

Hidden Gems of Oregon 2021

June 14-23, 2021 • 10 Days • \$3250

An off-the-beaten path Walking Adventure featuring the Columbia River Gorge, Wallowa Mountains, Hells Canyon, the Oregon Trail, Painted Hills, Smith Rock, McKenzie River, and Silver Falls State Park - and more only-in-Oregon hidden gems

TOUR COMPLETE

[Tour Type: Classic Curated](#)

- [Overview](#)
- [Reviews](#)

This tour is dedicated to exploring the Hidden Gems of Oregon. In addition to the more familiar must-see sights, we have invested extra effort into finding the off-the-beaten-trail highlights of the magical state of Oregon, the home state of all WAI staff. This makes it especially well-suited for those who live in the Pacific Northwest. But in truth, anyone who is curious about the scenic and historic wonders of our 33rd state will find this tour an eye-opening and exciting experience, requiring only a relatively short flight to Portland, our start/finish point.

The Adventure begins with a couple of scenic days along the Columbia River, continues in the remote and regal Wallowa Mountains, descends into North America's deepest gorge at Hells Canyon, walks the Oregon Trail in Baker City, explores the Painted Hills of the John Day Fossil Beds, hikes among the mesmerizing cliffs at Smith Rock, and wraps up with some very impressive waterfalls on the Metolius and McKenzie Rivers and at Silver Falls State Park.

This is a draft itinerary. Revisions will be made as this tour is finalized, and an updated itinerary with dates and pricing will be made available!

Including:

- All land travel as outlined
- Tourist-class or better hotel accommodations
- Breakfasts where included by hotels
- 13 walks
- Fees for walking credit for at least 7 AVA sanctioned walks
- WAI guide service throughout
- All tipping for coach driver and any local guides
- Pricing is based on double occupancy. A limited number of single rooms are available for a supplement of \$580. We provide a roommate matching service for those

interested.

Activities/Visits to:

- Waterfalls of Columbia Gorge
- Starvation Creek State Park
- Viento State Park
- Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail
- Deschutes River Recreation Area
- McNary Wildlife Nature Area
- Morgan Lake
- Wallowa Lake Tramway
- Hells Canyon Dam and Visitor Center
- Hells Canyon Jetboat and Ranch Lunch Adventure
- National Historic Oregon Trail Visitor Center
- Bates State Park
- Painted Hills at John Day Fossil Beds National Monument
- Smith Rock State Park
- Wizard Falls Fish Hatchery
- Sahalie and Koosah Falls on the McKenzie River
- Silver Falls State Park
- More fun stops than we can list!

"Wonderful experience. I feel I know Ireland - its history and culture. As for the kind people themselves, they are lovely people."

-Bob C; Tigard, OR

"I really enjoyed the stops; they were at places I wouldn't have stopped at if I planned the trip myself."

-Liz D; Norfolk, VA

"Once again, I have met a group of really neat people and saw old friends! Thanks for another super trip...Constant supervision, always willing to listen, information along the route and about areas is excellent. All the above is what makes your company unique - one of a kind."

-Mamie B; Venice, FL

"Always an excellent and educational experience - Like a living history walk."

-John S; Oakland, CA

"I don't have to think about details after I meet the tour leaders and the leaders themselves are always well prepared. I have met most of the WAI personnel and I find them all terrific!"

-Robert S; Portland, OR

"I feel as though I have received a course in Irish history, culture, geography, art literature and current events."

-Lucille S; Oakland, CA

"Trip exceeded expectations; enjoyed Tim's stories - added friendliness to each and all."

-Loretta H; Windsor, CO

"This was a wonderful trip with a new surprise every day. You always deliver unexpected delightful experiences, great guides, well-planned daily schedules."

-John & Shari S; Cheney, WA

"The tour exceeded my expectations. Use of Barbara and other guides was great and enhanced the experience."

-Paul D; ON, Canada

"It was a great trip with some wonderful hiking experiences. We had a great group of people who made the trip even more fun. I don't think it could have been any better."

-Jo Beth D; McKinney, TX

"Exceeded all my expectations - loved the walks, history and different experiences - pubs

and music, boat rides, etc.”

-Grace M; Bowling Green, KY

“Good leaders – good local guides – attention to detail.”

-Josie J; Sunnyvale, CA

*“Would definitely recommend WAI to our active friends. Hope to join you in the near future!
Tour exceeded our expectations.”*

-Candace S; Albuquerque, NM

- [360.260.9393](tel:360.260.9393)
- [Email Us](#)



Adventure Pace

Tour Pace: 1 2 3 4 5

Walk Challenge: 1 2 3 4 5

[About Adventure Pace](#)

Adventure Pace

How much Adventure do you want? Here are a few features to help gauge the following factors on each tour.

Tour Pace: On a scale of 1 (slowest pace) to 5 (fastest pace), we’ve rated the following

factors: number of 1-night hotels; driving miles per day; fullness of schedule; mid-tour airline flights; high elevation setting; and average amount of walking per day.

Walk Challenge: This number represents an average walk difficulty rating for the tour using a scale of 1 (easiest) to 5 (hardest).

[Contact Us](#)

Important Info



Group Size

7-18 travelers. If group size drops below 12, passenger vans may be used (up to 7 people in a 15 passenger van), which requires an increase in tour price of approximately \$50 per person per day.



Transportation

Included. For groups of 12 to 18, we use motorcoaches with a seating capacity of 40+ seats. For groups of 7 to 12, we use one or two 15 pax vans, seating no more than 7 travelers in each van. If vans are used, they are driven by WAI guides. Van transport requires an increase in tour price of approximately \$50 per person per day.



Hotels

Tourist Class or better hotel accommodations



Meals

Most breakfasts (due to Covid-19 concerns, no group meals are included-when possible, optional group meals may be offered).



Airfare

Travelers fly into and out of Portland's International Airport (airport code PDX).



Traveler Age

Our travelers usually range from 50-75 years of age. All ages welcome!

Your Guides



Scott Isom has had a passion for the outdoors ever since his childhood days spent exploring the waterfalls and outstanding hiking trails of the Columbia River Gorge with his family.

"One of the many things I loved about growing up in Portland, Oregon was that fact that so many natural wonders were within close range of my suburban neighborhood," Scott recalls. "I fell in love with hiking at a young age in places like Multnomah Falls, Smith Rock, and the McKenzie River. What makes this Adventure so special is the fact that it explores not only these must-see Oregon highlights, but also an impressive number of the state's more remote treasures like the Wallowa Mountains, Hells Canyon, and the Painted Hills, just to name a few. There are hidden treasures all throughout this tour that will likely be new for even those who have grown up in the Great Pacific Northwest!"

As one of WAI's busiest guides and on-site Adventure planners, Scott has led tours on all 7 continents.

Itinerary

Click on each day to reveal more details.

[Day 1-June 14: Arrive Portland, OR](#)

Travelers arrive today into Portland, Oregon's "Rose City". Our starting hotel is located about 9 miles east of Portland International Airport (PDX), or about a \$15 Uber ride. Several dining options are available nearby for you to enjoy before we gather briefly this evening for a Welcome Orientation.

[Day 2-June 15: Portland - The Dalles, OR \(B\)](#)

Columbia Gorge - Starvation Creek Walk - 3 km, 2B

Columbia Gorge - Mosier Tunnels Scenic Walk - 7 km, 2B

Beginning our clockwise loop around our nation's 33rd state, we marvel at basalt cliffs and towering waterfalls plunging toward the Columbia, one of the West's great rivers. While we will make picture stops at the more famous cascades and viewpoints, our featured walks today take us along two different abandoned sections of the Historic Columbia River Highway, now converted to hiking and biking paths. Built between 1913 and 1922, the Historic Columbia River Highway, a National Historic Landmark, was the first planned scenic roadway in the United States and offers magnificent views of the gorgeous Columbia River Gorge that separates Oregon from Washington. We wrap up this scenic day in The Dalles, near one of several hydroelectric projects that produce power from the Columbia.

NOTE: Breakfast is not included this morning but our hotel serves a no-host breakfast in their restaurant.

[Day 3-June 16: The Dalles - Hermiston, OR \(B\)](#)

Deschutes River Walk - 7 km, 2C

McNary Wildlife Nature Walk - 3 km, 1B

Continuing east along the mighty Columbia, our morning walk features the Deschutes River, a northward flowing tributary that is famous among Oregonians as a rafting destination as well as a world-class steelhead and trout fishing stream. Our loop walk begins with the Blackberry Trail along the river's edge and finishes with the Riverview Trail along a terrace above the river. An afternoon journey takes us further up the Columbia for one last stop at McNary Wildlife Nature Area. A short and easy stroll here takes us among wetlands and offers the possibility to encounter deer and migrating birds. We settle in for the night in Hermiston, a small riverside town famous for its watermelons.

[Day 4-June 17: Hermiston - Enterprise, OR \(B\)](#)

Morgan Lake (La Grande) Walk - 3 km, 1B

Wallowa Lake Tramway Walk - 4 km, 2C

After passing through Pendleton (known for its 110-year old Round Up rodeo), we ascend the Blue Mountains, paralleling the Oregon Trail route, on our way to La Grande, where we enjoy a serene walk above town at Morgan Lake. Following a lunch break, we drive to our second scenic mountain range of the day, the Wallowas, which are often called the “Alps of Oregon.” The grandeur of these northeastern peaks is best experienced by taking the Wallowa Lake Tramway to the top of Mount Howard, where a series of inviting trails beckons us to soak up the views! Following our Wallowa mountain high, we spend tonight in the fun little town of Enterprise.

[Day 5-June 18: Enterprise - Baker City, OR \(BL\)](#)

Prepare yourself for a remote, wild, and scenic day as we venture into North America’s deepest canyon! Taking in lofty views from the Hells Canyon Overlook and descending all the way to the Snake River for a jet boat adventure gives us a top-to-bottom perspective on this impressive gorge that separates Oregon from Idaho. During our jet boat expedition through the rapids, we stop to savor an included lunch at Sheep Creek Ranch, an isolated historic homestead that dates back to the 1880s. Following a mid-afternoon return to Hells Canyon Dam, we ascend the scenic byway, bound for a night at Baker City.

[Day 6-June 19: Baker City - John Day, OR](#)

Oregon Trail Walk - 6 km, 2B

Bates State Park Walk - 4 km, 2C

From the 1840s through the 1880s, thousands of hearty souls made the arduous journey from Missouri to Oregon’s Willamette Valley along a 2,170-mile-long wagon route that became known as the Oregon Trail. Portions of that famous route are clearly visible at the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center in Baker City, where we spend the morning walking and learning about the importance of this historic corridor. In the afternoon, we venture west through the Blue Mountains for an interesting and scenic walk at Bates State Park. Set in a lush valley fed by three rivers, Bates was once the site of a thriving lumber mill with its adjacent company town. We spend this evening in the geologically-rich, Eastern Oregon community of John Day, nestled along its namesake river.

NOTE: Breakfast is not included this morning but our hotel serves a no-host breakfast in their restaurant.

[Day 7-June 20: John Day - Sisters, OR \(B\)](#)

Painted Hills Walk - 4 km, 2C

Smith Rock State Park Walk – 6 km, 3D

Today's westward journey brings us to two of the Seven Wonders of Oregon, starting with a walk at the Painted Hills, so named for the colorful layers of red, yellow, black and gold that correspond to various geological eras. The area is also rich with plant and animal fossils dating back 30 million years! In the afternoon, we hike at photogenic Smith Rock State Park, a high desert outdoor wonderland considered by many to be the birthplace of American sport climbing. While we won't be roping up for a vertical ascent of these visually stunning climbing routes, hikes of varying difficulty are available to show off this impressive set of rocks along the Crooked River. In the evening, we enjoy our lodge in the delightful, little western-themed town of Sisters, beautifully set in the shadow of the Cascade Mountains.

[Day 8-June 21: Sisters – Springfield, OR \(B\)](#)

Wizard Falls Metolius Walk – 5 km, 2C

McKenzie River Sahalie Falls & Koosah Falls Walk – 5 km, 2C

We transition today from the drier eastern side of Oregon to more lush and green western environs on our way to the Willamette Valley. Beginning on the eastern slopes, a dazzling walk along the brilliant blue Metolius River, takes us to Wizard Falls and a fun little fish hatchery. In the afternoon, crossing the Santiam Pass offers panoramic mountain views as we descend to western slopes and the crystal-clear McKenzie River. A loop walk past Sahalie Falls and Koosah Falls takes us through an emerald forest to gaze in wonder at these powerful cascades. Our day concludes in the town of Springfield, near the confluence of the McKenzie and Willamette Rivers.

[Day 9-June 22: Springfield - Portland, OR \(B\)](#)

Silver Falls State Park Walk – 12 km, 2B

We complete our Oregon loop today with a lovely drive north through the Willamette Valley, stopping about 20 miles east of the state capital (Salem) in Silver Falls State Park. This largest state park in Oregon is an absolute gem and chock full of scenery. Our featured walk takes in ten different waterfalls, several of which offer the unique sensation of walking behind the falls! In the afternoon, we take scenic back roads to Portland, passing through small towns and going by Oregon City, western terminus of the Oregon Trail, before finishing our day at the same hotel where our journey began.

[Day 10-June 23: Portland - Home \(B\)](#)

Our Hidden Gems of Oregon Walking Adventure draws to a close this morning. Exploring well-known highlights and less-explored surprises of the "Beaver State" in early autumn is an absolute treat! We hope you return home filled with outstanding memories to share with the ones you love. Thanks for experiencing this diverse and spectacular state with us!

NOTE: Breakfast is not included this morning but our hotel serves a no-host breakfast in their restaurant.

More Details

Click on each heading for more details.

[How Do I Lock in My Place on This Adventure?](#)

To register, a transferable \$200 deposit is required to hold your spot. This amount is non-refundable; however, up until 60 days before departure, it can be transferred to a different tour. A final payment is due 60 days before departure and you will receive a prompt email from us a week or two in advance.

An email with critical information on flight arrangements will be sent soon after registration, with important details about steps to take in the months before your trip. Please do not buy your airline tickets until you review the Flight Arrangements email.

Please follow this link to read our full [General Tour Conditions](#).

[Unique Aspects of this Tour](#)

This Adventure highlights off-the-beaten-track Oregon, especially central and eastern Oregon. The state is blessed with geological diversity and we will sample a wide swath of it. It's an outdoor tour featuring more nature and less of the history and cultural legs of our triad of travel. That said, we get a healthy dose of Oregon Trail drama in the eastern part of the program near Baker City, including the actual ruts of the wagon wheels.

Be prepared for moderate temperatures in the 60s and 70s, though it can get into the 80s this time of year too. It's a good idea to bring a sturdy pair of hiking boots and walking sticks; some of our trails have sections that will be more challenging, though easier options are usually available as well. Raingear is a good idea in case we encounter the wet stuff during the adventure. While we will mostly be on the drier eastern side of Oregon, there is always the possibility of an occasional rain shower.

Walks are not overly challenging (take a look at ratings and distances), and most days we break the day up with two different trails at different times of the day.

[What's a Classic Curated Tour?](#)

With help from local experts and walking guides, these itineraries are hand-crafted with extensive on-site planning by WAI tour planners.

When planning Classic Curated Tours, our objective is to capture the essence of a destination—the history, culture, and natural wonders unique to that part of the world. We then build activities and walks that take us *inside* these characteristics.

Yes, these tours are educational, but they are also interactive and immersive; walking gets us off the bus and penetrates local cultures to not only see but touch, smell, and feel these special spaces.

Along the way, local walking guides amplify the experience by sharing insights into the magic of that particular location.

[Walk Ratings](#)

We generally walk at a pace of 2 to 3 miles per hour. In most cases, we are not “strolling.” We are walking at a relaxed but steady pace. Your experience will be significantly affected by your level of physical fitness. Because these are guided group walks, the success of the walks is predicated upon walkers having this minimum level of fitness in order to ensure that we are walking at a somewhat similar pace. If not walking regularly at home, we strongly recommend that you make a priority of “training” beforehand in order to both enjoy the trip and avoid medical issues due to overexertion. If you have questions about your ability to participate, please talk with our office.

We are using the America’s Walking Club walk difficulty rating system which contains a numeric indicator for trail incline and an alpha indicator for trail terrain. The explanation for this system is presented below:

Incline

1. Very small hills or very little stair climbing.
2. Some moderate hills and stair climbing.
3. Some significant hills or stair climbing.
4. Lots of significant hills or stair climbing.
5. Many steep hills.

Terrain

- A. Almost entirely on pavement.
- B. A significant part of the route is on well groomed trails with very few obstacles.
- C. A significant part of the route is on somewhat difficult terrain (rocky/rooted paths or soft sand).
- D. A significant part of the route is on very difficult terrain.
- E. The majority of the route is on very difficult terrain.

[Walk Difficulty](#)

Walks on this tour vary greatly in difficulty level, ranging from 1B (easy) to 3D (a bit challenging!), with most walks falling into the 2B/C range.

- In several cases, you will be able to choose between an easier and a harder option, so even if the walk rating for a particular walk may look too high for your comfort level,

on most walks we can usually find a suitable alternative for you.

- On most days, we will not do a full 10 km at one walk site due to the need to drive to our next location, or because of multiple walks in one day. We will usually offer at least 7 km (4.5 miles) of walking and will average about 9 km (5-6 miles) per day for the 8 days of activities.
- In almost all cases, these will be guided walks, with your WAI guide taking you on a group walk experience. But there may also be times when you can walk freely on your own so long as you are aware of the time and place to meet for departure.
- Walk stamps for most walks should be available along the way for those that wish to receive them; in some cases, we may be using the Online Start Box (OSB) to register and receive AVA credit for walks.

[Elevation on Tour](#)

Altitude is a significant factor only once on this trip, and our hotels are all located at relatively low elevation, which means you are sleeping at manageable elevations. One walk on the Wallowa Lake Tramway Trails takes place at over 8,000 feet above sea level, but we are not at this elevation for a long time. Available routes here are relatively short and self-paced, and if you feel the altitude having an adverse effect on you, it is always possible to take the tramway back down to a lower elevation.

[Tour Accommodations](#)

Good quality, tourist-class accommodations are the standard for our Adventure. Most accommodations on this tour are selected primarily as a practical base from which to pursue our itinerary. Because much of this Adventure is in small town Oregon, a few of our properties are quality motels reflecting the spirit of our setting, which we think you'll enjoy. Many, but not all, of our accommodations on this adventure are single-floor or have elevators. Travelers should be able to carry their luggage up a number of steps to get to a second-floor room if necessary.

[How Is Airfare Arranged?](#)

The official start and finish point for the Hidden Gems of Oregon Adventure is our hotel near Portland International Airport (airport code PDX). More details about flight arrangements and travel agent information will be available after you register for this tour.

[Travel Insurance](#)

WAI believes strongly in the importance of travel insurance for financial and medical protection from any number of unforeseen circumstances that can arise before departure or during your Adventure. This is now especially true in the era of COVID-19, which is typically treated like any other illness for travel insurance purposes. Many travel insurance providers are available for you to consider. Laura Pfahler and Sharon Mitchell of World Travel Inc. are travel agents who provides air travel and insurance services to many WAI travelers.

- Laura Pfahler: 503-434-6401 or llp@wtpdx.com
- Sharon Mitchell: 971-261-2091 or smitchell@wtpdx.com

Check out [Insurance Tips](#) from World Travel for a short introduction to travel insurance. (NOTE: WAI receives no commission or financial remuneration from World Travel Inc.).

As always, do some shopping to ensure you are getting the best value. Using the [SquareMouth.com](#) website can be a good way to compare pricing.

Other options include:

- Allianz
- Betins
- Travel Guard
- Travel Insured International

NOTE: We suggest purchasing from a reputable, well-established insurance company (avoid buying insurance from an unknown company found only online). Travelers interested in purchasing “cancel for any reason” insurance coverage should be careful to check pricing and terms BEFORE they register for a tour. Recent changes in the international travel landscape has caused changes in the policies of some insurance companies, and made the purchase of this particular type of policy even more time-sensitive.

[Tour Cancellations](#)

Walking Adventures International reserves the right to cancel this tour departure with fewer than 12 participants, in which case registered participants will receive a 100% refund of payments received. This refund policy contains one exclusion related to the COVID-19 outbreak. Some suppliers require non-refundable deposits as a condition of booking services. Unforeseen circumstances linked to the virus can force us to cancel a tour. Due to these supplier's non-refundable policies, WAI intends to retrieve as much of these deposits as possible, but cannot guarantee a 100% refund. In cases where full refunds cannot be obtained for a cancelled tour, we will do our best to transfer unrefunded money as traveler credits to be applied to a future tour to that destination.

View our full [Coronavirus FAQ](#) for more details.

[COVID-19 Policies and Procedures](#)

The [Our Approach to Fun but Prudent Travel](#) document identifies and explains Covid-19 mitigation policies and procedures WAI is using as a starting point for our 2021 tours. Because the knowledge base about COVID-19 changes daily, we review these policies and procedures on an ongoing basis, and will, of course, notify travelers on tour of updates as we approach the departure date of your tour.

Contact our office with any questions at 360.260.9393 or fun@walkingadventures.com.

[COVID-19 Travel Waiver](#)

During this age of COVID-19, WAI evaluates worldwide reports and conditions on an ongoing basis. Please read our COVID-19 Policies and Procedures document before signing the [COVID-19 Travel Waiver](#). Participation in this tour requires your signature on the [COVID-19 Travel Waiver](#).

Contact our office with any questions at 360.260.9393 or fun@walkingadventures.com.

What Happens Next?

Upon registering for this Adventure, you will receive a welcome email and initial invoice notifying you of your tour balance and due date. You will be able to make that payment online or over the phone as well. Any other payments necessary for optional services or one-off decisions can also be made this way.

An email with critical information on flight arrangements will be sent soon after registration, with important information about steps to take in the months before your trip. Please do not buy your airline tickets until you review the Flight Arrangements email.

About 10 weeks before departure, you will receive a final statement reminder about the final tour payment, which is due 60 days before departure. Around 2-3 two weeks before departure, you will receive a final email packet with all the details of the program, including hotel names and contact information, a list of fellow travelers, and a more detailed daily schedule.

Take a few minutes to peruse the enclosed itinerary. In the end, we think you will agree that walking is still and always the best way to experience our world. Join us for this surprising Walking Adventure program through Hidden Gems of Oregon!