpretation of the local moonshine trade and of the **Willamette Meteorite**, the largest meteorite found in the US. Other displays include collections of intricately etched military mess kits and Native American basketry. Head up to the 3rd floor for a good view of the dam and falls. Open by appointment only.

Stevens-Crawford House Museum MUSEUM
(☎503-655-2866; 603 6th St; ☺11am-3:30pm Thu-Sat) For a taste of the past, step into this 1907 museum. Owned by a pioneering family, the house still boasts most of its original furniture and hosts occasional exhibits, plant sales and a Christmas celebration.

Information

State Welcome Center (☎503-657-9336; www.historicoregoncity.com; 1726 Washington St; ☺9:30am-5pm Mon-Sat, 10:30am-5pm Sun) A good place to go for information and a few pioneer exhibitions.

Champoeg State Heritage Area

One of the very first settlements in Oregon, Champoeg (‘shampoo-e’) was located on a flood plain along a bend in the Willamette River. After the historic 1843 vote, the town continued to grow as the era of riverboat travel brought increasing trade to the Willamette Valley. However, this bounty only lasted until December 1861, when an enormous flood swept through the Willamette drainage and the settlement, destroying most of it.

Now a state heritage area and popular family destination, **Champoeg State Heritage Area** (☎503-678-1251; www.oregonstateparks.org; 8239 Champoeg Rd NE; day use \$5) is 25 miles southwest of Portland, off I-5 exit 278. There are 615 acres of old-growth woodland, grassy meadows, nature trails, historic sites and campgrounds. Films and displays at the **visitors center** (☺9am-5pm) explain the events that led up to the famous vote at Champoeg. There are also exhibits on the Calapooians and the flood patterns of the Willamette River. On summer weekends, various walks, tours and programs are offered.

The **Pioneer Mothers Memorial Cabin** (☎503-678-5537; adult/child \$4/2; ☺1-5pm Fri-Sun Mar-Oct) is a reconstructed log cabin built by the local Daughters of the American Revolution. It’s filled with objects brought across the Oregon Trail and other articles of frontier life. The 1852 **Robert Newell House** (☎503-678-5537; www.newellhouse.com; adult/child \$4/2; ☺1-5pm Fri-Sun Mar-Oct) houses Native American artifacts and inaugural gowns worn by the wives of Oregon governors.

Be sure to reserve in summer for the pleasant sites, yurts and cabins at the **Champoeg Campground** (☎800-452-5687; tent sites/RV sites/yurts/cabins \$19/24/36/39).

Newberg & Dundee

The gateways to wine country, these small cities were originally founded as Quaker settlements. Little of those original quiet ways remain however, and now strip malls and modern services are much of what you’ll see. At least there’s fine dining in the area, along with upscale countryside places to sleep. Dundee is 2 miles west of Newberg, on Hwy 99W.