

# Backpacking

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## Lower Twin Lake (Mount Hood area)

This mountain lake near Mount Hood checks just about every box for a good backpacking option with younger kids. It's 4.2 miles round-trip with 660 feet of climb to a lake with plenty of campsites and a trail around the lakeshore. There's also an easy option for a longer trek to Upper Twin Lake.

"It's just about perfect as a backpacking destination with young kids," wrote author Bonnie Henderson. "No surprise that it tends to be crowded on summer weekends. Aim for a weekday, or go early in the season (rhododendrons in bloom) or in early fall (bring warm sleeping bags)."

From Frog Lake Trailhead, go a few steps before turning right to join the Pacific Crest Trail, which you follow for 1.4 miles before picking up the Twin Lakes Trail. The trail tops out in another 0.1 mile and begins a descent. At the next junction, at 2 miles, go right to drop down to the lake. Follow the trail around the lake to find a campsite. Near the access trail the lake shore is muddy; go to the far side of the lake to wade in on a gravelly beach.

## Pamela Lake (Mount Jefferson Wilderness)

A generation of children from the Salem area took their first backpacking trip to this beautiful lake below Mount Jefferson. That includes my 4-year-old, who took her second backpacking trip here last weekend.

The hike is a good length at 4.4 miles one-way. It's an adventure but not difficult, with a gradual climb of 800 feet to the lake. It's also a scenic hike through mossy old-growth forest along tumbling Pamela Creek to a lake with a number of designated campsites and a view of Mount Jefferson from a southern shoreline that's fun to explore in the fall when the lake level is low.

Fishing is decent on the east side of the lake, and there's more challenging hike options to Grizzly Peak or Hunt's Cove, a perfect spot for when the little legs start to grow and want more of a challenge.

From May 28 to Sept. 24, you need an overnight permit purchased on Recreation.gov to enter the trailhead. Pamela Lake Trailhead is located 16 miles west of Detroit off Highway 22 and Pamela Lake Road.

## Bobby Lake (Waldo Lake area)

The mosquitoes are rough in June and July, so target this pretty lake near Waldo Lake during late August or September, according to Weinheimer.

A mostly level hike of 5 miles round-trip brings you to one of the best lakes in the state for swimming, says Weinheimer.

"It should be classified as one of the best swimmable lakes in Oregon because of the easiness getting in and out of the pristine blue-green colored water," Weinheimer wrote on Hike Oregon.

The Bobby Lake is right alongside Forest Service Road NF-5897 (the main road to Waldo Lake), a total of 5.5 miles from the turnoff with Highway 58.

After 2 miles of forested hiking on Bobby Lake Trail, you will cross the Pacific Crest Trail and continue straight a quarter mile to the lakeshore.

"When you see the lake you will also see some large flat tent areas where you can camp," Weinheimer said. "If you



Blue Lake in the Diamond Peak Wilderness. FRANZISKA WEINHEIMER/HIKE OREGON

want to enjoy a swim in the lake and a little more secluded camping, continue another quarter mile around the lake to the right until you see another campsite and a large rock that drops right into the lake. Where the rock enters the water, it creates a sandy bottom, making it a very pleasant entry point and a wonderfully warm shallow place for small kids to play."

## Blue Canyon Basin (Sky Lakes Wilderness)

The somewhat less-visited Sky Lakes Wilderness of Southern Oregon offers many charms unseen by people from the Willamette Valley. Among this land of lakes, the best for kids is easily Blue Canyon Basin located just outside the small town of Prospect and Butte Falls, northeast of Medford.

It's a short and fairly level hike to Blue Lake — 4 miles roundtrip — the most scenic alpine lake here. If you can't find a site here, fear not, just head down the trail to Horseshoe or Pear lakes, which both have sites. And if you want a longer trek, continue to Island Lake.

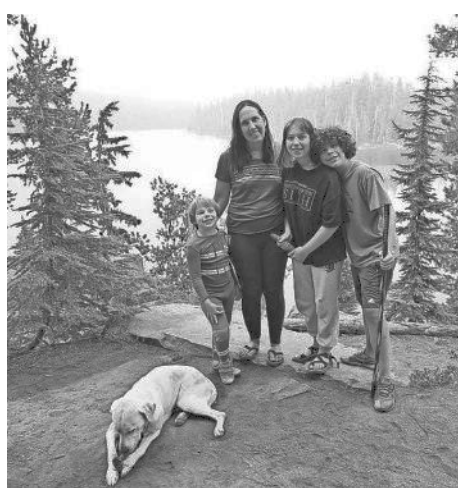
As with many other Southern Cascade areas, visit in late August or September to avoid horrendous mosquitoes.

## Rogue River Trail (southern Oregon)

A river more famous for whitewater rafting also makes for glorious backpacking along the 40-mile Rogue River Trail. But fear not, you don't have to hike that far — simply begin at the trailhead outside Grants Pass and hike as far as the little legs will go to a plethora of great campsites.

The one thing to be careful about is that the trail does have significant exposure — so keep the little ones close and on the trail. But the trail is beautiful from its beginning at Grave Creek Boat Ramp and Trailhead northwest of Grants Pass.

Short out-and-back camping options include Whiskey Creek (3.3 miles one-way), Big Slide (3.8) and Russian Creek (5.7) — although there's plenty more just down the trail.



A family of backpackers at Bobby Lake near Waldo Lake in Willamette National Forest. JEFF GREEN/SPECIAL TO THE STATESMAN JOURNAL

## 5 more options

**Threemile Lake (Oregon Dunes):** Go backpacking on the Oregon Coast by beginning at the Threemile Lake North Trail and exploring the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area. A 6-mile loop begins here that can be turned into a backpacking trip, with the best sites on the beaches of the lake itself.

"The trail provides vistas of freshwater lakes, wet areas within the forest and ocean waves," says Siuslaw National Forest's website. "The trail wanders through a spruce forest with substantial tree size, stops at the serene Threemile Lake and ends at the ocean beach."

You can combine Threemile Lake Trails and Tahkenitch Dunes Trail #1353 into an extended single loop trail of 6.5 miles.

**Erma Bell Lakes (Three Sisters):** Multiple swimmable lakes with campsites access on an easy forested trail is what you'll find at this cluster of lakes in the Three Sisters Wilderness. Access to the lakes was closed by the Middle Fork Complex this summer, but the area didn't burn and should reopen next summer.

The trip is 4.5 miles round-trip and mostly flat. It begins at Skookum Creek Campground and passes a waterfall, travels through old-growth forest and reaches three pretty mountain lakes.

There are campsites at Lower Erma Bell Lake, 1.7 miles from the trailhead, and Middle Erma Bell Lake, which has the easiest place to access the lake and my favorite sites. Just beyond, you can visit Upper Erma Bell, Williams and Otter lakes.

**Blue and Happy lakes (Diamond Peak Wilderness):** Often overlooked in the Diamond Peak Wilderness southeast of Eugene, Blue and Happy lakes are well named. The swimmable lakes and easy-ish hikes offer a lot for families, although once again, it's best in late summer or early fall to avoid mosquitoes. Coming in early July would not be as happy an experience at Happy Lake.

The hike to Blue Lake is just 2 miles round-trip, while an addition to Happy Lake is 6.8.

"These lakes on the west side of Diamond Peak frequently get overlooked, even though they are easy to get to and offer excellent camping and swimming opportunities,"

**Islet Beach (Waldo Lake):** From Islet Campground at Waldo Lake, follow the Shoreline Trail from the boat ramp to a collection of white sandy beaches bathed in sunshine and the azure water of Oregon's clearest lake. There's at least one campground near Islet Beach, the largest of the white crescent beaches on Waldo Lake's east side.

**Marion Lake (Jefferson Wilderness):** Another tried and true favorite in the Mount Jefferson Wilderness, Marion Lake has a lot of the same qualities as Pamela Lake, except that it's about one mile farther and showcases views of Three Fingered Jack instead of Jefferson. It's 6 miles round-trip, although it can feel like longer since it's such a big lake and there's a lot to explore nearby. There are plenty of campsites, and good side trips include hiking to Marion Falls or climbing Marion Mountain. This one requires an overnight permit from From May 28 to Sept. 24 as well.

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# Miller

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World

That "Clatsup" (sic) is on the website, by the way, but the link works.

## A quick aside about tides

After a quarter century, my all-time favorite go-to tide table website at the University of South Carolina Biology Department has moved.

It's the one that I use when prepping the annual mi-

nus-tides list to alert readers to coming clamming and tide-pooling opportunities.

It still has the same format along with a wealth of information for times and tides worldwide, along with moon phases and sunrise/sunset times, but at a new online address.

For those such as moi who bookmarked it, the former tbone.biol.sc.edu start page is now <http://tide.arthroinfo.org>

Whew!

## Access now park-and-stride

The annual winter gate closure on the access road to St. Louis Ponds west of Gervais is in effect from Oct. 1 through February 28.

While the road is closed and bathrooms are locked, you still are allowed walk-in entry to the 22-acre recreation site and its network of fishing ponds, accessible trails and docks, a dog-training area and large open spaces by parking on the shoulder just outside the gate on Tesch Lane, the gravel access road.

St. Louis Ponds is jointly managed by Marion County Parks and Recreation, online at [St.LouisPonds.marion.or.us](http://St.LouisPonds.marion.or.us), and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, which traditionally stocks rainbow trout intermittently during the winter months.

To check on the status of stocking at the ponds usually beginning around November, go to the Willamette Zone map on Fish and Wildlife's weekly recreation report at Fishing Report - Willamette Zone | Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife ([myodfw.com](http://myodfw.com))

To get to St. Louis Ponds, take North River Road out of Keizer about 13 miles and look for the St. Louis Road turn on the right. After crossing the railroad tracks several miles up the road, turn right on Tesch to the gate.

## And finally, let's talk turkey

It's still almost two months until Thanksgiving, but the fall wild-turkey hunting season opener in western Oregon is just a week and change away on Oct. 9.

Details about open areas and seasons are on pages 18 and 19 in the "2021-22 Oregon Game Bird Regulations" available free as license agents or as a PDF online at [21ORGB\\_VLR.pdf](http://21ORGB_VLR.pdf) ([eregulations.com](http://eregulations.com))

Whereas the spring season is a sneak-and-call exercise in trying to seduce a lovesick tom (male) into range, the fall season is more of a scout-and-stalk strategy. One advantage is that unlike the males-only spring season, the fall hunt allows you to take a bird of either sex.

It may be the most expensive holiday bird you'll ever put on the table, but probably the most satisfying in terms of reward-for-effort.

You need a resident hunting license (\$34.50) and a turkey tag (\$26.50). Those are available at license agents, or online at Oregon DFW - Login ([huntfishoregon.com](http://huntfishoregon.com))

You're allowed two tags a season, so if you get lucky, you can bag a turkey for Thanksgiving, and another for Christmas.

Or even New Year's and beyond if you still have an unfilled tag.

The season runs through Jan. 31, 2022.

Word to the wise, though.

Prohibitions regarding the discharge of firearms in city limits means those urban birds that show up on your porch or in your back yard this time of year are strictly off-limits.

**Henry's lament:** Now that I'm experienced enough and, ahem, mature enough to have a wealth of great advice to give, I'm too old for anyone younger than me to give a fig about listening to it

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