

WHAT'S NEW *in* OREGON

Spring 2024

Photo: Joey Hamilton

Spring in Oregon brings an abundance of beauty to the state from the first cherry blossoms to the colorful pop of tulips and daffodils. This season, we also have a vibrant crop of new hotels and spas, along with community celebrations like the Oregon AAPI Food & Wine Fest. Add in numerous accessibility initiatives and the state's remarkable Dark Sky Sanctuary designation and it holds true: Now is an incredible time to visit Oregon.

OREGON OUTBACK: LARGEST DARK SKY SANCTUARY IN THE WORLD

Heads-up to all the stargazers and adventure-seekers. In March a 2.5-million-acre area of Southeastern Oregon was certified as an **International Dark Sky Sanctuary**, making it the world's largest of the 19 **Dark Sky** Sanctuaries to date.

Located in a high-desert region coined the **Oregon Outback**, the area meets the strict criteria required for certification by DarkSky International, which includes sky quality, natural darkness and a commitment to protecting the night sky through responsible lighting practices. For ideas on how to explore the region, check out **Great Adventures in Oregon's Outback**.

PORTLAND'S NEW LUXE HOTEL SPAS AND A NEIGHBORHOOD RETREAT

Portland's first underground hot springs and spa is set to open late summer. Located in the Alberta Arts District, **Cascada** will offer five mineral pools, sauna and steam rooms, and halotherapy in a serene space. Also on the menu: guided yoga, breathwork and meditation. Book one of its three luxury suites for a blissful wellness weekend.

In the heart of downtown, rejuvenate at the city's first luxury spa at the **Ritz-Carlton, Portland**. Set on the 19th floor, the city views from the infinity-edge pool — surrounded on three sides by soaring windows — can't be beat. The 4,400-square-foot fitness facility includes a yoga studio and a full-service spa with sauna and steam rooms. On-site dining includes **Bellpine** restaurant, led by a Michelin-feted chef, and a sleek lobby bar called **Meadowrue** with biophilic design.

Feel like a local when you stay in the heart of Southeast Portland's Buckman neighborhood at the recently opened **Violet Suites PDX**, boutique lodging that features five spacious suites with contemporary decor and free parking. Bonus: It's an easy walk to many of the eastside's culinary hot spots, including **Nostrana** and **ENSO's Urban Winery**.

NEW WINERY TASTING ROOMS AND OREGON'S AAPI FOOD & WINE FEST

The husband-and-wife team behind **Cho Wines** just opened Oregon's first Korean-American winery and tasting room in the Willamette Valley. The duo also co-founded **Oregon's AAPI Food & Wine Fest** last year, an annual two-day celebration that coincides with both AAPI Heritage Month and **Oregon Wine Month**. Kyo Koo, one of the festival's featured chefs, recently opened **Warsugai** in Portland, where he serves nostalgic dishes from his childhood.

When traveling to the Southern Coast, there's a new reason to swing by the **Elkton Oregon AVA** with the opening of **Haines Creek Vineyard**. At this husband-and-wife-owned spot, you



The Ritz-Carlton, Portland

can sample estate pinot gris and baco noir in a cool yurt tasting room. It's one of a handful of wineries to visit in the small community. Other nearby highlights include **Tomaselli's Pastry Mill & Cafe** and the **Butterfly Pavilion**, a community-led project that teaches visitors about native butterflies in the **Umpqua Valley**.

For more road-trip inspiration, check out the new **Whiskey Hill Store** in the small town of Hubbard in the Willamette Valley. Set in a 1926 Craftsman bungalow, this community hub includes a charming coffee shop, a cafe and a market. There are also two quaint guest rooms in this former school-house that makes a great base for exploring all the nearby flower farms.

EXCITING ACCESSIBILITY INITIATIVES ACROSS THE STATE

The **Oregon Shakespeare Festival** continues to expand its accessibility initiatives for the 2024 season. In addition to providing audience members space and elevators for motorized scooters, wheelchair and companion seats, service animals, and OSF-provided audio augmentation and assistive hearing devices, this year there's a series of American Sign Language performances called **ASL+ Weekends**. Current dates include June 28-30, July 26-28 and September 13-15 — visitors are encouraged to reserve in advance.

Oregon's coastal cities are working with the **Oregon Coast Visitors Association** to make the beaches and other natural wonders **more accessible**. One way is with **David's Chair**, an electric all-terrain Track Chair that can be reserved free of charge. Chairs are currently available in eight coastal towns from **Manzanita** to **Gold Beach**. The second program is the seasonal installation of **Mobi-mats** — nonslip, roll-up beach-access mats that ease travel over sand. The mats are available at certain access points in **Lincoln City**, **Seaside** and **Beverly Beach State Park**, with more in the works.

WALLOWA RIVER RAFTING, BAKER CITY TURNS 150, OREGON TRAIL CENTER REOPENS

Minam Store, one of Eastern Oregon's leading outfitters, offers two new **guided river day trips** floating down Wallowa River's whitewater rapids. The new options include

a fly-fishing day trip or a half-day whitewater trip. Both culminate with a hi-rail shuttle back to the store, so it's a unique river-and-rails adventure. These trips run from Memorial Day Weekend through Labor Day Weekend.

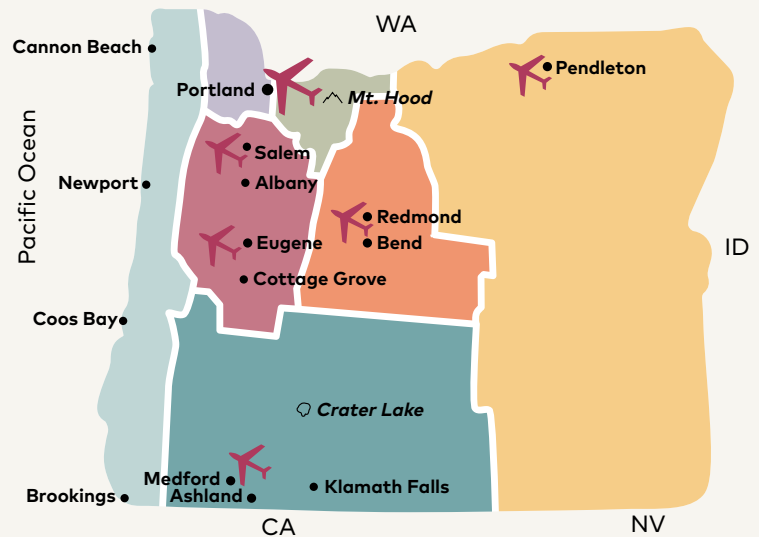
Often hailed as the "base camp" for Eastern Oregon, beloved **Baker City turns 150** this year. This vibrant downtown has more than 100 buildings on the National Register of Historic Places and is home to the stately **Geiser Grand Hotel** and the award-winning **Barley Brown's Brewpub**. Stay tuned for a series of events and celebrations to commemorate this special anniversary.

After extensive renovations, the nearby **National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center** is reopening in late May. Using life-size displays, films and multimedia presentations, the center shares the story of Oregon Trail pioneers, explorers, miners and settlers of the Frontier West.



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Mobi-mat in Seaside



CHO Wines



Minam Store Outfitters

