



Cruising through Cascadia

Traveling from Arizona to the Pacific Northwest in an RV towing a Jeep

By Stephanie Jarnagan

Hans Christian Andersen is credited with saying, "To travel is to live." As parents of three children ranging in age from 7 to 14, we are doing our best to instill this philosophy within each of them. And to help us do that, three years ago we purchased a 34-foot Coachmen Mirada RV and committed ourselves to planning epic summer vacations for the next few years.

With one major RV road trip under our belt that covered 10 states and 13 national parks, surely we learned enough to make our six-state loop from Arizona to the Pacific Northwest more manageable.

The main takeaway from our first trip to Yellowstone was that including too many stops on our trip is a royal pain due to the set up that goes into an RV. Sure, it looks convenient, but the sewer line doesn't hook up itself!

In order to reduce our workload and the likelihood of grumpy travelers, our two-week Pacific Northwest trip was divided into just three major stops: Trinidad, California; Seaside, Oregon; and Seattle.

Jaw-Dropping Redwoods in Trinidad

We booked three nights in the small town of Trinidad, California, a tiny coastal fishing village that serves as a gateway to Redwood National and State Parks. Our stay at Emerald Forest Cabins & RV turned out to be our favorite lodging on the trip. The entire park is riddled with redwoods, and our particular site featured a huge redwood stump (6 feet tall by 10 feet wide) that made for an excellent kids' climbing structure complete with banana slugs.

The village of Trinidad, which is actually the smallest incorporated city in California with just over 300 residents, is quaint and picturesque, with rugged coastline and ocean bluffs overlooking coves dotted with fishing boats.

We enjoyed an afternoon interacting with local sea otters that didn't seem the

(Left) Campsite at Emerald Forest Cabins & RV in Trinidad, California, with the author's family's 34-foot Coachmen Mirada RV and Jeep at the ready.

(Right, top to bottom) RV cruising along the Oregon coast on US 101. // Ten-foot-wide redwood stump complete with banana slugs delighted the kids at our Emerald Forest Cabins & RV campsite. // Iconic Trinidad Head Memorial Lighthouse built in 1947 pays homage to those lost at sea. // The kids got a kick out of driving through the historic Tour Thru Tree in the redwood forest at Klamath, California.



slightest bit frightened of us. We also were given a gift of 22 fresh crabs from some young fishermen finishing up their day's work. We promptly cooked them that night in our RV and had so much crab that we ended up sharing with several camping neighbors.

Our day trip to the Fern Canyon Trail was a highlight, especially when the kids found out that portions of *The Lost World: Jurassic Park* were filmed there. Ironically, the hike was not about the fabled redwoods, but more about the ferns that line the almost completely vertical canyon walls, which hug a shallow stream that serves as the hiking path.

Sunken Ships in Seaside

We traveled along US 101 up to our second destination, just outside Seaside, Ore-



gon. The 101 extended our drive time from Trinidad by about three hours, but the scenery was worth it. We caught glimpses of iconic towering rock formations just off the coastline, as well as the telltale signs of dairy farming towns like Tillamook, Oregon (home to my favorite brand of cheese!)

Our final destination was the Astoria/Warrenton/Seaside KOA, which was located in Hammond, Oregon, just a short drive from its more popular namesake cities. The KOA was family-oriented and very busy—the free pancake breakfasts are a perk resulting in big crowds.

Just across the street from the KOA near Fort Stevens, we explored a 112-year-old shipwreck that you can walk up to at low tide. The Peter Iredale was a four-masted steel barque sailing vessel that ran ashore in 1906 en route to the Columbia River. Tourists are able to get up close and personal, even climbing on parts of it to capture pictures.

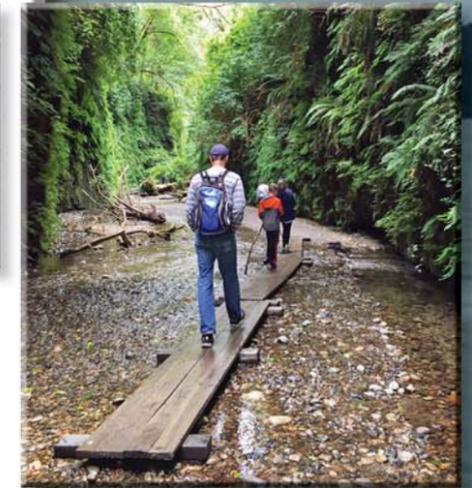
This leg of our adventure also included a trip to the Columbia River Gorge east of Portland, where we were lucky enough to visit the Multnomah Falls before the Eagle Creek Fire nearly destroyed the historic lodge last year. Luckily the lodge was saved, but the damage to the surrounding natural habitat was significant. Billed as the tallest waterfall in Oregon, the falls include two drops that span 620 feet.

Sunshine in Seattle

From Seaside, it was a relatively short jaunt to our final destination of Dash Point State Park, strategically located between Tacoma, Washington, and Seattle. We spent three glorious days filled with nothing but sunshine, soaking up all the touristy Seattle sights, like Pike Place Market, the Space Needle, Kerry Park and the infamous gum wall.

We also opted to get a little history of the area via Bill Speidel's Underground Tour. There we learned about the Great Seattle

(Clockwise from top) Checking out the wreckage of the Peter Iredale at Hammond, Oregon. // The short hike on the Fern Canyon Trail included picturesque scenery that was a backdrop for *The Lost World: Jurassic Park*. // Dash Point State Park is a centrally located destination sandwiched on the Puget Sound between Seattle and Tacoma. // Multnomah Falls in the Columbia River Gorge outside Portland. // Dash Point beach fun. // View of Mount Rainier from Seattle Center, with Key Arena and the arches of Pacific Science Center in the foreground and the Seattle Great Wheel on Pier 58 in the distance.



Fire of 1889 that destroyed 25 blocks and resulted in the Pioneer Square neighborhood being rebuilt 22 feet above the pre-fire street level. Parts of the spooky remnants left behind in the fire are still accessible and showcased on this tour.

Now an auto enthusiast's trip to Washington would not be complete without a stop at the famed LeMay–America's Car Museum in Tacoma. From classics to exotics, alternative engines to motorsports mania, there was something for each of us to enjoy. My kids took a liking to the classic Fords on display, making me swell with pride (disclaimer: I work with the Ford Motor Company Fund).



All in all, this road trip was most definitely smoother than our inaugural epic RV adventure (minus the time we lost the RV keys for three hours, but who even remembers that?). We were blessed with amazing weather—oddly enough not a single drop of rain until we hit a monsoon coming home in Wickenburg, Arizona.



Our trip concluded with another valuable life lesson appropriately imparted by Chief Seattle: "Take only memories, leave only footprints." Mission accomplished. ■

