

Hurricane Ridge by Day, Ruby Beach at Sunset — A 3-Day Olympic Peninsula Road Trip

Seattle to Port Angeles, the Hoh Rain Forest & the Wild Pacific Coast — A Self-Drive Loop

Washington's Olympic Peninsula packs glacier-capped peaks, thousand-year-old rainforest, and driftwood-strewn Pacific beaches into one compact loop from Seattle. This self-drive itinerary climbs to the alpine overlooks of Hurricane Ridge, wanders the moss-draped trails of the Hoh Rain Forest, and ends with sea stacks and tide pools at Ruby Beach and La Push — no tour bus required, just a full tank of gas and a rain jacket.

DURATION

3 Days

BEST TIME TO GO

Late June – September

The Olympic Peninsula is famously wet — Hurricane Ridge and the Hoh Rain Forest see rain (or snow up top) most of the year. Late June through September brings the driest, clearest stretch, with the mountain road reliably open and coastal trails at their best.

FROM

From \$650/person

Based on 2 travelers sharing a rental car, gas, 2 nights' lodging, and the park entrance pass.

Day 1

Seattle to Port Angeles, with a Climb to Hurricane Ridge

Leave the city behind and drive the loop around Puget Sound to Port Angeles, then climb straight up into the clouds for the peninsula's best mountain panorama before settling in for the night.

Seattle to Port Angeles

~2.5–3 hrs drive • US-101 via Tacoma (or the Edmonds–Kingston ferry)

Most self-drivers head south around Puget Sound via I-5 and US-101 through Shelton and Sequim — about 130 miles with zero ferry timing to worry about. Prefer the water route? Washington State Ferries run from Edmonds to Kingston (about 30 minutes), trimming the drive and adding a classic Puget Sound crossing with Olympic Mountain views from the car deck.

Hurricane Ridge Road

~1 hr from Port Angeles • \$30/vehicle, 7-day Olympic NP pass

The 17-mile Hurricane Ridge Road climbs about 5,000 feet from sea-level Port Angeles to a sweeping subalpine overlook of the snow-streaked Olympic Range. The historic Hurricane Ridge Day Lodge burned down in 2023 and is still being rebuilt, but the overlook, restrooms, and short interpretive trails remain open and the views are unchanged — go for late-afternoon light, and check road status ahead of time since the route can close for weather even in summer.

Olympic National Park — Hurricane Ridge • (360) 565-3131 • nps.gov/olym

Dinner at Bella Italia

Entrees ~\$22–36 • reservations recommended in summer

A Port Angeles institution serving Italian classics built around Pacific seafood — cioppino, crab ravioli, and a wine list heavy on Washington bottles. It's the kind of low-key, locally loved spot that fills up fast on summer nights.

Bella Italia • (360) 457-5442 • bellaitaliapa.com

Overnight – Olympic Lodge by Ayres

From ~\$180/night • downtown Port Angeles

A comfortable base with mountain-view rooms, an indoor pool, and a short walk to the waterfront — handy for an early start toward the Hoh Rain Forest the next morning.

Olympic Lodge by Ayres • ayreshotels.com/olympic-lodge-by-ayres

Day 2 Hoh Rain Forest to the Wild Coast at Ruby Beach

Trade alpine views for ancient, moss-draped forest, then chase the sunset out to the driftwood-strewn beaches of the Pacific coast.

Port Angeles to the Hoh Rain Forest

~1.5–2 hrs • US-101 along Lake Crescent

US-101 curves along the glacial blue of Lake Crescent before turning inland up the Hoh River valley on Upper Hoh Road. Budget extra time to pull over at Lake Crescent's turnouts — the water is startlingly clear.

Hall of Mosses & Spruce Nature Trail

0.8–1.9 mile loops • easy, flat, ~1–2 hrs

From the Hoh Rain Forest Visitor Center, the 0.8-mile Hall of Mosses Trail loops through bigleaf maples draped in club moss — one of the most photographed groves in the park — while the 1.9-mile Spruce Nature Trail follows the Hoh River through old-growth Sitka spruce and hemlock. Both are flat, well-maintained, and doable back-to-back in a couple of hours.

Hoh Rain Forest Visitor Center • nps.gov/olym

Sunset at Ruby Beach

~45 min from the Hoh • free roadside access

A short trail down through driftwood logs opens onto sea stacks, tide pools, and reddish sand streaked with garnet — one of the most photogenic stops on the whole coast. Time it for an hour before sunset and check a tide chart; low tide exposes the best tide pools around Abbey Island.

Overnight – Kalaloch Lodge

Beachfront cabins from ~\$300/night · book well ahead

The only lodging directly on this stretch of coast, Kalaloch Lodge sits on a bluff above the ocean with simple cabins and lodge rooms, plus its own Creekside Restaurant for a fireplace dinner of local seafood while the surf pounds below.

Kalaloch Lodge · thekalalochlodge.com

Day 3

La Push's Wild Beaches, Then Back to Seattle

One more dose of rugged coastline at La Push before the drive back around the peninsula and home.

Second Beach or Rialto Beach

0.7–1.5 miles roundtrip · morning low tide recommended

On the Quileute Indian Reservation at La Push, Second Beach is a 0.7-mile forest trail down to a wide, sea-stack-studded beach — one of the most dramatic on the Olympic coast. Prefer tide pools and a rock arch instead? Rialto Beach's flat 1.5-mile walk north leads to Hole-in-the-Wall, best explored at low tide.

Lunch at Blakeslee's Bar & Grill

Mains ~\$14–22 · Forks

A hearty, no-frills roadhouse in Forks for burgers, fish and chips, and pie before the long drive home — the kind of stop every Highway 101 road trip needs.

Forks to Seattle via Hood Canal

~3.5–4 hrs · US-101 & the Hood Canal Bridge

Retrace US-101 south and east along the Hood Canal, crossing the floating Hood Canal Bridge before picking up Highway 3 and I-5 into Seattle. Stretch your legs with a stop in Port Townsend's Victorian downtown if there's daylight to spare.