

Waterfalls, Forests, & Ocean Cabin Trip

May Trip

About the Location:

South of Portland nestled in the foothills of the Cascade Mountains lies the “crown jewel” of Oregon’s state park system: the 8,800 acre Silver Falls State Park. Mountain streams tumble over the cliffs here, creating 10 spectacular major waterfalls, and many more smaller bubbling falls and riffles. Miles of trails explore the lush forest and impressive waterfalls, and even allow you to walk behind four of the falls, where you peer out at the world through a misty white curtain as the rush of water echoes off of the concave basalt wall behind you. You’ll be on the traditional lands of the Molalla people, who were known for their hunting skills of the abundant small and large game alike. Today huge old-growth Douglas Fir trees remain as part of a diverse ecosystem with dense understories of giant sword ferns and thick green moss. Keep an eye out for black-tail deer, nesting red-tailed hawk, and rough-skinned newts who advertise their potent toxicity with a bright orange belly. The trails, bridges, and buildings offer sturdy yet charming appeal, and were built during the Great Depression by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) as part of the same New Deal works program that built the infrastructure at Yellowstone and Yosemite.



You’ll also get to take a trip to the Pacific Ocean, where Oregon boasts some of the most spectacular coastline in North America. We’ll hike to rocky headland bluffs that jut out into the powerful waves of the Pacific Ocean, with miles of sandy beaches. Keep an eye out for tufted puffin, dinosaur-like cormorants, elusive seals, and enormous Roosevelt elk.

What to Expect:

On the first day we’ll drive 1.5 hrs to our base camp at Silver Falls State Park, where we have reserved cozy cabins and campsites. Each day we’ll explore the area, with one day being a day trip to the coast for a spectacular ocean-side hike. The group expects to hike 3 - 8 miles a day wearing daypacks on trails rated easy to moderate. The weather in the Willamette valley this time of year may be sunny or it may be rainy, so it’s important to be prepared for a variety of conditions.

For sleeping accommodations, we provide your choice of either single person tents, or shared cabin space (cabin sharing is available if you’re signing up with your “pod”). Cabins offer bunk beds, power, and heat. In a separate building from the cabins are men’s and women’s restrooms with flush toilets. There are also heated showers in single-user (gender neutral) rooms. We’ll set up a central outdoor camp kitchen and gathering spot, where we will work together to cook meals and hang out. On the last day we’ll depart early and head back in Portland on Wednesday morning, leaving you time to travel home that same day.

New to Hiking?

No problem! This trip is designed for beginners and we’ll teach you everything you need to know. For accessibility accommodations, email outdoors@lclark.edu.

What will we eat?

We eat well on this trip! Some examples of typical meals include: pizza, burritos, and mac & cheese, lots of different salads, and delicious snacks while out hiking during the day! This trip can accommodate most dietary restrictions and allergies, as long as you let us know about them ahead of time in the online Health & Diet Questionnaire. Potable water is available at Silver Falls State Park.

What if I don't have outdoor clothing or equipment?

No problem! Check out our packing lists (located on your trip page) for a description of the essential and optional gear for your trip. We provide all the group gear such as tents, stoves, and cookware. If you don't have your own outdoor clothing or personal equipment, we provide what you'll need for free, as long as you *request the equipment ahead of time* using the online form found on our website.

What are the policies?

Participants on College Outdoors trips are expected to follow all [Lewis & Clark College conduct policies](#). All trips are tobacco, drug, and alcohol free, including vaping, medical cannabis, and tobacco products. Nicotine patches and gum are permitted. College Outdoors has specific policies and procedures to mitigate risks on trips, which are outlined in the [policy brochure](#) and will be explained by your trip leaders. These policies include: Respecting others, food sanitation practices, requiring the use of Personal Floatation Devices (PFDs, sometimes referred to as lifejackets), requiring close-toed shoes, staying 6ft away from cliff edges, and practicing "leave no trace" in the outdoors. Policy violations may result in disciplinary action and/or removal from trips.

You are welcome to join a trip with your best friends or significant other, we just ask that you refrain from "cliques" or other social behavior that may make others feel excluded. This will help us build a fun, inclusive community for everyone on the trip, and you might even make some new best friends!

What are the risks?

The most common injuries which could occur on this trip are blisters on feet (don't forget to break in your boots), and burns from not applying enough sunscreen. *These are all preventable with a little caution and common sense.* If you plan to borrow boots from College Outdoors, you can check them out a couple weeks early and wear them on campus to make sure they fit you well. Stinging insects and other allergens can be present this time of the year, and *people with the potential for severe reactions to allergens must plan to bring their own anaphylaxis kits (EpiPen).* [Learn more about possible risks here.](#) Please note that our trips will often visit remote areas and medical help could be hours away. Our trip leaders generally carry cell phones, and in some cases, satellite phones, but service is not always available in rural or rugged, remote areas. Trip leaders are trained as Wilderness First Responders.

What about Covid-19?

We expect that we will still be managing the Covid-19 situation in May 2021, so we are planning all May Trips to follow Oregon's guidelines for Phase 1 of reopening. Visit our website for up to date plans, protocols, and expectations: https://www.lclark.edu/programs/college_outdoors/covid-19-mitigation-for-may-trips/

More questions? Just ask! We LOVE to talk about trips!