

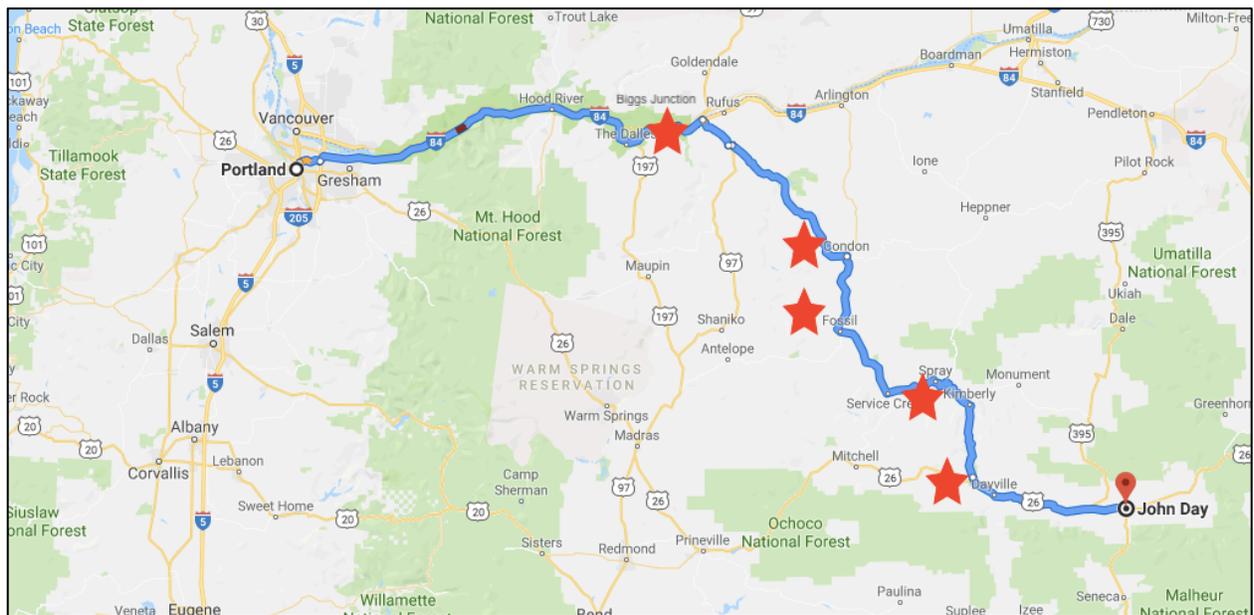


OMA 2019 Annual Conference

John Day driving hints

Taking the road less traveled to John Day? Keep reading for some helpful tips from one of our former board members, who happened to be raised in Grant County! Thanks to Kathleen Daly, for providing her driving guide.

From northern Oregon, including Portland, driving through the Columbia Gorge to John Day via Biggs Junction is my route of choice to Grant County. Not only is there less traffic, but the variety of scenery is amazing. If you plan to attend the Thomas Condon Paleontological Center pre-conference tour, this is also the perfect drive for you, as it will take you right past the Center en route to John Day. This will also take you through a beautiful area between Kimberly and the Picture Gorge, which is my favorite part of the drive, and not one to miss. If you are lucky, you might see a huge herd of elk grazing in the fields.



Fueling up

Biggs Junction is the second to last stop for gas. Keep in mind, it is self-service. If you've never pumped gas before, be sure to ask for some guidance before you leave. This is also a great time to get snacks or coffee (minimarts attached to McDonalds, Cinnabon, and Subway) and use the bathroom! There is a lot of land between Portland and John Day, but there are not a lot of bathrooms or locations willing to let you use them.

Heading east on OR-206, **Condon** is your next stop for gas. There are two stations basically across the street from each other as you head into town. Again, don't forget they are self-service.

Need more sustenance before heading south on OR-19? Hit Country Flowers for some coffee or snacks, The Drive-In for a tasty burger and milkshake, or the local grocery store. All businesses will be on your right hand side, as you travel south on OR-19.

NOTE: This is literally your last stop for a real bathroom. The city park (on your left, adjacent the high school track) has a public restroom. If you decide to pass, there are a smattering of pit toilets, and everyone's favorite, juniper trees and bushes!

Other places of note

By this point of the drive, I am usually ready to just be at my destination! So, unfortunately, I have not taken time to enjoy all **Fossil** has to offer. Not only is it the home of Painted Hills Beef, but you can actually dig for fossils in Fossil. There is also a local café (Korner Café), which is supposed to be pretty good, and a local museum.

Need another snack? Take a left at the John Day River Trading Post in **Kimberly** (it's one of two buildings along the highway before you cross a bridge, so don't blink). Just a mile or two up the road and on your right is a fruit stand. Open seven days a week, Thomas Orchards has delicious, locally grown fruits.

Before heading all the way into John Day, consider grabbing dinner in **Dayville** at the Dayville Café. Hands-down, one of the best place to eat in Grant County.

Tips for the drive

- **Raise a hand.** Be sure to wave to on-coming traffic. Or, at least don't be confused when you see someone waving at you. Folks in Gilliam County are particularly friendly; this is where you will see the most "howdies."
- **Don't speed.** Cops love to ticket speeders, especially in Gilliam County.
- **Watch for slow vehicles.** You are driving through farmland. Keep in mind there will be slow trucks and trailers. Give them space and don't be surprised if they appear to suggest that you pass on a double yellow (it is ok).
- **Be mindful of critters.** Depending on the time of day, you may experience a large array of fauna running across the road (deer, elk, cattle, dogs, rabbits, skunk, etc.). Try to avoid driving in Eastern Oregon during, what I call, "the witching hours." This is usually a couple of hours before sundown. Not only are animals coming out to water, but there is a lot of free range out there. This will also help protect your car from being splattered with stubborn bug splatter.
- **Call ahead.** Planning to make a couple stops along your drive? Check times of operation by *calling!* You don't want to show up for lunch only to learn your destination is closed. Business hours can be sporadic, especially on Sundays.
- **Help yourself.** If a gas station is closed, but the pump accepts credit cards, you can pump your own gas.