

Visiting the Olympic Peninsula, Washington

3-Night Sample Itinerary Starting in SeaTac Airport

Total Miles: 570



DAY 1

SeaTac Airport to Port Townsend (Drive Time: 2 hours)

From SeaTac Airport, head north on I-5 to downtown **Seattle** and take the ferry to Bainbridge Island - or head south on I-5 and over the Tacoma Narrows Bridge (shorter distance). For either route, drive north up the **Kitsap Peninsula** and across the Hood Canal Bridge. Once across the **Hood Canal**, turn right on Hwy 19 towards the historical Victorian seaport town of **Port Townsend**. Artsy shops, fun events, seaside restaurants, and Victorian architecture can keep any visitor busy for several days or even weeks. But it is just the first unique stop so continue on the road west.



Port Townsend to Sequim (Drive Time: 45 minutes)

Hwy 101 winds 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 is the town of **Sequim**, famous for its 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 Port Angeles (Drive Time: 25 minutes)

Depending on the time, plan on staying the first night in Sequim or nearby **Port Angeles**, the largest town on the Olympic Peninsula. Both of these towns and the surrounding area offer many different lodging options including camping and RV sites, affordable hotels and motels, and 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 to take day trips into Olympic or 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

Port Angeles to Hurricane Ridge (Drive Time: 45 minutes)

On a clear day, the snow-capped peaks of the Olympic Mountains are visible and beckoning for a visit. Morning is the best time to visit Hurricane Ridge so take advantage of the early hour. The **Olympic National Park Visitor Center** located on the way to **Hurricane Ridge** offers park passes (required to visit Hurricane Ridge), maps, and back-country wilderness permits. 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.

Hurricane Ridge to Lake Crescent (Drive Time: 1 hour 10 minutes)

Head back down the mountain and west on Hwy 101. If time allows, stop to see **Madison Falls** by turning left on Olympic Hot Springs Road just before the Elwha River. Another 10 minutes' drive will reveal 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.

Lake Crescent to Neah Bay (Drive Time: 1.5 hours)

Continue west on Hwy 101 and north onto Hwy 113. After two miles, pull over to the right side of the road to view Beaver Falls just a few feet away! A few miles more will lead to curvy Hwy 112, the 61-mile Strait of Juan de Fuca Scenic Byway. The communities of Clallam Bay and Sekiu are also located along the byway and boast an impressive fishing season each year. The Makah Tribal village of **Neah Bay**, located at the most-northwestern point in the contiguous United States, offers scenic views of the Pacific Ocean from the

Hobuck Beach Resort (Open year round) as well as a spectacular Makah Cultural Heritage Museum. Plan on staying in this area for the second night. If there's enough daylight, the 1.5 mile **Cape Flattery** trail is a must-do.

💡 **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.



Day 3 Neah Bay to Forks (Drive Time: 1 hour)

To experience more hiking in Neah Bay, the **Shi Shi Beach** trail and the **Ozette Loop** offer stunning seastack views. But if the moss-draped rain forests are calling your name, head back down Hwy 112 early towards **Forks** and the famous Hoh Rain Forest. Famous for Stephenie Meyer's "Twilight" book series, the towns of Forks and neighboring **La Push** attract thousands of Twilight fans each year to pay homage to the town that inspired the stories. Be sure to visit Forks Outfitters to stock up on supplies.

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

South of Forks, turn 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 amazing photo ops.



Hoh Rain Forest to Kalaloch Lodge or Lake Quinault (Drive Time: 1 hour or 1.5 hours depending on destination)

Traveling south, don't miss beautiful Ruby Beach just off Hwy 101. For dinner with an ocean view head 10 minutes south to **Kalaloch Lodge** (Open year round) and the Creekside Restaurant. Kalaloch Lodge also offers cabins for rent all year round. A little walk through the campsite at Kalaloch and down onto the beach will reveal the aptly named "Tree of Life" with roots that cling to the eroding cliff over the sand.

💡 **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.

30 minutes further south is the hamlet community around **Lake Quinault**. Several lodging options are also available here including the Lake Quinault Lodge and its Roosevelt dining room. After a long day of traveling, settle in to a quiet evening here.

Day 4 Lake Quinault Area

Plan to spend some time in this unique area of the peninsula. Several short hikes winding around the south shore reward the hiker with views of waterfalls and the area's famous record-setting giant trees. Stay to kayak the lake, owned and managed by the Quinault Indian Nation, or take the 3-hour rain forest van tour into Olympic's **Quinault Rain Forest**. For a longer backpacking trip, Lake Quinault is the entry point to the **Enchanted Valley**, also known as the Valley of 10,000 Waterfalls.

Lake Quinault to SeaTac Airport (Drive Time: 2 hours 40 minutes)

Traveling back to SeaTac Airport can be done in one long drive, or broken up with a stop for dinner in the middle. Continue on Hwy 101 south and 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 SeaTac Airport.

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.

