

NORTHWEST

WA | OR | ID | MT | AK | BC | WY TRAVEL & LIFE

Autumn Adventures

Discover **Golden Getaways**
throughout the Northwest

Scenic Spin
through
Central Oregon

Colorful Fall
Drives in NW
Wine County

Off-Season
NW Getaways
on a Budget

Display until October 31, 2025



NWTRAVELMAG.COM

OFF-SEASON ADVENTURES

BY
KATHERINE
GUSTAFSON

Budget-Friendly
Destinations Worth
Discovering



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Not every vacation needs to be a luxury spa retreat or an escape to an all-inclusive resort to be valuable and restorative. Just because you're saving for a special occasion or a down payment doesn't mean fulfilling and relaxing trips are out of reach. Traveling during off-seasons like fall or winter can deliver unique experiences without the hefty price tags.

During quieter months, popular crowded destinations transform into sleepy towns ready to be explored. Lower prices for accommodations allow your hard-earned dollars to stretch further, giving you the flexibility to extend a trip or experience more attractions. With just a couple of money-saving strategies—like travel packages or cooking meals—you can transform a carefully budgeted trip into a leisurely exploration of an exciting new place.

We've compiled a list of four towns to visit in the off-season, each offering sought-after attractions to inspire your own stress-free, wallet-friendly getaway. Ready to plan your off-season adventure? These destinations prove that memorable vacations don't require maxing out your credit card—just a little creativity and flexibility.

YACHATS, OREGON



Coastal Drama Without the Crowds

For beachcombers and cozy-vacation lovers, discover Yachats, Oregon—home to stunning and otherworldly natural beauty. Natural formations like Thor’s Well (an ocean sinkhole), Spouting Horn (a geyser-like fountain of seawater) and Devil’s Churn (a roiling tidal chasm) draw visitors year-round. The best part? All natural attractions are free to visit and enjoy. With just a car and maybe some trail snacks, you can spend the day breathing in the misty sea air.

The Heceta Head Trail climbs to the iconic Heceta Head Lighthouse, where visitors can tour the structure and, by reservation, the nearby Victorian-era lightkeeper’s residence (now Heceta Lighthouse Bed and Breakfast)—the lightkeeper’s residence Ghost Tours in October will give you goose bumps.

If communing with nature is your style, Cape Perpetua Campground and the Carl G. Washburn Memorial State Park campground offer great camping options near Yachats, with plenty of trails leading to more must-see spots along the coast.



Heceta Head Lighthouse



▲ Viewpoint at Cape Perpetua



► Drift Inn Dungeness Crab Qusadilla

Remember, budget travel isn’t all or nothing. With money saved from cooking, maybe treat yourself to a nice dinner at Luna Sea Fish House or the Drift Inn Hotel and Restaurant. It’s all about balance—saving where you can and spending where you want.

► To learn more, visit yachats.org.



▼ Gateway to Yellowstone



GARDINER, MONTANA

Yellowstone's Gateway Without the Masses

Yellowstone National Park can reach up to 900,000 visitors during peak summer months. Avoid bustling crowds and scorching heat by taking a leisurely tour of northern Yellowstone and make Gardiner, Montana, located at the park's North Entrance, your home base for a week. Instead of booking a hotel, consider RVshare, and rent your transport and accommodation all in one with many options available, including camper vans, travel trailers and motorhomes at various price points.

Yellowstone's Edge RV Park, just outside the park, is a great place to settle each night after long days of exploring the wonders of Yellowstone. Traveling during the off-season has its perks: A peek into fall colors along scenic byways like Yellowstone River, Blacktail Plateau Drive and backroads around Gardiner offers spectacular views of jewel tones adorning the hillsides.

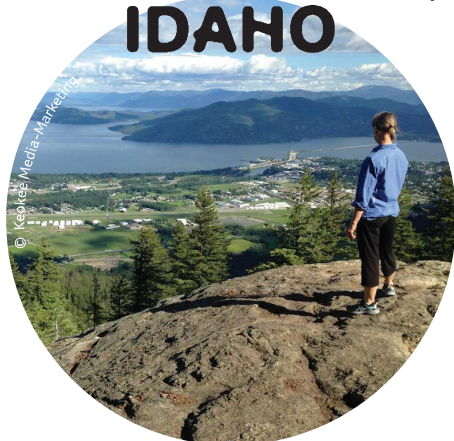
▲ Elk Walking through Yellowstone River

▲ Exploring Yellowstone by RV

Avoiding peak seasons also increases wildlife sightings, boosting your chances of spotting herds of bison or elk meandering in their natural habitat. While you take in the sights, check out the free National Park Service App or GuideAlong for comprehensive commentary and interactive maps. GuideAlong triggers location-specific information based on your phone's GPS signal, serving as your personal tour guide. A self-guided tour of northern Yellowstone promises adventure fit for the whole family without breaking the bank.

- ▶ To plan your trip, visit visitgardinermt.com.

SANDPOINT, IDAHO



Mountain Lake Magic

Situated between Lake Pend Oreille and the Selkirk Mountains, Sandpoint, Idaho is the perfect spot for an off-season vacation. Stroll along the Pend Oreille Bay Trail and bask in lakefront views of sparkling waters while trying to spot a ruffed grouse or wild turkey. The Little Pend Oreille National Wildlife Refuge is a particularly popular birding spot, offering diverse habitats and abundant wildlife.

Consider checking out Baldfoot Disc Golf for another low-cost activity that's fun for all ages. Visit Sandpoint City Beach Park on a sunny fall day; you can even sleep next to the beach at the City of Sandpoint RV Park for an affordable night of waterfront relaxation.



▶ Stroll along Pend Oreille Bay Trail

© Keopsee Media-Marketing



◀ Sandpoint City Beach

▼ Buger and Beer from Lou's Brews



◀ Enjoying Cool Fall Weather Playing Discgolf

▲ Taking a Cruise on Lake Pend Oreille

If RVs aren't your style, Sandpoint has plenty of affordable accommodations. Hotel Ruby Sandpoint (3 miles north of the beach) is a great option with free breakfast included. Saving money on meals allows for more flexibility in other areas of your trip. Use that extra cash on a History Cruise of Lake Pend

Oreille, an affordable experience offered year-round that provides fascinating insights into the area's past while you enjoy stunning lake views.

▶ Check out visitsandpoint.com for more information.

BUDGET TIPS

- Accommodations are typically cheaper during the off-season, so shop around for lodging rates and money-saving discount packages.
- Having a kitchen is an easy way to stick to a food budget.
- Larger chain grocery stores in cities and larger towns are usually more affordable than local grocers, so stock up on essentials on your way to your destination and cook for yourself.
- Some museums don't charge admission, while others offer an admission-free day.
- Outdoor activities like hiking, birding and wildlife watching are free.

▶ Walking Along Long Beach Boardwalk



LONG BEACH, WASHINGTON



Classic Boardwalk Charm

For a good old-fashioned boardwalk beach vacation, Long Beach, Washington, is a delightful discovery. Home to the world's longest beach (on a peninsula), Long Beach promises ample space to spread out and relax on the sand without fighting for elbow room.

For curious souls, Marsh's Free Museum is a must-see attraction in Long Beach. Covered from floor to ceiling with curios, antiques and the infamous "Jake the Alligator Man," this wonderfully weird museum guarantees fun for the whole family and perfectly captures the town's quirky seaside charm.

Just south of the beach town, Cape Disappointment State Park provides plenty of trails on and around the water. A short hike from southern Long Beach brings you to North Head Lighthouse, credited with saving many ships as they navigate the "Graveyard of the Pacific,"





◀ Trail to North Head Lighthouse

the treacherous mouth of the Columbia River. Cape Disappointment offers over 100 standard campsites along the water, making crashing waves the soundtrack to your trip. Off-season camping at Cape Disappointment is much easier to book because of lower demand, so you save both money and stress!

For other accommodations, the Boardwalk Cottages offers reasonable off-season rates in town. Long Beach's food scene punches above its weight too. The Lost Roo served up a lively atmosphere and good seafood at reasonable prices. Find yummy scratch-made baked goods and deli items at Dylan's Cottage Bakery.

Budget tips: Explore the peninsula with stops at cranberry bogs to watch the harvest and visit the free Cranberry Museum to learn all about farming the tart little fruit. Stop in the charming, historic

village of Oysterville on the bay side of the peninsula, once a commercial hub of oyster farming where they loaded clipper ships bound for the booming, gold-rush city of San Francisco with the delicacy. 🍷

▶ Check out evergreencoastwa.com to start planning your trip.



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◀ Outfront of Marsh's Free Museum

▶ Family Stay at the Boardwalk Cottages