

Disconnect on a winter beach getaway

Pack your parka, rain gear, and beanie . . .

and escape to Oregon's Cannon Beach

Story and photos by Tracy Beard

Everyone comes to Cannon Beach in the summer. Blankets and tents line the beach, and it's imperative to leave your road rage at home when it comes to the parking. Restaurant reservations must be booked well in advance, and the streets and shops are noisy and crowded. But in winter the beach is a deserted island, serene and uncomplicated, with no crowds, no lines, no noise, and virtually no disturbances. You have unlimited choices of where to stay, eat, and how to spend your time replenishing your soul with any activities that you adore. Heading to the beach can be your opportunity to unplug from it all.

Watching waves collide, crash onto the sand, and quickly retreat back into the deep is inspiring any time of year. This repetitive motion is both hypnotic and soothing. The sounds of the sea and the whistling of the wind calm us and remind us of the power of nature.

~Tracy Beard



The lobby at the Inn at Cannon Beach.

Why not be adventurous and go to Cannon Beach in the winter? Sprinkled liberally throughout the town are a variety of hotels, inns, and restaurants. Located in the most southern part of town is the quiet and pristine Inn at Cannon Beach. The friendly staff provided exemplary service from my initial reservation right through my checkout.

Each room at the Inn hosts a gas fireplace, and many rooms have a large, two-person Jacuzzi tub. A five-minute walk takes you to the beach; it takes 10 minutes to reach Haystack Rock. All rooms include a mini-kitchen with a Keurig coffee machine and a mini-fridge. A breakfast of cold cereal, yogurt and fruit, or hot sausage and waffles is available in the Inn's gallery room. The staff will make a cheese omelet if you're interested. Prices are substantially lower in the winter, ranging from \$165 to \$195 versus \$215 to \$325 in the summer. The Inn is only 30 percent full on winter weekdays, so it is extremely quiet and easy to get a reservation.

There are no ocean view rooms at the Inn at Cannon Beach, but you can sit and watch, from the safety and warmth of your room, one of the inevitable winter storms. The trees dance in the wind and water cascades from the sky, while you sit by the fire with a good book, drinking your coffee or enjoying a glass of wine. If there is no looming storm, you can hear the birds chirping or



Newmans 988 accommodates 48 diners.

watch from the privacy of your balcony the Inn's ever-present herd of bunnies wander the property.

Just four minutes down the road is Newmans 988 (photo, opposite page). The little yellow house accommodates 30 people downstairs and 18 upstairs. John and Sandy Newman purchased this beautiful home in February of 2006. John, the executive chef, trained at the Culinary Institute of America in New York. After working in restaurants all around the country, he and Sandy settled down in Cannon Beach, where John worked as the executive chef at the Stephanie Inn for eight years before they decided to open their own establishment.

The cuisine at Newmans 988 is both French and Italian. I ordered the Chef's Prix Fixe Menu. The four-course dinner began with crispy polenta topped with earthy, wild mushrooms, pureed eggplant, and sweet and tart balsamic syrup. Wendy, the head server, wisely suggested pairing the appetizer with the Coe Cellars 2014 Sangiovese. The spinach arrived with chewy currants, tangy goat cheese, crunchy candied nuts, spicy red radishes, and Italian olives, all tossed in a lemon garlic dressing. The first two courses were superb, but it was the cioppino that left me wanting more the next day.

Cioppino is a fish stew and each element, cut and cooked to perfection, combined for a tantalizing dish. The stew's delicate base didn't overpower the black cod, prawns, crab, scallops, and vegetables. John and sous-chef Eric Kliewer obviously knew what they were doing. Wendy suggested pairing the cioppino with a 2015 Beaujolais Rosé from Kermit Lynch. The wine, crisp and light, melded deliciously with the cioppino. For dessert, I indulged in a Neapolitan of spumoni: layers of cherry, pistachio, and chocolate gelato drizzled with chocolate sauce and sprinkled with brittle candied almonds. Eating at Newmans 988 is a must-do in Cannon Beach.



Newmans 988 main floor dining room. At right, spinach salad, Neapolitan dessert.



Other options for eating out include the Driftwood restaurant, which makes a great clam chowder; the Irish Table, with its hearty traditional Irish dishes; and the Sweet Basil Café, serving healthful organic meals.

Aside from finding great places to stay and eat, what can you do in Cannon Beach in the winter? Relax and spoil yourself in some of life's luxurious pleasures.

The Cannon Beach Spa, one of several spas in town, offers a variety of massages, wraps, and scrubs for your pampering. Soak your feet in a bowl of herb-infused warm water and smooth rocks to begin the Japanese foot massage. As you wiggle your feet, the rocks gently press on trigger points, releasing stress. Then, one of the staff will spend time massaging your feet using reflexology techniques. After your session, enjoy a chocolate treat at the Cannon Beach Chocolate Café.



To further unwind, the Inn at Cannon Beach will book an in-room massage upon request. Lie on a table by your fireplace in the comfort of your room and feel the stress wash away during the soothing touch of a Swedish or deep-tissue massage. To assist in replenishing your mind, body, and soul, the Inn will provide you with a gift certificate for a free session at Cannon Beach Yoga Arts. A restorative yoga session will help you re-center before returning home to the real world.

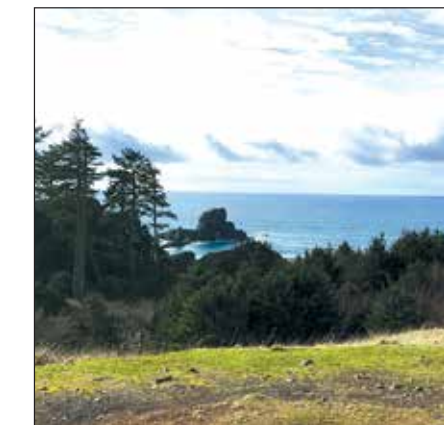
If you are feeling a bit more energetic, consider the abundance of hiking options available within 20 minutes of the Inn, from an easy two-mile hike to the beach at Oswald Park to more difficult hikes at Saddleback Mountain. Ecola Park is not

far away with its inviting trails, picnic tables, and stunning ocean views. Check the weather and trail closures before heading out. Take long walks along the beach, soak up the fresh air



Follow the path to nearby Ecola Park with its inviting trails, picnic tables, and stunning ocean views (top photo).

and the sea, or stay in your room with a good book. You can even get some indoor exercise at the Cannon Beach Fitness Center. The Inn will provide you with a complimentary visit.



However you choose to spend your time, you can avoid the noise, crowds and high prices of summer by taking yourself – alone or with someone special – on a getaway to experience the pleasures of Cannon Beach in the winter.

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Former Longview resident Tracy Beard, now of Vancouver, Wash., once trained as a chef and enjoys travel, cooking, dining out, wine tasting, hiking and skiing. She writes travel, food and adventure stories for several publications. Read more about her at <http://tracysblog.blogspot.com>.

