

## Driving the Pacific Coast Highway





When we contemplated a road trip down the length of the U.S. Pacific Coast, we quickly realized that it would need to be split into a couple of stages, because ten or twelve days of driving is probably a long enough trek for a couple of middle aged map readers who think they have to stop to walk to every lighthouse and waterfall along the way. (Not to mention taking pictures of all the tacky town statues.)

We also realized that we'd better start the journey fairly soon; before age and common sense rendered it irrelevant.

We planned it in two sections: Washington and Oregon for the first year, and California for the next – when we'd end up in San Diego where we'd been for our honeymoon, twenty-five years earlier.

It turned into four separate states: the Olympia Loop in Northern Washington, Southern Washington and Oregon, Northern California, and Southern California.

U.S. Highway 101 is the original road from the Olympic Peninsula in Washington to Los Angeles.

After following the coastline through Oregon, it continues along the coast of California as far as Eureka, where it heads inland to become the "Avenue of the Giants" through the redwood forests to Leggett, California; and then continues to San Francisco and Los Angeles.

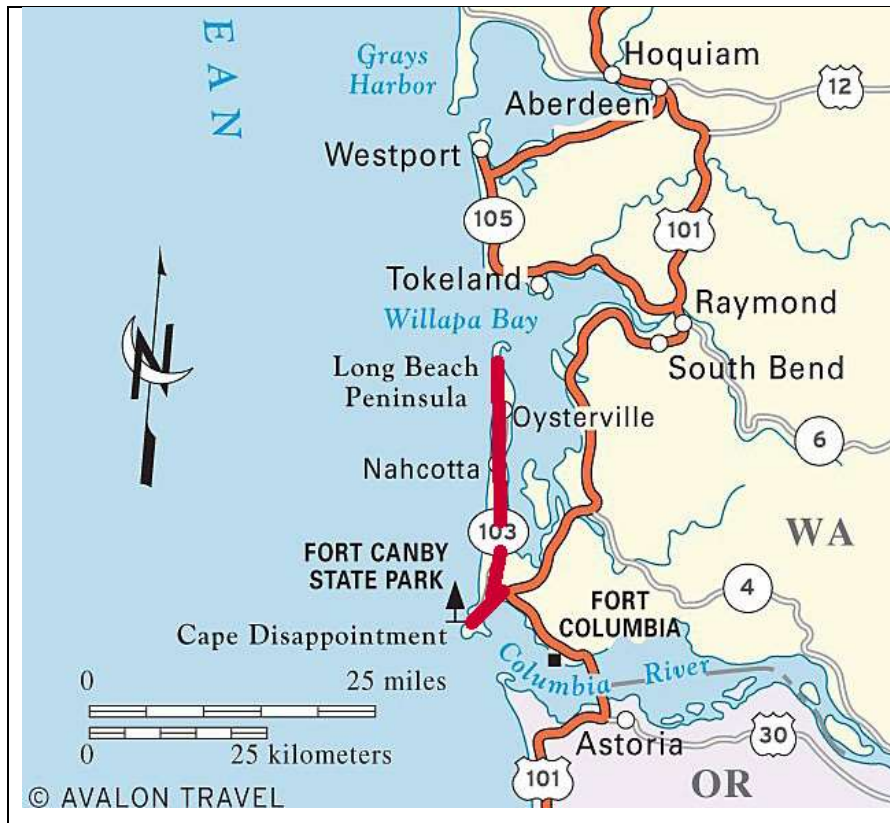
The actual "Pacific Coast Hwy" (PCH) is California Route #1, beginning at Leggett in Northern California, following the coast to San Francisco, south along arguably the most scenic sections at Monterey and Big Sur, merging with U.S. 101 north of San Luis Obispo, and again from Gaviota to Oxnard - ending at Interstate #5 near Dana Point (half way between Los Angeles and San Diego).

So we set off in late September of 2018 for a twelve day jaunt along the South Washington and Oregon Coastline.

The 2018 stage of the tour followed U.S. Highway 101 from Aberdeen, Washington to Klamath, California; with the majority of time spent on the Oregon Coast. We flew to Seattle and drove to Aberdeen, Washington in a rented car to join the coast road and begin the journey southward.

After driving the distance, and walking ourselves tired, we cut across from Crescent City, California to Grants Pass, Oregon on the “Redwoods Highway”; and beetled back thru Portland and on to Seattle on the Interstate to catch the flight home.

### South Coast of Washington State



The tacky statue tour was now well started. From here, it's 77 miles along the highway to Oregon. Google says to expect it to take 1 hr 37 mins. It took us two days.

We spent our first night in Aberdeen, Washington, after arriving from Seattle and getting settled. Almost immediately, we went looking for seafood; Sue for salmon, and Ron for chowder.

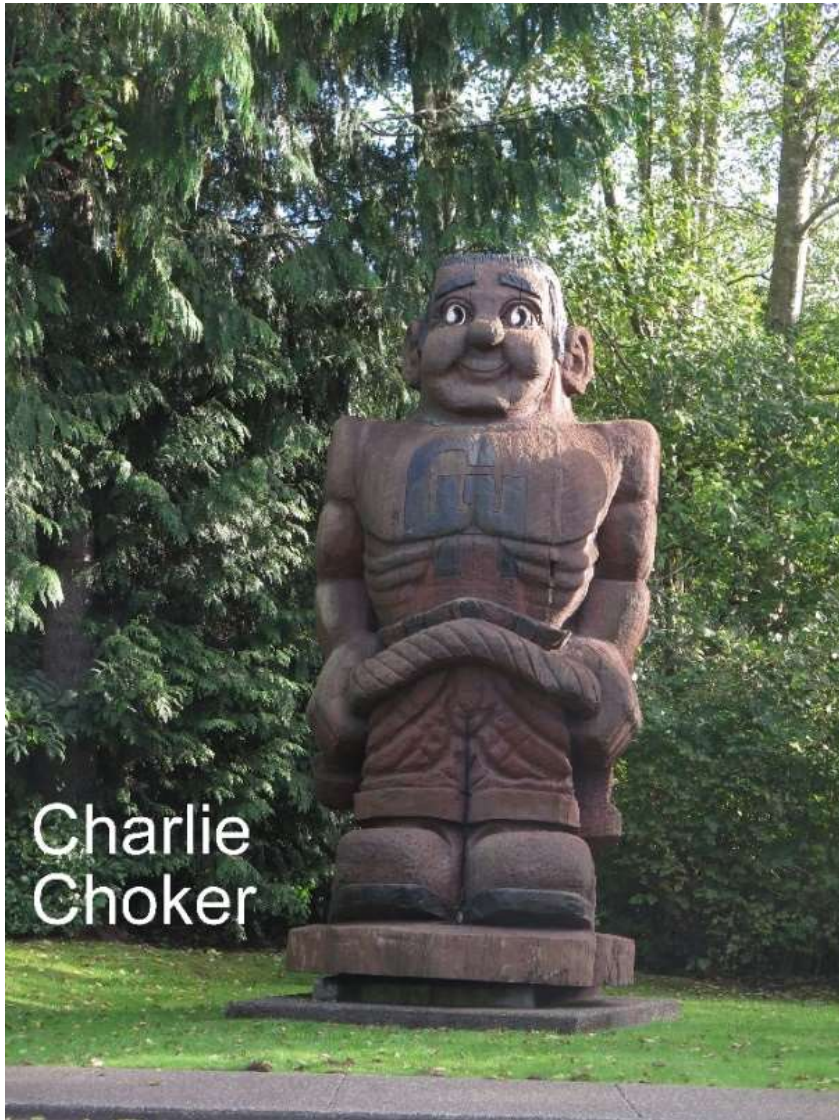
**Aberdeen** is a town with a tradition of hard working loggers, fishermen, and miners. Like all such towns that share the coastline with more “touristy” places, it can have an initial appearance of being a little scruffy around the edges to the uninitiated. “Hard scrabble” some people might call it.

We were directed to the prominent (and only) seafood place by the friendly staff at the excellent motel, to find a “pickup and carry” place that seemed very popular with the locals on a Sunday night. The chowder was excellent, although the salmon maybe not so much.

For those who notice these things while on vacation, it could be said that the locals were not about to reduce prices below what could be expected in any tourist town – so there! Good for them.

Ron wasn’t sure who he was, but apparently the musician known for Seattle’s “Grunge” movement came from Aberdeen. They have a little spot with tributes to his origins, and the people in the house beside the park have the sense of humour to explain themselves with signs saying things like: “No, he didn’t live here. No, this is not a gift shop. Yes, we get tired of the traffic.”





Gray's Harbour College is in Aberdeen and their mascot is "Charlie the Choker", true to the history of the area. A Choke Setter on a lumber crew is the guy attaching cables to a felled log. Appropriately, Charlie was carved in 1975 from a 15 by 8 ft cedar log - with a chainsaw. Note the rope around his waist. Just the kind of guy you might want on your football or wrestling team.



Interestingly, just before legal cannabis in Canada, we visited two states where it was sold everywhere. Not that this is related in any way, but I was surprised that people in the Pacific Northwest didn't seem as fit and healthy as I had expected, judging from the residents seen wobbling around the Walmart.

The next day we set off on a little detour along the south side of Gray's Harbour to Westside and Tokeland, before re-joining the main route at Raymond.



They have a viewing tower at the harbour in Westport, and a long walkway along the beach in Westhaven State Park that is favoured by surfers. The sea lions seem to love playing “king of the castle” on the buoys.



They boast “Washington’s Tallest Lighthouse” here, by the way.



The coastline here is known as the “cranberry coast” for some reason. There is a rumour of cranberry processing somewhere, or used to be. They even make wine from it.

At Tokeland, we visited the Shoalwater Bay Casino, where they let us keep a couple of bucks – setting us up for future failure (more casinos to follow).





**Raymond** is another lumber mill town, dominated by the Weyerhaeuser company. At the restaurant, they told us that people with significant seniority often got a tribute in the form of a metal statue in their honour. The town is plastered with two dimensional metal monuments in the shape of people and wildlife.



At the southernmost part of the Washington coastline is the Long Beach Peninsula; boasting the "longest beach in the world" at 28 miles long.

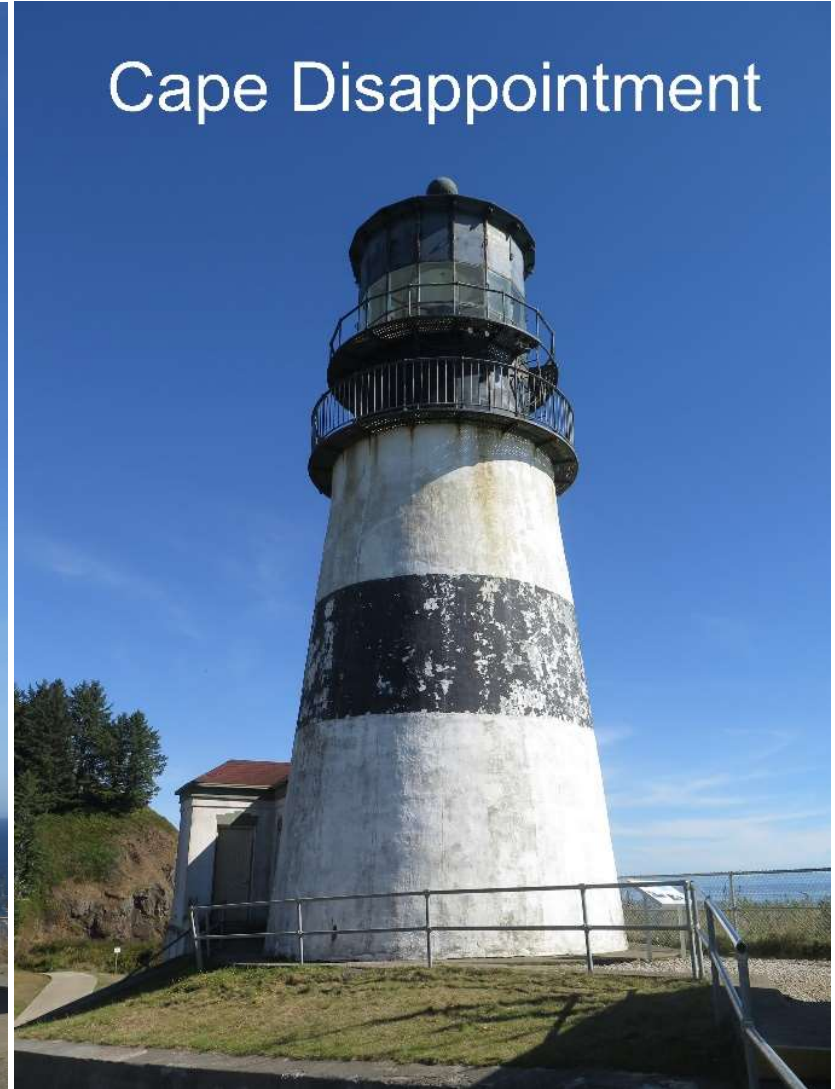


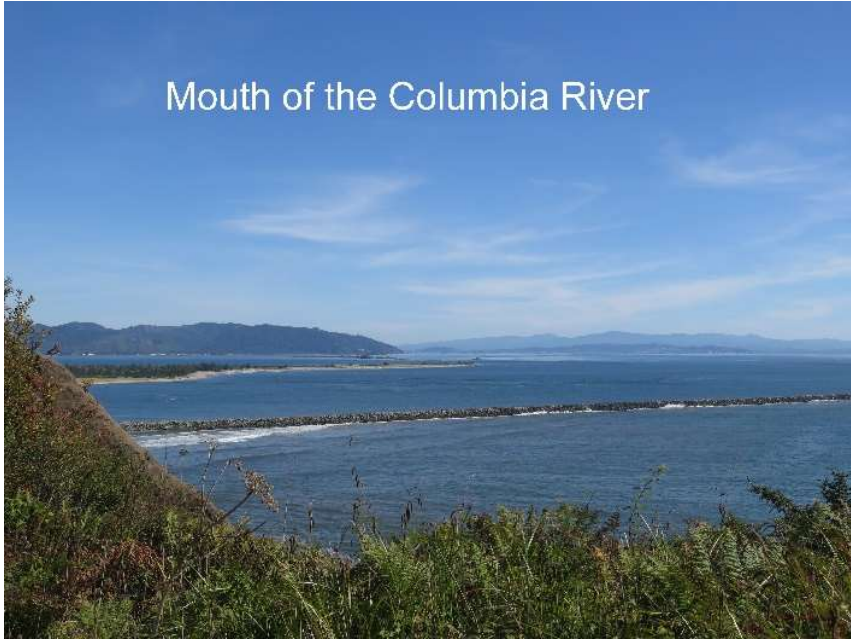
Like all tourist towns, Long Beach features many cutesy type shops and attractions; including this water spitting clam – to which I can't believe we donated a couple of quarters just for the picture.

And featuring garish shops and the world's ugliest statues.



Then there were the walks to the lighthouses.





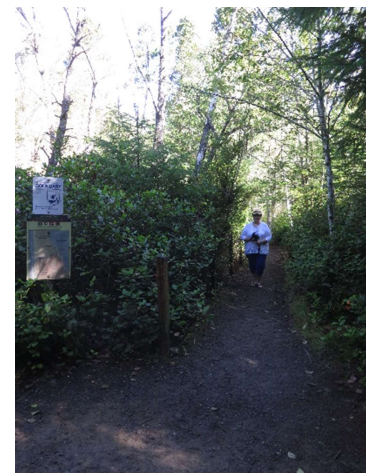
I suppose smart people and most seniors would have gone to the visitor center for the iconic picture of the Cape Disappointment Lighthouse, but when the trail beckons..... (We flatlanders keep forgetting that a mile is not a mile if it's uphill.)

The “disappointment” was that after a grueling walk, we could have wished for a better paint job and an easier view of the lighthouse. Views of the sea are always worth it though.

The Coast Guard has a station around the corner.



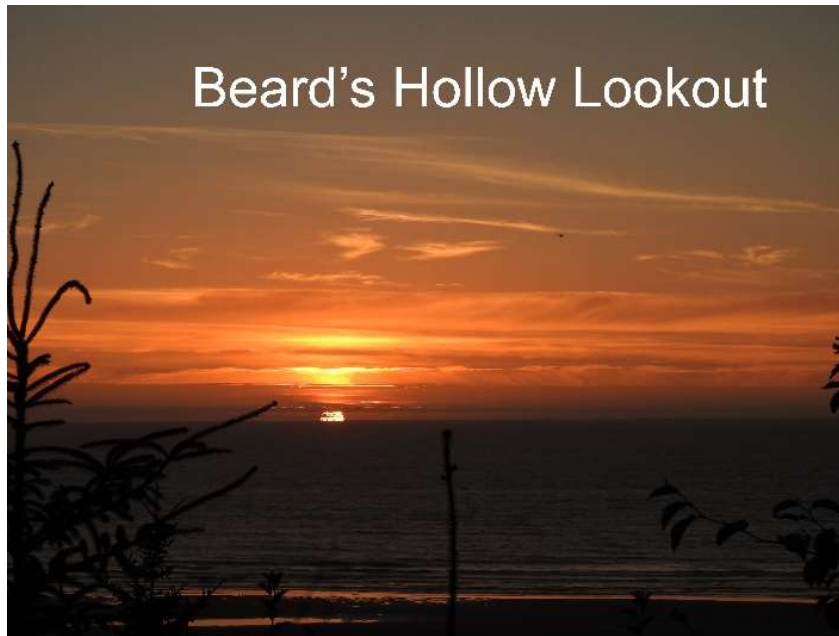
At the top of the peninsula, is Leadbetter Point, a forested area with some walking trails. Oysterville, along the route, features a seafood shop selling product from the many oyster beds in the bay.



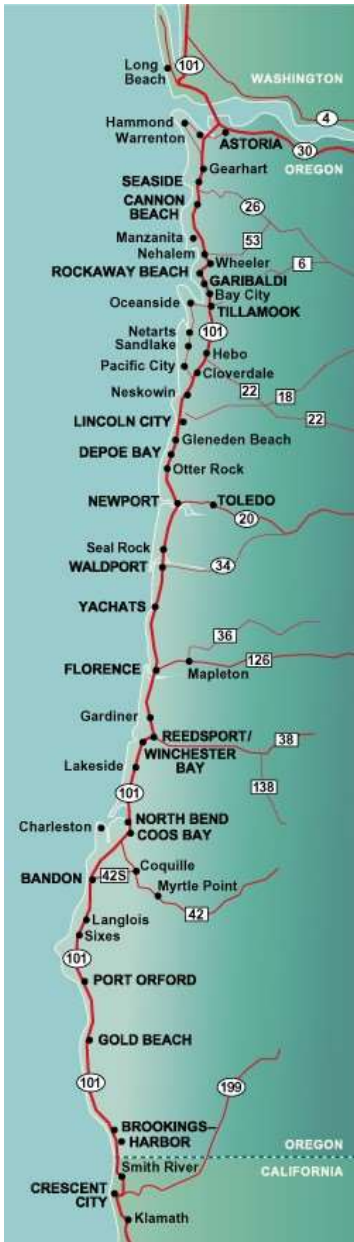
Of course, we had to scramble to get to Beard's Hollow Lookout at the south end of the peninsula to see the sunset. As usual, we got there just in time.

All this meant that we got back to town hungry after most of the restaurants closed. (Why do tourist businesses close at 9:00 o'clock just because it's off season?)

We managed to find a pub style little hotel that had a hard working cook and friendly servers, plying straggling travellers with seafood hors d'oeuvres and wine.







## Oregon Coast Highway

Distance from Astoria to Brookings: 337 miles

Google's driving time estimate: 7 hrs 15 mins

We did the distance in 5 days

We made the mistake of picking up an excellent guidebook called The Original Highway 101 "Mile by Mile" – which lists every attraction imaginable along the route. (It cost us several hikes uphill, but we covered them pretty well given the time we had.)

Link to Mile by Mile: <https://www.oregoncoasttravel.net/>

The bridge crossing the Columbia River from Washington to Oregon at Astoria, is of the distinctive design attributed to an engineer named Conde McCullough.

The McCullough bridges were built along the Oregon Coast Highway from Astoria to Gold Beach in the 1920's and 1930's and are still standing today.





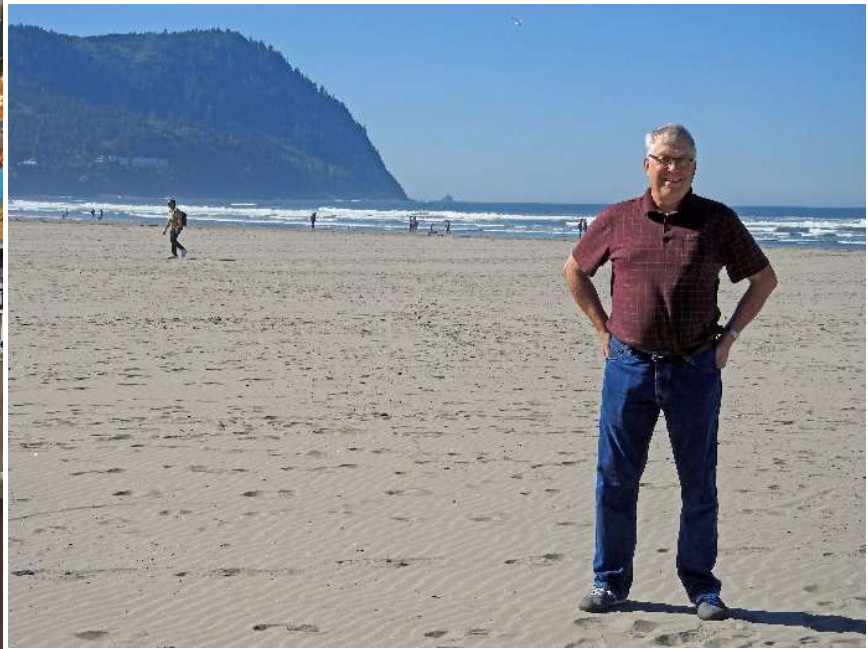
On a hill overlooking the area in Astoria, is a tower built in 1926 by the Great Northern Railway, in commemoration of the role played by the city in the history of the Astor family. A mural painted around the column depicts the history of Oregon. Having hiked to a couple of lighthouses earlier in the day, seemed to inspire a need to climb all 164 steps of the spiral staircase inside – before heading to the liquor store and on to Seaside, Oregon.



# Seaside, Oregon



Seaside seems to be the Oregon equivalent of Washington's Long Beach to the north. A long promenade along the beach, a mall containing a carousel, are examples of the tourist trade supporting the seaside resort town. Restaurants included Dooger's Seafood and Grill for dinner, and the Pig 'N Pancake for breakfast – both enjoyable with notable ambiance and great service, albeit overrated food.

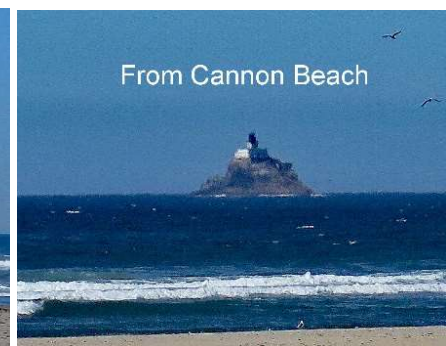


Sue managed to find most of the “must get” items on her shopping list all in one shop while Ron ate marionberry pie. (Marionberry is just a variety of blackberry but Oregon is particularly proud of it.)

One can see the lighthouse on Tillamook Head (“**Terrible Tilly**”) in the distance from Seaside, and again from Cannon Beach. It is so named for the stormy conditions of its location.

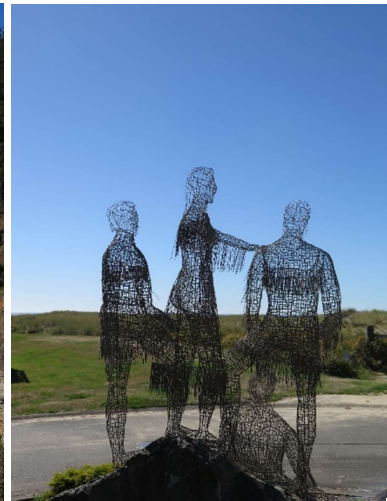
Before the light was even built, the basalt rock it was built on claimed the life of the mason sent to survey it in 1879. He was swept into the sea when he attempted to land.

It was decommissioned in 1957. In 1980 it became a columbarium: a storage house for urns of human remains, before the Oregon Mortuary and Cemetery Board took away its licence in 1999.



The rock can only be accessed by helicopter and is closed to the public.

From Seaside to Lincoln City (92 miles, driving time 2 hours)



It's a short drive from Seaside to **Cannon Beach**; and Ecola State Park offers stunning views just before arriving. A narrow roadway makes a somewhat exciting drive to Indian Beach within the park.

Cannon Beach is a rather touristy and artsy fartsy kind of place, but if you can tolerate the crowds it can be fun to poke around the shops. We kind of preferred the beach itself, which offers great views like the "haystack" monolith, which is a good example of the off shore rocks that many places along the coast can claim as their own.



The town of **Tillamook** is probably best known for its huge cheese factory – a must see according to the brochures. (Well, we do like cheddar, and they offered free samples, so what could we do?)



**YOU'VE GOT TO STAY SHARP TO KEEP ALL THAT CHEESE ON TRACK**

Did you ever work on a factory floor? It's harder than it looks.

Our skilled packaging line operators have to keep up with the constant flow of cheese blocks, making sure the machines cut, weigh and package them perfectly.

It takes keen eyes—and commitment—to do all those visual quality checks.

We cut about a million pounds of cheese a week. That's 115 two-pound baby loaves a minute!



### Side Trip to Oceanside and Cape Meares

The deviation from the highway at Tillamook, to get to the smaller coastal road to Oceanside is well worth it in our opinion. You have to remember that our opinion is rather biased toward lighthouses, so everyone should use their own judgement.





The lighthouse at Cape Meares is accessible with a short walk (albeit over sloped ground). It is known as Oregon's "shortest" lighthouse.



For those who still feel like walking after viewing the lighthouse, a trail from the other side of the parking lot goes to what's supposed to be the state's oldest Sitka spruce tree. It's known as the "Octopus Tree" and is reputed to be some 300 years old. Ignore the odd banana slug.



**Lincoln City to Yachats** (49 miles, driving time 1 hour 10 minutes)

The coast road also runs thru Pacific City, which has yet another beach boasting those large monoliths... which are quite impressive we'd have to admit... and re-joins route 101 north of Lincoln City.

Lincoln City is a larger town which acts as the supply center for the surrounding region. You know, containing Supermarkets, Walmarts, and .... Oh yes, a prominent casino. The casinos in Oregon all smell of smoke, just to irritate you further when they take your money. (You can tell I was bitter.)



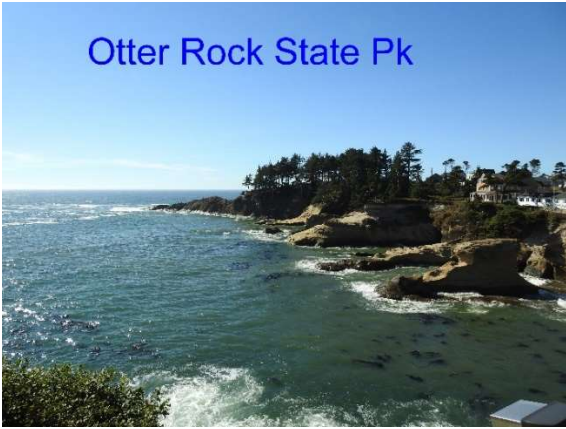
Well we're flatlanders after all, so can't resist any opportunities for whale watching along coastlines when we can.

One of the best places to do that turned out to be from the window of the waterfront restaurant at Depoe Bay – which is one of those places that claims to be the “World’s Smallest Harbour”.

The town statue at Depoe Bay is a whale that spews water on cue.



Otter Rock State Pk



Yaquina Head

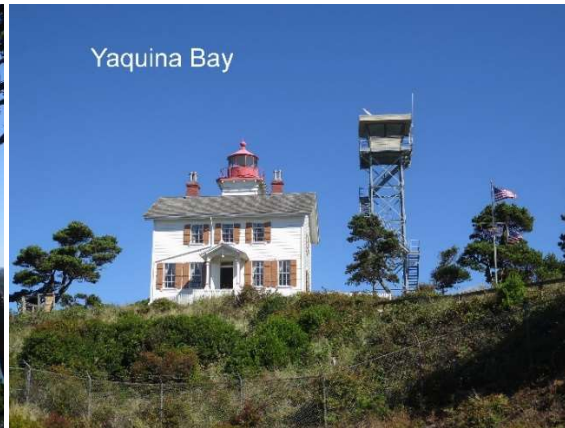


Yaquina Head is noted to be the “tallest” lighthouse in Oregon. It was once named “Cape Foulweather” lighthouse.

Newport  
Oregon



Yaquina Bay



Yaquina Bay lighthouse at Newport is reputed to be the only “wooden” lighthouse in Oregon.

Newport is also the home of an aquarium, featuring smiling fish, cavorting otters, and tufted puffins.



Both Otter Rock and Seal Rock are communities along the coast; both of which are probably named with some scenic rocks in mind; and maybe sea lions or seals, or even otters but we didn't see any.



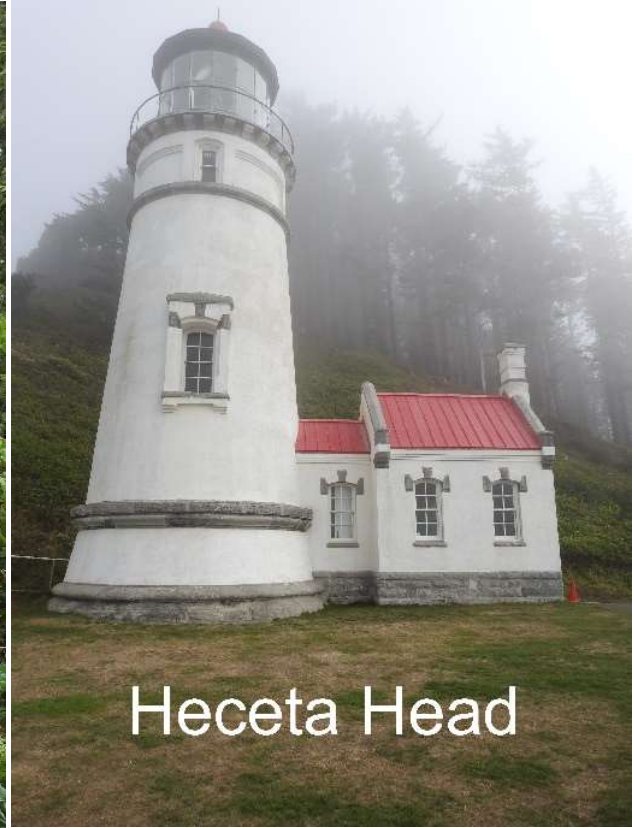
What we did see in Seal Rock (the larger of the two), is some amazing wood carvings by a guy named Brian McEneny – who is not just your average chainsaw carver. He calmly and unassumingly works on his craft out in the parking lot while you watch. Price tags for some of the ones Sue was admiring reached \$45,000. Luckily they wouldn't fit into her checked luggage for the plane.

The sign at the counter at the motel in **Yachats** points out the correct pronunciation (“Yah-hots”). Well, I guess if you live there, you get to tell the tourists how to say the name.

Another beach, more rocks, rolling waves, pounding surf... nice walking trail along the coast... Great place to relax. Could use a couple more restaurants – good opportunity for some greedy entrepreneur.



**Yachats to Coos Bay** (75 miles, driving time 1½ hours)



Heceta Head is listed in the tourist propaganda as the “most photographed” lighthouse in Oregon.



Along the coast here, someone some time ago, bought an otherwise useless piece of rock, and then he or his ancestors realized they could make a fortune charging tourists to go down and see some sea caves. From December to April, sea lions come here to calve. We came in September. In the rain.

One takes a modern elevator down to the caves. (It's a lucrative business.) Kind of cool though.



For about 50 miles along the coast at Florence, are what is known as the "Oregon Dunes". It wouldn't be hard to get lost among them. You could walk for miles in the sand before you drop. It took us two days to rid our runners of the sand.



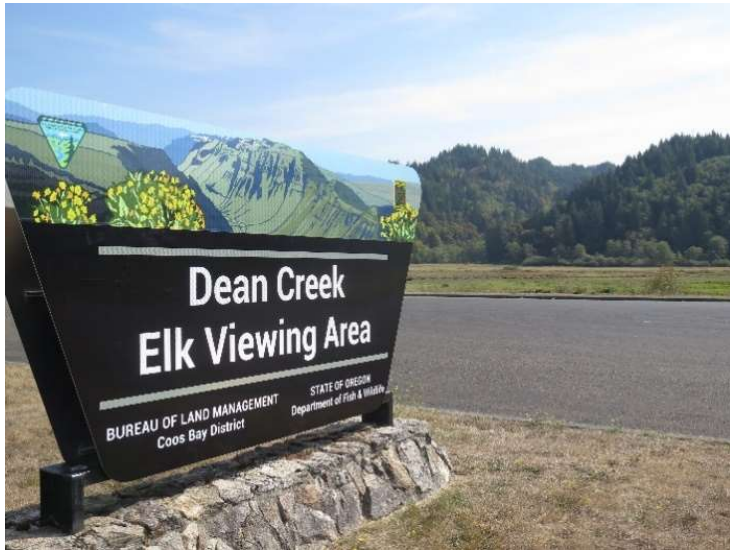
There are some seriously warped individuals living in their vehicles along here. They usually have dogs. Sports enthusiasts, however, love to exercise their dune buggies here. (The four wheeled ATV version of what at home are used for the same purpose, except we use them in the mud.) We were also intrigued by the shorebirds scurrying across the sand or standing on one leg in single file. (We think they were sanderlings.)





## Side Trip - Elk Viewing near Reedsport

No explanation necessary, but to point out that Reedsport is littered with life sized chainsaw carvings.



### Then on to North Bend and Coos Bay

The Umpqua Lighthouse has a sign which says it “once was” the oldest lighthouse in Oregon. What could that even mean? The other lighthouse claiming to be the oldest is farther down at Coquille River.

Closer to North Bend, some character who leads a group called “Leaven No Trace” built a big bird (Mother Bird and her Baby) to highlight some environmental issue. He spent the summer of 2017 driving with his mother and cleaning up garbage along Hwy 101 – which would be impressive if he didn’t get into trouble breaking into vacant houses to squat while he was at it.) Look up Leaven No Trace on Google.



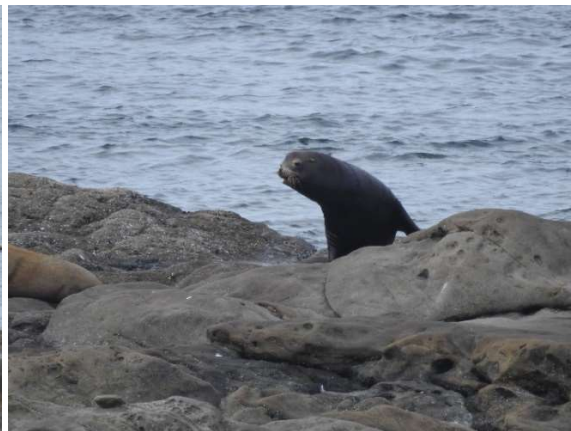
Coos Bay is another larger lumbermill town. The working city in the midst of a tourist area. They have an impressive looking casino, with a fancy restaurant – but it’s no friendlier than the one in Lincoln City. North Bend/Coos Bay are close enough to touch on the map, and share a Walmart.

Coos Bay to Gold Beach (79 miles, driving time 1½ hours)

# Cape Arago (near Charleston)



Cape Arago Sea Lions



## Side Trip - Myrtle Point

Because my mother-in-law is named “Myrtle”, we had to take a little detour to the old logging town of Myrtle Point. Oregon is home to the Myrtlewood, after all – the same tree called the California Laurel in California.



Down the road toward Bandon, is the oldest lighthouse in Oregon at Coquille River.



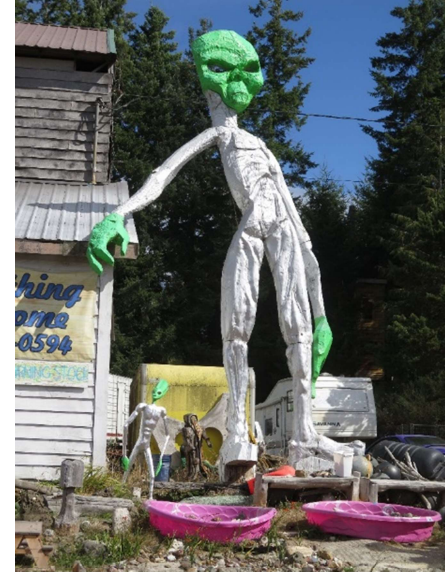
It's a windy spot, so sometimes you can see kite surfers enjoying the waves.



An historic house built a century ago by a family named "Hughes" is preserved as a museum here. We thought it was funny to include it as yet another tourist destination that was "closed" when we got there. (Initially, we thought it was Howard Hughes's house, which of course it wasn't.)



The town of **Bandon** is known for artisans. Like many such places, the art can get a little tacky (no offense meant – we enjoyed the 5 minutes we spent there.)





We were hungry when we got to **Port Orford**, so we stopped at the “Crazy Norwegian’s” who claim to have the best fish and chips in Oregon. Well, how do you tell if fish and chips are good? They were fine.



**Side Trip – Myrtlewood Tree – 10 miles east of Gold Beach**

A short trail off the road leads to Oregon’s oldest known Myrtle (even older than my mother-in-law – she is 98 and the tree is estimated at 400). The niche at the bottom of the Myrtlewood was just large enough to be coaxed into to pose for a pic.



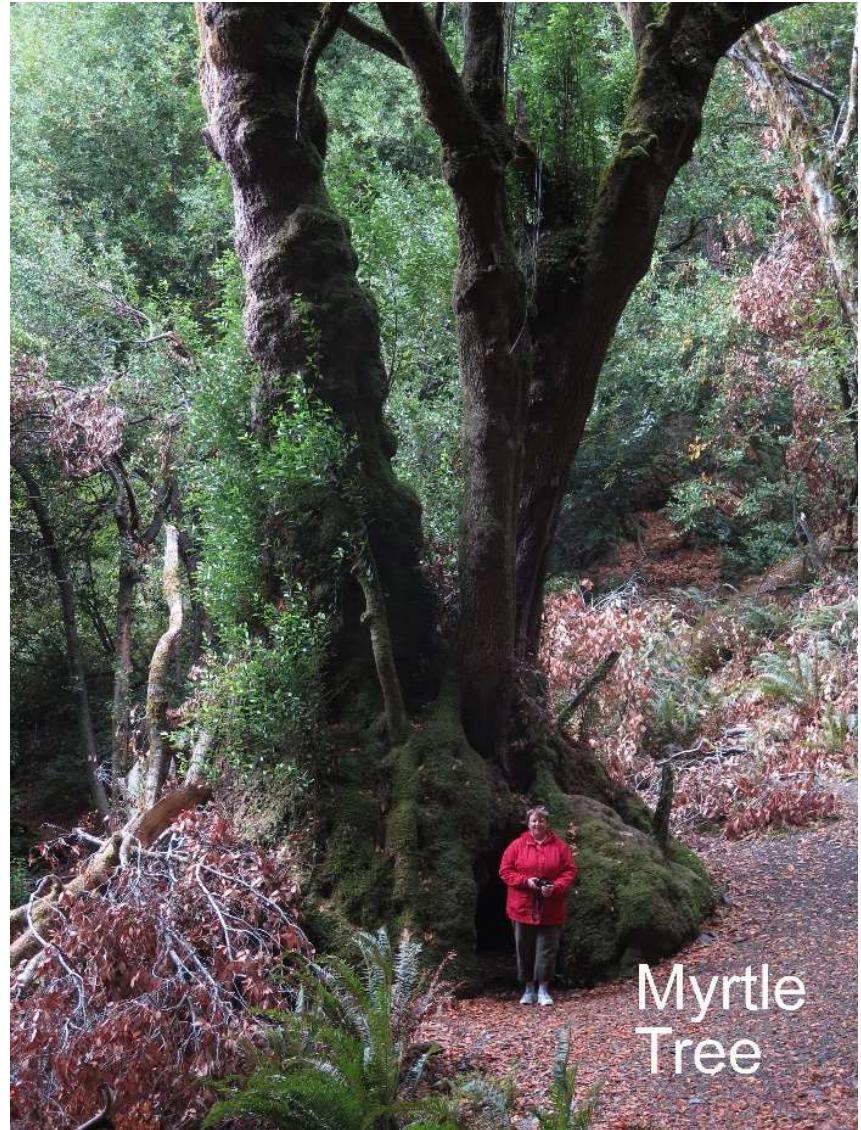
Myrtlewood is a slow growing hardwood, and a favourite for crafts and carvings.

The wood grain differs depending on the nutrients in the soil where it happens to grow, so... items made from it may have varying color patterns.



The leaves have an aroma reminiscent of but more intense than a bay leaf, and are sometimes used for flavouring food.

The nuts were once ground up and eaten by indigenous people of the area.

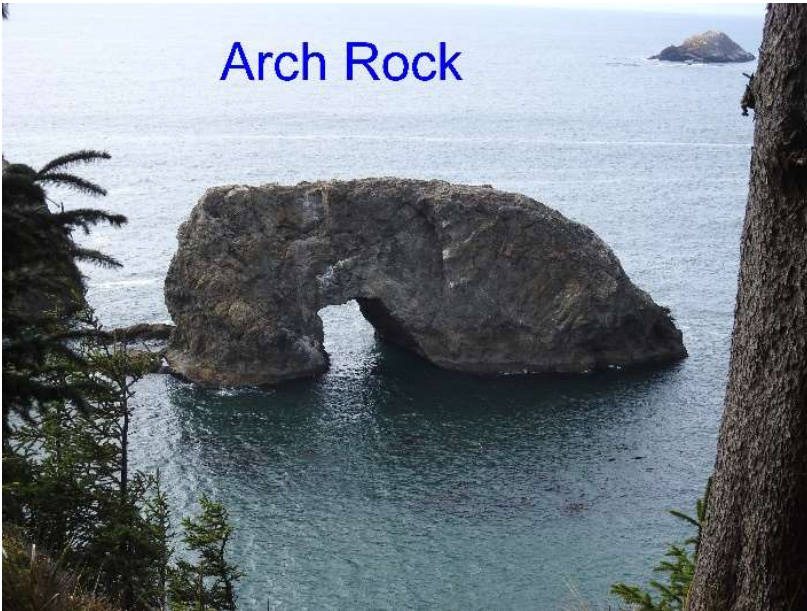


**Gold Beach to Brookings** (28 miles, driving time 35 minutes)

# Gold Beach from Cape Sebastian



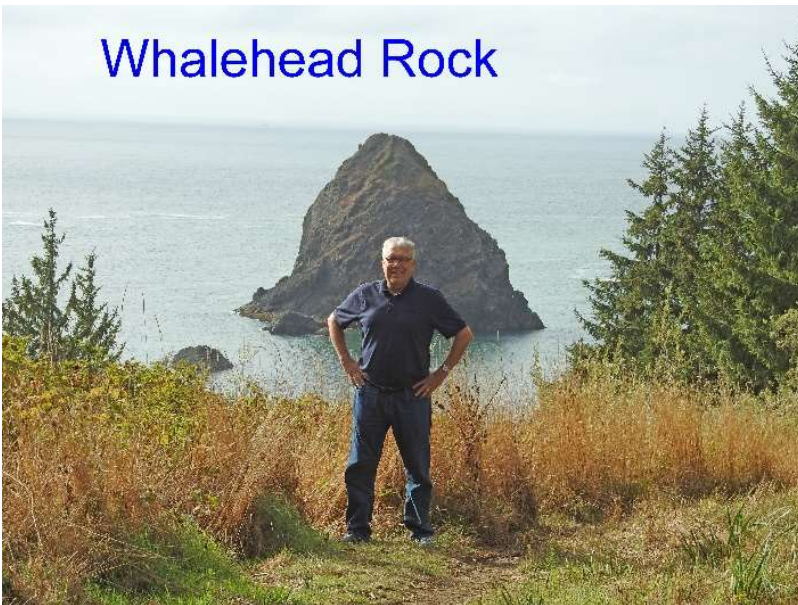
Arch Rock



Natural  
Bridges



Whalehead Rock



Harris Beach  
Brookings, Oregon





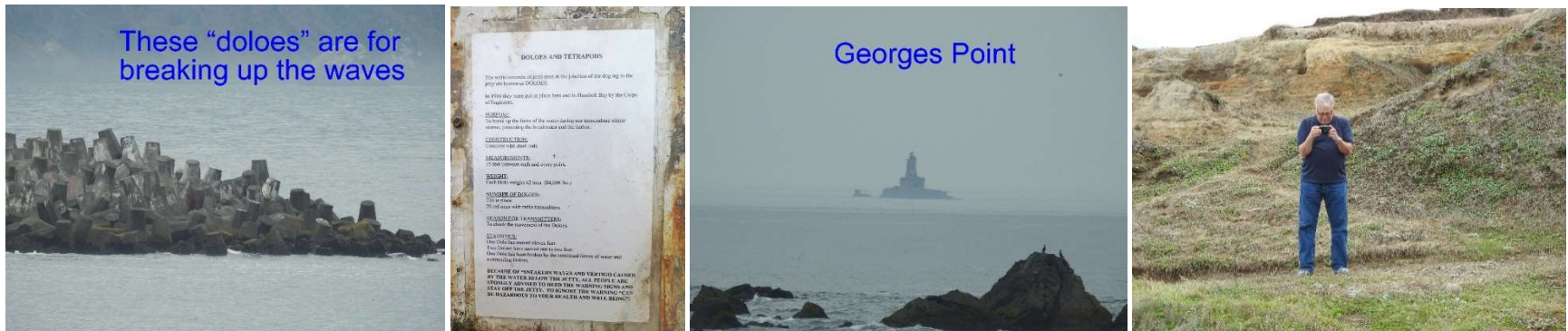
After dinner in Brookings, we waited precariously on the rocks at Harris Beach for another sunset.

## Crescent City, California

From Brookings, it's a short hop to California... first stop en route to Crescent City is a casino in Smith River. At low tide in Crescent City, one can walk to the lighthouse at Battery Point.



Crescent City Harbour has had tsunamis in its history; including the most devastating one ever to hit the U.S. Pacific coast - killing 11 people in 1964 after the Alaska earthquake. In order to break up the force of the waves, concrete blocks known as “dolosse” have been placed on the pier. George’s Point is another lighthouse off shore northwest of town.





**Redwoods – Klamath, California / Redwoods Hwy to Grants Pass, Oregon**

Before taking the “Redwoods Highway” from Crescent City, California, to Grants Pass, Oregon, we took a drive south to Klamath, California (literally “thru” the redwoods). The Bunyan and Babe statue is at a tourist trap called the “Trees of Mystery” – with gondolas and zip lines and such. It was raining and we were headed for a rest, so we just “zipped” in for a quick pic.



Klamath, Calif



One last casino stop in Canyonville (between Grant’s Pass and Portland). Count ‘em, that makes 5 separate casinos this trip. Redeeming feature at this one, though, was one heck of an eagle statue.



Just south of Portland in Oregon City (or Milwaukie), an auto dealership (Liberty Motors) got themselves a replica of the statue of Liberty – placed in the back by the garbage cans. Really had to exercise the GPS to find the darn thing.

The caveman in Grants Pass and Paul Bunyan in Portland are no slouches either. The caveman is a tribute to an established men's club in Grants Pass, whose claim to fame is that they were descended from Neanderthals. (Grant's Pass is near the famous "Oregon Caves".)

Grants Pass

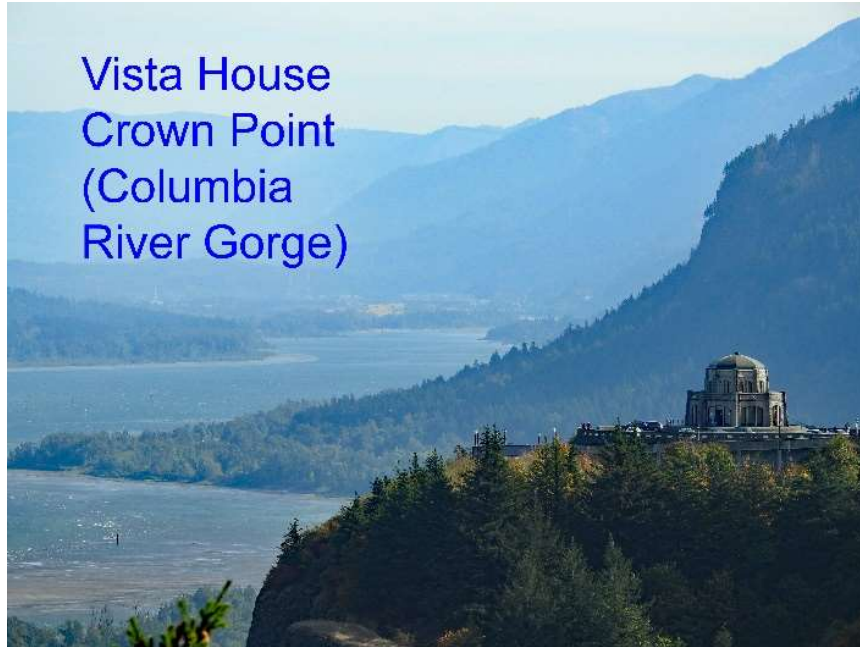


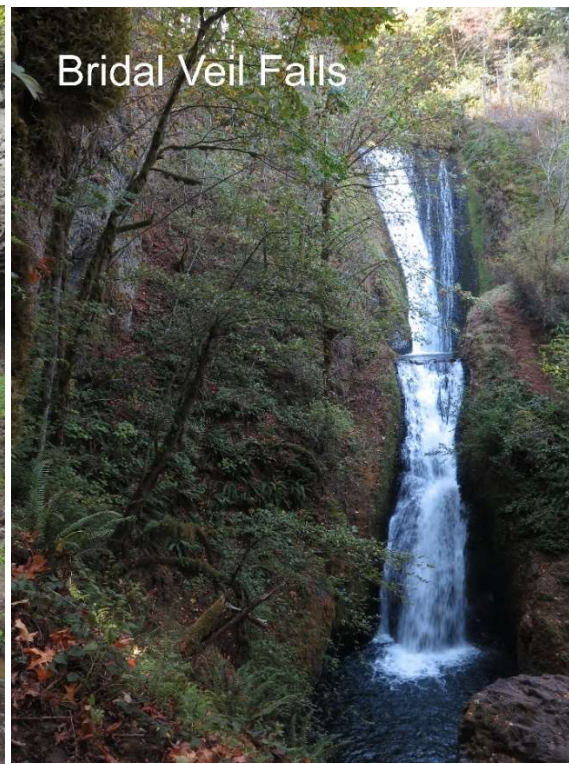
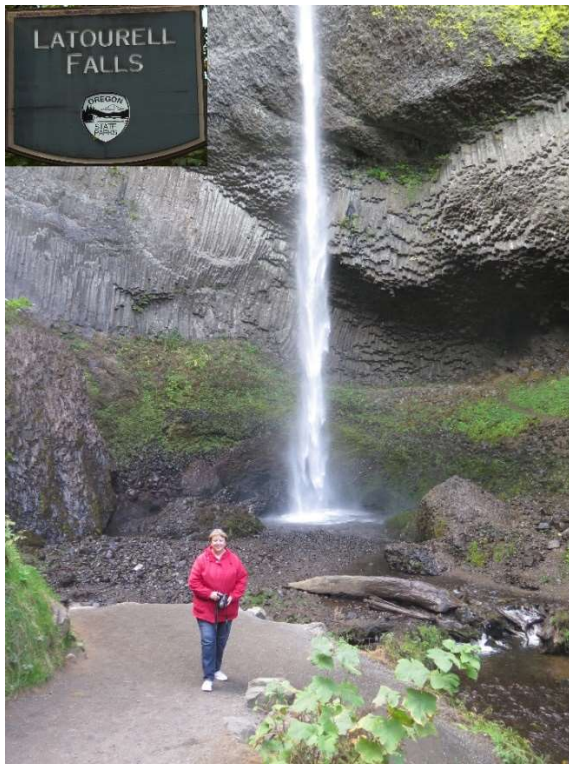
Portland



## Columbia River Gorge

The area along the Columbia River east of Portland is known as the Columbia Gorge.





There are 71 waterfalls in the Columbia Gorge. If you hiked to 3 per day, you could see them all in a month.

Note to fellow flatlanders: when they indicate that the trail is only a half mile long, they don't mention that it's uphill both ways.

The waterfall most often pictured on the brochures because it's right on the highway, is Multnomah Falls. It happened to be closed because of the Eagle Creek fire in 2017 making the trails unsafe.

Well, you can't really close a waterfall, just the trail, so we took a picture from a distance.

(The fire has been blamed on a 15 year old who was setting off fireworks during a burn ban. The court assessed damages of 36 million dollars along with his probation, knowing they'll never collect.)

## Seattle

The Space Needle and Pike's Place Market were the "must do" in Seattle. Unfortunately, the walk between the two was a little longer than we anticipated – and uphill again.





Ron declined to lean against the glass wall, and Sue declined to walk on the glass floor.





Pike Place Market is a popular spot with both locals and tourists



Next to the Space Needle, is the **Chihuly Garden and Glass museum**; where amazing blown glass structures by Dale Chihuly are on display.





Knowing that we'd be coming back to Seattle to visit Mount Rainier and Mount Olympus in the future, we closed this year's trip with a final seafood dinner at Salty's in nearby **Redondo Beach, Des Moines.**

## Driving the Pacific Coast Highway – Southern California



For our 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, we drove the Southern California part of the PCH; from San Francisco to San Diego – where we spent a week.

One of the cool things we notice about the coastline is the constant roar of the surf.

Another thing to notice about the Southern California coast is that spaced out “surfer dudes” are sometimes middle aged, and old Volkswagens still exist, but they both look a little silly now. And people have Bloody Marys for breakfast.

We won’t talk about the traffic till later.



Mama and baby  
Elephant Seal



Mama and baby  
Sea Otter



## Southern California – Stage 1 - Half Moon Bay to Monterey

(90 miles, driving time 2 hours)



After landing in San Francisco, we had just enough time to find our way to Half Moon Bay; where we had our first seafood dinner at Sam's Chowder House and turned in to rest up for the drive south. (Notice Sue's sensible sized plate in contract to Ron's seafood platter which he couldn't finish.)

On our first day on the road, we enthusiastically started off on an innocent looking "short" hike to see some elephant seals. By the time we got back, our sore legs and feet set the tone for the next few days. We hurt from self inflicted over exertion, but hey, when prairie people get near a seacoast they tend to get carried away.

When we reached the Monterey Pier, we parked as close as we could, limped our way to a restaurant with comfortable seats, and watched seals begging for food from the comfort of our seats. The way it should be.

Rejuvenated, we wandered along the pier where Ron bought a \$30 pearl ring for Sue's anniversary present. (It broke the next day and the pearl was lost.)





**Año Nuevo State Park** is a state park of California, USA, encompassing Año Nuevo Island and Año Nuevo Point, which are known for their pinniped rookeries.

Located in San Mateo County, the low, rocky, windswept point juts out into the Pacific Ocean about 55 miles south of San Francisco and the Golden Gate.

Año Nuevo Island (Año Nuevo is Spanish for New Year) is a small island off Año Nuevo Point.

Access to Año Nuevo Island is restricted to members of approved research teams; the island is closed to the public.

The island has a few abandoned buildings built in the late 19th century. A residential home and foghorn station, all abandoned, are located on the island. The original light tower was deliberately toppled early in the first decade of the 21st century as it began to deteriorate and became a hazard to the resident wildlife. Some of the remaining buildings are used as research facilities.

The Año Nuevo Coast Natural Preserve is designated at Año Nuevo Point to provide wildlife viewing opportunities and minimize disturbance to the animals in their natural habitat. Visitor entry into this area of the park is restricted year-round. Access is by park issued permit or guided walk.

Northern elephant seals come ashore to give birth and mate from early December through March.

Bull seals engage in battles for breeding access to the females from early December through January.

Pregnant females come ashore to pup from late December to early February, and mothers nurse their pups for about a month before mating and returning to the sea.

By early March, most of the adults have returned to the sea. Pups remain behind through March basking in the sun and learning to swim in the intertidal zones.





**San Gregorio State Beach**



**Pescadero State Beach**







**Pigeon Point**



**Southern California – Stage 2 – Monterey to San Simeon**

(94 miles, driving time 2½ hours)



**Monterey (Fisherman's Wharf)**



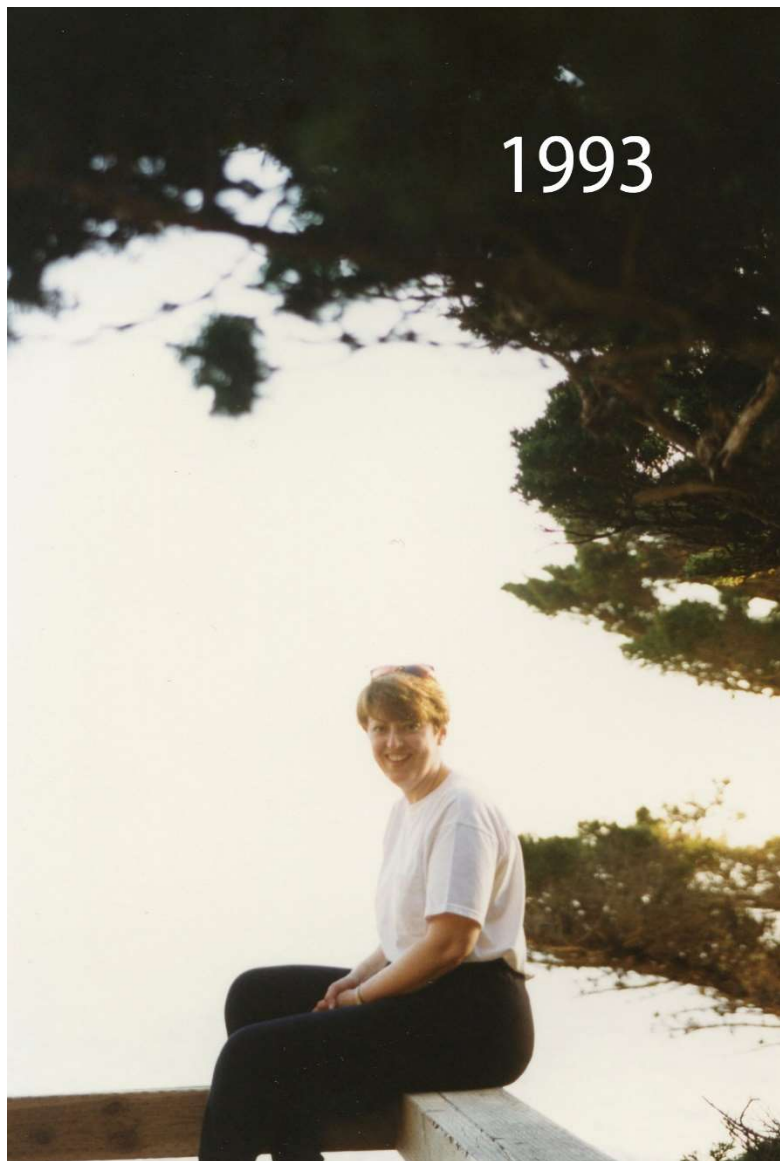
**Point Pinos - oldest remaining working lighthouse in California (and closed of course)**



Along the famous 17 mile scenic drive from Monterey to Pebble Beach



Re-visiting Pescadero Point (you can never go back)





Pebble Beach is the site of the U.S. Open (trophy prominently displayed at the visitor's center)



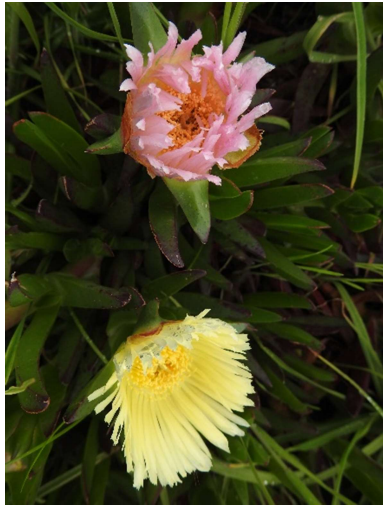


The road along the Big Sur coastline, from Monterey to San Simeon is the soul of the Pacific Coast Highway.

**Bixby Creek Bridge** is one of the most photographed bridges in California due to its aesthetic design, "graceful architecture and magnificent setting".

The bridge is 120 miles (190 km) south of San Francisco and 13 miles (21 km) south of Carmel in Monterey County along State Route 1.

The bridge opened in 1932. At 360 feet (110 m), the Bixby Bridge was the longest concrete arch span on the California State Highway System. It is one of the tallest single-span concrete bridges in the world. After a \$20 million seismic retrofit completed in 1996, the bridge remains functionally obsolete. Its 24-foot (7.3 m) width does not meet modern standards requiring bridges to be 32 feet (9.8 m) wide.



Turned out that the Elephant Seal Rookery just north of **San Simeon** was right along the highway – and the seals were much more active than the ones at the nature preserve to which we walked for hours. (Well, “active” is a relative term.)

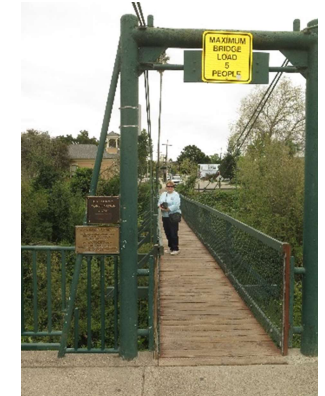




### Southern California – Stage 3 – San Simeon to Oxnard

(173 miles, driving time 3 hours)

At San Simeon, we blew off the two hour tacky tour at Hearst Castle, so we could be on time for lunch at Andersen's in Buellton, Calif - to have their famous pea soup. And let's not miss the only (and puny) swinging bridge in California at Arroyo Grande.

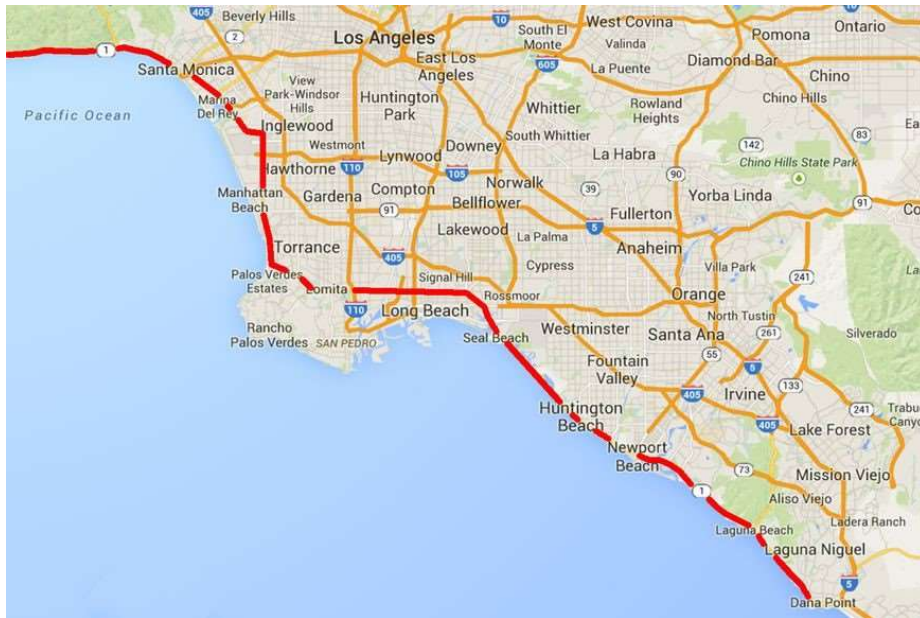


A bit south of San Simeon, the PCH joins U.S. Hwy 101 at San Luis Obispo, going inland to re-emerge at the coast near Santa Barbara. There is an awkward section of PCH #1 just off Hwy 101 but Vandenberg Air Force Base occupies the coastline here.



## Southern California – Stage 4 – Oxnard to Sunset Beach

(89 miles, driving time at least 3 hours)



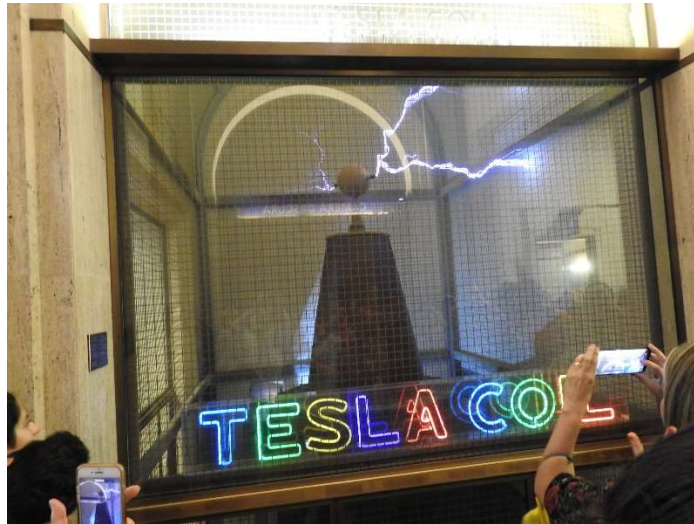
After Santa Barbara, the Highway begins going through urban areas; with the coastline visible at Santa Barbara and again in Malibu.

This is the Los Angeles area through the crowded beach communities of Malibu, Santa Monica, Marina del Rey, Venice Beach, and Long Beach.

The PCH is a few blocks away from the water from Santa Monica until Sunset Beach (north end of Huntington Beach), but each of the beaches have coastal access, a pier or a boardwalk. Although they each have their own personality, they all have crowds and lack of parking in common.

Sunset Beach is a refreshingly quieter beach area a little further south; and a good place to stop for a rest day.





Griffith Observatory on the south facing slope of Mount Hollywood is a great place to view the Hollywood sign, as well as the Los Angeles skyline.

Mr. Griffith J. Griffith donated the land in 1896 and left funds in his will with plans for the observatory; opened in 1935.

Despite the diversity and ubiquity of palms in the Los Angeles area, only one species—*Washingtonia filifera*, the California fan palm—is native to California.

All of L.A.'s other palm species, from the slender Mexican fan palms that line so many L.A. boulevards to the feather-topped Canary Island date palm, have been imported.

The massive planting effort—conceived by the city's first forestry chief, L. Glenn Hall—is often characterized as a beautification project for the 1932 Olympic games. But impressing foreign athletes actually played less of a role than did getting L.A.'s unemployed back to work; the \$100,000 program that planted some 40,000 trees in total was part of a larger unemployment relief program, funded by a \$5 million bond issue.

Southern California's native palms grow far away from Los Angeles, in spring-fed Colorado Desert oases tucked deep inside steep mountain ravines.

Today, many of the palm trees planted in the 1930s are nearing the end of their natural life spans. The recent arrival of the red palm weevil—known to devastate palm populations across the world—augurs poorly for the fate of younger trees. The L.A. Department of Water and Power has indicated that as the city's palm trees die, most will not be replaced.





Sunset Beach is a quiet beach community at the north end of Huntington Beach. We took a break from driving in traffic to hang out, sample the restaurants, watch the sunset, and shop for shoes.

**Southern California – Stage 5 – Sunset Beach to Oceanside** (55 miles, driving time 1½ hours)

From Sunset Beach, the PCH goes through the beach towns of Huntington Beach, Newport Beach, Laguna Beach to Dana Point (near San Clemente). Highway #1 officially ends here; joining Interstate #5 down to San Diego.



Oceanside and Carlsbad are half way between Dana Point and San Diego.



The **Flower Fields at Carlsbad Ranch** is a fifty-acre dazzling rainbow of beautiful ranunculus flowers set on a hillside overlooking the striking Carlsbad, California coastline.

Located in North San Diego County, a region with a rich history of growing flowers going back to the 1940's. The Flower Fields at Carlsbad Ranch is located less than one half-mile from the ocean.

It is called the Tecolote® Giant Ranunculus, which is one of the finest strains of ranunculus plants in the world. The ranunculus flower is native to Asia Minor and is a member of the buttercup family. This unique blossom also is known as a Persian Buttercup or Ranunculus Asiatic.

Over 50 acres are devoted to raising the ranunculus bulb crop; approximately five acres are used for other specialty flowers.

The flowers die back and produce seed for re-planting in these same fields for the next season. We feel that by allowing the plant to complete its life cycle, it helps to produce a more superior bulb crop.

The best time to view the flowers is usually mid-March through Mid-April.





San Diego Zoo Safari Park (Escondido)







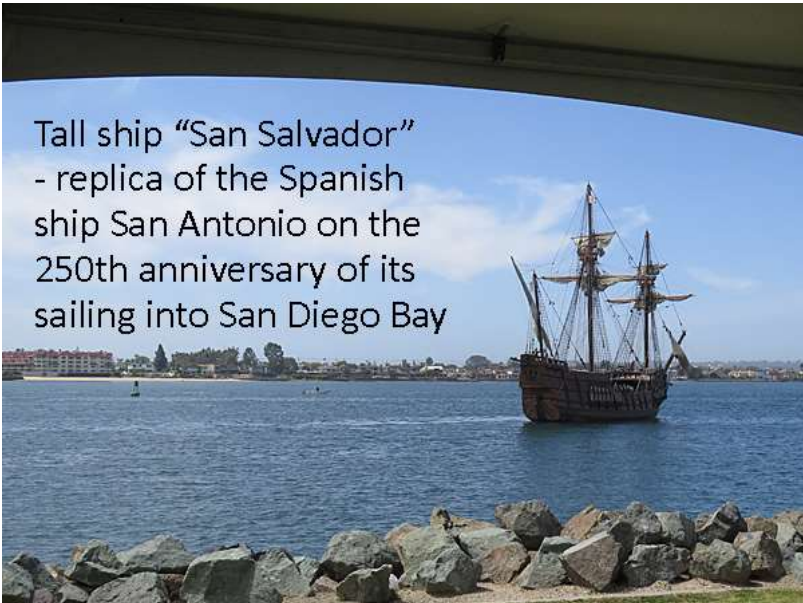
## San Diego Area



The iconic statue “Unconditional Surrender” immortalizes a photograph taken in Times Square during V-J Day celebrations, when a young sailor (on a date with his fiancée) grabbed a passing nurse to steal a spontaneous kiss. Glenn McDuffie, who claimed that he was the smooching sailor, died at age 86 on March 9, 2014. He spent the last several years of his life charging women \$10 to take a picture of themselves kissing him on the cheek.

The USS Midway was the longest serving U.S. aircraft carrier (from 1945 to 1992). It has been a museum ship at Navy Pier in San Diego since 2004.







Breakfast at Humphrey's (where we honeymooned)



then Dinner at Del Coronado

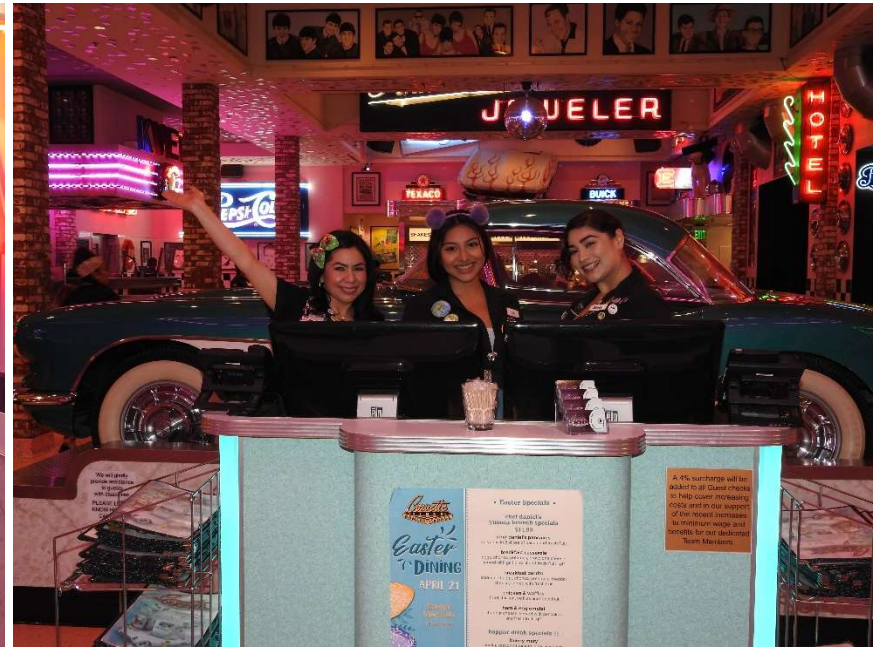




At the **Torrey Pines Gliderport**, "Bunko" the falcon is ready to go



Entertainment is as important as the food at the Corvette Diner





Anniversary Brunch at the Del Coronado followed by a carousel ride at Seaport Village





Pipe organ recital on the world's largest outdoor pipe organ at **Balboa Park** and a Padres baseball game at **Petco Park** to wrap up the trip