Welcome to the State Parks of the Columbia River Gorge

Conveniently positioned beside the river and high above on the cliffsides of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, 19 state parks and a state trail open the way to hiking, sightseeing and more.

Looking for a riverside picnic area, a beach or a place where your leashed dogs can catch a breeze? Try one of the six parks on river-level I-84.

How about a close-up look at several of the gorge’s spectacular waterfalls? Or panoramic views of the wide, majestic river sparkling far below? Visit the parks along the engineering marvel now known as the Historic Columbia River Highway.

Several offer access to nearly 30 U.S. Forest Service (USFS) hiking trails (see other side). Want to stay overnight? Establish headquarters for your gorge visit in one of these state park campgrounds.

Hiking Adventures

Daytime hikes offer the best way to see the Columbia River Gorge. State park trails lead to cascading waterfalls, bird’s-eye viewpoints and connections with a vast network of cliffside trails managed by the U.S. Forest Service (see maps inside).

The Historic Columbia River Highway is an amenity to many trailheads in the west end of the gorge. And, further east, long-abandoned segments of the highway now exist as the Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail.

Parks Along The Historic Columbia River Highway

Begun as a trail (long or short, your choice) from these parks to a waterfall or cliffside viewpoint:

Guy W. Talbot State Park, 12 miles east of Troutdale. A short trail leads from a secluded, well-shaded picnic area to 249-foot-high Lostowul Falls. Great for group picnics with its modern restrooms.

Shepperd’s Dell State Natural Area, 14 miles east of Troutdale. Features a short trail to views of Young’s Creek waterfalls.

Bridal Veil Falls State Scenic Viewpoint, 15 miles east of Troutdale (also accessible to motorists on I-84 from Exit 28). Offers a pleasant picnic destination and two hiking trails, one (one-mile round-trip) leading to the base of gracefully cascading Bridal Veil Falls. Upper-level interpretive trail features magnificent views of rock formations and the Columbia River.

John B. Yeon State Scenic Corridor, on a frontage road two miles east of I-84 Exit 35, 30 miles east of Portland. A short trail leads to a view of 289-foot Elowah Falls (no other visitor facilities available). Visitors also access USFS trails just outside.

Crown Point State Scenic Corridor, 11 miles east of Troutdale. Cliffside site of the historic, octagonal Vista House; a gate landmark since it was built in 1918. Houses a museum, interpretive displays and a gift shop (open March-Oct). Panoramic views of the gorge visible in all directions from the parking lot.

Bridal Veil Falls

Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail

Where motorists on old U.S. Highway 30 once swept around curves high along the cliffs of the Columbia River Gorge, hikers, bicyclists and users of other non-motorized forms of transportation leisurely enjoy the view from the Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail (HCHRST). The trail, actually two disconnected paved ribbons following abandoned stretches of the historic highway route, gives users more than 10 miles of sightseeing trails. Between Hood River and Mosier, the five-mile Twin Tunnels segment passes through two distinct climate zones. Starting at the east Mark O. Hatfield Trailhead near Mosier, the trail leads through dense forest dotted with ponderosa pine trees for about one mile to the Twin Tunnels. Spectacular geological formations tell the story of the gorge’s creation dominate the scenery. After passing through the tunnels, visitors emerge from the west portal into a forest that includes fir trees and other vegetation common to western Oregon. Views along the 3.5-mile segment from the tunnels to the west Mark O. Hatfield Trailhead overlook the river and the scenic grandeur of its gorge.

You will need a State Parks day-use permit to park at either the east or west trailhead. (Yellow self-service fee boxes are available at either end and at the Troutdale Visitor Center.) A visitor station with trail hosts at the west trailhead offers orientation services. A driveable one-mile segment of the Historic Columbia River Highway (HCHRST) leads from OR 35 to the station’s parking lot.

The other open, paved portion of the HCHRST parallels I-84 west of Cascade Locks through an area that receives double the amount of rainfall measured in the Twin Tunnels area. A lush, green landscape of ferns, moss-covered rocks and delicate, shaded wildflowers flank a secluded 2.5-mile segment winding from the trailhead at the west portal into a forest that includes fir trees and other vegetation common to western Oregon. Views along the 3.5-mile segment from the west trailhead overlook the river and the scenic grandeur of its gorge.

All segments of the trail are rated moderate to difficult for people with disabilities.

Be a Responsible Hiker

Lease no trace of your presence. Pack out any garbage you create, and any found along the trail.

PLEASE, don’t smoke on the trails. Fires start even during wet seasons.

Control your pet. Uncontrolled pets often annoy fellow hikers and harass wildlife. They also can damage vegetation and the trail.

Advise local authorities of trail washouts, fallen trees and rock slides to help maintain a safe trail system.
Hiking in the Columbia River Gorge

Start your trail adventure in a state park.

The maps on this page show the Columbia River Gorge trails immediately accessible in the vicinities of state parks. For maps and information showing the entire network of U.S. Forest Service (USFS) trails in the Gorge, ask for the USFS Hiking Trails of the Columbia River Gorge map, which is sold at the Crown Point Vista House, Multnomah Falls Lodge and the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area office in Hood River. Also, note that USFS Trail-Park passes ($5 daily; $30 annual) are required at some trailheads.

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Safety Reminders

Hiking trails in the Columbia River Gorge lead through a variety of terrain with wide variations in altitude. Trails can be steep and rugged with winding switchbacks.

A day hike of five miles averages about 2½ hours. However, hiking time does not allow time for sightseeing. It is wise to take along enough water and food for a full-day experience and to allow plenty of time to complete a hike. Try not to get caught on a trail in the dark; daylight is a precious resource in the gorge.

If backpacking, be sure to take a whistle, trail map, compass, flashlight, first-aid kit, pocket knife, sunburn protection and insect repellent. It’s also a good idea to carry extra clothing and socks, a plastic tarp, a candle and waterproof matches.