

Hiking

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level round trip. This trail, too, is muddy when there's rain, but the lush canopy provides some protection for trail users who get surprised by a shower.

To find this trail, take Highway 58 to Lowell, go over a covered bridge and left onto the Jasper Lowell Road. Continue across town 1.5 miles to another covered bridge. Turn right onto the North Shore Road before the bridge and follow this road for 11 miles. Park at a hiker sign just before the bridge by the Dolly Varden campground.

Another hike venturing off campus is the 3.4-mile loop at Shotgun Creek beyond the town of Marcola.

This hike is also a muddy adventure.

The hiking trail is open to hikers, bikers and horses, but all-terrain vehicles and mud bikes frequently use other areas around the Shotgun Creek trail. Take I-105 bypassing Springfield to the 42nd Street Marcola exit, continue through Marcola and turn left three miles beyond the town at a sign for Shotgun Creek. Park by the trail head on the right and enjoy.

Finally, south of Cottage Grove and Dorena Lake is a gem of a trail named Brice Creek. This trail meanders up and down along the creek for a total elevation gain of 600 feet from the lower to the upper trail heads. It's a good 11-mile run out and back past numerous waterfalls, changing vegetation

ranging from ferns and firs to deciduous forests and grassy areas, and naked rocks by the creek's water holes. These make fine swimming areas in the summer but may prove a tad cool this time of year. This trail is also open to mountain bikes and horses but closed to all motorized vehicles. To find the Brice Creek trail heads, take I-5 to Cottage Grove, follow signs to Dorena Lake and go beyond this for a total of 21.7 miles from the freeway. The first trail head is a mile past the Umpqua National Forest sign.

When planning the trip, always bring a map and a compass (if you know how to use it). Tools to bring along include a multi-tool such as a Leatherman knife, utensils, a blister kit and a first-aid kit.

Also, don't underestimate the amount of food and water to bring. A hungry, dehydrated trail user can make poor choices. Underfueling can lead to irrational decisions and confusion.

Some tried-and-true alternatives are trail mixes (make your own from nuts, M&Ms, pretzels and almonds), granola bars, fresh or dried fruit and peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwiches.

If you're planning a longer trail adventure, a water-filtration device is imperative as well. Drinking water straight from the source is a no-no and can lead to severe stomach aches or illness.

However, hiking trips are not guaranteed to be rain-free, so pack and dress accordingly.

Good staples include Gore-Tex

or similar membrane breathable shells, worn over a layer of fleece or a sweater.

Breathable fabrics such as polypropylene make the best layers because they don't absorb moisture like cotton does. A cotton layer that holds moisture from sweat and condensation will feel cold and uncomfortable and detract from the adventure. The same goes for footwear. A Gore-Tex or similar boot doubled with good socks (not cotton) is a good choice.

Extra socks, shoes, a dry T-shirt and a towel left in the car for the trip home makes it that much more comfortable. A granola bar for the ride provides a little extra push to power the final leg of the trip.

All this said and prepared, the essence is still: happy trails!

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Horoscope by Linda C. Black

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 1). Study technical material this year, and you could become a whiz. Even if you've been all thumbs before, it all starts making sense. Change for the better in December. The work's there, and the money's good in January. Study computers or machinery in February; you'll do better than you thought you could. Get a routine down pat in May and crank out more work than ever. Forgive and forget in June, and a partnership benefits. You should have a great time next October with new friends. Plan strategies for next year in November.

To get the advantage, check the day's rating: 10 is the easiest day, 0 the most challenging.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) — Today is a 7 — Watch for a new discovery. You're in a creative mood and may come up with a brilliant idea, so there's no telling what might happen — and not a moment too soon! Meanwhile, don't forget an older person's request.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) — Today is a 6 — Take it slow and easy. A problem you run into isn't fatal; it's more likely going to be helpful. When you're trying to do something that's never been done before, it's smart to heed all suggestions. Even the ones you don't like.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21) — Today is an 8 — You're able to talk people into doing just about anything today. Why not go for something you've been thinking about for ages? This could be the moment you've been waiting for. Discretion is advised.

CANCER (June 22-July 22) — Today is a 5 — Are you the same person you were this time last year? Last week? Don't get stuck thinking about yourself in the same old way; your role may have changed. If you're feeling confused, this may be why. Keep practicing, you'll get it.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) — Today is a 6 — You're a very busy person, that's true. Are you trying to do too much? Nobody else has your style but someone else might be better suited for drudge jobs. Delegate.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) — Today is an 8 — As your performance today shows, you're a pretty good juggler. Of course there's too much for one person to do, but so what?! You routinely do the work of three or four people. You even make it look easy.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23) — Today is an 8 — Do something you've always wanted to do but were afraid to try. If you don't know how, someone nearby can teach you. Romance is blossoming, and you're learning fast, but don't believe everything you hear. Use good sense.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) — Today is a 5 — It's time for a household meeting. You and your family or roommates need to have a little talk. If you don't let your feelings be known, they're liable to do something you won't like. Better nip this in the bud, or at least add modifications.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) — Today is an 8 — Venture into new fields. Something you thought was too hard might start making sense, and you're learning quickly. Don't limit yourself based on old memories. You may be even smarter now than you were back then.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) — Today is a 6 — Push to finish the job as soon as possible, but don't get sloppy. The fewer errors the better. Ask for money now, too. It's better to have it sitting snugly in your account than to wait until later.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) — Today is a 7 — Friends look to you for advice, which you love. You're full of great ideas, but don't offer them too quickly. Add a disclaimer or two, in case your first suggestion doesn't do the trick. Give yourself a little room to work in.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) — Today is a 5 — You may feel pressed, but don't be intimidated. Just because others are more confident doesn't mean they're right. You may get further on intuition than they do on logic. Speak up if they're missing something you think is important.

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