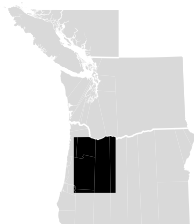


Portland & the Willamette Valley



Just south of the Washington state border and 65 miles inland from the Pacific Ocean, dynamic Portland is Oregon's superstar city. It's the state's largest metropolis and features a bustling, vibrant downtown alongside charming neighborhoods full of friendly (and often zany) people. Portland is laid-back, highly livable, proud to be ultra-green – both politically and physically – and boasts countless brewpubs, bookstores, gardens and coffeehouses. It's a highly addictive, unmissable spot to slap your backpack down while adventuring in the region.

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, where they finally dug in their heels, parked their dusty covered wagons and set up the region's first homesteads. South of Portland is the Willamette Valley, Oregon's very own wine-lovers' paradise. Let your taste buds explore the wineries around McMinnville, sampling the region's exquisite varietals and fine cuisine. Visit humble Salem, Oregon's capital city, and its surrounding attractions (which include a waterfall-filled state park and a 2.5-lb 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.

Portland and the Willamette Valley are also supremely 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.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Tromping Silver Falls State Park's 8-mile **Trail of Ten Falls Loop** (p248)
- **Wine tasting** around areas like McMinnville or Eugene (p244)
- Joining the parades, street fairs and the fun crowds in the September **Eugene Celebration** (p251)
- Exploring the many restaurants and art galleries in Portland's chic **Pearl District** (p228)
- Sampling the wide variety of microbrews in **Portland** (p237), which boasts around 30 breweries and brewpubs
- Snatching a history lesson in Oregon City at museums like the **Museum of the Oregon Territory** (p241)



