

# 5 DAY TRIPS ON THE WEST SIDE OF THE OLYMPIC PENINSULA

Whether you have only a few hours or several days, this guide offers a host of choices as you explore the Northwest corner of the Pacific Northwest. This 2,000 square mile area is bordered on the north and west by over 100 miles of saltwater shores, and to the south and east by alpine meadows and rain forest valleys. Over 200 miles of wild rivers furrow the region with healthy runs of native salmon and steelhead. The City of Forks is the primary population and commercial hub for the area, with many smaller communities along the way, including Sekiu, Neah Bay, Clallam Bay, Beaver and LaPush. Year round temperatures range from the mid-40's to upper 60's, snowfalls are infrequent as are temperatures over 80 degrees.



## DAY 1: HOH RAIN FOREST & KALALOCH BEACHES

Among the only protected temperate rain forests in the Northern Hemisphere, the Hoh Rain Forest is a not-to-be-missed attraction on the West Side of the Olympic Peninsula. Moisture-laden air from the Pacific brings an average of 140 inches of annual rainfall to the Hoh Valley, (record of 190 inches) in addition to condensed mist that contributes another 30 inches. Nineteen miles inland from Hwy 101 you'll find the Hoh Rain Forest Visitor Center. Here, three loop trails are easy to stroll and give a great sampling of the area: The Hall of Mosses Trail is 3/4 mile and shows the moss-draped maples, magically green in the spring, spectacular with color in the fall, and a treat any time of year; the 1 1/4 mile Spruce Nature Trail meanders through the late-secessional (younger) forests of red alder and cottonwood, showing the landscape carved by this glacier-fed river; and a paved 1/4 mile nature path suitable for a wheelchair or stroller. The Hoh Visitor Center is also a starting point for longer and more challenging hikes to alpine meadows and glacier fields.

Trekking with llamas is one way to explore the interior of the Park, when llamas pack your gear while you just pack yourself! River float trips and kayak tours are available on the Hoh River, and local fishing guides offer great sporting and photography trips year-round.\*\*

Scenic ocean shores with easy access are found in the Kalaloch (pronounced clay-lock) area, 15 miles south of the Rain Forest Road on Hwy 101. Beach Trail 4 is a pebble beach with dramatic surf (beware of the strong undertow), tidal pools and is a popular place to dip for smelt (schools of small fish that spawn in the surf in warm, calm weather and can be caught with a large net). Picturesque Ruby Beach with a meandering creek, dramatic sea stacks, and drift logs is named for its sometimes garnet-colored sand. A gold mining operation was located here in the early 1900's. The Rain Forest Country Adventures Map shows the beaches, attractions and services in the Hoh Rain Forest and Kalaloch areas including the world's largest Western Red Cedar off Hwy 101.\*\*



## DAY 2: AROUND FORKS & LAPUSH

Forks is situated on a broad prairie 14 miles from the ocean. About 5,000 folks live in the area, and you'll find many restaurants, lodgings, shops and services in this friendly, rural community. At the north end of Forks, look for Tillicum Park featuring public tennis courts, covered picnic area and children's playground. Near the south edge of town you'll find the Visitor Information Center, the Forks Timber Museum and the Forks Loggers' Memorial with its 12-foot tall wood logger. The complex offers gardens and forest paths that link to the University of Washington research facility. The Forks Timber Museum features an authentic fire lookout tower, a 9-foot cook stove from a logging camp and exhibits of pioneer and regional history. Open seasonally or by appointment (360) 374-9663. Free Logging and Mill Tours depart from the Forks Visitor Center on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from May through September. Step aboard for a 2-3 hour tour of mills, and logging, thinning & managed forestry sites narrated by volunteer guides. Reservations are advised as seating is limited, call (360) 374-2531 to reserve space.

This drive-to beach is a beautiful spot to enjoy the surf and watch shorebirds, eagles and seals. The 1 1/4 mile trek north to "Hole-in-the-Wall" begins here. On the south side of the river is the Quileute Indian village of LaPush and First Beach, a mile-long crescent known for surfing-size waves and great whale watching, especially from February through April. Kayakers, surfers and seals often add to the view. The hospitable community offers a marina from which fishing charters operate in season. Second Beach, just east of LaPush, is popular with photographers and is reached by way of a .7 mile forested trail that leads to a 2-mile long sandy stretch of beach with seastacks. Third Beach, is a mostly-level 1.5 mile trail through natural second growth forest, a result of winds up to 170 mph in January 1921. The "21 Blow" leveled nearly 8 billion board feet of timber, enough to construct 600,000 3-bedroom homes. In the fall, mushrooms flourish under the forest canopy on these trails. The Sol Duc Salmon Hatchery, 13 miles north of Forks, has interpretive displays, river access and picnic areas. In the fall, adult fish can be seen in the trap located past the water-cooling tower toward the river.

West of Forks, visit Rialto Beach on the north side of the Quillayute River.



## DAY 3: EXPLORE THE NORTHWEST COAST

Head to the most Northwestern tip of the continental US, exploring Cape Flattery, perhaps take a whale watching tour, walk along Hobuck Beach and visit the internationally-known Makah Museum.

Along Hwy 112 are the communities of Clallam Bay, Sekiu and Neah Bay and spectacular views of the Strait of Juan de Fuca and British Columbia's Vancouver Island. Birders will delight in the variety of sea and migratory fowl found in this

region, a list of sites and species is available by request or on-line.\*\* Some of the best tide pools in Washington can be found near Clallam Bay at Slip Point. Access is from the county day-use park right in town. Once on the beach, head to the right toward the point. Check the tides and allow plenty of time to be safe. Picturesque Sekiu has several boat marinas - a fun stroll to look at the boats and perhaps catch a glimpse of halibut, lingcod or salmon fresh from the Strait.

Continuing toward Neah Bay along Hwy 112, watch for the occasional gray whales that feed in the shallow reefs along the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Keep an eye out, too, for bald eagles that can be seen along this dramatic stretch of highway, particularly in late winter. Fishing charters and scenic coastal tours are available seasonally at Sekiu and Neah Bay.\*\*



## DAY 4: OZETTE WILDERNESS HIKE

Travelers will find the northwest entrance to Olympic National Park's 57 miles of coastal wilderness at Lake Ozette.\* (From Hwy 112 past Clallam Bay, turn southwest onto the Hoko-Ozette Road, follow 21 miles to the Ozette Ranger Station.) Three miles of plank-and-stair trail lead the hiker to Cape Alava, with rocky shores and reefs to explore at low tide. Cape Alava is near the site of an ancient Makah village partially buried in a mudslide over 500 years ago. Artifacts recovered from this site can be viewed at the Makah Museum in Neah Bay. The site is now closed and is marked by a memorial kiosk.

Makah Indian artifacts more than 500 years old are preserved and displayed at the Makah Museum in Neah Bay (360) 645-2711 (closed Monday & Tuesday in winter). Neah Bay is also a major stop on the Northwest Flyway for migratory birds. Beyond the village of Neah Bay, enjoy a spectacular .7-mile walk to Cape Flattery, the most northwestern point in the contiguous 48 states! The boardwalk trail leads through the forest to breathtaking vistas with four observation decks where one can see Tatoosh and Vancouver Islands, sea life and ship traffic. Turning south over the Waatch River near the Makah Tribal Center will lead to the scenic crescent of Hobuck Beach, open to the public year-round for day-use.\*\* Continue to the new northern entrance to Olympic National Park and Shi Shi Beach where the Point of the Arches rock formations can be found.

Look for dozens of Indian petroglyphs near Wedding Rocks, the first headland south of the trailhead. Sand Point, the southern tip of this 9-mile triangular trail, offers agate hunting and is home to a large sea otter population. A turn inland will lead you a level 2.8 miles back to Lake Ozette via another planked trail. The cedar plank walkway can be slick; soft-soled athletic shoes are often preferred over vibram boots. Be sure to check a tide table to time your beach walk with an outgoing tide, and carry the 10 hiking essentials - and lots of film as seals, deer, eagles and perhaps osprey, otters and whales may be there, rain or shine!



## DAY 5: LAKE CRESCENT, WATERFALLS & HOT SPRINGS

The legend of the well-matched dragons that fought nearly to the death, and whose hot tears of anguish created the hot springs of today lends a magical touch to the Lake Crescent area. This picturesque glacier-carved lake offers swimming, boating, and fishing along with diverse hiking trails. Hike along a shoreline path that was once a railroad grade, ascend to breathtaking vistas or stroll through the forest to a waterfall. Waterfalls in the area include Marymere Falls, a 1.8 mile round-trip walk from Storm King Ranger Station at Barnes Point and one of the most photographed spots on the Peninsula, Sol Duc Falls, a 1.6 mile round-trip walk from the end of Sol Duc Hot Springs Road (13 miles off of Hwy 101 at the west end of Lake Crescent). Just east of Lake Crescent on Olympic Hot Springs Road you'll find the sweet

Madison Falls on a paved 600 foot accessible path, park near the toll-booth and stroll left to see this cascade.\* Take time to enjoy the many soft adventures including whitewater rafting and kayak tours.\*\* Pedal boats, rowboats, canoes and motorboat rentals are available seasonally at the resorts and store on the lake. On the north shore of the lake, a 4-mile trail follows the old Spruce Railroad grade and is one of two trails in the Park that allows mountain bikes. The hot springs resort at Sol Duc features three hot pools and a swimming pool and is open seasonally.\*\* Just west of Lake Crescent, the 13-mile Mt. Muller Loop offers a challenging 2700 foot elevation gain and several scenic vistas. This, along with miles of backroads perfect for mountain bikes, stock, and dogs, awaits you courtesy of the US Forest Service.\*



## ALL ALONG THE WAY . . . OLYMPIC WEST ARTTREK

Olympic West Arttrek is a self-guided driving tour of gift shops, galleries and studios across the Olympic Peninsula's West Side, from Kalaloch to Neah Bay. The Arttrek tour offers Native American carvings and basketry, fine art & sculpture, a chainsaw carver and delightful gifts, books, and antiques! Pick up the tour brochure at any Arttrek location or contact the Forks Visitor Information Center.

### GET THE DETAILS:

\*Fees for use may apply. For maps and information, contact Olympic National Park at (360) 565-3130, [www.nps.gov/olymp/](http://www.nps.gov/olymp/), or the US Forest Service Pacific District (360) 374-6522, [www.fs.fed.us/r6/olympic/](http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/olympic/).

\*\*For brochures, maps mentioned, referrals and/or seasonal information contact the Forks Chamber of Commerce.



For lodging and visitor information, call 1-800-942-9943 or visit [www.nwlodging.com](http://www.nwlodging.com)

*This itinerary was first created for a family of 5, including children ages 6, 7 & 9 years, by Diane Schostak, a long-time Forks resident.*

*Revised July 2004.*

[www.forkswa.com](http://www.forkswa.com)

Log on to see the LaPush web cam!

**Enjoy the REST of the Olympic Peninsula:**

FORKS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, INC.  
VISITOR INFORMATION CENTER  
P.O. Box 1249 • Forks, WA 98331  
1411 South Forks Avenue  
800-443-6757 • 360-374-2531 • [info@forkswa.com](mailto:info@forkswa.com)

