

Driving the Infinity Loop

THE COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE, OREGON

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The Columbia River Gorge, with its breathtaking scenery, rich history, and abundant outdoor activities, is a must-experience destination in Oregon, located just east of Portland. The scenic route winds through this picturesque region by following the Columbia River, dropping into verdant valleys, and trekking up the mountain to offer endless—perhaps *infinite*—adventures. Use this as your quick guide to make the most of your journey along parts of the “Infinity Loop.”



When to Visit & Top Tips

In late spring to early fall, the weather is mild, and most trails and attractions are accessible.

Parking can be limited at popular stops like Multnomah Falls and Hood River. Arrive early to secure a spot.

Most suggest two to three days to do it well. Troutdale and Hood River are great places to call home base for day-trip excursions.

OPENING SPREAD: The Columbia River Gorge provides countless views worth slowing down for, especially this panorama with Vista House in the background. THESE PAGES FROM LEFT: Multnomah Falls: a must-stop for waterfall enthusiasts and shutterbugs. With a light dusting of snow and ice, Mother Nature prepares to awe in the winter months.

Photography by (opening spread) Chris Ekimon, (these pages, from left) Shalini Prabha, Ken Park. All images via Friends of the Columbia Gorge.

Route.

The Infinity Loop's name stems from the shape of this road trip, which is like a figure eight or the infinity symbol. Regardless of how many stops you make or which way you travel, you can't go wrong.

Highlights.

High on the must-stop list is Multnomah Falls, which plunges in two cascades totaling 620 feet. A short hike takes you to Benson Bridge for a closer view of the falls and epic photo opportunities. Drive east to another cinema-worthy feat of engineering: the Bridge of the Gods in Cascade Locks. (You might have seen it and the nearby Pacific Crest Trail in the film *Wild*.) The town hosts Thunder Island Brewing, a local and visitor favorite, with indoor and outdoor seating right along the Columbia River.

Twenty-five minutes down the road you will hit Hood River, which is famous for its windsurfing and kiteboarding. Take a short drive or walk to the river to witness some of the world's best watersport athletes. Hood River also offers charming downtown shops, breweries, and cideries, (including Full Sail Brewing Company, Double Mountain Brewery, and Fox-Tail Cider & Distillery). You'll get great views



Locavore Favorites

Cathedral Ridge Winery
Hood River Lavender Farms
The Gorge White House
Packer Orchards & Bakery
Thunder Island Brewing
McMenamins Edgefield



Photography provided by (clockwise from left) Timberline, Packer Orchards & Bakery, Hood River Lavender, Kathleen Nyberg / McMenamins.

THESE PAGES, CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Mount Hood is a winter wonderland for skiers as well as those who want to enjoy its beauty from inside the historic Timberline Lodge. Stop for fresh pastries, both sweet and savory, like these from Packer Orchards & Bakery. Hood River Lavender is one of the many aromatic stops along the Fruit Loop. Troutdale is an ideal home base for the Infinity Loop, where you can stay at McMenamins Edgefield; the seventy-four-acre property includes a hotel, winery, distillery, brewery, spa, restaurants, and more.



of Mount Hood from town, and a forty-five-mile drive west to Vista House at Crown Point will provide a panoramic Gorge view and true photographic grandeur.

Depending on the season, you might want to veer off course with a thirty-five-mile drive through the "Fruit Loop." It is a beautiful drive through the Hood River Valley dotted with orchards, wineries, lavender farms, and more.

If you make the trek to Mount Hood, you won't be disappointed. There you will find Timberline Lodge, which was built in the 1930s by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The National Historic Landmark (that served as the exterior for *The Shining*) now functions as a ski lodge and offers a restaurant, pub, and gift shop for hotel guests and visitors.

Nature.

Be prepared to be wowed by the dramatic landscape. The scenery is there to remind you to slow down and relish the view while sampling some Columbia River Gorge berries, artisanal cheeses, smoked salmon, craft beers, and wines. Whether you hike to a waterfall, sample local brews, or simply enjoy stunning vistas, this road trip is sure to be a favorite memory of your Oregon travels. 11