

CAPE TO CAPE ON FOOT

Netarts Area Trails and Beach Walks Cape Meares to Cape Lookout



Netarts Area Trails and Beach Walks

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Happy Camp Beaches*
6. Netarts Spit
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8. Cape Trail
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* Part of the Oregon Coast Trail – a 360-mile walking route along Oregon's coastline.

Legend

- Trailhead/Parking
- Restrooms
- Viewpoint
- Beach Access
- Camping
- Creek
- Road
- Trail



Netarts Area Trails and Beach Walks

1. Cape Meares

The parking lot at Cape Meares State Scenic View Point is a great place to begin a walking tour of the area. Two short, wheelchair-accessible trails lead west to the Lighthouse (open to the public April -October) or east to the Octopus Tree. The Lighthouse trail offers splendid views of offshore rocks, and seasonally, seabird nesting sites, sea lions, and gray whales.

A longer, less-traveled trail begins at the Octopus Tree and heads south, connecting to Three Capes Highway. Another begins at a small, gravel parking lot just outside the park entrance gate. At the trailhead, go left a short distance to view the Oregon State Heritage Tree, or go right (north) for a longer trail that winds down the Cape to ocean beaches and the village of Cape Meares.



*Note before you walk:
Short Beach and Tunnel Beach are low tide beach walks. Please read the accompanying information on beach walk safety and tide pool etiquette.*

2. Short Beach

Though visible from the Cape Meares parking lot viewpoint, this beach is easy to miss from the Three Capes Highway. South of Cape Meares, the highway emerges from forest to offer a glimpse of the ocean. Look for a fence on the east side of the highway, and an Oregon Islands National Wildlife Refuge sign at the trailhead on the west side. There is limited parking along the highway shoulder.

This is a short, but steep, trail. Local volunteers have built a twisting staircase to the beach, repairing and replanting the hillside in the process. Take your time and enjoy the sights and sounds as you descend. Watch your step – avoid ankle-turning opportunities!

3. Tunnel Beach

At the north end of Oceanside (park at Oceanside State Wayside), Maxwell Point juts out into the surf. During very low tides, it is possible to walk around Maxwell Point to the lovely secluded beach to the north, however, there is a convenient tunnel through Maxwell Point, allowing easy access to this beach.

Walking north on Tunnel Beach takes you through interesting rock formations, and to another outcropping. If you can get around it (check the tide!), there is often good rock collecting beyond. However, the hidden charm of Tunnel Beach is a natural sea cave, known locally as Lost Boy Cave. Completely submerged at high tide, it is a charming room at low tide, decorated with seastars on the ceiling. Some years, it has been filled with sand, offering a floor for exploration; other years its floor is a tide pool. Be very careful to avoid being stranded here!

The walks below begin in Oceanside and Netarts, picturesque little resort villages with lodging, camping, and dining available.

4. Oceanside Beaches

On the north end of Oceanside, Oceanside State Wayside provides a convenient day-use beach area, with parking and public restrooms. From here, you can walk the beach down to Happy Camp in Netarts. For this beach, Maxwell Point provides a windbreak from the northwesterly summer winds. Turn right from the parking lot for a warm basking spot on a windy day.

5. Netarts/Happy Camp Beaches

Netarts has two good beach access points, with restrooms at both. Just north of the village of Netarts, take Happy Camp Road west down the hill. At the end of the road you will find a gravel parking lot near the mouth of Netarts Bay. This area has strong tidal currents and is unsafe for swimming. From the parking lot, you can walk south along the bay, or a northerly walk will greet you with great views of Three Arch Rocks.

At the south end of Netarts, turn west off the main highway at Netarts Bay Drive. You will immediately see Netarts Bay and the County Boat Ramp parking lot. From the lot, you can walk north about 100 yards to the bay beach.

*The walk below is accessible from the campground and day-use areas in **Cape Lookout State Park**. The nature trails, located near the campground, are very easy walks, and feature interpretive signs.*

6. Netarts Spit

From Cape Lookout to the end of Netarts Spit lies seven unbroken miles of sandy beach – a beach walker's paradise. Access points are located in the campground and day-use areas of Cape Lookout State Park. A day-use parking fee is required. The campground here is excellent.

Access across the dunes from the campground is limited to marked trails due to ongoing erosion and a dune restoration project underway here.

Two short nature trails are also accessible from the day-use and campground areas. The North Trail begins at the day-use parking lot and heads south, connecting with the trailhead on Cape Lookout.

*The walks below are located inside **Cape Lookout State Park**, on Whiskey Creek Road, about three miles south of the main park entrance, at the crest of Cape Lookout. There is a paved parking lot there.*

7. North Trail

8. Cape Trail

9. South Trail

These hikes are longer and more strenuous than the other trail walks in this guide, so be prepared: Wear good shoes, carry water, and plan for unpredictable changes in weather. Cape Lookout can be very breezy, or become shrouded in fog quickly. The nearest restroom facilities are in the Cape Lookout State Park day-use area to the north.

North Trail crosses the cape and follows the coastline north 2.3 miles to the park day-use area. There is also a trail access point on Whiskey Creek Road, about one mile north of the trailhead.

South trail meanders 1.8 miles along the south side of the cape and connects to the beach below, and a large rocky tidepool area.

The Cape Trail, 2.4 miles long, passes through many different types of coastal forest habitat to spectacular viewpoints at the west end of Cape Lookout, including views of the ocean and Cape Kiwanda to the south. This is a great viewing area for marine birds and mammals, including gray whales.