



Columbia River Gorge

Includes ➔

The Western Gorge & Columbia River Highway.....	263
Cascade Locks.....	263
Bonneville Dam....	263
Across the Border..	266
Hood River.....	267
The Dalles & Around.	271
Eastern Gorge.....	274

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Celilo Restaurant & Bar (p270)
- ➔ Nora's Table (p270)
- ➔ Double Mountain Brewery (p270)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ McMenamins Edgefield (p263)
- ➔ Skamania Lodge (p267)
- ➔ Celilo Inn (p273)

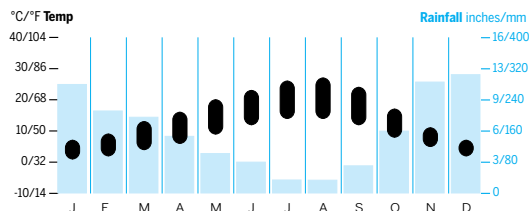
Why Go?

Cleanly dividing Oregon and Washington is the spectacular Columbia River Gorge, carved some 15,000 years ago by cataclysmic glaciers and floods. Driving east on I-84 (or on the scenic Historic Columbia River Hwy) has you passing high waterfalls and nearly vertical mountain walls, all the while paralleling the mighty Columbia.

Hikers have plenty to keep them busy in the gorge, which features many steep, lovely trails that lead through canyons lined with ferns and rivers, and across wildflower fields to grand vistas. Summer wind sports are legendary – the gorge channels westerlies inland against the current, creating world-class windsurfing and kiteboarding conditions. There are also mountain-biking and rafting possibilities, especially around Hood River. Not into strenuous activity? The gorge offers highlights such as lovely waterfalls, agricultural bounties (don't miss the cherries in July!) and fine wine tasting. This is a special place, so take time to enjoy it.

When to Go

Hood River



Feb–May Waterfalls are at their gushing best, thanks to incessant winter and spring rains.

Jun–Aug Ripe cherries, great hiking weather and hot westerlies for kiteboarding.

Sep–Oct Luscious apples and pears, plus Hood River's Harvest Festival.

The Western Gorge & Columbia River Highway

Finished in 1915, the Historic Columbia River Hwy winds its scenic way between Troutdale and The Dalles. Also known as US 30, this thoroughfare was the first paved road in the Northwest and America's first scenic highway; it was also the last leg of Lewis and Clark's Corps of Discovery expedition and the hellish finale for Oregon Trail pioneers.

The Columbia River Hwy offers access to gushing waterfalls in spring, wildflower displays in summer and awe-inspiring views all year round. Hikers have plenty of trailheads to choose from, and cyclists can cruise two stretches of the old highway renovated for nonvehicular use. It's slow going on busy weekends, however, and windy enough that trailers are not recommended.

For great views, head to **Portland Women's Forum Park** – it's just a parking lot but one of the best viewpoints into the gorge. Another great must-see panoramic spot is nearby **Crown Point**, which marks the western edge of the gorge. Here, the 1916 **Vista House** (☎10am-4pm) **FREE**, an art nouveau-style rotunda, houses an **information center** (☎503-695-2230; www.vistahouse.com; ☎9am-6pm), gift shop and snack stand. And everyone stops at **Multnomah Falls**, Oregon's tallest waterfall at 620ft, with a 1-mile hike to the top. There's a **US Forest Service visitors center** (☎503-695-2372; ☎9am-5pm) and refreshment stand at the base of the falls. Finally, hikers will love the very popular **Eagle Creek Trail** (see p266), the gorge's premier walk; just be prepared for high trails with steep drop-offs.

There's camping at **Ainsworth State Park** (☎800-551-6949; www.oregonstateparks.org; tent/RV sites \$17/20; ☎Mar 15-Oct 31) though it caters more to RVs with crowded campsites and highway noise. For a special atmosphere, stay at the unforgettable **McMenamins Edgefield** (☎503-669-8610; www.mcmenamins.com/54-edgefield-home; 2126 SW Halsey St, Troutdale; dm \$30, d with shared bath \$70-115, with private bath \$120-155; 🍷🍷) in Troutdale, worth a visit for its bars and restaurants alone. The **Multnomah Falls Lodge** (☎503-695-2376; www.multnomah-fallsodge.com; ☎8am-9pm) offers a fine Northwest-style dining option right at Multnomah Falls.

To reach the historic highway, take exit 17 or 35 off I-84.

Cascade Locks

An early transportation center, Cascade Locks (at exit 44 off I-84) gets its name from the navigational locks, completed in 1896, that cut through the treacherous rapids here (now submerged). The town flourished throughout the 1930s, when the area was home to thousands of Bonneville Dam construction workers. At the locks, note the wooden Native American fishing platforms.

👁 Sights & Activities

Cascade Locks Historical Museum MUSEUM
(☎541-374-8535; Port Marina Park; ☎noon-5pm May-Sep, sometimes closed Mon) **FREE** Housed in an old lockmaster's three-story residence (1905) across from the locks, this museum features Native American artifacts, a fish wheel and a basement taxidermy collection – including a very surprised bobcat.

Columbia Gorge Sternwheeler CRUISE
(☎800-224-3901; www.portlandspirit.com; adult/child 4-12yr \$28/18; ☎May-Oct) Sightsee the Columbia River on a sternwheeler. Embark from the eastern end of Marine Park, where there are picnic tables, a cafe and gift shop. There are also jet-boat rides and other types of cruises.

🛏 Sleeping & Eating

A couple of campgrounds, a few motels and some diners offer the basics. Most travelers stay in Hood River, 14 miles to the east, or across the river at elegant Skamania Lodge (p267).

For a fast-food treat, get a giant soft-serve cone at **East Wind Drive-in** (☎541-374-8380; 395 NW Wanapa St; burgers \$4-7; ☎7am-8pm).

Bonneville Dam

This **dam** (☎541-374-8820; ☎9am-5pm) **FREE** was one of the largest New Deal projects of the Depression era. Completed in 1937, it was the first major dam on the Columbia River. Dam construction brought thousands of jobs, and the cheap electricity produced by the dam promised future industrial employment. Bonneville's two hydroelectric powerhouses back up the Columbia River