



# AUTO TOUR

AAA Washington Travel Services

## *Olympic Peninsula*

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The Olympic Peninsula is one of North America's scenic gems. Saltwater shores form its western, northern and eastern flanks. A dense forest covers much of the peninsula, occasionally cleared for farming as in the Chehalis Valley in the south and the Dungeness Valley in the northeast. Over a century of logging has left its mark on the landscape in the extensive areas of clear cuts, second-growth forest and vast reforestation tracts, found principally around the margins of the peninsula.

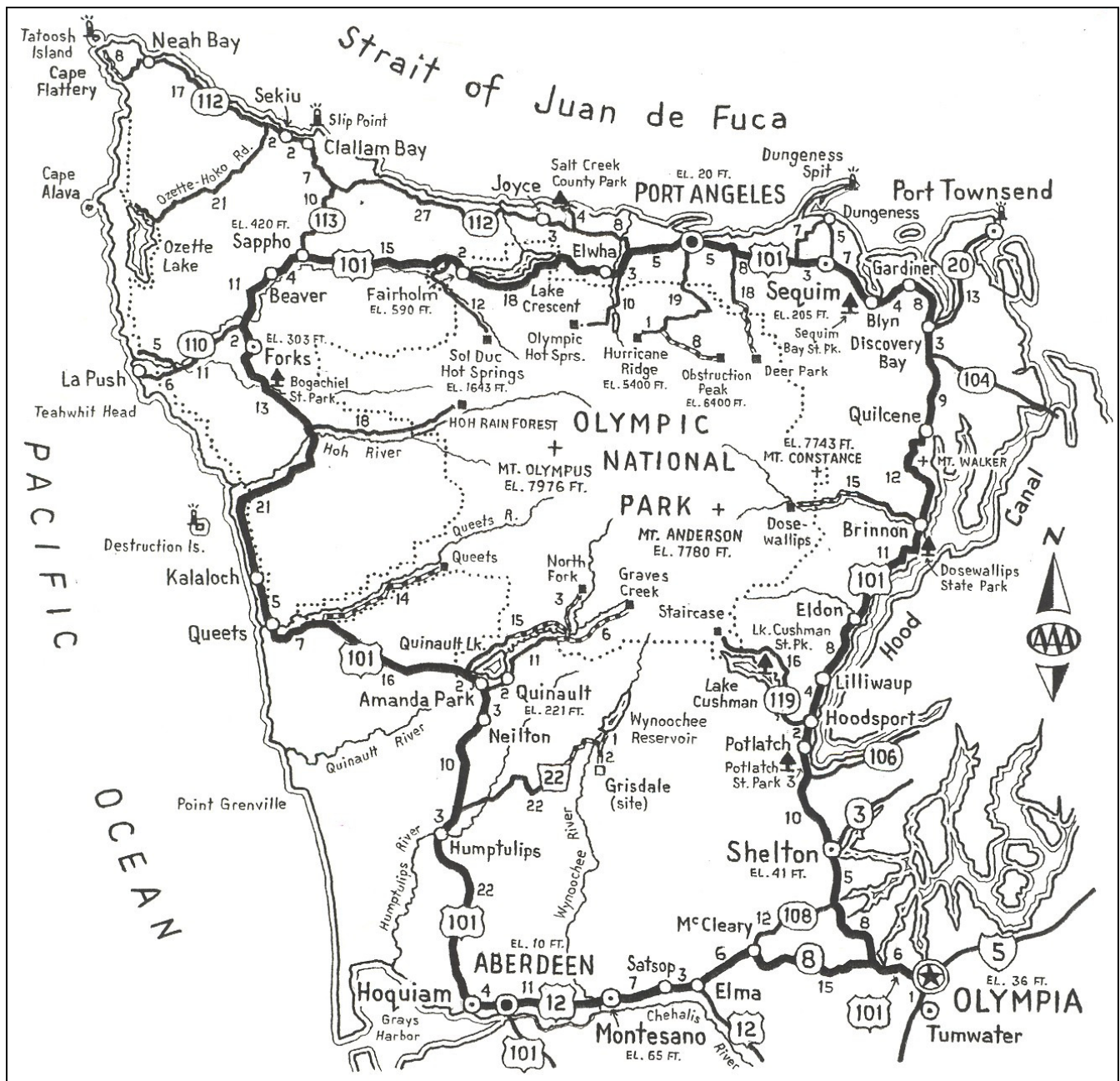


*(Left) Trails lead from Hurricane Ridge through conifer groves & alpine meadows. Views stretch across deep valleys to the rugged wilderness of the park's interior; (Right) Iconic moss-covered maples at Hoh Rain Forest in Olympic National Park*

The rugged Olympic Mountains, a realm of deep valleys and glaciated crags, dominate the central part of the peninsula. Their western slopes face the prevailing westerly winds and the resulting copious rainfall (up to 200 inches per year) nurtures the western hemisphere's largest temperate rain forest. On the opposite side of the peninsula, rainfall in the Dungeness Valley is so light (averaging less than 20 inches) that farmers must irrigate their crops.

President Theodore Roosevelt proclaimed the core of the peninsula a national monument in 1909. In 1938 Congress enlarged its area and established **OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK**. Today the park covers 1,431 square miles, including a 60-mile strip along the Pacific. In recognition of its exceptional natural features and diversity, the United Nations designated the park a World Heritage Site in 1982.

Our self-guiding auto tour encircles the Olympic Peninsula in a clockwise direction. Most of the route, part of the *Pacific Coast Scenic Byway*, is an excellent two-lane highway – with some multi-lane sections from Olympia to Shelton and Hoquiam, and east of Port Angeles. The route is driveable year round, although the best weather occurs in the summer and early fall. Rain, heavy at times especially in the west, constitutes the primary driving hazard. Although precipitation occurs in all months, it is heaviest from November through April. Snow is relatively infrequent at lower elevations, but remains on the ground from winter into early spring at elevations above about 3,000 feet.



## 1. Olympia to Grays Harbor (via US-101, WA-8 and US-12)

Our Auto Tour starts at **OLYMPIA** (pop. 46,780, alt. 130 ft.), Washington's seat of government since the territory was created in 1853. The city enjoys a dramatic setting on the wooded shores of Budd Inlet, the southernmost reach of Puget Sound. To the east rises the snowy dome of Mt. Rainier. The craggy profile of the Olympic Mountains marks the northwestern horizon. For more on Washington's capital city see the club's companion publication *DESTINATION FOCUS: OLYMPIA*.

From I-5 exit 104 at the south end of Olympia head west on US-101. This is the beginning of the Pacific Coast Highway, which circles the peninsula then heads south along the west coast, ending in Los Angeles. Just west of the city we cross Mud Bay, an inlet of Puget Sound. Low tide exposes a fringe of mud flats, which give it its name. Oyster harvesting along these inlets dates back to the Native American period. Six miles west, US-101 swings north, to Shelton and Hood Canal – this will be our return itinerary. Continue west on SR-8, which climbs over the Black Hills, cloaked in second-growth forest.

Twenty miles west of Olympia, and a mile north of the highway, stands **McCLEARY** (pop. 1,655, alt. 257 ft.), a lumber town with rows of company-built frame houses and the historic **McCleary Hotel** built in 1912. The town is named for Henry McCleary, who established a sawmill in 1898. The door factory here was at one time the largest in the world. The **McCleary Museum**, 314 Second Street, has displays on logging and early town history (open weekend afternoons, June-August).

Highway 8 continues west, entering the Chehalis River Valley, a lush landscape of dairy farms. At **ELMA** (pop. 3,140, alt. 50 ft.) we join US-12. Named for Elma Austin, a pioneer settler, the town first prospered as a logging center; today it trades with valley farmers. Elma hosts the Grays Harbor County Fair each August. The huge concrete structures on the south side of the valley are the cooling towers of the never-completed Satsop nuclear power plant.

**MONTESANO** (pop. 4,010, alt. 66 ft.), seat of Grays Harbor County, is the birthplace of commercial forestry's tree farm system – the **Clemons Tree Farm**, established in 1941, extends over vast areas north and south of town. Settlement here started in the early 1850s. Pleasant residential neighborhoods extend north and west of the downtown area, guarded on the north by the impressive 1912 **Grays Harbor County Courthouse** – step inside for a look at the historical murals. *The Vidette*, a local weekly, has been publishing continuously since 1883, making it Washington's oldest newspaper still in business. In May rhododendrons add brilliant splashes of color throughout the town. A former church at 703 W. Pioneer Ave. now houses the **Chehalis Valley Historical Museum**. **LAKE SYLVIA STATE PARK** (*Discover pass required, see below*), a mile north of town on the site of the area's first sawmill, features a 2-mile forest management interpretive trail.

Note: As of July 2011, a **Washington Discover Pass** is required for admission to day-use areas of state parks, as well as areas administered by the state Department of Fish & Wildlife and the Department of Natural Resources.

The fee is \$10/car for a one-day pass, or \$30 for an annual pass. Purchase the pass from any State Parks regional office or at the park itself when staff is available. Click [www.discoverpass.wa.gov](http://www.discoverpass.wa.gov) for details on other methods of purchase, including over 600 locations where hunting and fishing licenses are sold (transaction fees apply). A \$99 fine can be levied against drivers of street-legal vehicles caught without a Pass.

Overnight campers in state parks need not purchase the Discover Pass for the nights they're camping.



Multi-lane US-12 continues west through lush pasturelands to the Aberdeen-Hoquiam area, the largest population center on the Washington coast. Historically these were major lumber processing and shipping ports, although the timber-based economy is in decline – the sprawling waterfront mills and sorting and storage yards are considerably less active these days.

**ABERDEEN** (pop. 16,870, alt. 25 ft.) spreads across the flats on the north side of the bay at the point where the Wishkah and Chehalis rivers empty into Grays Harbor. Although the first settlers arrived in the late 1860s, the town wasn't platted until 1883. First called Wishkah, from *woos-kla*, a Native American phrase loosely meaning 'stinking water,' it was changed in 1884 to honor the Aberdeen Packing Company in Ilwaco, which was in turn named for Aberdeen, Scotland.

From the start, the region's great timber wealth was the city's economic mainstay. In the early 1900s, Aberdeen became one of the West's great timber ports and milling centers. Following a disastrous fire in 1903, the central business district was rebuilt with substantial brick structures, many of which remain. By 1910, dozens of lumber and shingle mills lined the waterfront and Aberdeen's population rose to 17,000. The bars and bawdy houses of the waterfront district gave Aberdeen a reputation as a wide-open town. The Great Depression of the 1930s slowed the city's growth, but employment surged during World War II – Aberdeen's population peaked at 24,000 in the 1940s. Changing economies have left the city with a careworn visage, especially in the boarded up storefronts and abandoned lots in its central core. For a peek into the halcyon days, stop by the **Aberdeen Museum of History**, downtown at 111 E. Third Street. Its displays document the lifestyles in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Wooded hills frame Aberdeen's northern flank where pleasant neighborhoods such as Bel Aire command sweeping views of the city and harbor. Here the city's entrepreneurs and elite built substantial homes designed by eastern architects in the Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, Mission Revival and Prairie-Style. Giant rhododendrons add brilliant splashes of color at their peak in May. At **Samuel Benn Park**, at E. 9th and 'I' streets, paths lead through landscaped, rolling hills to a formal rose garden. This was part of pioneer Samuel Benn's estate, acquired by the city in 1929.

**Grays Harbor Historical Seaport**, located at 719 Hagara Street in the Junction City district off US-12 just east of Aberdeen, celebrates the area's maritime legacy. When she's in port here you can tour the state's official tall ship, *Lady Washington*, a full-scale replica of Captain Robert Gray's 18th-century sailing brig. She starred as the *HMS Interceptor* in the first *Pirates of the Caribbean* movie.

Aberdeen holds a special place in the hearts of Generation X music fans as the birthplace of **Kurt Cobain**, lead singer and songwriter for 1990s grunge juggernaut Nirvana. Cobain spent his childhood here and met band co-founder bassist Krist Novoselic in the mid-80s. The two joined forces with drummer Dave Grohl to launch Seattle sound into the mainstream in the early 90s, but Nirvana's meteoric rise cratered after Cobain's death in 1994. In Aberdeen, Cobain is memorialized on the town's welcome sign, which invites visitors to *Come As You Are*.



**HOQUIAM** (pop. 8,650, alt. 20 ft.) borders Aberdeen on the west, straddling its namesake river. Hoquiam is an American Indian word meaning *hungry for wood*, appropriate in view of its role as a forest products processor and exporter. The first European settlers arrived in the 1850s, grazing cattle in lush pastures beside the tide flats. By the late 1860s the settlement boasted a post office; the first school opened in 1873. California lumberman Asa Simpson opened a sawmill at the mouth of the Hoquiam River in 1882. After the arrival of railroads in the late 1880s and early 1890s, the lumber boom brought prosperity to the new city. Originally four miles apart, Hoquiam and Aberdeen have grown together – the boundary runs down the middle of Myrtle Street.

Downtown Hoquiam's compact business district hugs the west bank of the Hoquiam River. As in Aberdeen, a large number of shops and buildings are boarded up. Built in 1927-28, the **Seventh Street Theatre** (313 7th Street) was the first in the state to show talking motion pictures – today it hosts concerts and plays. At the foot of 8th and 9th streets a walkway leads along the Hoquiam River. A **Port Viewing Tower**, at the foot of 28th Street (south of US-101 in the eastern part of Hoquiam), overlooks the industrial harbor. Here you can watch logs being sorted and loaded onto cargo vessels. Most of the cargo is bound for the Far East. On the opposite bank along Riverside Avenue is the **Grays Harbor Farmer's Market & Craft Fair**, open year-round.

Several historic homes, former abodes of the city's timber barons, are worth a stop. **Hoquiam's Castle**, 515 Chenault Ave., is a 20-room turreted Victorian gem, built in 1897 as the home of Robert Lytle. It is now a private residence. The hilly neighborhood north of here features other substantial residences set amid lush landscaping.

**Polson Museum**, on the east bank of the Hoquiam River at 1611 Riverside Ave. (US-101), was the home of lumber heir F. Arnold Polson. The 26-room Craftsman-style mansion has historical displays of the Grays Harbor area. Note the floorboards made of Western hemlock – they run knot-free, from wall to wall, indicative of the high quality timber of the original virgin forest. The surrounding park contains a rose garden and many exotic trees.

West of Hoquiam, the **Grays Harbor National Wildlife Refuge** protects an expanse of tide flats and marsh grass, prime habitat for migratory birds that feed here in great flocks during spring and fall. Peak birdwatching occurs in April and early May, when hundreds of thousands of birds congregate to feed. Prime viewing is from two hours before to two hours after high tide. To reach the refuge follow signs to the airport from SR-109, 1½ miles west of Hoquiam. Drive to the end of the road, walk along the gated hangar access road to the 1,800-foot boardwalk, which leads out into the refuge. The site is open daylight hours daily.

## 2. Hoquiam to Sappho (via US-101 & Olympic NP)

From Hoquiam US-101 strikes north, crossing a wooded lowland coursed by dozens of streams. Fish hatcheries near **HUMPTULIPS** (pop. 255, alt. 131 ft.) and **NEILTON** (pop. 315, alt. 483 ft.), tiny communities almost lost in the woods, are open to the public. North of Humptulips (its name means 'chilly region') a Forest Service Road runs 24 miles east to the site of **GRISDALE** (alt. 805 ft.), once a bustling lumber camp. The foothills north of here receive some of the highest rainfall in the 48 states. Wynoochee Lake, just north of Grisdale, records upwards of 150 inches per annum.

Highway 101 reaches **Lake Quinault** (alt. 186 ft.) at the southwest corner of **OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK**. There are several resorts and campgrounds along its wooded shore. At **Willaby Creek Campground** on the south shore, a nature trail leads through a grove of ancient trees skirting a fern-covered rock gorge. A gravel road continues 17 miles along the Quinault River to Graves Creek in the southern part of the park.

At Lake Quinault US-101 strikes west, traversing the northern part of the **Quinault Indian Reservation**. After crossing the Queets River the highway reaches the ocean at the village of **QUEETS** (pop. 175, alt. 35 ft.), then runs north along the beach for a dozen miles. This is the only point in Washington where Highway 101 fronts the Pacific. This coastal strip, stretching north to beyond Cape Alava was added to Olympic National Park in 1953. At the village of **KALALOCH** (pop. 75, alt. 42 ft.) there is a lodge set on a bluff overlooking the ocean. A roadside pullout offers views of **Destruction Island** several miles off shore. Spanish explorers named it *Isla de los Dolores* (Island of Sorrows), recalling the death of several of the crew. Sea lions and seals crowd its rocky shore. **Ruby Beach**, a mile north, takes its name from tiny crystals of red garnet, which give the sands a pinkish hue. It's an easy stroll along the wide beach to the mouth of the Hoh River.

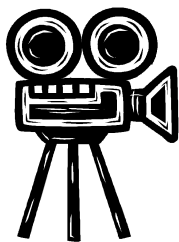
The highway turns inland following the Hoh River.

A road branches east 18 miles to the **HOH RAIN FOREST VISITOR CENTER** in Olympic National Park. In this and other west-facing valleys of the Olympics, moist Pacific air systems dump upwards of 200 inches of rain a year. The mild, damp climate nourishes lush vegetation. The tallest trees, some exceeding 200 feet, are Sitka spruce and Western hemlock. Beneath this canopy grow Big leaf maple. The forest floor is a tangle of vine maple and fern – moss carpets the ground, coats tree trunks and drapes from branches. The scattered clearings are created by the browsing habits of the indigenous Roosevelt elk.

Highway 101 continues north. **BOGACHIEL STATE PARK** (*Discover pass required, see p. 3*) offers hiking trails, fishing and camping beside its namesake stream.

Just up the road is the bustling logging town of **FORKS** (pop. 3,500, alt. 303 ft.). Lumbering has been an important area industry since the late 1800s. During World War I the area's vast stands of Sitka spruce, a major component in aircraft of the time, fostered a lumber boom. Freshwater fishing attracts anglers from throughout the continent. Area rivers support spectacular runs of steelhead during summer and winter. Professional guides offer their services. River rafting is also popular on the nearby Soleduck, Bogachiel, Calawah and Hoh rivers.

The **Forks Timber Museum**, on Highway 101 at the south end of town, showcases the development of logging and the town's pioneer settlement – open daily mid-April to mid-October (admission). At the north end of town **Tillicum Park** has Old No. 10, a Shay locomotive that hauled log trains on the former Rayonier railroad, which linked Forks with Port Angeles.



Forks' dormant economy was given a second life by complete accident in 2008 with the release of the first of five films in Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight* saga. The chronicles of Bella Swan, vampire Edward Cullen and werewolf Jacob Black drive up to 8,000 tourists a month. They visit sites referred to in the books like Forks High School, the Police Department and the Cullen House (now a bed and breakfast). Though reluctant at first, the town has embraced the *Twilight* phenomenon with themed shops and menu items. (Curious fact: The movies were filmed in Oregon and British Columbia, not in Forks!).

Two miles north of Forks SR-110 branches 14 miles west to **LA PUSH** (est. pop. 360, alt. 37 ft.), a Quileute Indian settlement overlooking the Pacific at the mouth of the Quillayute River. Its name is a Native American interpretation of the French *la bouche*, meaning 'mouth.' The town's relatively contemporary appearance belies its antiquity. Quileute peoples have been living here since the 12th century. The reservation was established in 1889. The **Quileute Tribal Center** has some displays of tribal artifacts.

The weatherworn town has a commercial and sport fishing fleet and is the access point to the spectacular wilderness beaches stretching north to Cape Alava and south to the mouth of the Hoh. The rugged coastline of isolated beaches and rocky headlands, part of Olympic National Park, is accessible by hiking trails. In the spring and fall you might see gray whales offshore on their annual migration between Baja California and the Bering Sea. The beaches are popular with surfers and kayakers and in winter storm watchers gather to view the crash of giant waves.

Return to US-101.

Highway 101 follows the Soleduck Valley to the former logging camp town of **BEAVER** (pop. 450, alt. 390 ft.) Located at the southern end of 500-acre Lake Pleasant, the town was originally called Tyee. **Lake Pleasant County Park**, on the west shore, has a beach, picnic area and boat launch. Four miles up Highway 101 is the hamlet of **SAPPHO** (pop. 100, alt. 480 ft.), named for the ancient poetess by a Greek resident. Until the 1960s, this was the site of the logging railway's switching yard. The **Soleduck Hatchery Interpretive Center**, 1½ miles east, depicts the life cycle of the salmon (open daily).

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### Side Trip – Ozette & Neah Bay

At Sappho, SR-113 branches north 10 miles to Highway 112. The *Juan de Fuca National Scenic Byway* (SR-112) runs along the Strait of Juan de Fuca to the twin fishing towns of **CLALLAM BAY** (pop. 365, alt. 31 ft.) and **SEKIU** (pop. 328, alt. 80 ft.). Modest fishing resorts line the shore of the bay and the area hosts several annual fishing derbies. Charter fishing trips are available. Scuba diving and wildlife watching are also popular. The state correctional facility south of Clallam Bay, is an important employer. Giant freighters and cruise ships ply the strait, the main shipping channel connecting Puget Sound with the open Pacific. The dark, forested bulk of Vancouver Island lies 15 miles across the strait.

At the mouth of the Hoko River, 2 miles west of Sekiu, is an important archaeological site (not open to public). Here 3,000 years ago ancestors of today's Makah Indians built a fishing encampment.

The Ozette-Hoko Road leads 21 miles southwest to **LAKE OZETTE**. Covering over 12 square miles, Ozette is the state's third largest natural lake, after Chelan and Lake Washington. The lake is part of Olympic National Park's coastal strip. The road ends at the resort settlement of **OZETTE** (pop. 50, alt. 35 ft.), nestled in the woods on its northernmost inlet. The Ranger Station has information on trails and recreation. Canoeing and kayaking are popular, exploring the lake's inlets and islands – its shores have several boat-in campsites.



[Photo: National Park Service]

From Ozette, hike west on the **Cape Alava Trail**. This 3.3 mile wooden boardwalk trail can be slippery when wet (a typical condition in this rainy climate). The Ozette River empties into the Pacific just north of Cape Alava (*pictured at left*).

Cape Alava is the westernmost mainland point in the 48 states. Its name recalls José Manuel de Álava, the Spanish naval commandant at Acapulco who served as a commissioner at the 1790 Nootka Convention on Vancouver Island. Spanish Captain Manuel Quimper, exploring these shores in August, 1790, first called the headland *Punta de Hijosa*, giving the adjacent indentation the name *Boca de Álava*. Later Spanish charts identified the headland as *Punta de Álava*. The British chart maker Captain Henry Kellet, assigned the name Point Alava, and over the years the present nomenclature prevailed.

The cape holds important archaeological sites. The Makah inhabited an isolated village here until the 1920s when they were forced to relocate to Neah Bay, where their children could attend school. Erosion over the winter of 1969-70 exposed remains of a much older settlement. Washington State University archaeologists excavated the Ozette Village site over a decade, uncovering artifacts in layers dating back over 2000 years. Researchers described it as “Pompeii in mud.” Some of the finds are on display at the Makah Cultural and Research Center in Neah Bay. A plaque and replica of a cedar longhouse mark the village site.

Return to Highway 112, which continues west, winding along the wooded shore to **NEAH BAY** (pop. 865, alt. 50 ft.), a logging and fishing town on the **MAKAH INDIAN RESERVATION**. The Spanish established a small fort here in 1797, and although it was abandoned after five months it enjoys the historical distinction of being the first European settlement in present-day Washington. Spanish place names along the coast are the only remaining legacy of the Iberian presence. The reservation was established by treaty in 1855. The **Makah Cultural and Research Center**, at the eastern entrance to town, preserves the cultural heritage of the tribe, including artifacts unearthed at various ancient sites in the area. The museum is open daily Memorial Day weekend into mid-September; Wednesday to Sunday during the rest of the year (admission).

From the end of the road west of town a trail leads to **Cape Flattery**, the northwestern extremity of the contiguous U.S. Off shore waves crash against Tatoosh Island. Its lighthouse, commissioned in 1857, guides shipping into the entrance of the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

**Shi Shi Beach** (pronounced *shy-shy*) is one of Washington’s most magnificent coastal panoramas. This two-mile long strand extends between Portage Head on the north and Point of Arches, with its phalanx of sea stacks, on the south. A rocky shelf extends out to sea, protecting the beach from the biggest waves. Its near-shore section hosts countless tide pools, teeming with marine life. The rocks off Portage Head are the site of a shipwreck.

Shi Shi is only accessible by trail. To reach the trailhead, drive south from Neah Bay along the ocean to the end of the road just beyond the Sooes River – here you’ll find a parking area. The trail extends three miles to the north end of Shi Shi Beach. The trail lies within the boundary of the Makah Reservation. At its end you enter the coastal strip of Olympic National Park. The beach is also accessible from the south, via the 6.4-mile Ozette River-Shi Shi Travelway, a difficult hike, recommended for the hearty.

Note: The Makah charge a \$10 per vehicle fee to use trails and other recreation facilities on reservation land. You can pay the fee at the Cultural and Research Center or any tribal business. The fee is valid for 12 months.

Retrace the route back to Sappho. Although you can also follow Juan de Fuca National Scenic Byway (SR-112) east, we recommend the drive east from Sappho passing Lake Crescent.

### 3. Sappho to Discovery Bay (via US-101)

US-101 heads eastward across the top of the Olympic Peninsula from Sappho. It runs through the upper Soleduck Valley, framed by high, forested ridges. A side road branches a dozen miles southeast to **SOL DUC HOT SPRINGS** (alt. 1,643 ft.), one of Washington's few hot springs resorts. Michael Earles, an early lumber entrepreneur, built a four-story, 165-room hotel here in 1912. It offered every spa service and a wide range of recreational activities including golf and tennis. The hotel burned in 1916. Mineral water bubbles from the earth at 128°F. It's piped into a swimming pool and three mineral water pools ranging in temperature from 99° to 105°. Today's resort offers cabins, a restaurant and gift shop. The national park's **Sol Duc Campground** lies beside its namesake river.

Return to Highway 101.

Shortly after re-entering the national park, the highway skirts the southern shore of **LAKE CRESCENT**, a sparkling jewel set amidst high, forested mountains. The lake is ten miles long and up to 624 feet deep. The community of **LAKE CRESCENT** (pop. 30, alt. 585 ft.) offers lodging and dining amid woods overlooking the lake. The nearby **Storm King Visitor Center** provides information on fishing, hiking and other area activities. The center is named for Mount Storm King, which towers 4,000 feet above the eastern end of the lake. A trail leads one mile to 90-foot **Marymere Falls**. The 4-mile **Spruce Railroad Trail** follows the former railroad right-of-way hugging the north shore (one trailhead is at the north end of the lake, off East Beach Road).

East of the lake US-101 exits the park, skirting Lake Sutherland fringed by vacation homes. Just east of the hamlet of **ELWHA** (alt. 430 ft.) the highway crosses the Elwha River, site of the country's largest dam removal project to date. Starting in September, 2011, two dams – one north of the highway and one south – were dismantled and their reservoirs drained in a landmark effort to restore the river's once rich salmon run. The Elwha River has resumed its free flow through the valley. A roadside pullout overlooks the former Lake Aldwell.

East of the Elwha River Bridge a paved branch road leads south into the park along the Elwha River Valley, passing several campgrounds and trailheads. At the end of the road a trail leads to primitive **Olympic Hot Springs**.

A side road skirts the edge of former Lake Mills, the reservoir that was drained to prepare for the removal of the Glines Canyon Dam. A trail leads down to the southern end of the former reservoir.

Highway 101 follows the former east shore of Lake Aldwell.

Take SR-112 west 8 miles to Salt Creek Road. This leads 4 miles to **Salt Creek County Park**, located on beautiful Crescent Bay on the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The site was used during World War II as a harbor defense military base called Fort Hayden. The park is noted its Tongue Point Marine Life Sanctuary.

Return to US-101.

Highway 101 leads to **PORT ANGELES** (pop. 19,080, alt. sea level to 450 ft.), metropolis of the north peninsula and an important fishing port, paper milling center and port of entry. The harbor was named *El Puerto de Nuestra Señora de los Ángeles* (Port of Our Lady of the Angels) by Spanish Captain Francisco Eliza in 1791. Drive out to the tip of Ediz Hook, a 4½-mile long sandbar protecting the harbor, for a grand panorama. Look back across the harbor; the city rises in terraces into the foothills against a backdrop of verdant mountains and snowcapped peaks.



*Downtown Port Angeles overlooks the city's harbor*

The pleasant downtown faces the waterfront. Attractions here include a harbor-side park with an observation tower and marine laboratory, and the **Clallam County Museum** (known locally as Museum at the Carnegie) located in the 1919 former Carnegie Library at 205 S. Lincoln Street.

The **Olympic Coast Discovery Center**, in The Landing at 115 E. Railroad, has displays and information on the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary, a 3300 sq. mi. ecosystem of wilderness shore and adjoining ocean waters.

From downtown docks, the Black Ball Line runs passenger and auto ferry services across the Strait to Victoria, British Columbia.

The **Olympic Discovery Trail** follows the former Milwaukee Railroad line along the city's waterfront. A paved trail continues five paved miles from the former Rayonier mill at the eastern end of town, pass downtown and end at the U.S. Coast Guard Air Station near the tip of Ediz Hook.

The **Port Angeles Fine Arts Center**, in the uptown area 2 mi. east of Race Street on Lauridsen Blvd., features changing art exhibits. The 5-acre grounds features walking trails and Webster's Woods, an outdoor art park. The center is open Weds.-Sun. afternoons.

The city is also headquarters of Olympic National Park. **Olympic National Park Visitor Center**, south of US-101 via Race Street at 3002 Mount Angeles Road, offers an excellent orientation to the wonders of the park.

Just south of the center, the Hurricane Ridge Road enters the park's woodlands and begins a 20-mile climb up to the crest of **HURRICANE RIDGE** (elev. 5,405 ft.). From this height sweeping views extend across the upper Elwha Valley into the wilderness heart of the Olympics. Near the **Visitor Center** several hiking trails lead through alpine meadows where elk and deer graze in summer. During winter a Park Service concessionaire operates a small **ski area**. Snowplows keep this road open during the winter months. A narrow gravel road runs 8 miles east along the ridge crest, ending at 6,450-foot **Obstruction Peak**, the highest point accessible by car on the Olympic Peninsula. Panoramic views encompass the rugged Olympics and north across the Dungeness Valley to the Strait of Juan de Fuca and the San Juan Islands. This road is not maintained in winter.

Retrace the route downhill to Port Angeles.

Highway 101 leads east from Port Angeles through the Dungeness Valley, an attractive patchwork of farmland sandwiched between the outer ramparts of the Olympic Mountains and the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Located in the lee or "rain shadow" of the Olympics, this area receives less than 20 inches of rain per year, a climatic anomaly in western Washington. These fertile prairies attracted the first farmers in the 1850s. By the turn of the 20th century the Dungeness Valley was the largest tract of irrigated farmland in western Washington. **Olympic Cellars**, 6 miles east of Port Angeles, is open for wine tasting daily May-Dec., weekends Jan.-April.

**SEQUIM** (pop. 6,625, alt. 183 ft.) is the bustling trading center for the valley and a popular retirement community due largely to the relatively dry, sunny climate. The town's name – pronounced *SKWIM* – derives from an American Indian word meaning 'a place for going to shoot,' recalling the area's once bountiful hunting for elk and waterfowl. The **Irrigation Festival**, celebrated here in early May, is the state's oldest continuing community event. The first took place in 1896. Local attractions include the **Sequim-Dungeness Museum**, **Dungeness River Audubon Center** and the **Olympic Game Farm**. The Sequim-Dungeness Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center, on the east side of town, is a great place to obtain information on things to see and do in the district.



*Lavender fields frame a farmhouse near Sequim*

There are several scenic drives through the attractive countryside north and west of town although urbanization is rapidly changing the area's landscape. En route you'll pass numerous lavender farms. The aromatic herb has cosmetic, culinary, medicinal, craft and decorative uses. The first fields were planted in 1995 and today the valley has approximately 40 growers. Sequim is considered the *Lavender Capital of North America* and many of the local farms are open to the public. The city hosts an immensely popular **Lavender Festival** annually in mid-July.

**Dungeness Spit**, curving six miles out into the chilly waters of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, is one of the longest features of its kind in the world. **Dungeness Recreation Area**, a county park at the foot of Kitchen Dick Road, anchors the spit's mainland base, while most of the spit and its bayside fringe of tidelands and marsh constitute a national wildlife refuge. The 63-foot **New Dungeness Lighthouse** crowns the tip of the spit. The light was commissioned in 1927 to replace the original facility erected in 1857. It's possible to hike out to the end of the spit, but remember, you'll have to foot-it all the way back – a 12-mile roundtrip!

East of Sequim US-101 drops down to the saltwater shore of Sequim Bay. Two late 18th-century explorers failed to detect the bay, its mouth concealed by two natural overlapping sandbars. It wasn't recorded until the Wilkes Expedition of 1841. Wilkes labeled it Washington Harbor. The **John Wayne Marina**, down on the bay, is popular with boaters. The late actor often enjoyed saltwater fishing trips here. **SEQUIM BAY STATE PARK** (*Discover pass required, see p. 3*) features nearly a mile of shoreline, picnic sites and a campground.

Two miles beyond the park, the highway passes the quiet village of **BLYN** (pop. 100, alt. 20 ft.), a former logging town named for a sea captain. The rotting pilings along the shore supported the railroad, which formerly linked Port Townsend

with communities on the northern Olympic Peninsula. The last trains ran in 1984. Nearby is **Seven Cedars Casino**, operated by the Jamestown-s'Klallam Tribe. Seven large totems guard the casino, built in the style of a longhouse. The casino opens each day at 10am.

Highway 101 skirts the southern reach of Sequim Bay, then ascends Miller Peninsula, a blunt headland separating Sequim Bay from Port Discovery. Three miles east of Blyn, Diamond Point Road leads to a real estate development at the northeast tip of the peninsula. Spanish explorer Manuel Quimper named this *Punta de San Juan* in 1790. Wilkes called in North Bluff. Henry Kellet charted it as Clallam Point, a name that survived until 1941, when the U.S. Board on Geographic Names declared the present name official. The Diamond Point Quarantine Station operated here from 1894 until 1935. Shipboard immigrants, suspected of having a contagious disease, were hospitalized and/or confined here.

The highway passes through **GARDINER** (pop. 300, alt. 140 ft.), a former logging town founded in 1911 and named for founder Herbert B. Gardner. The 'i' was inserted, replicating the family name's original spelling, when the post office opened in 1916. Captain George Vancouver landed here in 1792, naming the expansive bay Port Discovery, for his vessel *HMS Discovery*. Vancouver used this as a base to explore the nearby coastline, as did two Spanish expeditions in 1790 and 1791. Gonzalo López de Haro christened the inlet *Puerto de Bodega y Quadra*, to honor his fellow countryman who explored the Northwest coast, although the name only appeared on Spanish charts.

The highway follows the shore to **DISCOVERY BAY** (pop. 60, alt. 40 ft.), located at the head of Port Discovery. Here SR-20 leads a dozen miles northeast to **PORT TOWNSEND** (pop. 9,180, alt. 120 ft.), located on a protected harbor at the eastern end of the Quimper Peninsula. Founded in the 1850s, this was one of the leading cities on Puget Sound. Its central blocks form a National Historic District and the city is renowned for its Victorian architecture. For more information see the club's companion publication *Destination Focus: Port Townsend*.

#### 4. Discovery Bay to Olympia (return route via US-101)

U.S. Highway 101 traverses the eastern portion of the Olympic Peninsula – 83 miles from Discovery Bay to Olympia. The highway leads south from the head of the bay, following Snow Creek. Highway 104 branches east, leading to the Hood Canal Bridge and the Kitsap Peninsula. Highway 101 continues south, passing two lakes: Crocker and Leland, the latter fringed with summer homes.

The easternmost ramparts of the Olympics rise west and south of **QUILCENE** (pop. 600, alt. 20 ft.), nestled between the Big and Little Quilcene rivers near the head of its namesake bay, an arm of Hood Canal. The original townsite, dating back to the 1860s, was down on the bay, 2 miles south – here you'll see a marina, oyster farm and the rotting pilings of an old railroad trestle, part of the planned line between Port Townsend and Shelton. Small-scale mining took place west of town from 1902 into the 1920s, but commercial logging was the town's mainstay well into the 20th century. Recently, brush collecting – salal, huckleberry and sword fern – for the commercial flower market, has become an important cottage industry. Quilcene is renowned for its namesake oysters, a delicacy on tables throughout the West. There are several oyster hatcheries and a State Shellfish Laboratory on Quilcene Bay. The **Quilcene Historical Museum**, 151 E. Columbia Street, has displays about the town's early industries.

South of Quilcene, US-101 enters **Olympic National Forest** and swings around the base of **Mount Walker**. A narrow gravel road (closed in winter) encircles the peak, climbing up to its 2,800-foot summit where panoramic views encompass a vast territory from the Olympics eastward across the Puget Lowlands to the distant Cascades. During the months of May and June blossoms add color to the lowland woods. Look for the bright pink of western rhododendron (Washington's state flower) and the creamy white of Pacific dogwood and madrona. The latter tree is easy to recognize with its glossy evergreen leaves and reddish-orange peeling bark. In late summer madronas bear clusters of small orange fruit. Its name comes from the Spanish – *madroño* – meaning 'strawberry tree,' a related species found in southern Europe. Canadians know the madrona as arbutus.

Continuing south, the highway drops down to the shore of Hood Canal, an 80-mile long inlet separating the Olympic Peninsula from the Kitsap Peninsula. Captain Vancouver named this feature for a lord of the British Admiralty in 1792. Highway 101 hugs its western shore for 30 scenic miles. **Seal Rock**, a Forest Service recreation area, is the only place in Washington where national forest land touches saltwater shoreline. The park offers a half-mile of shoreline, shellfishing and camping. The ¼-mile Shell Midden Trail has signs explaining the natural and human history of the site. If you're lucky, you may see a harbor seal. Here Hood Canal reaches its widest point – six miles to the opposite shore. The main channel bends east around the Toandos Peninsula, while broad Dabob Bay extends to the north.

**BRINNON** (pop. 800, alt. 77 ft.) is named for pioneer Elwell Brinnon who homesteaded here in 1860. Commercial logging started in 1890, spurred by the promise of a rail line down the west side of the canal. **DOSEWALLIPS STATE PARK** (*Discover pass required, see p. 3*), on the north side of town, includes a mile of shoreline at the mouth of its namesake river. The river takes its name from *Doswailopsh*, a mythical Indian chief who was transformed into a mountain. The canal's tideflats beckon amateur naturalists. A magnificent view extends westward up the valley of the Dosewallips, framed by a

backdrop of rugged Olympic peaks. Brinnon hosts an annual *Shrimpfest* the third weekend in May. Just north of the river is **Whitney Gardens & Nursery**, noted for their collection of azaleas and rhododendrons, some planted in the 1950s. Blossom season extends from February through May.

Forest Road 2610 follows the Dosewallips River west 15 miles into the eastern part of Olympic National Park. Three miles up the road just past the concrete bridge, an unmarked short trail leads to **Rocky Brook Falls**. This accessible falls, a little-known gem, drops 125 feet over a stone escarpment. The road ends at **Dosewallips** (elev. 1,600 ft.), a campground and old ranger station flanked by 7,000-foot peaks. Trails lead further up the valley into wilderness.

South of Brinnon, US-101 skirts the small bay of **Pleasant Harbor** with a popular marina and state park at the end of Black Point. A mile further south, the Duckabush River empties into the canal. The origin of its name is unclear -- either *Doheabos* ('reddish face,' the name of a Twana village at its mouth) or *Duckaboos*, chief of the mythical Salmon People.

A narrow road (FR-2510) branches 7 miles west into the national forest, where a trail continues deep into the Olympics. The historic **Interrorem Guard Station** (1906), 6 miles up the road, is the oldest building in Olympic National Forest.

**TRITON COVE STATE PARK** (*Discover pass required, see p. 3*), 4 miles south of Duckabush River, offers access to Hood Canal, a boat launch and a few picnic tables. Two miles south, Forest Road 25 branches west following the Hamma Hamma River into Olympic National Forest. A Twana Indian village called *Hab Hab* (meaning 'reeds'), which formerly stood at its mouth, gives the river its name.

Three miles south is **ELDON** (pop. about 50, alt. 20 ft.), another shore-side community that started out as a logging camp in the early 1900s.

Highway 101 parallels the canal for 9 miles to **LILLIWAUP** (pop. 90, alt. 10 ft.), a community of summer homes located on a small bay. Its name is derived from an Indian word meaning *inlet*. Settlers arrived in the 1850s, although the town was not platted until 1890. In June of that year the O'Neal expedition set out from Lilliwaup to explore the unknown interior of the Olympic Peninsula. That October members of the party reached Hoquiam, having made the first transect of the rugged peninsula. O'Neal concluded in an 1896 report to Congress that the Olympic's interior was too rugged to be of use for anything except a national park.



*Low tides expose oyster and clam beds at Dosewallips State Park*

**HOODSPORT** (pop. 1,200, alt. 40 ft.), a string of cottages along the shore, is the largest community on the canal. Settlement started in the early 1880s. The town was platted in 1890. The foothills of the Olympics west of town hold small deposits of copper and manganese -- sporadic mining activity continued into the 1940s. **Hoodsport Winery**, on Highway 101, makes 17 different wines from vineyards around the state. One of their special blends uses grapes from a vineyard on Stretch Island in south Puget Sound. This vineyard, established in 1872, is one of the oldest in the state. Wine tasting is offered daily from 10-6. The **Forest Service / National Park Service Information Center**, a block west of US-101 on SR-119, offers information on recreation on the nearby national forest and park lands.

From Hoodsport SR-119 leads northwest 16 miles to at Staircase in the southeast corner of Olympic National Park. The road passes Lake Cushman reservoir (elev. 733 ft.), set in a deep forested valley. The original smaller lake, site of the elegant Antlers Hotel, was inundated by the reservoir in the early 1920s. **LAKE CUSHMAN STATE PARK** (*Discover pass required, see p. 3*), 11 miles beyond Hoodsport, offers swimming, boating, camping, picnic sites and miles of trails. Mountain biking and mushroom collecting are also popular. Archaeologists have unearthed evidence of human occupation in this area dating back at least 6,000 years.

Beyond the park SR-119 re-enters Olympic National Forest (becoming Forest Road 24) then follows the upper reaches of Lake Cushman and the North Fork Skokomish River to **STAIRCASE** (elev. 875 ft.), a National Park ranger station and campground. This area was explored in 1890 by the Joseph O'Neal expedition. Its name derives from *The Devil's Staircase*, a particularly difficult sector encountered by the trekkers. Snowclad heights, their lower slopes cloaked in thick forest of giant Douglas fir, western hemlock and western red cedar, tower more than 5,000 feet above the valley. Trails lead up the valley into the park's wilderness interior.

Retrace the route back to Hoodsport.

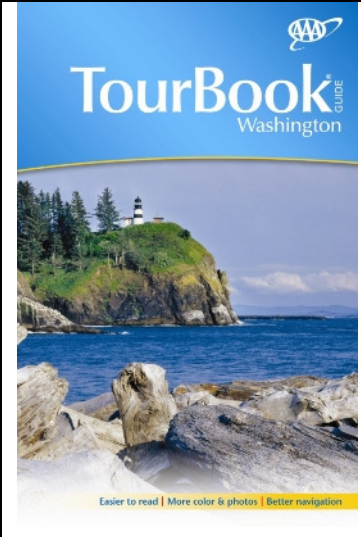



Highway 101 continues 2 miles south from Hoodspout to the village of **POTLATCH** (pop. 75, alt. 18 ft.), established as a lumber company town in 1900. The large concrete structure just west of the highway is a Tacoma Powers hydroelectric facility, erected in 1926. The giant pipes feed water from the Lake Cushman reservoir to the powerhouse. A mile south, camping and picnicking are found at **POTLATCH STATE PARK** (*Discover pass required, see p. 3*), which overlooks The Great Bend where Hood Canal curves off to the east. Local tribes set up winter villages on these shores and the park's name recalls their traditional gift-giving ceremonies. Later, this was the site of the Minerva Resort and a sawmill. The highway runs through the **Skokomish Indian Reservation**, established by the Point No Point Treaty in 1855. The tribe's **Lucky Dog Casino**, on US-101 just north of the junction with SR-106, beckons with slot machines and games of chance. The highway traverses south of the Skokomish River with the snowcapped Olympics as a backdrop on the northern horizon.

Four miles down the highway, take the first exit for **SHELTON** (pop. 9,855, alt. 61 ft.). Located on Oakland Bay, an inlet of Puget Sound, Shelton is a forest products town dominated by the sprawling waterfront Simpson Timber Co. mill. Simpson operates one of the country's last remaining logging railroads – the 31-mile line links the mill with company-owned timberlands west of the city. The many specialty tree farms in the district lend Shelton its nickname *America's Christmas Tree Capital*.

For a glimpse into Shelton's past, stop by the **Mason County Historical Museum**, located in the 1914 former library at Fifth and Railroad. A block east stands a 90-ton Shay locomotive which hauled strings of log flatcars to the mill from 1924 until 1958. The local Visitor Information Center is housed in the caboose. Oysters are an important local delicacy and Shelton celebrates its annual *Oysterfest* in early October.

From the downtown area SR-3 heads south – stop at the roadside pullout on a bluff overlooking the city (great photo stop of a Northwest logging town). Highway 3 rejoins four-lane US-101 just south of Shelton, and continues to **KAMILICHE** (pop. 100, alt. 50 ft.), site of the Squaxin Tribe's **Little Creek Casino**. A mile east on Old Olympic Highway is **Squaxin Museum** filled with tribal artifacts. Inlets at the southernmost reach of Puget Sound, such as Skookum, Totten and Eld, are renowned for their oyster beds. The tidal range here is upwards of nine feet. Low tides expose extensive tracts of mudflat, natural habitat for shellfish.

U.S. 101 curves east and enters the western suburbs of Olympia. Fourteen miles beyond Kamilche we meet I-5, completing our Auto Tour.

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**KEEPING INFORMED ON THE ROAD**  
Here is a listing of Olympic Peninsula radio stations . . .

**ABERDEEN-HOQUIAM**  
KXRO – 1320AM  
KBKW – 1450AM  
KWOK – 1490AM  
KXXK – 95.3FM  
KSWW – 102.1FM  
KDUX – 104.7FM  
KJET – 105.7FM

**FORKS**  
KBIS – 1490AM  
KBDB – 103.9FM

**OLYMPIA AREA**  
KBRD – 680AM  
KGY – 1240AM  
KLDY – 1280AM  
KUOW – 1340AM (NPR)  
KAOS – 89.3FM  
KRXY – 94.5FM  
KXXO – 96.1FM  
KGY-FM – 96.9FM  
KFMY – 97.7FM  
KAYO – 99.3FM

**PORT ANGELES**  
KIKN – 1090AM  
KONP – 1450AM  
KNWP – 90.1FM (NPR)

**PORT TOWNSEND**  
KRPT – 91.9FM

**SEQUIM**  
KSQM – 91.5FM

**SHELTON**  
KMAS – 1030AM