



# ROAD TALES

If you want a whole new adventure, take a motorcycle trip. Of course, there is some preparation with the three-day state-endorsed motorcycle safety course and an investment in a form of wheels. But all these are minor compared to the enjoyment of the open road on two wheels. There are many great three- and four-day cycle trips

in the Northwest that let you enjoy the splendor of the scenery while keeping you off the bustling interstates. Keep in mind that 100 miles on a bike seems like 300 miles in a car, so you don't have to go far from home to take up this wonderful hobby. Here are three of the best routes in the Northwest to get you started.

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# EPIC NW MOTORCYCLE TOURS

by Don Chase, Herbert David and Anne Norup

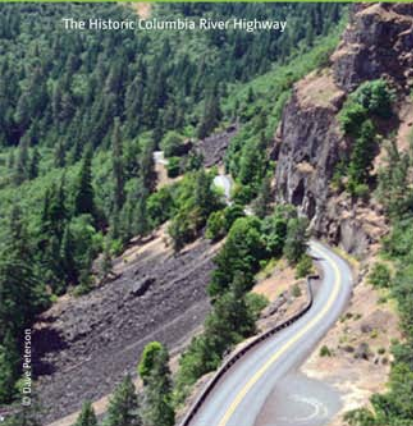
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Clockwise from top left: Campgrounds make easy lodging along the route. B.C.'s Sunshine Coast, a beautiful touring destination. Winding roads above the Columbia Gorge in Rowena, Oregon



## Great NW Motorcycle Tours

The Historic Columbia River Highway



A view of the Columbia River Gorge



### Historic Columbia River Highway Tour, Oregon

The alternate to I-84 on the Oregon side of the Columbia River Gorge is the Historic Columbia River Highway, and, completed in 1922, it remains a testament to engineering. The signed historic highway begins just outside of Portland at Troutdale (exit 17) to begin the 70-mile journey.

While the Columbia River Gorge is beautiful anytime, bright colors are the immediate benefits of fall travel, and you'll encounter less traffic midweek. The conundrum is whether you drive the route in its entirety for the thrilling and demanding route or drive-stop-drive to enjoy the

many falls and parks and Hood River, which is a welcome hub for refreshments and stretching your legs.

After the historical landmark Vista House, near the west end of the route, the highway drops more than 600 feet through a series of near figure-eight turns, which really get your attention. The sweeping hairpin turns and almost dizzying road twists force you to be nimble and deliberate working the gas, brakes and gears. Next, you are driving through a kaleidoscopic tunnel as colorful maples and oaks tower over the roadway, and steep, dark



Touring by Vista House on the Historic Columbia River Highway.

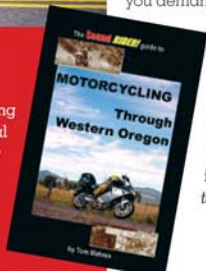
### Sound Rider Guides

Are you looking to explore the Pacific Northwest in detail on a motorcycle? Author Tom Mehren has created six guides for touring through Oregon and Washington, featuring both paved and dual sport routes for areas like the Oregon Coast, the Columbia River Gorge and the entire Cascade Range. You'll find these books at better book stores or online at [soundrider.com/store](http://soundrider.com/store).

basalt cliffs with green mosses and ferns are just few feet away from you. If that's not enough to distract you, there are the many waterfalls. Sneak a peek here and there, but only for a brief moment—there's another curve ahead. Horsetail Falls are so close to the road that you might get wet from the spray.

The road is narrow, has occasional fallen rocks or limbs, and can be crowded with other cars, motorcycles, bicycles, and pedestrians – you want to observe the beauty around you, but the road in front of you demands your immediate attention.

At The Dalles, you can cross the river to get a different north-side perspective and thrilling drive. Or, you can run the same route back, this time stopping to enjoy the many falls, vistas and parks. For more information, visit [hoodriver.org](http://hoodriver.org) and [thedalleschamber.com](http://thedalleschamber.com). – DC



### Route Planning

There are a few things to consider when planning a touring route. Some advance research will make the difference between a great tour filled with fun and excitement versus a “when are we going to get there” trip:

- >> Plan your route with visitors bureau guides; enter the route in your GPS.
- >> Curves and twisties: prepare yourself by studying the route in advance.
- >> Food and fuel availability: Fuel should be every 150-200 miles, and check the web for best places to eat along the route.

- >> Check weather forecast one to four days in advance.
- >> Interesting sights and attractions: Know the scenic, geologic or historical places and parks that you want to visit.
- >> Traffic: Avoid Interstates and major highways as much as possible; state routes and county roads are more interesting.
- >> If an overnight trip, check for lodging or camping locations every 150-200 miles.
- >> Let someone know where you are going and when you will be back.

## Central Cascades Tour, Washington

The central Cascades—Mount Rainier National Park, Chinook and Cayuse Passes—offer some of the best fall scenery and touring in the Northwest. Grand views of mountains and valleys vie for your attention. You become good at catching a glimpse here and there, but when you are riding along clinging to a mountainside with a thousand foot drop merely feet away, you instinctively grip your handlebars tight and watch the road. Gravity works with and against you, causing you to work your gears and brakes in unison to meet the many ups, downs and turns—hairpin turns so sharp that you expect to see your own taillight. You revel in your mastery of machine and road, not wanting it to end.

All of your senses are engaged. Smells of deep forests to sweet alpine meadows. An entire spectrum of colors from blue lakes and many shades of green of the trees and mosses, to the golds and reds of changing leaves. Cold, brisk air from the altitude keeps you alert as snow can be found year round. The sun blinking through the trees has a strobe light effect on you, but pay attention



“Refuel” at good roadside restaurants.

there’s always another curve ahead. The urge to keep going to ride the backbone of the Cascades is tempting—but also tiring. Stop when you sense the need. Catch your breath, relax and take in the alpine scenery. You might even take a side trip to see Bumping Lake.

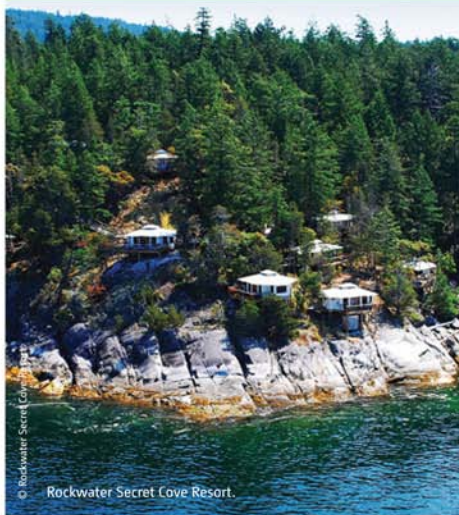
This tour can begin at either end for a one-way and return trip or continue into a long loop. If you begin in Enumclaw, take Highway 410 to Mount Rainier National Park. The highway crosses Cayuse Pass. Remain on 410 and you will soon cross Chinook Pass, eventually ending in Naches at the junction with US 12. Great campgrounds dot the landscape between Highway 410 and the American River. You can backtrack at this point. An alternative route is to take Highway 123 at Cayuse Pass and cut through the scenic Stevens Canyon Highway, heading west through the park.

What goes up must come down as you return to lowlands of Puget Sound. Fortunately, the memory and resulting high of this great tour will last until you do it again. For more information on this area, go to [visittrainer.com](http://visittrainer.com). — DC



The Stevens Canyon route in Mt Rainier Nat'l Park.





Rockwater Secret Cove Resort.



Enjoying off-road time at the Historic Lund Hotel in Lund, B.C.



B.C. Ferries carry you and your motorcycle to the Sunshine Coast.

## Sunshine Coast Tour, British Columbia

Motorcyclists in line at Horseshoe Bay's ferry terminal make quick friendships with one another as they wait to ride up British Columbia's Sunshine Coast. They swap stories about past trips, where they're from and what lies ahead. Locals give insider tips to visitors, "Keep a lookout for loose gravel," or "Good time to go with tourists gone and fall color coming on." Anticipation charges the air.

When the *Queen of Surrey* docks at Langdale, near Gibsons, bikers roar off the ferry and zoom up the hill like racehorses out of the gate.

Highway 101, carved into the rugged coastline, begs to be explored by motorcycle with breathtaking views and mile after mile of the kind of twisties riders dream about. Thick, dense forests span mountainsides spilling down hilly slopes to embrace sheer rock cliffs plunging into the sea. There are 52 glorious miles of fantastic long sweepers mixed with tight S-curves from Gibsons to Lund.

A few miles beyond Sechelt, combine your ride with off-bike R&R at Rockwater Secret Cove Resort—a sanctuary for the senses. Once a fishing lodge, it's been transformed into a private oasis with luxe tenthouse suites accessed by a 1500-foot boardwalk through a woodland paradise. Or stay in a cozy waterfront cabin.

"We're known as a romantic getaway and for our excellent West Coast cuisine," says Dikran Zabunyan, general manager for the resort. Bikers will appreciate flat, level parking. Spa services ease aching muscles and the heated outdoor pool promises a refreshing dip.


Following breakfast, head back to the highway and enjoy one stunning, perfectly banked curve after the next en route to Earls Cove where you'll catch the ferry to Saltery Bay.

Nature's heady scent of briny salt air mixes with sun-kissed pines, curling under your helmet's visor—a vivid reminder of the wildness of this area.

At road's end, you'll discover the picturesque village of Lund, celebrating its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. Built in 1905, the Historic Lund Hotel is a landmark, sitting at the edge of the marina with renovated guest rooms and a waterfront pub.

A stone's throw away, Nancy's Bakery has been delighting customers for 23 years with signature cinnamon buns and fresh-out-of-the-oven baked goodies.

Standing in front of Milepost 0, between the bakery and the hotel, one wonders whether it's really the end of the road or just the beginning of a new adventure as you ready yourself for the return trip.

For more information about touring the Sunshine Coast, visit [helloworld.com/vancouver-coast-mountains.aspx](http://helloworld.com/vancouver-coast-mountains.aspx). For the B.C. Ferries schedule, consult [bcferries.com](http://bcferries.com). To make reservations at Rockwater Secret Cove Resort, go to [rockwaterssecretcove.com](http://rockwaterssecretcove.com) and for the Lund Hotel, [lundhotel.com](http://lundhotel.com). —AN 

**Check Bazaar on page 113 for essential motorcycle tour camping gear.**

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