

Experiences await on OUR COAST

that are so powerful, so essential they will remind you who you are: Call it a reboot of your soul.



Matt Winters
Contributing editor
Our Coast Magazine

Big talk, but true. Stride down a trail angling through sea cliffs, stepping over native copper-colored frogs and rich red newts. Rounding a bend, there's a gnarled spruce posing as Tree-beard the Ent from Tolkien's Middle-Earth. Crab boats, decks lit brightly as the sun as crews pull up pots from the inky depths, glow on the horizon like Christmas lights in the gathering pink and purple dusk.

Come expecting to be reawakened. There will be sights that linger in your imagination as long as you live; new favorite foods; walks where you'll fall in love; people creating art, music and poetry perfectly tuned to the key of these infinite waters, beaches and forests. Black bears and bumblebees, elk amid the Scotch broom, bird-filled islands and lichen-encrusted canyons, oysters and orcas and surfboards, torrential waterfalls and utterly silent lakes, mighty rains and the mightier clarity that follows: These are a few of our favorite things.

Our reality is almost unimaginably rich. It is also profoundly personal — this is a place of discovery, of deep friendship, of adventure. Don't expect prepackaged tours or sanitized theme parks. Our luminous days and potent

nights are organic, unfiltered, undiluted.

Maybe you'll come in January, hoping to stand witness to a gargantuan storm capable of peeling the enamel off your teeth, but instead find yourself standing in shirt-sleeve sunshine, arm-in-arm with your best person on miles of beach — your own private romance, observed only by the wild whitecaps and brazenly tame pelicans.

See the world as our eagles do: Fly in a biplane or helicopter a thousand feet above the mouth of the Columbia and count the volcanoes marching down the Cascades, giants in snowy stocking caps

Buy a bag of yeasty, sensuous cardamom rolls and set out for Willapa Bay in the tender morning. Take a folding chair, a thermos of Scandinavian-strength coffee, plant yourself by a slough. Bring Bob Pyle's "Sky Time in Gray's River" or Barry Lopez's "River Notes." Await the blue herons and river otters — the herons can see your lids slide across your wondering eyes and maybe even read your thoughts. You must be as worshipful of stillness as they are. The otter will brim with curiosity. You'll see a faint trail of bubbles swaying up the slough and then a black nose and eyes so aware you'll wonder if it's a mischievous uncle reincarnated. Tell him a corny

joke. He just might laugh.

Go down to the tide pools and contemplate these nurseries of life — and their fragility and ours.

Rent bicycles for the whole family and pretend you're all about 8, rascals at the very acme of childhood. Look for puddles to splash through. Put your kickstands down along the riverfront and dip your toes in waters that tasted the paddles of the Chinook, the Clatsop, of Lewis and Clark. Explore the Columbia River Lightship and then celebrate with milkshakes, watching vast ships glide outward toward Asia.

Feed the seals, ride the merry-go-rounds, blow your diet on elephant ears and saltwater taffy — these, too, are profound experiences in the lives of families. Cherish them. Leave no Tilt-a-Whirl unriden.

We are a good and funny and thoughtful tribe, a band of sisters and brothers joined together by our love of this place and of one another. Join us.

Come expecting to be reawakened. There will be sights that linger in your imagination as long as you live.

