



Olympic National Park

Mountains, Beaches and Rain Forests

At this national park you can be in the mountains, on an ocean beach and in a rain forest on the same day. But allowing at least three days to explore Olympic's diversity and beauty will bring you far more enjoyment.

If you'd like to take short hikes in all three environments, and see waterfalls, sea stacks, wildlife, dense forests and towering mountains, then this destination is for you. If you'd like to learn about temperate rain forests, this is the best place in the United States to do that. And if you like the color green, you'll feel like you're in heaven while you're on the Olympic Peninsula.

What's the best time to visit? July through September, if you prefer sunshine and 60- to 75-degree temperatures (15-24 C). Winter months are better if you want to experience the rain forests at their wettest best.

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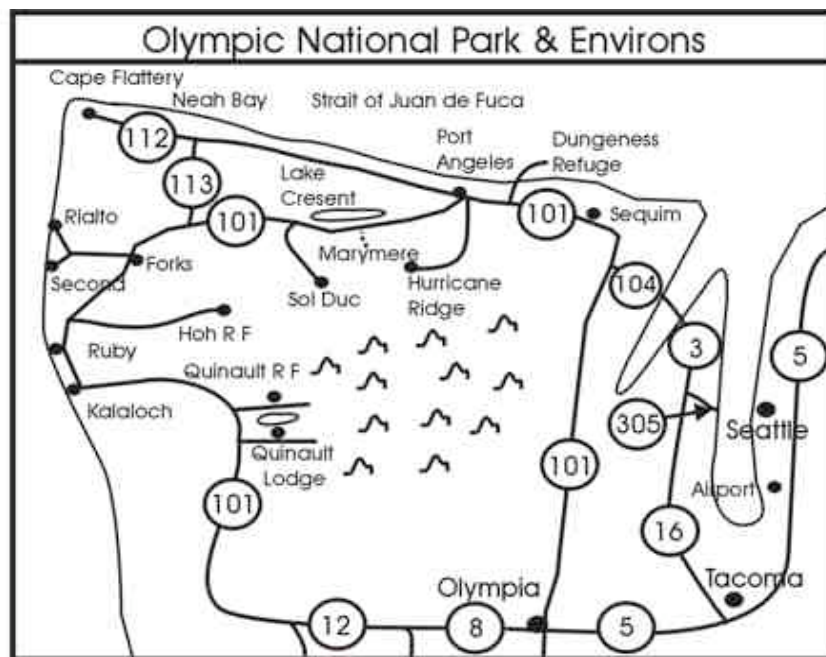
Guided Tours of Cities, Towns, and National Parks in the American West

by the Authors of *Seven Perfect Days in Arizona*, *Seven Perfect Days in Colorado*,
and *Seven Perfect Days in Northern California*

Olympic National Park is located on the State of Washington's Olympic Peninsula, west of Seattle. Its dominant features are the Olympic Mountains in the middle of the peninsula, rain forests on the western slope of the mountains, and 73 miles (117 km) of wild beaches on the Pacific Ocean. Access to the primary points of interest is easy: just get on U.S. Highway 101 and drive in a circle.

This issue of *Pathfinder Newsletter* focuses on the essentials of Olympic National Park. It contains a three-day tour encompassing: the park's headquarters in Port Angeles; Hurricane Ridge in the Olympic Mountains; fjord-like Lake Crescent and nearby Marymere Falls; Sol Duc Valley, with its hot springs and waterfall; the Hoh Rain Forest; Rialto, Second, Ruby and Kalaloch Beaches; and Lake Quinault with its rain forest and relaxing Lodge.

For additional information, see pages 453-483 of Fodor's *Pacific Northwest* or pages 551-590 of Fodor's *The National Parks of the West*. See the end of this issue if you want to spend more time in the area.



The Day Before Day One

There are two primary ways to get to Port Angeles from Seattle. One is by driving 130 miles (209 km) from Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEATAC), via Interstate 5 and Highways 16, 3, 104 and 101. The second is 72 miles (116 km) from Seattle's main ferry terminal via the Bainbridge Island Ferry and Highways 305, 3, 104 and 101. Both routes will take about three hours. You can get information about the 30-minute ferry ride at www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/info_desk/terminals/index.cfm?terminal_id=7; reservations are not accepted, but tickets may be purchased online. The main terminal is located at 801 Alaskan Way, Pier 52, in downtown Seattle. (See the end of this article for activities in downtown Seattle.) Here's an information tidbit: ferries have been active on Puget Sound since 1889.

On the way to Port Angeles, we suggest a stop at the Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge. Turn right on Kitchen-Dick Road, eight miles (13 km) west of the town of Sequim (pronounced “Skwim”) and drive another three miles (5 km) to the refuge (www.fws.gov/washingtonmaritime/dungeness/). If you have a Golden Age Pass or other inter-agency pass, you can enter this U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service facility without paying the per family entrance fee.

The refuge is a crescent of sand and cobblestones nearly five miles long that was formed 10,000 to 20,000 years ago by glacial action. It’s one of the world’s longest natural sand spits. There is a lighthouse at the end of the spit, which alerts ships in the Strait of Juan de Fuca to keep their distance. The half-mile walk from the parking lot to the base of the spit is a beautiful introduction to the forests of the Olympic Peninsula.

From an environmental standpoint, the Refuge is a haven for wildlife. It’s an important stop for migrating birds during spring and fall. Some 250 species of birds, 41 species of land mammals and eight species of marine mammals have been recorded here. But expect to see only a large number of sea gulls, unless you walk well out on the spit.

If you’re so inclined, you’ll find a walk of about a mile out to be relaxing and enjoyable. If you purchase a sandwich or picnic fixings in Sequim, you can eat them while seated on a driftwood log, watching the birds and listening to the waves. Off in the distance, to the north, is Vancouver Island in Canada.

As for restaurants and lodging in Port Angeles, for the evening and night that you’ll be spending there, we suggest that you consult www.portangeles.org. This town of 19,000 residents has an abundance of bed and breakfasts, as well as hotels, motels and other accommodations. Colette’s Bed and Breakfast is expensive, but is an exceptional ten-acre (4 hectare) ocean-front property (www.colettes.com). We enjoyed our meal at Bella Italia (www.bellaitaliapa.com). C’est Si Bon is highly recommended by locals (www.cestsibon-frenchcuisine.com).

Worthwhile is the drive past the Nippon paper mill on the Port Angeles waterfront to the Coast Guard Air Station on Ediz Hook. This 3.5-mile-long (5.6 km) sand spit protects the Northwest’s deepest harbor, allowing ocean-going vessels to enter. The Coast Guard Station is one of two helicopter bases in the Northwest that provides rescue and law enforcement services for U.S., Canadian and other nationals.

If you look across the Strait of Juan de Fuca at Vancouver Island, there’s a good chance that you’ll see the quaint city of Victoria near the waterline. It’s from Port Angeles that many people take the ferry to Victoria to visit the Butchart Gardens (see the end of this issue for more information).

Day One

Today, you’ll enjoy beautiful mountain and lake vistas, hike to two waterfalls and soak in a hot springs.

We strongly recommend that you start your visit to Olympic National Park at the park’s main Visitor Center in Port Angeles at 3002 Mount Angeles Road, 360-565-3130, www.nps.gov/olymp. The center is open from 8:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. during the summer; otherwise, hours vary according to the season. The displays and other provided information will pre-

pare you for what you'll be seeing over the coming three days. Be sure to watch the 25-minute, beautifully photographed film that introduces the park and its diversity of landscape, plants, animals and early inhabitants. Since there is no paved road that goes deep into the Olympic Mountains, the film helps visitors better understand this core area of the park and how it looks during the four seasons. Also take special note of the relief map near the visitor center entrance; it shows how the mountains, beaches and rain forests are positioned on the Olympic Peninsula. And you'll be impressed by the 8-1/2 foot (2.6 m) slice of a Douglas fir that began its life in the year 1349.

The Park began in 1909 when President Teddy Roosevelt set aside the land as the Olympic National Monument. It became Olympic National Park in 1938, an International Biosphere Reserve in 1976 and a World Heritage Site in 1981.

Hurricane Ridge

Here is a very important tip: Check the television monitor at the visitor center ranger desk for weather conditions at Hurricane Ridge. The webcam photo is updated every fifteen minutes. You'll be able to determine whether it's clear enough to make your trip to the Ridge worthwhile. Sunny is best; overcast is fine; foggy is not so good. In other words, don't be fooled by the fact that the mountains are shrouded by clouds as you look at them from Port Angeles. There is typically a break in the clouds at the Hurricane Ridge level.

Next on tap is your 17-mile (27 km), 45-minute drive to Hurricane Ridge, which begins to the right as you exit the visitor center. The road is open daily from mid-May through mid-autumn, and otherwise on many weekends, weather permitting. You'll come to an entrance station at about the five-mile (8 km) point. Be sure to keep your receipt; it will allow free entrance to all other Olympic National Park locations for a week. *If you are a U.S. citizen or permanent resident, and at least 62 years of age, you're eligible for the Golden Age Pass, which is effective immediately upon purchase. It costs only \$10.00 and gives you (and passengers who are then with you) lifetime access to all U.S. National Parks and National Monuments.*

During this drive, you'll be struck by the greenness of the forests and hillsides, and by the variety of trees and plants—a common sight for the three days of your tour. Especially striking is the fact that most of the space under the trees and out to the roadside is filled by all-green vegetation, led by ferns. In some places, the evergreens are so thick that they appear to be giant hedges bordering the road.

At the Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center, elevation 5,242 feet (1,598 m), you'll enjoy the inside exhibits showing Olympic's mountain habitats, a stunning back patio panorama of the Olympic Mountains, and several short hikes. (See the photograph on page 1.) Most of the mountain peaks are identified on the patio's signboard. Among them is Mount Olympus, the tallest at 7,976 feet (2,431 m) elevation, and Mount Seattle at 6,177 feet (1,883 m). There are sixty active glaciers on the peaks; Mount Olympus has three all by itself.

As for hiking, you have both long and short choices. Ask for a trail map at the visitor center. Two short trails are particularly enjoyable: the flat Cirque Rim Trail with Port Angeles and the Strait of Juan de Fuca in the distance on a clear day, and High Ridge Trail with its 360-degree views at 5,471 feet (1,667 m) elevation. It's common to see deer feeding and resting along both trails.

Lake Crescent and Lake Crescent Lodge

Now return to Port Angeles and turn left onto Highway 101, which you'll come upon soon after you pass the Olympic National Park Visitor Center. [*Check your gas gauge; there are no gas stations between Port Angeles and Forks.*] Twenty miles (32 km) later, you'll come to Lake Crescent Lodge (416 Crescent Road, Port Angeles, 360-928-3211, www.lakecrescentlodge.com). There, you can have lunch, enjoy the outstanding view of Lake Crescent and hike to Marymere Falls.

We think it's worth pointing out that Highway 101 is a curby two-lane road that follows the ins-and-outs of Lake Crescent exactly, so that you get a variety of views of the lake; it's a constantly beautiful drive, best enjoyed from the numerous viewpoints and pullouts.

Historically, the circa-1916 Lake Crescent Lodge was originally known as Singer's Lake Crescent Tavern and served as an overnight accommodation for tourists who visited the lake by steamboat before automobile roads were built. Today, still providing overnight lodging and restaurant service, it's a National Park Service property that's run by a concessionaire.

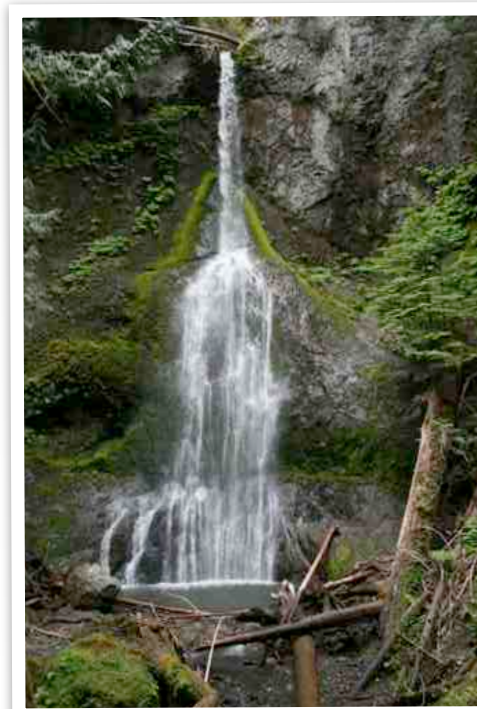
Twelve-mile (19 km) long Lake Crescent was glacially-carved more than 10,000 years ago. It's unusually deep: 624 feet in the center of the lake. Its water is very clear and is blue-green in color. The source of its water is runoff from the Olympic Mountains. The lake drains into the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

The most outstanding feature of the lake is its fjord-like appearance: as with the fjords in Norway, the 1,500-foot (457 meter) mountains come right down to the lake and disappear underwater. If you're a water person, instead of taking the hike to Marymere Falls you may prefer to rent a rowboat and have a more extended look at the lake.

Marymere Falls

To get to the trailhead that leads to Marymere Falls, return to the entrance road that leads from Highway 101 into Lake Crescent Lodge. Cross the entrance road to the Storm King Ranger Station parking lot. The 1.5-mile (2.4 km, round trip) mostly-flat trail begins at the ranger station, passes through a tunnel under Highway 101 and continues to the falls.

This will be your first hike through Olympic's dense old-growth forests (meaning they have not been clear-cut via logging), featuring really big trees, very green undergrowth, two narrow foot bridges, and a beautiful waterfall. The trees, which rise to about the height of a 20-story building, are mostly western hemlock, Douglas fir and Sitka spruce. You'll see patches of trees that have moss growing on them (more on this when we get to the Hoh Rain Forest). The last part of the trail involves climbing a steep earthen stairway to view the feathery 90-foot (27 m) Marymere Falls from lower and upper observation decks.



Sol Duc Falls

Next, continue west on Highway 101 to about one mile past the end of Lake Crescent and turn left onto Sol Duc Road. Seven miles (11 km) and ten minutes later, you'll come to the Salmon Cascades. With the help of the signboard by the observation deck, you'll gain an appreciation of what Chinook and Coho salmon go through as they make their way 50 miles (80 km) from the ocean to their breeding grounds during late summer/early fall after spending years touring the ocean.

Five miles (8 km) beyond Salmon Cascades, you'll come to Sol Duc Hot Springs Resort. Our suggestion is that you spend the night here in one of the cabins, enjoy a good meal, and soak in the hot mineral springs, which are free to guests. (P.O. Box 2169, Port Angeles, WA 98362, 360-327-3583, www.visitsolduc.com.) This is another National Park Service facility that's operated by a concessionaire. There is also an 82-space campground on the river.

Before that, however, there is another falls to visit that's well worth your while. To get there, drive another mile beyond the resort to the end of Sol Duc Road, where you'll find the trailhead for Sol Duc Falls Trail.

As with the hike to Marymere Falls, you'll be walking through old-growth forest with mostly western hemlock, Douglas fir and Sitka spruce trees towering over you and greenery everywhere on the ground, including many tall ferns and wildflowers. Unlike the hike to Marymere Falls, there is no moss on the trees, so the forest looks "younger," even though it's not. There are also a couple of footbridges here, but no steps to climb; this is a beautiful, basically flat hike, .8 miles (1.3 km) in length, one way.

The second footbridge will definitely command your attention, because from it you'll look down on the 90-foot (27 m) falls with its three powerful chutes of water and be impressed with the noise that it makes and the mist that rises from it.

Day Two

One fabulous rain forest and two interesting wilderness beaches will occupy your day. (There's some symmetry here: yesterday it was one mountain scene and two waterfalls.) *To decide which to do first, rain forest or beaches, stop briefly in Forks at the Forks Transit Center at 551 S. Forks Ave. (360-374-7566) or the Forks Information Center at 1411 S. Forks Ave. (800-443-6757). Get a copy of the tide chart and ask the attendant when it would be best to visit the beaches. We also recommend that you stop at the Thriftway Supermarket at 950 S. Forks Ave. to purchase picnic supplies; there are no food facilities in the Hoh Rain Forest or at the beaches. (There is a picnic area at Hoh, just off the parking lot.) Including the drives to and from Forks, you're likely to spend about four and one-half hours on your rain forest jaunt and three hours total at the two beaches.*

Hoh Rain Forest

This morning, you'll drive from Sol Duc Hot Springs Resort to Highway 101, turn left, drive 27 miles (43 km) and make those brief stops in the town of Forks. If you choose to visit the rain forest first, continue another 13 miles (21 km) south on Highway 101 and turn left on Upper Hoh Road. Drive 18 miles (29 km) farther and you'll arrive at the Hoh Rain Forest Visitor Center

(open daily 9-6 during summer; Friday through Sunday the rest of the year, hours vary according to the season; 360-374-6925; www.nps.gov/olym/planyourvisit/visitorcenters.htm.) The map on page two should be very helpful today.

At the Hoh visitor center, elevation 574 feet/175 meters, you'll have the opportunity to learn the details of why there's a rain forest in the northwestern United States and about its characteristics, flora and fauna...and you thought that rain forests are only located in the tropics, right? Here are a few tidbits that will give you a jump-start on your learning and observing:

In a nutshell, the Hoh is one of four west-facing river valleys on the Olympic Peninsula that host rain forests; the others are Quinault, Queets and Bogachiel. They are among the best preserved which are located in the North Temperate Zone of the earth. As ocean storms reach land from the southwest they run into the up-sloping Washington Peninsula and drop their moisture in the form of rain at lower elevations and as snow in the mountains. That's 140 to 192 inches—12 to 16 feet—every year! The Hoh and Quinault Rain Forests are the two wettest places in the continental United States.

Here's an interesting fact: Since the western side of the Olympic Peninsula traps most of the storms' moisture, there is little moisture that drops on the northeastern side. The result? Something called a "shadow." The town you passed by the other day, Sequim, is in the "shadow" and gets an average of only sixteen *inches* of rain a year, while the Hoh Rain Forest gets sixteen *feet* of rain! Seattle is also affected by the "shadow," receiving only 36 inches of rainfall per year. (Interestingly, Sequim has abundant year-around sunshine.)

Why doesn't all the moisture fall as snow? Because the incoming ocean temperatures are moderate, and because the thick canopy of tall trees in the forests retains the moderate temperatures. That makes for an environment that's friendly to epiphytes and Roosevelt Elk. Epiphytes are plants that grow on other plants, like mosses, ferns and lichens; you'll see plenty of these in the Hoh Rain Forest. (See the photo on page 1.) Roosevelt Elk are larger and darker than Rocky Mountain Elk, and it is because they eat the underbrush that the forest appears open and park-like.

Olympic National Park was created in 1938 to preserve "the finest example of primeval forest...and provide permanent protection for the herds of native Roosevelt Elk."

Just one more interesting phenomenon and we'll send you off to the visitor center and the rain forest: You'll see many "nurselogs" on your walk. They are logs that have fallen and are decaying. Seeds often fall on these logs, take root, and the young trees grow down and around them and into the ground. Over time, the "nurselogs" rot away and leave holes in the base of tall, healthy trees.

While browsing for information in the visitor center, be sure to sit down at the television monitor and watch the Hoh Rain Forest video.

Outside, you'll want to hike the 1.2-mile (1.9 km) Spruce Nature Trail and the connecting 0.8-mile (1.3 km) Hall of Mosses Trail. Both trails are loops and easy walks. As the name implies, the Hall of Mosses Trail is the more spectacular, with mosses hanging everywhere, primarily from alders and big-leaf maple trees. The trees are not harmed, because the mosses take their nutrients from the air and rain. The Spruce Trail loop will take you through habitat that's more open and by the Hoh River with its slate-colored and milky water that's primarily runoff from the glaciers on Mount Olympus.

How big are the big trees along these trails? They average about 230 feet (70 m) in height and the largest have a circumference of 50 to 60 feet (15 to 18 meters).

Rialto and Second Beaches

Next, drive back to Forks, go through town, and turn left on La Push Road, which is about two miles (3.2 km) north of town. After about seven miles (11 km), turn right on Mora Road and drive another five miles (8 km) to Rialto Beach.

This is an easy beach to access, because it's a short walk from the parking lot. This is also a difficult beach to access, because there's a huge, long pile of driftwood—there are many hundreds of them—that needs to be negotiated to get to the water. [Hint: there is a path through the driftwood about 200 feet north of the parking lot.] Where did all those logs come from? Their roots were eroded by heavy rains and glacier melt that washed them down rivers and out to sea. They were then washed up onto the western beaches of the peninsula by incoming storms.

Remember, these are wilderness beaches; they have not been developed for recreational purposes. The National Park Service manages most of the 73 miles (117 km) of beach along this coast, and has chosen both to leave the beaches in their natural state and to make them accessible to the public via roads, parking lots and trails.

So, even though you'll see some unusual rock formations off in the distance, what you'll probably focus on at Rialto Beach is the very thing that seems to be in the way of beach enjoyment: the driftwood. Play the cloud-shape game: one large piece of driftwood down near the water looks like a seal. The eroded top of a large log looks like a roiling mountain stream.

Consult the tide chart that you picked up in Forks before you walk too far along the beach. You don't want to be trapped by incoming water.

If you've reached Rialto Beach at low tide, you might be in for a special treat: A 1.5-mile (2.4 km) walk north on the beach to Hole-in-the-Wall (a sea-carved arch), will bring you to tide-pools, where you're likely to see starfish, sea anemones, clams, crabs and sea urchins.

For a somewhat different beach experience, drive back to La Push Road, turn right and drive five miles to Second Beach. After parking, hike the interesting half-mile (0.8 km) trail



to the beach: the first part is a rather steep uphill, and the last part is a steep set of stairs. On the beach, you'll find the usual jumble of logs, but what's different here is the number of sea stacks that sit in the water offshore, and the hole-in-the-wall at the north end of the beach (this is different from the Hole-in-the-Wall north of Rialto Beach). The whole scene is quite picturesque.

Sea stacks are an interesting phenomenon. They were once connected to the mainland, but through erosion by the ocean now stand alone out in the water. Some have trees and other plant life on top and serve as nesting places for sea birds. (See the photo on page 1.)

By now, you're ready for dinner. You have two choices: 1) drive back to Forks (ask your B&B host for restaurant recommendations); and 2) the River's Edge Restaurant, which is just one mile (1.6 km) farther along La Push Road at the waterfront of the Quileute Indian Reservation (41 Main St., 360-374-5777, no website). Yes, the restaurant is run by Quileute Indians, and, yes, the food is good, the ambiance is quite nice and the views of the ocean and the fishing boats are wonderful. The Quileute is one of eight tribes on the Olympic Peninsula.

For lodging this evening, we recommend the Miller Tree Inn, a bed and breakfast on the edge of town near downtown Forks (654 E. Division St., Forks, WA 98331, 360-374-6806 or 800-943-6563, www.millertreeinn.com). The inn, a circa-1916 farmhouse bordered by a picture-perfect pasture, is cozy and warm, has exceptional hosts, and serves wonderful full breakfasts. For other lodging choices, consult the Forks Chamber of Commerce website at www.forkswa.com.

Day Three

It's time to wind down a bit before heading home—unless you're planning to spend more time in the area (see below). Today, we suggest that you visit two more beaches, take a short hike in the Quinault Rain Forest, visit the Kestner Homestead, and wrap up the day relaxing at the Lake Quinault Lodge.

Ruby Beach

If you have time to visit only one beach in Olympic National Park, it should be this one.

Drive south from Forks on Highway 101 about 26 miles (42 km) to Ruby Beach. A few paces downhill from the parking lot, you'll find an overlook of the beach with an interesting signboard titled, "Sea Stacks." At the bottom of the hill, you'll find another titled, "Drift Logs and Rip Tides." The total walk from the parking lot to the beach is about one-third mile (0.5 km). There's no escaping it here: you will have to climb over some logs to get to the main part of the beach.

The four things that distinguish Ruby Beach from Rialto and Second beaches are the numbers and variety of sea stacks and large rocks, the presence of large numbers of cobblestones that have been smoothed by the sea, the width of the beach, and the fact that Cedar Creek empties right onto the beach. (It's possible to imagine some of the beached logs washing down the creek during a particularly heavy rain.) Playing the cloud-shape game again, you'll find a 30-foot (9 m) eagle rock sitting in the sand and the 30-foot head of a large sea animal rising out of the sand with its jaws open wide.

Particularly beautiful is the primary sea stack that sits off the north end of the beach, fronted by two guardian rocks (see the photograph on page 1).

Like Rialto, there are tide pools and sea creatures south of Ruby Beach that are accessible during low tides.

Altogether, these features make Ruby Beach one of the most pleasant oceanfront experiences of a lifetime.

In stark contrast, you'll find the beach at Kalaloch to be almost barren—except for the largest pile of driftwood that you'll ever see.

To get there, continue south on Highway 101 eight miles (13 km) to Kalaloch Lodge (pronounced “CLAY-lock”), drive into the cabin area to the small parking lot, and walk down the stairs to the beach, which, but for the logs, is reminiscent of the less-populated beaches of the East Coast: very wide at low tide, all sand, no sea stacks and very few large rocks in the water.

The Kalaloch Lodge is a great place to have lunch. If there are two of you, one sandwich is probably large enough for both. Try the clam chowder; it's the best ever! And the view from the dining room is gorgeous. (Lunch is served 11:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; 360-962-2271; www.visitkalaloch.com/lodging-food/index.cfm).

Quinault Rain Forest and Kestner Homestead

Continue down Highway 101 for about 28 miles and turn left onto North Shore Road. If you come to Amanda Park, you've gone about 2.5 miles (4 km) too far on Highway 101; just return to the north side of Lake Quinault (you'll see the lake off the east side of Highway 101) and turn right onto North Shore Road.

Once on North Shore Road, drive about six miles (9.5 km) to the Quinault Rain Forest Ranger Station (on the left). The ranger station is open 9-5, Thursday through Monday, from June through September, 360-288-2444, www.nps.gov/olym/planyourvisit/visiting-quinault.htm. Take particular note of the history and photographs related to the Kestner family, whose homestead you'll be visiting next.

To get to the Kestner Homestead Trail (a 1.3-mile/2.1 km loop), cross the parking area and look to the right for the trailhead. If you wish to walk only the 0.5-mile (0.8 km) Maple Glade Loop Trail—similar to the Hoh Rain Forest's Hall of Mosses Trail and connected to the end of the Kestner Trail—look to the left after crossing the parking area.

The Kestner Homestead Trail will lead you to... guess what?...the Kestner Homestead. The most astonishing fact about this farm is that in 1891 before the land was settled, there was no clearing here; it was all rain forest, full of trees and mosses like the forest that surrounds the farm today. Imagine the effort it took to clear this land, especially in a day when ox



teams and horses were the only means of removing huge tree stumps from the soil! This is the extreme of what the pioneers did as they settled the American West.

Austrian immigrant, Anton Kestner, claimed this land under the provisions of the Homestead Act of 1862. That Act allowed any head of family over 21 years of age to acquire 160 acres of free land if that person lived on, cleared and cultivated the land for a period of five years. The Kestner family lived here until 1946 when the farm was sold to the Higleys who, in turn, sold it to Olympic National Park in 1987.

Anton Kestner put his considerable woodworking expertise to use, creating the boards and shingles that were used to construct the farm's house, barn, smoke house and other buildings. He also made the fine furniture that he, his wife, Josepha, and their seven children used during their half-century of living here.

Look around the property. Imagine the usual farm animals in abundance, and the hay-fields, pastures, vegetable gardens and fruit and nut trees. Imagine the cow-milking, butter-churning, pie-making, hay-gathering and other routine farm chores that kept the family fully occupied. If you are from the city, it's much easier to imagine what farm life was like 100 years ago after you've visited a place like the Kestner Homestead.

Next, following the loop trail, you'll reenter the rain forest and come upon a sight that you'll find hard to believe: a place where the forest floor's vegetation seems to be only giant ferns, almost as far as you can see. And then, there's the usual giant Douglas fir, Sitka spruce, mountain hemlock and mossed-over maple trees. Are we bored yet?

Lake Quinault Lodge

It is possible to continue east on North Shore Road another 10 miles (16 km), cross over the Quinault River and drive west on South Shore Road to Lake Quinault Lodge. However, we don't recommend it, because after the first two miles the roadway is made of heavy gravel and is rather rough. Instead, we suggest that you return to Highway 101, pass through Amanda Park and shortly thereafter, turn left onto either Old State 9 Road or South Shore Road. (Old State 9 Road runs into South Shore Road.)

Before you settle into the comfort of Lake Quinault Lodge, we have one last nature treat for you. About a mile and a half past the lodge, look for the sign on the left that says, "World's Largest Spruce Tree." It's just an easy 0.3-mile (0.5 km) walk from the roadway to the tree.

What you'll see is a Sitka spruce tree that stands 191 feet tall (58.2 m)—that's about as high as a 19-story building—has a circumference of 58 feet 11 inches (18 m), and is about 1,000 years old. Tree huggers have a hard time getting their arms around this one!

The Quinault Rain Forest is apparently a prime environment for growing big trees: it also hosts the world's largest western red cedar, the world's largest Douglas fir, and the world's largest mountain hemlock.

Now, back to circa-1926 Lake Quinault Lodge (345 South Shore Road, Quinault, WA 98575, 360-288-2900, 800-562-6672, www.visitlakequinault.com). Hopefully, you'll arrive in sufficient time to take advantage of the many ways to relax here.

There are comfortable lawn chairs on the large lawn that slopes down to the lake; gaze awhile at the glacier-gouged 4.5-mile-long (7.2 km) lake or curl up with a good book. There is a horseshoe pit on the lower left of the lawn—but maybe that's a bit too much work. There is a

boathouse where you can rent a canoe, kayak, rowboat, pedalboat or motorboat. Inside the lodge, there is a large fireplace to sit by, board and card games to play, a heated pool, ping pong and a game room.

Or, if you haven't yet had enough of walking, you can take a walk along the lakeshore or in the rain forest. Rain forest trails that are managed and maintained by the U.S. Forest Service begin just across the street from the lodge. Ask for a map at the lodge's front desk.

The food in the lodge's Roosevelt Dining Room is very good. Reserve early. You'll particularly enjoy sitting at a table on the porch where you can enjoy the panoramic view and the setting sun.

Return to Seattle

The drive from Lake Quinault Lodge to Seattle or to the SEATAC airport, via Highways 101, 12, 8 and Interstate 5, takes about three hours (see the map on page 2).

Want to Spend More Time in the Area?

If you have additional time, you can also take in the **Ozette Loop Trail**; it's a triangle of three miles (4.8 km) of beach and two three-mile boardwalks (www.nps.gov/olymp/planyourvisit/ozette-loop.htm). Or, you can walk the ¾-mile **Cape Flattery Trail** to the beautiful northwesternmost point of land in the contiguous United States (www.northolympic.com/capeflatterytrail/). And there is the interesting **Makah Indian Reservation Museum/Cultural Center** in Neah Bay (www.makah.com/mcrchome.htm).

Another option is to take the ferry from Port Angeles to **Victoria**, on Canada's Vancouver Island, and enjoy the spectacular, internationally-acclaimed Butchart Gardens (www.butchartgardens.com), afternoon tea at the historic Empress Hotel, and the quaint town. You'll need your passport.

In **Seattle**, you can enjoy the view from the top of the Space Needle (www.spaceneedle.com), visit Pike Place Market (www.pikeplacemarket.org) and tour Pioneer Square (www.pioneersquare.org). There are many other things to do in Seattle (www.seattle.gov/html/visitor).

Twenty-five miles north of Seattle, in Mukilteo (near Everett), you can tour **Boeing's Future of Flight Aviation Center** and see airplanes being built (www.boeing.com/commercial/tours/index.html).

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Bill and Celia Ginnodo are residents of Arlington Heights, Illinois. They have lived and traveled extensively in the American West, including Washington. They are the authors of *Seven Perfect Days in Colorado: A Guided Driving Tour*, *Seven Perfect Days in Northern California: A Guided Driving Tour*, and *Seven Perfect Days in Arizona: A Guided Driving Tour*, which can be seen at www.pridepublications.com and www.amazon.com (enter keyword "Ginnodo").

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Next Issue – “Zion, Bryce, Capitol Reef, Escalante and Cedar Breaks”