

CHEAP

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The negative here is that you're stuck with short driving times. If going from L.A. to New York in five to seven days sounds like fun, call a travel agent and get a list of the reputable firms around the country. Most are, but it's better to hear it from someone with current knowledge.

Hitchhiking: Of course, for the meek of thumb, thumbing for rides on the nation's highways is common fare. Did you know that thumbing for rides on planes is also possible?

Like weaseling your way into a passing Toyota, squeezing into a DC-10 requires an innocent face and the ability to build trust.

It also requires something good to bargain with, like original art, good photos or some quality wine.

The best people to approach are

pilots who fly small planes. They tend to be less inhibited about bartering for plane rides.

If this avenue of travel sounds uncommon, it's not. There are stories abound about air hitchhikers from Seattle making it to Tokyo in a day and the Philippines in a week.

Anyone interested in trying this approach should realize that airports frown on it, just like the police frown on hitchhikers on the freeways. Another negative is that you could spend a couple days in the

airport if you're not lucky.

If you are, though, you could spend your money in a place a little more suitable to your taste.

Most ski slopes stay open until Labor Day.

Mount Hood SkiBowl, about three hours away from Eugene, offers challenging skiing for just \$20 a day, for example. Hoodoo Ski Area and Willamette Pass offer equally good slopes at equally cheap prices.

Several ski resorts offer package

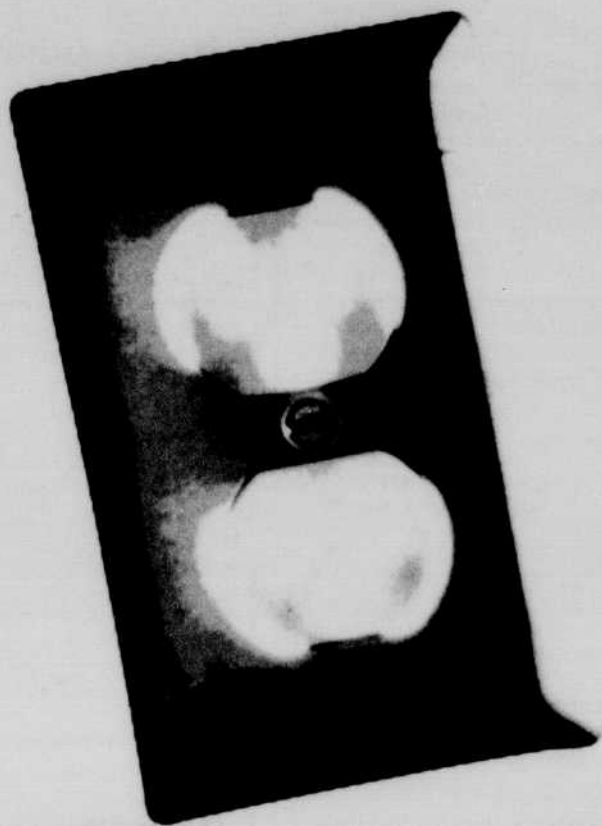
deals for weeklong stays, which are great if you don't like skiing with crowds.

Camping and hiking also prove cheap ways to have an excellent vacation. Gear rentals and food for a whole week can be as cheap as \$200.

Another outdoor idea comes from the U.S. Forest Service. They rent cabins at about \$20 a day and are comparable to staying at a much more expensive resort, except with a better view and more privacy.

Contact the Oregon Tourism Division at 1-800-543-8838 or the Forest Service at 465-6521 for more information

— Edward Klopfenstein



Plug into a partnership for efficiency.

Join Lane County's Public Utilities in Promoting an Energy Efficient Future.

"The Energy Outlet"—a new energy conservation information center sponsored by Lane County's public utilities and the Bonneville Power Administration—will open in downtown Eugene in spring, 1994.

The store will help Lane County electric customers make wise energy choices by promoting energy conservation, energy education and electrical product efficiency. Bonneville is working with Eugene Water & Electric Board, Springfield Utility Board, Emerald People's Utility District and Blachly-Lane Electric Cooperative in developing and constructing the new information outlet.

The outlet will look much like a standard retail store. However, unlike a retail store, the outlet will not sell products, but will inform customers about where and what to buy for energy efficiency. The Energy Outlet will display and promote energy-efficient products — many of which are not commonly offered — and show how best to use these products and where they can be purchased.

In an effort to forge a "partnership for efficiency," Lane County's public utilities are looking for donations of items to be used in the displays such as building materials, lighting, and the most energy-efficient products sold by local retail businesses. Sponsoring businesses will be featured in a display at the Energy Outlet when the store opens next spring.

To learn more about how you can contribute, call EWEB Energy Management Services at 484-1125 for a complete packet of information.

the Energy Outlet

INDOOR

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of Books in downtown Portland. If you haven't been there before, just imagine Eugene's Smith Family Bookstore multiplied by six, and that's Powell's.

Big deal, you say. A lot of books. But let me ask you a question: Where else are you going to find cut-out paper dolls of Jimmy Carter and his family? 'Nuff said.

• Movie theaters

Boy, bet you wouldn't have thought of that on your own. It's only the most pathetically cliched place to go in the history of the world, especially for couples.

WARNING: If you happen to know the words to that Cinemark song they play before the main feature — it's about popcorn, Front Row Joe, things like that — buy a VCR. You're just spending too much time at the movies.

• Bed

It's perfect. It's safe, it's warm, and there aren't any nasty outdoor hazards like tree branches or bugs. There are no tiny little teenaged boys strung out on their own testosterone zapping neon invaders from Mars, and it requires no light to enjoy, unlike a good book. On the other hand, it is perhaps the second-most cliched place to go in the history of the world, especially for couples.

• The Alvadore Store

Located northwest of Eugene in the tiny metropolis of the same name, the Alvadore Store offers all of the traditional trappings of a convenience store and gas station, but oh, so much more. But it's kind of like *The Crying Game*: we can't tell you what it's all about. You'll just have to experience it for yourself.

OK, a little hint: blue cream soda, Joe Camel and tanning beds.

• Funky, pseudo-Bohemian coffeehouses

There's one in every Northwestern city these days; it's just a matter of finding it. And once it's found, what a trove of fun and joy lies within.

Whether your taste runs to lattes or lemon tea, a coffeehouse might just be the place to go. Eavesdropping possibilities run rampant, because nearly everyone around you has a more interesting, or at least more angst-filled, life than you do, and coffeehouses tend to be intimate — read "small" — so you won't strain your ears.

Furthermore, there's usually a good selection of alternative papers in stacks by the door, so you can not only expand your hearing range, but also your education.

(That last suggestion came from my incurably outdoorsy colleague. I haven't decided if I ever want to go somewhere that doesn't have Pepsi on tap. Organic colas don't count.)

So all is not lost. Just because you live in a natural wonderland, replete with all of nature's splendor, doesn't mean you have to enjoy it.