

From the dense forests of Washington to the beaches of Southern California, the Pacific Coast is a vacation destination that appeals to varied tastes. Within a matter of hours by motorcoach, groups can find themselves in a drastically different climate and geographical setting. Between coffeehouse and hiking trails, you'll encounter everyone from celebrities to cowboys.

Portland, Oregon

MANY SHADES OF GREEN

Besides its host of natural wonders, including lush parks, scenic trails, spectacular gardens, as well as the beautiful Willamette River that runs through it, the "City of Roses" also boasts a vibrant music and cultural scene, a multitude of brewpubs and coffeehouses, and cutting-edge, postmodern architecture. Add in its award-winning mass transit system and status as one of the most walkable and bikeable cities in the nation, groups will not only find plenty of one-of-a-kind attractions and activities to take advantage of in Portland, but will also have no trouble getting around from place to place.

DAY 1: After catching a caffeine buzz at one of the city's many coffeehouses, head to the International Rose Test Garden and its magnificent collection of 7,000 rose bushes, then head to the nearby Oregon Zoo, where its exciting new "Predators of the Serengeti" exhibit awaits. Find your way to Pioneer

Courthouse Square, known as "Portland's living room," where you're likely to catch a live concert or public festival. If your group is hungry for a memorable fine dining experience, the Nob Hill neighborhood or Pearl District is sure to satisfy, with a wide selection of premier restaurants serving up the finest in Pacific Northwest cuisine.

PORTLAND IS RANKED THE MOST ENVIRONMENTALLY-FRIENDLY U.S. DESTINATION BY SUSTAINELANE.COM.

DAY 2: Start the day exploring one of the city's daily farmers' markets, then venture to Powell's Books, the largest independently owned bookstore in the world. Take a quick jaunt to the eclectic Voodoo Donuts, then cycle off your sugar buzz by renting bicycles and riding the Waterfront bike loop. Cool off with a cold one at one of the city's many microbreweries and learn about the ins and outs of beer making with a Brewery Tour at BridgePort or Widmer Brothers Brewing Companies.

DAY 3: For an exhilarating day excursion, head to Multnomah Falls, located in the heart of the scenic Columbia River Gorge. Take a scenic, tree-lined hiking trail to one of the most beautiful waterfalls in the area, followed by a satisfying meal at Multnomah Falls Lodge.



The International Rose Test Garden in Portland, Ore., is blooming with 7,000 roses.

"Getting cultured" in Portland is easy with the city's plentiful museums, as well as on-going ballet, opera, theater and symphonic performances. Don't miss the Portland Art Museum and its extensive collection of Native American art.

Santa Clara, California

A CITY WITH A MISSION

Located in the heart of Silicon Valley and known as the birthplace of high-tech innovation, the city of Santa Clara is a forward-thinking destination also rich in California history. Founded in 1777, the city is not only

home to the historic Mission Santa Clara de Asis and the state's oldest institution of higher learning, Santa Clara University, but also the largest number of high-tech companies in the country. But whether learning about its colorful past or its vision of the future, this southernmost Bay Area city offers a diverse range of fun, educational and unique attractions for summer visitors.

DAY 1: Learn about the technology that made Silicon Valley famous by visiting the city's tech-themed museums, including the free Intel Museum, the Tech

Museum of Innovation, the NASA Explorations Center and the Computer History Museum. Venture to the Great Mall of the Bay Area with the largest collection of manufacturer and off-price outlets in Northern California or journey to the more upscale Santana Row, which features luxury retail, unique specialty shops and a host of restaurants and entertainment options.

NBA ALL-STAR STEVE NASH ATTENDED SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY 1992-95.

DAY 2: If you're in town on a Saturday, start the day at the popular Downtown Santa Clara Farmers' Market where you can shop for locally grown food items while enjoying live music. Thrill seekers and groups with children won't want to miss the region's largest amusement park, California's Great America. This 100-acre theme park features the most coasters, thrill rides as well as kids' and water rides of any theme park in Northern California, and is open daily through Aug. 25. At day's

end, venture to the nearby Mercado Santa Clara, offering a 20-screen movie theater and a wide range of dining options.

DAY 3: Delve into the city's heritage by visiting the historic Mission Santa Clara de Asis on the campus of Santa Clara University, the eighth of 21 California missions. Tour its adobe structures and walk through the magnificent Mission Gardens, which houses flowering plants and olive trees dating back to the 1800s. Nearby is the famed Winchester Mystery House, a bizarre but beautiful 160-room Victorian mansion that is a not-to-miss experience. Get goose bumps checking out its strange halls, secret passageways and stairways leading nowhere.

Vail, Colorado
ROCKY MOUNTAIN HIGH

Although Vail is most commonly thought of as a premier skiing destination, the spectacular alpine valley has

plenty to offer year-round visitors. With its clear mountain air and dry, pleasant temperatures in the summer months, the Vail Valley and Beaver Creek area offers a wide array of outdoor summer activities, including hiking, horseback riding, fly-fishing, rafting, mountain biking, golf, as well as Jeep and Hummer tours. In addition, the pedestrian streets of Vail Village and Lionshead feature a myriad of choices when it comes to shopping, dining, entertainment and nightlife, so visitors will have no difficulty finding plenty to do in this beautiful mountain town.

DAY 1: Try your hand at fly-fishing by taking a free casting clinic along the shores of Vail's Gore Creek, then venture back to dry land and explore the various specialty stores and art galleries in Vail Village. Golfers in your group will be in heaven at the Vail Golf Club with its 18-hole course backed by incredible scenery. After the sun sets, enjoy a relaxing dinner at one of the town's numerous restaurants, then venture to Bridge Street for a taste of the town's vibrant nightlife.

DAY 2: Your group won't want to miss exploring the scenic Betty Ford Alpine Gardens and the neighboring Vail Nature Center, which offers fun and educational programs, as well as scenic walking tours. Adventurous spirits



Vail Village in Colorado hums with the sounds of shoppers and live music.

can schedule half- and full-day rafting experiences through Timberline Tours or Lakota Guides, as well as Jeep tours to the Continental Divide. If it's a Tuesday night, enjoy a free Bud Light Hot Summer Nights outdoor concert or one of many live performances held at the Gerald R. Ford Amphitheatre, depending on the event schedule.

DAY 3: Bask in more scenic beauty as you ride the chairlift up Vail Mountain with spectacular views of summer wildflowers and the Gore Range. Your group can rent bikes and work up a sweat on one of Vail Mountain's biking trails or take a leisurely ride along the Vail bike path. If it's a Sunday, take a stroll through the Vail Farmers' Market and Art Show in Vail Village, and enjoy a little leisurely shopping while live music fills the air.

For more destination information, visit GroupawayTravel.com.



California's Mission Santa Clara de Asis was the first mission built in honor of a woman.