

## Explore Olympic

Waves boom along wilderness beaches and mix with snow-fed rivers. Ancient trees shelter wildlife. Rugged peaks embrace glaciers and subalpine meadows. Coast, forest, and mountain ecosystems combine to create this spectacular wilderness park. The Olympic Peninsula is home to eight American Indian tribes that developed complex hunter-gatherer societies and continue to keep their traditions alive. European explorers who ventured here in the late 1700s heralded the way for homesteaders. The Olympics were set aside as a national monument in 1909 and further protected as Olympic National Park in 1938. Today the park is internationally recognized as a Biosphere Reserve and World Heritage Site, testimony to its rich resources. Explore Olympic—a gift to the future.

**Coast** Tides control the rhythm of life along this biologically diverse coastline. Twice-daily intertidal animals face pounding surf and drying winds. Coastal rivers serve as highways for migrating fish, and downed trees along riverbanks protect young salmon journeying from mountains to sea. When the adults return and swim upstream to spawn, their flesh carries a special form of nitrogen gathered during their years at sea. Most salmon die after spawning, but their death brings life. Bears, eagles, insects, and other animals feed on salmon carcasses, then deposit nutrients in rivers and forests. Marine nitrogen nourishes forest soils—a gift from the salmon.

**Forests** Olympic National Park protects the largest old-growth forest in the Pacific Northwest. Its unique character begins with ancient trees that took root 200 to 1,000 years ago. In these forests multi-layered canopies, standing snags, and fallen trunks provide habitat for myriad animals. Differences in moisture (from 40 to 240 inches annually), and changes in elevation (from sea-level to 7,980 feet) create a mosaic of forests in the park. Temperate rain forests grow along the coast and in ocean-facing valleys. Lowland, montane, and subalpine forests cloak other park areas. Olympic supports complex forest communities—a gift from the past.

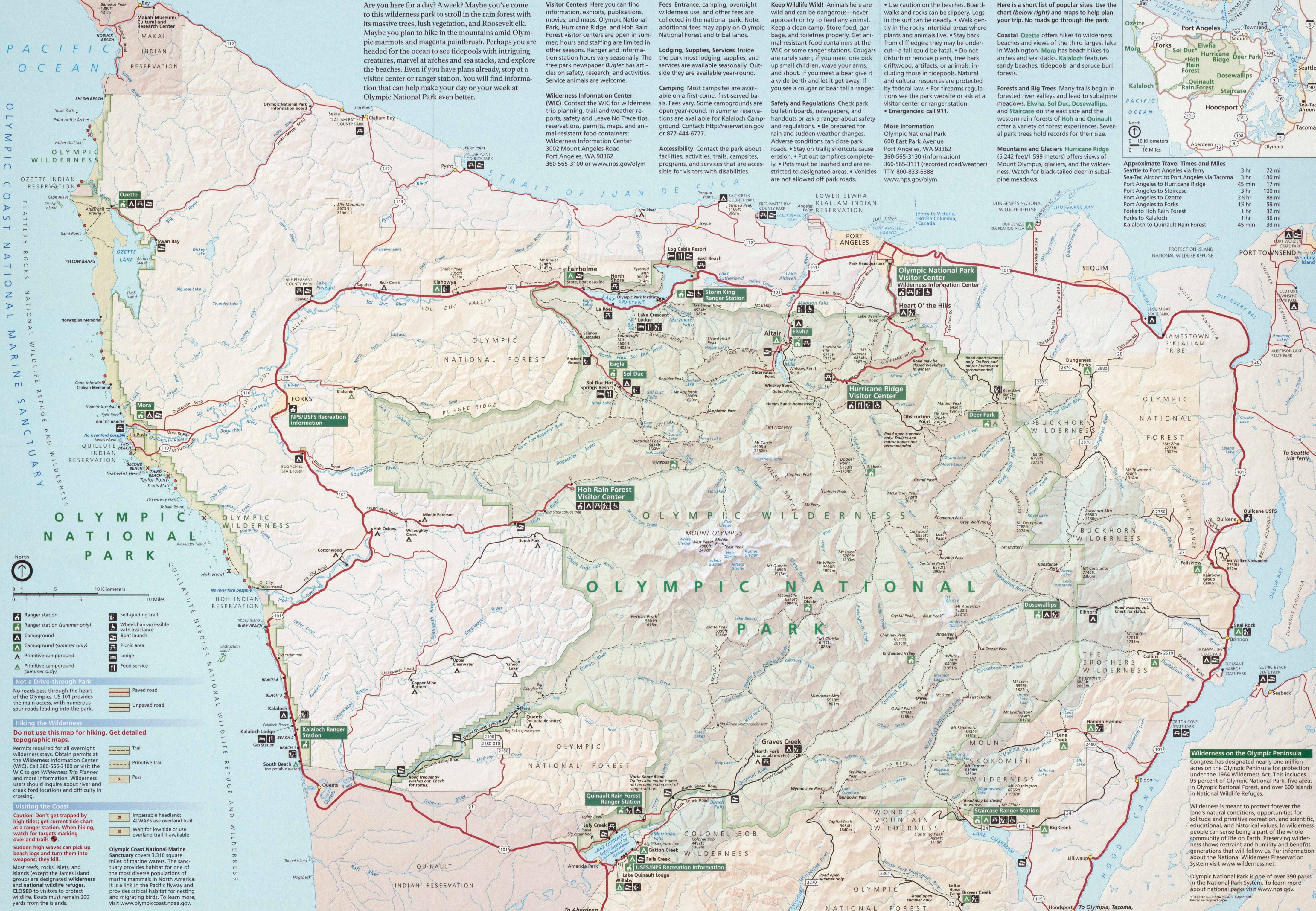
**Mountains** A world of landscapes unfolds here: glaciers chisel U-shaped valleys, and brilliantly colored wildflowers blanket subalpine meadows. Geologists still debate the origins of the Olympics. Some 50 million years ago lava gushed from underwater rifts in the edge of the continent, hardening into mile-thick layers of basalt. Later an immense submerged delta of sandstone and shale formed farther out in the ocean. These layered rocks slowly rode back to the continent and jammed beneath the basalts, forcing the Olympics to rise from the sea 10 to 20 million years ago.

Ice-age glaciers helped carve the Strait of Juan de Fuca and Puget Sound, separating the Olympics from nearby lands. Years of isolation nurtured the rich biodiversity of the Peninsula, where over 20 plants and animals are found nowhere else on Earth. The rugged Olympic Mountains—a gift from the sea.

ILLUSTRATION: NPS / JOHN DAWSON

Planning Your Visit to Olympic National Park

Getting Around the Park



Are you here for a day? A week? Maybe you've come to this wilderness park to stroll in the rain forest with its massive trees, lush vegetation, and Roosevelt elk. Maybe you plan to hike in the mountains amid Olympic marmots and magenta paintbrush. Perhaps you are headed for the ocean to see tidepools with intriguing creatures, marvel at arches and sea stacks, and explore the beaches. Even if you have plans already, stop at a visitor center or ranger station. You will find information that can help make your day or your week at Olympic National Park even better.

**Visitor Centers** Here you can find information, exhibits, publications, movies, and maps. Olympic National Park, Hurricane Ridge, and Hoh Rain Forest visitor centers are open in summer; hours and staffing are limited in other seasons. Ranger and information station hours vary seasonally. The free park newspaper *Bugler* has articles on safety, research, and activities. Service animals are welcome.

**Wilderness Information Center (WIC)** Contact the WIC for wilderness trip planning, trail and weather reports, safety and Leave No Trace tips, reservations, permits, maps, and animal-resistant food containers: Wilderness Information Center 3002 Mount Angeles Road Port Angeles, WA 98362 360-565-3100 or [www.nps.gov/olym](http://www.nps.gov/olym)

**Fees** Entrance, camping, overnight wilderness use, and other fees are collected in the national park. Note: additional fees may apply on Olympic National Forest and tribal lands.

**Lodging, Supplies, Services** Inside the park most lodging, supplies, and services are available seasonally. Outside they are available year-round.

**Camping** Most campsites are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Fees vary. Some campgrounds are open year-round. In summer reservations are available for Kalaloch Campground. Contact: <http://reservation.gov> or 877-444-6777.

**Accessibility** Contact the park about facilities, activities, trails, campsites, programs, and services that are accessible for visitors with disabilities.

**Keep Wildlife Wild!** Animals here are wild and can be dangerous—never approach or try to feed any animal. Keep a clean camp. Store food, garbage, and toiletries properly. Get animal-resistant food containers at the VIC or some ranger stations. Cougars are rarely seen; if you meet one pick up small children, wave your arms, and shout. If you meet a bear give it a wide berth and let it get away. If you see a cougar or bear tell a ranger.

**Safety and Regulations** Check park bulletin boards, newspapers, and handouts or ask a ranger about safety and regulations. • Be prepared for rain and sudden weather changes. Adverse conditions can close park roads. • Stay on trails; shortcuts cause erosion. • Put out campfires completely. • Pets must be leashed and are restricted to designated areas. • Vehicles are not allowed off park roads.

**More Information** Olympic National Park 600 East Park Avenue Port Angeles, WA 98362 360-565-3130 (information) 360-565-3131 (recorded road/weather) TTY 800-833-6388 [www.nps.gov/olym](http://www.nps.gov/olym)

Here is a short list of popular sites. Use the chart (below right) and maps to help plan your trip. No roads go through the park.

**Coastal Ozette** offers hikes to wilderness beaches and views of the third largest lake in Washington. **Mora** has beach hikes to arches and sea stacks. **Kalaloch** features sandy beaches, tidepools, and spruce burl forests.

**Forests and Big Trees** Many trails begin in forested river valleys and lead to subalpine meadows. **Elwha, Sol Duc, Dosewallips, and Staircase** on the east side and the western rain forests of **Hoh** and **Quinalt** offer a variety of forest experiences. Several park trees hold records for their size.

**Mountains and Glaciers** **Hurricane Ridge** (5,242 feet/1,599 meters) offers views of Mount Olympus, glaciers, and the wilderness. Watch for black-tailed deer in subalpine meadows.

**Approximate Travel Times and Miles**

|                                            |        |        |
|--------------------------------------------|--------|--------|
| Seattle to Port Angeles via ferry          | 3 hr   | 72 mi  |
| Sea-Tac Airport to Port Angeles via Tacoma | 3 hr   | 130 mi |
| Port Angeles to Hurricane Ridge            | 45 min | 17 mi  |
| Port Angeles to Staircase                  | 3 hr   | 100 mi |
| Port Angeles to Ozette                     | 2½ hr  | 88 mi  |
| Port Angeles to Forks                      | 1½ hr  | 59 mi  |
| Forks to Hoh Rain Forest                   | 1 hr   | 32 mi  |
| Forks to Kalaloch                          | 1 hr   | 36 mi  |
| Kalaloch to Quinalt Rain Forest            | 45 min | 33 mi  |

**Wilderness on the Olympic Peninsula**  
Congress has designated nearly one million acres on the Olympic Peninsula for protection under the 1964 Wilderness Act. This includes 95 percent of Olympic National Park, five areas in Olympic National Forest, and over 600 islands in National Wildlife Refuges.

Wilderness is meant to protect forever the land's natural conditions, opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation, and scientific, educational, and historical values. In wilderness people can sense being a part of the whole community of life on Earth. Preserving wilderness shows restraint and humility and benefits generations that will follow us. For information about the National Wilderness Preservation System visit [www.wilderness.net](http://www.wilderness.net).

Olympic National Park is one of over 390 parks in the National Park System. To learn more about national parks visit [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov).

North

0 1 5 10 Kilometers  
0 1 5 10 Miles

**Not a Drive-through Park**  
No roads pass through the heart of the Olympics. US 101 provides the main access, with numerous spur roads leading into the park.

**Hiking the Wilderness**  
Do not use this map for hiking. Get detailed topographic maps.

Permits required for all overnight wilderness stays. Obtain permits at the Wilderness Information Center (WIC). Call 360-565-3100 or visit the WIC to get *Wilderness Trip Planner* and more information. Wilderness users should inquire about river and creek ford locations and difficulty in crossing.

**Visiting the Coast**  
Caution: Don't get trapped by high tides; get current tide chart at a ranger station. When hiking, watch for targets marking overland trails.

Sudden high waves can pick up beach logs and turn them into weapons; they kill. Most reefs, rocks, islets, and islands (except the James Island group) are designated wilderness and national wildlife refuges. CLOSED to visitors to protect wildlife. Boats must remain 200 yards from the islands.

Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary covers 3,310 square miles of marine waters. The sanctuary provides habitat for one of the most diverse populations of marine mammals in North America. It is a link in the Pacific Flyway and provides critical habitat for nesting and migrating birds. To learn more, visit [www.olympiccoast.noaa.gov](http://www.olympiccoast.noaa.gov).

**Legend:**

- Ranger station
- Ranger station (summer only)
- Campground
- Campground (summer only)
- Primitive campground
- Primitive campground (summer only)
- Self-guiding trail
- Wheelchair-accessible with assistance
- Boat launch
- Picnic area
- Lodge
- Food service
- Paved road
- Unpaved road
- Trail
- Primitive trail
- Pass
- Impassable headland; ALWAYS use overland trail
- Wait for low tide or use overland trail if available