

# Visiting the Olympic Peninsula, Washington

2-Night Sample Itinerary Starting in Seattle

Total Miles: 460

## DAY 1

### Downtown Seattle to Sequim (Drive Time: 2.5 hours)

From downtown Seattle, take the Bainbridge Island Ferry to Bainbridge Island. Drive north up the Kitsap Peninsula and across the Hood Canal Bridge. Once across the Hood Canal, Hwy 104 leads onto the Olympic Peninsula and joins with Hwy 101. Continue on Hwy 101 which will begin heading west across the foothills of Olympic National Forest.

Hwy 101 will wind through the little town of **Blyn**, home of the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, and the beautiful hand-carved totem poles that greet its visitors. Just 10 minutes further to reach the town of **Sequim** – a perfect first stop for lunch. Sequim is famous for its rich agriculture, in particular lavender which is celebrated annually during Sequim Lavender Weekend the third weekend in July. Nature lovers won't want to miss the **Dungeness Spit**, a 5.5-mile natural sand spit and wildlife refuge located north of Sequim.



### Sequim to Olympic National Park Visitor Center & Hurricane Ridge (Drive Time: 1.5 hours)

On a clear day, the snow-capped peaks of the Olympic Mountains are visible and beckoning for a visit. Use this afternoon to visit Hurricane Ridge, the first destination within Olympic National Park. Continue on Hwy 101 west toward Port Angeles. Once in Port Angeles and the **Olympic National Park Visitor Center** which offers park passes (required to visit Hurricane Ridge), maps, back-country wilderness permits, and more information. From the Visitor Center, travel up Hurricane Ridge Road for 18 miles to reach Hurricane Ridge at an elevation of 5,242 feet.



💡 **Smart Travel Tip:** Note that the road to Hurricane Ridge is not open every day in the winter and snow falls autumn through spring. Vehicles are required to carry chains in winter. For travel conditions, call the Hurricane Ridge hotline at 360-565-3131.

### Overnight in Port Angeles (Drive Time: 45 minutes)

From Hurricane Ridge, a 45 minute drive back down the mountain leads to the largest town on the peninsula, **Port Angeles**. The town and the surround area offer many different lodging options from camping and RV sites, affordable hotels and motels, and friendly bed & breakfasts – all within a short distance of the Strait of Juan de Fuca and Olympic Mountains. Many visitors stay in Port Angeles multiple nights and take day trips into Olympic or even the Coho ferry over to Victoria, B.C. (a 90-minute sailing).

💡 **Smart Travel Tip:** Book ahead whenever possible. Lodgings and campsites on the peninsula fill up fast in the summer and during large events. Fall through spring offer fewer crowds and more vacancies.

## Day 2

### Morning in Port Angeles

Wake up to the sound of ships and gulls in the harbor in Port Angeles where several quaint restaurants serving famous breakfasts can be found. Take the morning slow, possibly driving out to Ediz Hook for an unbelievable view, or take advantage of the early morning light to visit Hurricane Ridge if it didn't make the previous day's plans. Don't linger too long, however, because there is much more to see on this day.

### Port Angeles to Lake Crescent (Drive Time: 30 minutes)

Head west out of Port Angeles on Hwy 101. If time allows, stop to see **Madison Falls** by turning left on Olympic Hot Springs Road just before the bridge over the Elwha River. Another 10 minutes' drive will reveal the deep, turquoise water of Lake Crescent as Hwy 101 curves around the southern shore of the lake. Visit the historic **Lake Crescent Lodge** (Open May – New Year's Day) or access the trailhead to one of the peninsula's best short hikes to **Marymere Falls**. Take advantage of the Lodge's waterfront dining room for lunch or pack a picnic to eat on the shore. The Lodge also rents out canoes for a leisurely paddle in the crystal clear water.



### Lake Crescent to La Push (Drive Time: 1hour 15 minutes)

From Lake Crescent, continue west on Hwy 101. Here, the road travels through the northwest corner of **Olympic National Forest**, past small towns and over the winding Sol Duc River. After 35 miles, turn right onto La Push Road and continue west toward the Quileute Tribal town of **La Push**. Several short, yet rewarding hikes in this area include Second and Third Beaches as well as **the Rialto Beach** to the north. Watch an early sunset over the horizon before heading back to Forks for the night.



### La Push to Forks (Drive Time: 25 minutes)

Follow La Push Road back out to Hwy 101 and continue south a short distance to reach the town of **Forks**. Famous for Stephenie Meyer's "Twilight" book series, the town attracts thousands of Twilight fans each year to pay homage to the town that inspired the stories as well as the Forever Twilight in Forks festival each September. Forks offers several economy lodgings as well as more-rustic cabins nestled in the surrounding forest. Be sure to visit Forks Outfitters to stock up on supplies and food for the next day.

💡 **Smart Travel Tip:** Daylight varies between the seasons at this latitude. Sunset is at 4:20PM in December and at 9:20PM in June. Plan accordingly, especially if hiking during the shorter-daylight season.



Day 3

### Forks to the Hoh Rain Forest (Drive Time: 1 hour)

Get an early start on this day and head south from Forks on Hwy 101 for 13 miles and then left onto Upper Hoh Road. Follow the road west into the quietest place on earth – the **Hoh Rain Forest** in Olympic National Park. A National Park Pass is required and can be purchased at the gate if needed. Once at the Hoh Rain Forest Visitor Center, learn all about Washington's temperate rain forest and stroll around the Hall of Mosses trail for some spectacular photo ops.



### Hoh Rain Forest to Ruby Beach (Drive Time: 50 minutes)

After a morning spent among moss-covered maple trees and towering spruce, continue west back on Upper Hoh Road. Once on Hwy 101, head south to the ocean for a stop at one of Olympic's most iconic beaches. **Ruby Beach**, named for its subtly colored red rocks, is a must-see on any trip around Hwy 101. View sea stacks and large driftwood logs, worn by the elements. At low tide, explore the tidepools for glimpses of starfish and anemones.

💡 **Smart Travel Tip:** Tide times change every day. Be aware of tides when visiting any beach, especially if hiking or camping near the water. Use caution and watch the waves when swimming or wading on ocean beaches.

### Lunch - Picnic at Ruby Beach or at Kalaloch Lodge (Drive Time: 10 minutes)

If you were able to pick up lunch in Forks, Ruby Beach is an excellent picnic location. Or, for a more formal dining experience with a view of the ocean, head 10 minutes south to **Kalaloch Lodge** and the Creekside Restaurant. Kalaloch Lodge also offers cabins for rent all year round but fills up quickly during summer months. A little walk through the campsite at Kalaloch and down onto the beach will reveal a peculiar destination – the aptly named "Tree of Life" with roots that cling to the eroding cliff over the sand.



### Heading back to Seattle (Drive Time: 3hours)

Traveling back to Seattle can be done in one long drive, or broken up with a stop for dinner in the middle. Continue on Hwy 101 south through the towns of Hoquiam and Aberdeen. Continue east through Aberdeen towards Olympia. Stop in Olympia for dinner in the state's beautiful capital city or continue east on I-5 back towards Seattle.

**Extend the trip** by exploring Mount Rainier National Park southeast of Seattle or continuing south on I-5 towards Portland, Oregon!

*Note that all times and distances are approximate. Unforeseen circumstances such as traffic, ferry delays, inclement weather, road construction and bridge closures can affect travel. Be prepared for possible traffic/ferry delays especially during summer. For information on current road conditions visit [wsdot.com](http://wsdot.com).*

