



DENNIS FRATES

THE FRUIT LOOP'S TOP 10 DESTINATIONS

Stop, sample, sip and pick
in the shadow of Oregon's
magnificent Mount Hood.

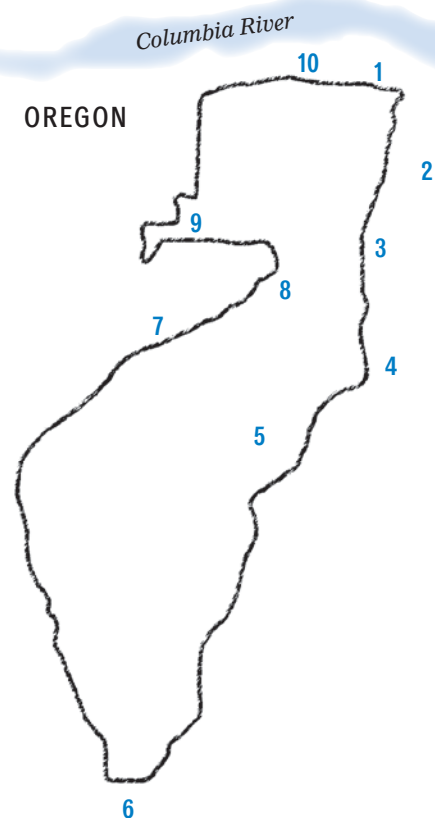
By Leslie Forsberg

AS A CHILD, EVERY FALL I filled tin pails with heritage King apples from our farm's orchard. They were then tucked inside pie crusts, filling the house with a transcendent cinnamon-apple scent. To this day I'm smitten by country roads with fruit stands and U-pick orchards.

My favorite drive, the 35-mile Hood River Fruit Loop nestled in the heart of Oregon's pear and apple country, starts in the town of Hood River—an hour east of Portland—and follows Oregon Route 35 to Parkdale, circling back on Oregon Route 281. The loop boasts orchards, farm stands, delicious treats and pretty wineries in abundance, plus magnificent scenic views of Mount Hood. Serpentine roads wind past nearly 30 spots that invite you to sample the area's best. Come along for the ride to 10 of the valley's top sites—and sights.

WASHINGTON

OREGON



AT A GLANCE

1. Mount Hood Railroad
2. Panorama Point
3. Gorge White House
4. Packer Orchards
5. Hood River Lavender Farms
6. Kiyokawa Family Orchards
7. The Old Trunk
8. Apple Valley Country Store
9. Hood River U-Pick Organic
10. Waterfront Park

AGEFOTOSTOCK/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO



1

Mount Hood Railroad

Get your cameras ready for a scenic round-trip excursion that starts at a historic depot in Hood River, then rolls along the Columbia River before switchbacking into the Hood River Valley. The view is sublime and the pace relaxing as the train chugs past orchards, farms and forests en route to Parkdale, at the foot of Mount Hood. mthoodrr.com

2

Panorama Point

For a jaw-dropping glimpse of what's to come, don't miss this scenic hilltop county park at the edge of Hood River. From the park's lofty vantage point, you'll have an Instagram-worthy view of verdant farms, orchards and foothills spread out in front of the majestic, glacier-clad Mount Hood, which brushes the sky at 11,239 feet.



ANNA GORIN/GETTY IMAGES; GORGE WHITE HOUSE: VISIT HOOD RIVER; PEARS: PACKER ORCHARDS

3

Gorge White House

Forgive the pun, but the setting of the Gorge White House, a 1908 Dutch colonial revival, is breathtakingly gorgeous. This stately home is surrounded by lush lawns, dahlia gardens and orchards, with two spectacular snowcapped mountains in the background: Mount Adams to the north and Mount Hood to the south. A farm-fresh food cart offers burgers made with local beef, and you can sample White-House-made wines and hard ciders in the old farm shop. Extend your visit with U-pick fruits and flowers. thegorgewhitehouse.com



Packer Orchards

This fourth-generation family farm and bakery creates sweet pear concentrate to go into delicious baked goods, allowing some of the goodies to be made without sugar. The bakery offers a vast array of cookies and giant, fruit-filled cinnamon rolls, but if you're lucky enough to visit during peach season, look for luscious peach empanadas. The house-made jams, including spiced vanilla pear and apple butter, are ideal for gift-giving. packerorchards.com

4



5

Hood River Lavender Farms

Perfumed air adds to the extraordinary visual appeal of the lavender fields in the foreground and Mount Adams and Mount Hood as the backdrop. After capturing your fill of photos, check out the selection of health and beauty products, including handmade old-fashioned lavender soap, lavender shea balm and more. The lavender fields are open for U-pick June through September. hoodriverlavender.com

Kiyokawa Family Orchards

The closest farm to Mount Hood on the loop (with a simply astounding view), Kiyokawa Family Orchards grows seemingly infinite amounts of apples, pears, Asian pears, cherries and stone fruit, used at top restaurants in Portland and beyond. This is the largest U-pick operation in the valley. Its other claim to fame is an eye-catching, red-fleshed apple called the Mountain Rose unique to this farm. Do you wonder what this and other unusual apple varieties taste like? You're in luck: The orchard offers samples so you can taste before you buy. Stop by the farm store for the perfect fall flavor pairing: fresh apple cider and apple cider donuts. kiyokawafamilyorchards.com

6



7

The Old Trunk

Hunt for fun and quirky vintage treasures, from repurposed art to records, at the Old Trunk, a shop inside an early 1900s general store. Pull up a stool at an old-time soda fountain that serves sodas crafted with house-made fruit syrups as well as shakes and soft serve ice cream perfect for mounding alongside fresh apple and pumpkin pies. oldtrunkhr.com



APPLE PICKING: GREG VAUGHN/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; LAVENDER: HOOD RIVER LAVENDER FARMS



8

Apple Valley Country Store

You'll feel as though you've stepped back in time at this country store with creaky wood floors and ladies in gingham aprons selling fresh-fruit pies as well as the house specialty: tasty huckleberry and Marionberry milk shakes. In the fall, seek out the crispy pear dumplings with house-made salted caramel sauce. Handmade soaps, jams and jellies lining the wood shelves make perfect souvenirs. applevalleystore.com



9

Hood River U-Pick Organic

Trees loaded with plump, ripe Bing, Rainier and pie cherries draw gourmands to this family-friendly organic farm in the summertime, with Honeycrisp and Gala apples and Bartlett pears making an appearance in late summer and fall. Free-roaming farm animals—goats, pigs, chickens and more—add entertainment value to picking adventures. hoodriverupick.com

10

Waterfront Park

Cliffs that rise to 4,000 feet above the Columbia River funnel winds through the canyon and into the sails of windsurfers zipping along the shores of Hood River, the self-proclaimed Windsurfing Capital of the World. Visit Waterfront Park in Hood River for an up-close view of daredevil river-runners; you can rent paddleboards and jet skis here if you're feeling adventurous. For front-row seats plus delicious local fare, take in the action from the deck at Riverside, a restaurant on the water. In the evening, indulge in refined cuisine at the stylish Celilo Restaurant and Bar at the center of town. visithoodriver.com

COUNTRY STORE: BRIAN JANNSEWALAMY STOCK PHOTO; WINDSURFER: DANITA DELIMONT/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO