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Sand & Suds

ENGAGING THE SENSES IN FLORENCE, OREGON

BY BRANDON FRALIC

There's more to experiencing the Central Oregon Coast than simply seeing it. This spring, spend a weekend engaging all five senses—from the feeling of sand on your skin to the sudsy mouthfeel and flavor of locally-sourced craft beverages. Hear the surf crashing; catch a whiff of the beach-scented breeze. It's all within reach in the coastal town of Florence.

SAND

Sand Master Park: To feel the sand between your toes, head to Sand Master Park: the world's first sandboard park. Owner Lon Beale opened shop here in 2000, securing 40 acres of private coastal dunes. Today, Beale and his staff offer sandboard rentals and lessons to the public from their dune-side shop. After removing your shoes and climbing the dunes, it's time to strap in—rain or shine. First-timers may find the bunny hill somewhat intimidating. But fear not—Sand Master Park's quality instruction puts newbies at ease. And unlike snowboarding or skateboarding, sandboarding is one board sport in which a crash landing proves relatively painless. Welcome news for beginners, as you're likely to take a spill—and have a good laugh—on the first run.

Sand Dunes Frontier: Feel the wind in your hair—and the sand in your teeth—at the Oregon National Dunes Recreation Area. In business since 1960, Sand Dunes Frontier operates guided dune buggy tours for groups of all sizes and adventure levels. For a scenic excursion and ecology lesson, larger groups prefer the big purple buggy. Thrill-seekers should opt for the smaller, faster sand rails, which zip across windswept dunes at speeds of 55 mph.

The ride itself is like a freewheeling rollercoaster. After a short drive through coastal forest, your buggy breaks out of the tree line into unending sand. Cruise up, over and down the other side of dunes that reach up to 385 feet in height—grateful for your experienced driver, seat belt and goggles all the while.

SUDS

Homegrown Public House: After working up an appetite in the dunes, it's time to settle in for some suds. Homegrown Public House offers a strong selection with local beer, cider and kombucha on tap. Lane County regulars include beer from nearby Agrarian Ales (sip their Country Song Saison, if it's on tap), along with Wildcraft Cider and more than a

WHEN YOU GO

- >> Sand Master Park, sandmasterpark.com
- >> Sand Dunes Frontier, sanddunesfrontier.com
- >> Homegrown Public House, homegrownpub.com
- >> Driftwood Shores, driftwoodshores.com
- >> Travel Lane County, eugenecascadescoast.org



few Willamette Valley wines. In fact, owner Kelsey Terry takes “farm-to-table” so seriously that she works exclusively with local producers. Don’t expect the typical pub grub from Homegrown Public House. Seafood is the name of the game on the coast, and Homegrown provides diners with beer-battered albacore fish & chips, seafood curry and more. Those looking for a vegan/gluten-free alternative should spring for the Hippie Elitist Burger—if only for the delight of ordering such an aptly-named (albeit delicious) lunch.

STAY

Driftwood Shores: Stay by the beach at Driftwood Shores, the only oceanfront hotel in Florence. In addition to private balconies and ocean views from every room, Driftwood Shores offers convenient add-ons—like ready-to-go s’mores packages and burlap-wrapped firewood bundles for your impromptu beach fire adventures. The on-site Surfside Restaurant and Lounge is especially excellent for breakfast, serving up enormous omelets to fuel yet another day of sand and suds on the Central Coast. 🍷

