



TRAVEL
OREGON



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Plan Your Visit to the Columbia River Gorge at [ReadySetGorge.com](https://www.readysetgorge.com)

— [ReadySetGorge.com](https://www.readysetgorge.com) offers trail and travel tips to help you plan and prepare for your trip to the National Scenic Area —

Hood River, Ore., and Washougal, Wash. (March 19, 2021) — With wildflower season upon us and spring break just ahead, state, federal and nonprofit groups are encouraging people to plan before venturing out to the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. Winter trail damage and COVID-19-related modifications, along with a [closure of the Historic Columbia River Highway](#) between Bridal Veil and Ainsworth State Park, mean it is essential to prepare adequately when venturing out to the Columbia River Gorge.

Curated by local land resource managers, tourism industry groups and outdoor enthusiasts, [ReadySetGorge.com](https://www.readysetgorge.com) is a one-stop resource for planning an outdoor recreation trip to the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. It is an easy way to learn about hiking and biking trails, get up-to-date information about trail closures, and get better prepared.



“The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area is a world-renowned destination, and it’s also a place many people call home,” says Stan Hinatsu, recreation manager for the U.S. Forest Service. “Increased visitation puts a strain on the Gorge’s limited resources.”

ReadySetGorge.com, a collaboration between the [Columbia Gorge Tourism Alliance](#), [Friends of the Columbia](#)

Gorge, the [U.S. Forest Service](#), [Oregon Department of Transportation](#), and the Oregon Tourism Commission, dba [Travel Oregon](#), includes an interactive map of recreational trails, boat launches, picnic sites and more. Also included are packing lists and other helpful tips to help you prepare for your visit, such as suggestions for lesser-known but equally beautiful trails. You can also find ideas for giving back to the communities of the Gorge, which have been impacted by COVID-19.



Planning ahead can help ensure visitors get to experience their favorite activities. “Arriving early or visiting mid-week, and in some cases making a reservation through [recreation.gov](#), may increase your chances of finding a parking spot. However, it’s always important to have a backup plan in case a particular destination is closed or if a parking lot is full,” Hinatsu says.

Starting April 24, 2021, the Columbia River Gorge-Mt. Hood [Trail Ambassadors](#), a group of trained volunteers, will be available on weekends at some of the region’s most-popular trailheads, serving as a resource for hikers and visitors of all ages and abilities. They can help answer questions about trails and point people to nearby picnic areas, restaurants and other local attractions.

“The Gorge is open for business, even though it looks a little different this year,” says Emily Reed, director, Columbia Gorge Tourism Alliance. “Many businesses have created welcoming outdoor spaces and put protocols in place to be able to safely accommodate more people.” Visitors are encouraged to respect the requests of individual businesses, and adhere to the facemask and physical distancing policy in place per CDC and local health guidelines.

“This year more than ever, people are excited to be outside with friends and family, but it’s important to be respectful of the people and places you encounter,” says Kevin Gorman, executive director of Friends of the Columbia Gorge. “By taking simple steps such as packing out all our trash and staying on designated trails, we help ensure future generations can enjoy the beauty and wonder of the Scenic Area.”

Five Spring Travel Tips for the Columbia River Gorge

1. Always have a Plan B and Plan C. Check [ReadySetGorge.com/land-status](https://www.readysetgorge.com/land-status) to determine what trails are open and what hazards exist. Parking at popular sites such as Multnomah Falls and the Dog Mountain Trail System is limited and fills up quickly. Always have **two** backup destinations in mind in case your top choice is inaccessible, too crowded or the parking lot is full.

2. Go early and mid-week. Experience your favorite towns, trails and restaurants without crowds or delays. If possible, take advantage of flexible work and school schedules and travel mid-week. When visiting on the weekends, aim to arrive no later than 9 a.m. to help your chances of getting a parking spot.

3. Venture further afield. Spring wildflower season is the perfect time to choose to explore a less-popular trail. For some ideas, visit [ReadySetGorge.com/news](https://www.readysetgorge.com/news).

4. Leave your car at home. New this year, Columbia Area Transit (CAT) offers an annual Gorge Pass, which gets you to and from Portland, Multnomah Falls and Mt. Hood Meadows, and around the Gorge. The \$30 pass includes **unlimited** use of the Columbia Gorge Express (CGE), all CAT fixed-route buses, and CAT's Gorge-to-Mountain ski bus — which operates until March 31, 2021.

5. Bring your facemask and other essentials. Face coverings are required at businesses and recommended outside when social distancing is difficult. Even if you're planning a short hike, make sure you have the essentials to survive an unexpected night outdoors. Find a list of 10 essential items and how to use them at [ReadySetGorge.com/resources](https://www.readysetgorge.com/resources).



Plan your trip and get prepared at [ReadySetGorge.com](https://www.readysetgorge.com).

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Wildflowers at Tom McCall Nature Preserve. Photo by Becky Brun

Biking with face coverings. Photo by Travel Oregon / Dylan VanWeelden

To access high-resolution images, please email Becky Brun, Pitchfork Communications, at becky@pitchforkcommunications.com.

Please feel free to share this 1-minute video about ReadySetGorge.com:

<https://youtu.be/WQOIIUtslv0>