



**RV TRIPGEN**

The Complete Guide to  
RV Travel in  
**Oregon**

Speed limits, towing rules, NPS reservations, Cascade-pass windows,  
pump rules,  
and everything else you need to know before you cross the state line.

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[rvtripgen.com](https://rvtripgen.com)

# RV travel in Oregon

Oregon is one of the most varied RV states in the country: 363 miles of free, mostly state-park-strung Pacific coastline, Crater Lake, the Willows, the Cascades, the high desert around Bend and the Alvord, and the Columbia Gorge all in one state. The Oregon coast has the densest, best-run state-park network in the West for RVs -- you can string together hookup sites every 30 miles for the entire coast. The catches are the Cascade-pass winter windows (Oct-May for the high passes), the high coastal humidity (mould risk if you don't ventilate), and a quirk Oregon kept until very recently: most gas stations don't let you pump your own fuel. That law has now mostly relaxed but pockets still attendant-only. Plan around it and Oregon is one of the best RV states in the West.

## Oregon by the numbers

<b>Boondocking + dispersed sites</b>	1,728
<b>Established campgrounds</b>	581
<b>Dump stations</b>	102
<b>Propane refills</b>	101
<b>Potable water fill-ups</b>	205
<b>Laundromats</b>	88
<b>RV showers</b>	82
<b>Verified-bad spots (overnight prohibited)</b>	149

Source: iOverlander community database (70% of Oregon spots verified in the last 24 months).

## Driving rules

<b>Interstate (cars)</b>	70 mph (rural I-84 east of The Dalles); 65 mph elsewhere
<b>Interstate (trucks + towing)</b>	65 mph
<b>US/State highway (cars)</b>	55-65 mph (posted)
<b>US/State highway (towing)</b>	55 mph
<b>Built-up areas</b>	25-35 mph (posted)
<b>Drive on</b>	Right
<b>RV passenger seatbelts</b>	Required for all front-seat occupants; under-16s in all seats
<b>Cell phone use while driving</b>	Hands-free only since 2017; all hand-held (calls + text) banned

## Highways

### RV-friendly corridors

Highway	Note
I-5	Main north-south spine through Portland, Salem, Eugene, Medford. Big-rig standard; Siskiyou Summit at the CA border is the only sustained grade (chains-required area Oct-Apr).
I-84	Portland east through the Columbia Gorge to Idaho. Heavy truck traffic; Cabbage Hill (east of Pendleton) is a serious 6% descent -- use lower gears and engine brake.
I-205	Portland bypass.
US-101	Pacific coast highway, full state length. Two-lane, busy in summer, but every state park along it is RV-friendly. Astoria-Megler Bridge (US-101 at the WA border) is high-wind-exposed.
US-97	Klamath Falls north through Bend, Madras, and on to Washington. Easy.
US-26	Portland east over Mt. Hood and through the central Oregon plateau.
OR-58	Eugene southeast over Willamette Pass; standard mountain grades but well-paved.

### RV-restricted segments

Segment	Restriction
OR-138 (Diamond Lake-Crater Lake N entrance)	Tight switchbacks near Crater Lake; trailers over 25 ft strongly discouraged from the north entrance road inside the park.
Crater Lake Rim Drive	33-mile loop; vehicles over 22 ft are prohibited on some pullouts and overlook spurs. The Cleetwood Cove trailhead lot is too small for big rigs.
OR-242 (McKenzie Pass / Old Santiam Wagon Road)	Lava-field two-lane; closed mid-Nov to mid-Jul. Vehicles over 35 ft prohibited even when open. Use OR-126 + US-20 (Santiam Pass) instead.
Rowena Crest / Historic Columbia River Highway	Narrow, very tight curves; not for big rigs. Use I-84 instead.
Old Hwy 30 along the Columbia (Multnomah Falls)	Park-and-walk; the falls parking lot is too small for RVs. Use I-84 exit 31 lot or shuttle from Cascade Locks.

## Mountain passes

Pass	Elevation	Note
Siskiyou Summit (I-5)	4310 ft	OR-CA border; chains-required area Oct-Apr.
Willamette Pass (OR-58)	5128 ft	Open year-round; chains Oct-Apr.

Santiam Pass (US-20)	4817 ft	Open year-round; chains Oct-Apr. The standard big-rig route over the central Cascades.
Mt. Hood (US-26)	4157 ft	Open year-round; chains common Nov-Mar.
McKenzie Pass (OR-242)	5325 ft	CLOSED mid-Nov to mid-Jul. Even when open, rigs over 35 ft prohibited.
Cabbage Hill / Deadman Pass (I-84)	3615 ft	Open year-round; the 6% descent eastbound is the dangerous direction.
Cascade Lakes Hwy (FR 46)	6300 ft	Seasonal; typically open Jun-Oct.

## National parks + monuments

National Park / Monument	Entry fee	Reservation note
Crater Lake NP	\$30/vehicle (7 days), \$80 America the Beautiful annual	Mazama Campground reservable via recreation.gov May-Oct; RVs to 50 ft but tight. Lost Creek Campground (tent only) inside the park. North entrance only open mid-Jun to late Oct (snow). Rim Drive opens later in summer.
Oregon Caves NM & Preserve	Free entry; cave tour \$10/adult	No camping in the monument. Cave Creek USFS campground 4 miles away; RVs to 36 ft. Access road OR-46 is winding -- 20 mph average for big rigs.
John Day Fossil Beds NM (3 units)	Free entry	No camping in any unit. Nearest RV at Mitchell, Dayville, or Kimberly.
Lewis & Clark NHP	\$10/person (7 days), free with America the Beautiful	Day-use only; Fort Stevens State Park adjacent has 500+ RV sites with hookups.
Newberry National Volcanic Monument (USFS-managed)	\$5/day or America the Beautiful	Paulina Lake and East Lake campgrounds reservable via recreation.gov; RVs to 36 ft.

## State parks

Oregon has the best state-park system in the West for RVers: 250+ parks, of which 50+ have full or partial hookup RV sites. The coast alone has 18 RV-hookup parks (Fort Stevens, Cape Lookout, Beverly Beach, South Beach, Honeyman, Bullards Beach, Sunset Bay, Cape Blanco, Harris Beach -- the standouts). Reservable up to 6 months ahead via oregonstateparks.org or 1-800-452-5687. Non-resident camping \$34-46/night for full hookups (resident discount \$4 less). Hiker/biker sites \$9. Day-use \$5/vehicle.

## Boondocking + dispersed camping

**BLM:** Oregon BLM dominates the eastern half: the Steens Mountain, Alvord Desert, Owyhees, Vale district, and large stretches around Lakeview. Free 14-day dispersed camping is the default. The Alvord Desert playa is a free hard-surface boondock (when dry) -- popular and signal-dead. BLM access roads east of Bend get washboarded fast.

**National Forest:** Oregon has 11 National Forests; Deschutes, Mt. Hood, Willamette, Umpqua, Rogue River-Siskiyou, Fremont-Winema, Malheur, Wallowa-Whitman, Ochoco, Siuslaw, and a piece of Klamath. All allow free dispersed camping; 14-day limit. Popular FR areas around Bend (Deschutes NF), Mt. Hood, and Wallowa Lake fill summer weekends. Fire restrictions Jun-Oct most years.

**Stay limit:** 14 days at any one location (federal rule, applies to BLM and NF dispersed).

## Tribal lands

Oregon has 9 federally-recognized tribes: Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Grand Ronde, Siletz, Umatilla, Coquille, Coos/Lower Umpqua/Siuslaw, Klamath Tribes, Burns Paiute, and Cow Creek Umpqua. Tribal lands are sovereign; dispersed camping is generally not permitted without permission. Warm Springs operates Kah-Nee-Ta historically (currently closed for redevelopment) and the Indian Head casino. Several tribes operate gas stations along US-97 and US-26 with tax-free fuel.

## Propane, dump stations, fuel

**Propane:** Reliable in Portland, Salem, Eugene, Medford, Bend, Klamath Falls, La Grande, and along I-5 and I-84. Sparse along the southern coast between Florence and Brookings (Coos Bay reliable), the Steens/Alvord area (last reliable in Burns), and the Wallowas (Enterprise/Joseph have one each). U-Haul reliable; many Les Schwab tire stores in Oregon also do propane refills.

**Dump stations:** Most Oregon state parks have free dumps for registered guests. Coastal parks are exceptionally good. Flying J / Pilot stops along I-5 and I-84 charge \$10-15. Bend has multiple commercial options; Portland fewer (use suburban Vancouver, WA across the river). Crater Lake's Mazama Campground dump is free for guests.

**Fuel:** Diesel widely available along interstates and US highways. The Oregon self-service quirk has mostly been repealed (as of 2024 most stations let you pump) but some pockets -- coastal small towns, rural eastern -- still attendant-only. Long fuel gaps: OR-205 / OR-78 east of Burns toward the Alvord (100+ miles), US-95 in the Owyhees (Jordan Valley to Burns Junction is 90 miles), OR-31 from Lakeview north (60+ miles). Oregon fuel taxes mid-range; Idaho cheaper if crossing east.

## Weather windows

**Best months:** June through September for the whole state. Coast can be cool/foggy even in summer (50-65 F daytime). Cascades and high desert are 75-90 F.

**Avoid:** November through April for any pass above 4,000 ft. Cascade passes (Santiam, Willamette, Cascade Lakes Highway, OR-242) chain-required or closed. Coast is drivable year-round but rains roughly Nov-Apr -- expect mould on stored canvas if you don't ventilate. East-of-Cascades winter is cold but drier; Bend is doable shoulder-season.

### Climate caution

I-84 Cabbage Hill (east of Pendleton) is one of the most dangerous interstate descents in the West for RVs -- 6% sustained over 6+ miles with multiple sharp curves. Downshift early, use engine braking, do not ride the service brakes. Eastern Oregon SR posts truck-runaway lane reminders for a reason.

## Emergency + road conditions

<b>State patrol</b>	Dial *OSP (*677) from a cell phone for Oregon State Police non-emergency
<b>Road conditions</b>	<a href="https://tripcheck.com">https://tripcheck.com</a>

## How RV TripGen helps

### Cascade-pass shoulder-season check

RV Tripgen checks Santiam, Willamette, McKenzie, and Mt. Hood pass conditions against your dates and reroutes shoulder-season trips through Columbia Gorge (I-84) when the high passes are chain-restricted.

### Oregon coast hookup-park reservation window

RV Tripgen flags any Oregon-coast itinerary booked inside the 6-month state-park reservation window and warns when popular hookup parks (Cape Lookout, Beverly Beach, Honeyman) are already full for your dates.