

Ultimate West Coast Explorer | Vancouver to San Francisco

Holiday Duration: 21 Nights



Overview

Ultimate West Coast Explorer

From one coastal city to another, you will follow Highway 101, the Pacific Coast Highway for much of this wonderful fly-drive holiday which takes in modern cities, rainforests, coastal scenery, 500 feet high sand dunes, giant Redwood trees and snow-capped mountains.

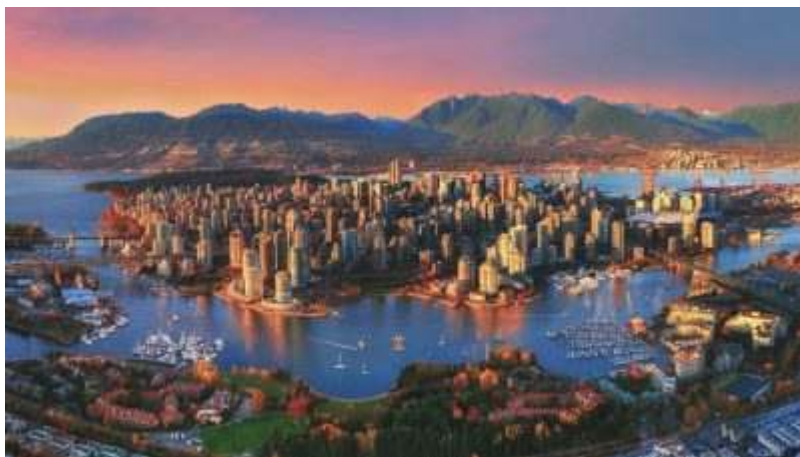
It is important that you travel from north to south so that you are on the "outside" of the road to capture the best views. Beginning in the ever-popular city of Vancouver, Canada you'll be visiting Seattle and Portland, judged by many to have the highest quality of life of any American urban area before ending your holiday in another world-class city – San Francisco. Along the way the highlights will be the Olympic National Park, the coast of Oregon, the California wine country and the mighty Redwoods.



This itinerary is flexible and can be tailor-made to suit you; if you want to add extra days in one area, extend the holiday or maybe change the direction of travel. Talk to one of our experts about how to make this holiday the perfect one for you.

Here's a day-by-day guide to your itinerary. Feel free to ask us to add other days or ideas and excursions by contacting us directly, so we can give you the best price.

Days 1-3



Vancouver

Arrive in Vancouver, British Columbia. Since you will be in the area for three days, you may want to consider purchase of a See Vancouver Visitors Passport that includes admission to 50 attractions that you can arrange into the itinerary of your choice.

You may choose to visit the renowned Vancouver Art Gallery, or the terrific collection of local historical artifacts at the Museum of Anthropology. There are several unique districts within the city that are worth exploring, check out Gastown or Yaletown to see an alternative side to the city. If shopping is more your pace, why not check out Robson Street or Granville Island Market.

Another option is the Capilano Suspension Bridge whose surrounding area features nature tours and a living forest exhibit. Grouse Mountain is also close, or you may decide to head to Whistler either for the day or for a night or two.

3 nights in Vancouver

Day 4



Vancouver to Victoria

Hop on the ferry or a float plane from Vancouver to Victoria, the capital of British Columbia. Whilst there be sure to visit the Butchart Gardens and Craigdarroch Castle Historic House Museum, an opulent mansion exhibit.

There are several museums in the city including; The Royal British Columbia Museum, First Peoples, Natural History and Modern History Galleries — filled with the sights, smells and sounds of British Columbia. Victoria is also one of the best places in the world to see killer whales and Frontier America can arrange a whale-watching trip for you.

1 night in Victoria

Days 5-6



Victoria to Seattle

Take the high-speed ferry from downtown Victoria through the Strait of Juan de Fuca and Puget Sound into the heart of Seattle.

In recent years Seattle has become the commercial hub of the Northeast, it is also not a city that lacks culture or sights. Take a tour of the city and visit Pike Place Market, Pioneer Square and the original Starbucks Coffee. Purchase a Seattle City Pass to see the very best of this fascinating city. Your pass enables you to visit the Seattle Aquarium, Pacific Science Center, EMP Museum, Museum of Flight and take an Argosy Harbor Cruise. These attractions as well as the amazing Chihuly Garden and Glass are not to be missed.

2 nights in Seattle

Day 7



Seattle to Port Angeles

This morning, you will collect your car to start the driving part of your holiday.

Take one of the many ferries across Puget Sound to Bainbridge Island from where it is an easy drive to Lake Crescent Lodge just outside Port Angeles, your first hotel on the beautiful Olympic Peninsula. On the way, we suggest you stop at Port Townsend, Port Angeles and Hurricane Ridge. The Olympic National Park is one of America's great hidden treasures, with stunning and diverse natural landscapes, the Peninsula loop is a truly amazing driving experience.

1 night in Port Angeles

Day 8**Port Angeles to Kalaloch**

Another hidden gem on the Olympic Peninsula is the Quinault Rainforest, with dense evergreens and secluded valleys this is another 'not to be missed' spectacle as is the shimmering Ruby Beach. We recommend settling for the night at the Kalaloch Lodge, following a lovely dinner in their historic Roosevelt dining room. Alternatively, you could stay at the inland Lake Quinault Lodge.

1 night in Kalaloch**Days 9-10****Kalaloch to Portland**

Leave the coast today as you join I-5 heading for your 3 1/2-hour drive to Portland, Oregon. Known as the City of Roses, the culturally rich downtown is

surrounded by small, intriguing neighbourhoods, each with a unique flavour and heritage. Accolades have been heaped on Portland with the city dubbed the country's best eating destination, America's most sustainable city, one of the "greenest" cities in the world and more. You will be spoilt for choice with the number of attractions on offer. These include The Pittock Mansion or The Portland Art Museum, deep in the heart of the Pearl District, bibliophiles will rejoice in Powell's City of Books. You will find over one million books displayed in 68,000 square feet.

2 nights in Portland

Day 11



Portland to Newport

Heading down the Pacific Coast Highway, the unspoiled and sparsely settled Oregon coast alternately brings relaxing stretches of peaceful beaches and beautiful natural landscapes. You may wish to take a slight detour to visit Cape Meares State Park. You can settle for the night in Newport, a popular historic travel destination rich with rich maritime history. Make sure to visit Oregon Coast Aquarium and the unique collection of shops at the Aquarium Village. An alternative stay would be in Cannon Beach with its spectacular views of Haystack Rock home to hundreds of tufted puffins.

1 night in Newport or Cannon Beach

Days 12-13



Newport to Gold Beach

Your day today is going to be one of unending scenic beauty as you travel the Pacific Coast Highway National Scenic Byway on the Oregon Coast. Just south of Newport, Cape Perpetua Scenic Area delivers 360-degree clear panoramic views that go on for miles. The Sea Lion Caves let you go deep into the earth in this unique habitat. As you travel south, the solitude of the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area's wind-sculpted shifting sand dunes as high as 500 feet above sea level goes on for 40 miles. Be sure to stop at the many scenic viewpoints all down the coast.

The next day, your highlight will be a jet boat tour up the Rogue River. You will deliver the mail to Agness 32 miles upriver just as Rogue River pioneers have done since 1895, when road access did not exist. This is great for the travelers who seek a scenic experience and aren't interested in whitewater jet available on the longer tours. The Pacific Coastal Estuary, abundant wildlife, pristine wilderness and mail boat history make this boat tour memorable for all ages.

TIP: Take a Sand Dune Buggy tour in Florence to really get a feel for the size of the dunes.

2 nights in Gold Beach

Day 14**Gold Beach to Eureka**

Today, continue your journey south into California towards Eureka via Redwood National Park, a great place to stop for lunch amidst the imposing sequoia trees. Then continue to Eureka, a state historic landmark, a town that stands proudly over the Humboldt Bay and is the largest coastal city between San Francisco and Portland. With streets lined with Victorian houses, packed with colonial charms, and a still-working seaport, Eureka makes for a pleasant overnight. You might like to board the Madaket for a guided cruise around the harbour or visit the Morris Graves Museum of Art houses in the former Carnegie Free Library.

1 night in Eureka**Days 15-16**

Eureka to Mendocino

Today we recommend you take the long way around but you will have to make a choice of routes. Your first stop should be Ferndale: the entire village is a California Historic Landmark. Explore the old-fashioned mercantile establishments, as stores were called back then. Browse the antique shops, art galleries and specialty shops; hear the ringing of the blacksmith's hammer and watch fresh candy being dipped by hand. Then make your way to Mendocino, which you may recognize as the location of hit TV-show 'Murder She Wrote'. The coastal scenery around here is breathtaking, a string of state parks preserves redwood groves, pristine rivers, wildlife-rich wetlands, and bucolic coastal headlands. Wander through a pygmy forest of miniaturized pines and cypress trees at Van Damme State Park, kayak or paddle an outrigger canoe on Big River at Mendocino Headlands State Park, lounge on the sandy beach cove at Jug Handle State Natural Reserve, or photograph the historic concrete-arch bridge at Russian Gulch State Park.

We suggest you board the Skunk Train deep into the redwood forest from Fort Bragg just to the north of Mendocino. Built as a logging railroad, the Skunk line was created to bring massive redwood logs out to Mendocino sawmills. Residents along the tracks dubbed the trains, the skunk, saying they could smell the gasoline engines before they could see them. You can also take the "Railbike" using 2-seater pedal and electric bikes that skim atop the rails. Whichever you choose, it will be a memorable couple of hours. While in Fort Bragg, you might also like to wander through the Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens.

2 nights in Mendocino

Days 17-18



Mendocino to Napa Valley

You will bid goodbye to Highway 101 today as you take the 128 south through the heart of the Napa Valley, there are literally hundreds of vineyards that you can visit, but if you want to leave the driving to others, tour California wine country on the Wine Train which runs up and down the Napa Valley. Discover primarily Cabernets as opposed to the Pinots of the Mendocino area, larger vineyards as rather than the more family-oriented operations further north, you can hear about winemaking practices at the wineries and enjoy a gourmet lunch washed down with a glass or two of wine. Away from the wineries, you might like to explore the 3.4 million year old Petrified Forest and the backroads of Calistoga.

2 nights in Napa Valley

Days 19-21



Napa Valley to San Francisco

Meander towards San Francisco through Sonoma County and Sausalito where you should stop before driving across the Golden Gate Bridge into the world-famous San Francisco bringing your epic journey to a close. But the holiday is not over as you still have three nights to spend in the city.

If you have not been to San Francisco before, you might like to walk the Barbary Coast Trail, a 3.8 mile route following bronze medallions set in the sidewalks that connect 20 of the city's most important locations (you can rent an audio tour guide to accompany you). Visit Fisherman's Wharf, where you can have incredible views of San Francisco Bay, the Golden Gate Bridge and the cityscape along with your seafood. Nearby is Ghirardelli Square a transformed 19th century chocolate factory which is now fabulous marketplace filled with restaurants and boutiques.



Of course, no visit to San Francisco is complete without a stop in Chinatown or a cable car ride to the top of Nob Hill where incredible views await. Hop on the ferry to Alcatraz Island, the famous which housed such notables as Al Capone and Machine Gun Kelly. Be sure to ask us to prebook tickets as they get sold out weeks in advance.

3 nights in San Francisco

If you are interested in a holiday to America please contact us on 020 8776 8709 to discuss your plans with a USA expert, or send an email to america@frontier-travel.co.uk with your requirements and we will put together your ideal itinerary and quotation. Let us take you there.