



# PATHFINDERS

## DESTINATION:

Astoria Column and Astoria, Oregon

*“The emence Seas and waves which breake on the rocks & Coasts to the SW. & NW roars like an emence fall at a distance, and this roaring has continued ever Since our arrival in the neighbourhood of the Sea Coast...”*

*-- William Clark, Sunday, December 1st, 1805*

One of the greatest challenges faced by the Corps of Discovery was crossing the water from what is now Washington to the location in Oregon where they planned to spend the winter. The weather was dreadful. The churning waters tossed their dugout canoes so badly that the men were seasick. It was one of the most difficult parts of the entire expedition.

## ADVENTURE:

To get a sense of what it was like for the Lewis and Clark expedition to journey across the body of water separating Washington from Oregon, **start your visit to Astoria with a trip to the Astoria Column.** Whether you climb to the top of the 125-foot tower or just stand at the base and look out at the enormous expanse of water, you will understand why it was so difficult for the Corps to cross. From this spot, you can see most of the areas of the Lewis and Clark National and State Historical Park.

Although the Corps of Discovery was the first group of white explorers to arrive here by



Photo: Tobi Kibel Piatek

*View from the Astoria Column.*

traveling across land, ships of white men had sailed to this location before. So, as Lewis and Clark were watching the water for opportunities to cross, they were also looking for any sign of a trading ship. Today, you can watch for ships entering and leaving the Columbia. You might see 350-400-foot freighters carrying logs or cars, or containers of goods and produce. Think of these as the modern equivalent to what Clark and his men were looking for. You can also see commercial fishing vessels — a modern equivalent to the Chinook Indians’ boats of 200 years ago.

## OPB'S LEWIS AND CLARK EXPLORER GUIDE

### GETTING AROUND:

*Driving Instructions to*

***Downtown Astoria:** Coming from the east, take Highway 30 from either Vancouver or Portland. Coming from the south, take Highway 26 and follow the signs to 101 for Astoria/Seaside.*

***The Astoria Column:** Take 16th to Jerome, right on Jerome for one block, left on 15th for two blocks and left on Coxcomb Drive to the Column.*

***Lewis and Clark Explorer Shuttle:***

*This is the easiest way to get around! Leave your car at either the Astoria Transit Center located at 10th Street and Marine Drive or at your hotel. Operates June — Labor Day Weekend in September. The Lewis and Clark Explorer Shuttle runs to the Astoria Column, Fort Clatsop, Seaside, Cannon Beach, and connects with buses that can take you to Ilwaco and Long Beach, Washington.*

***Astoria-Warrenton Chamber of Commerce:** 503-325-6311  
<http://www.oldoregon.com/>*



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## MORE TO DO AND SEE:

- **Hike the Cathedral Tree/Column Trail.** From 28th and Irving in Astoria, you can hike a forest trail that passes the lofty Cathedral Tree and emerges at the Astoria Column.
- **Visit the Astoria Riverwalk** that extends from the Port of Astoria in the west, through downtown, to Tongue Point to the east.
- **Lewis and Clark Explorer Train:** Passenger train service running between Portland and Astoria; travels along the Oregon shore of the Columbia River, passing bald eagle sanctuaries, wildlife refuges and historical sites visited by the Corps of Discovery.
- **Astoria Trolley:** Runs along the Riverwalk from the Port of Astoria through downtown to the East End Mooring Basin. You can catch it at any of the well-marked trolley stops. (The Columbia River Maritime Museum stop is closest to the Astoria Column.)
- **Do a Little Ship Watching:** There's a great view of the river traffic from a sheltered viewing deck at the end of 6th Street and from the dock at 17th Street. Two Coast Guard cutters, the Steadfast and the Alert, are stationed here, and river tour boats come to call.
- **Columbia River Maritime Museum:** This nationally recognized museum tells the story of the people and industry of the Columbia River. You can't miss the dynamic display of the 42-foot Coast Guard Lifeboat cresting a wave in the museum's front window.
- **Tour some museums:** Fort Astoria, Clatsop County Heritage Center Museum, Flavel House Museum and Astoria Children's Museum
- **Tapiola Playground:** This brand-new 15,000-square-foot play structure features replicas of Astoria-Megler Bridge, Astoria Column, Flavel House, Liberty Theater Stage, and a Fort Clatsop tot-lot, among many other things, to climb, jump, swing and dig in. Take Highway 202 south approximately one mile from the Astoria roundabout on Highway 101 at the west end of town.
- There are lots of **wonderful restaurants and shops** to choose from downtown and on Pier 10.



Photo: Tobi Kibel Piatek



*If you are lucky enough to visit the Astoria Column on a clear day, you will have a spectacular 360° panoramic view of historic Lewis and Clark sites in Washington and Oregon. When you stand at the top of the tower, you can see miles of water stretching in all directions. From this point, it is easy to imagine the enormous challenge the Corps faced as they struggled to cross the Columbia River, through high winds and torrential rain, to reach their destination – the Pacific Ocean and the location they selected to create their winter camp, Fort Clatsop. From this vantage point, it is also easy to see the many changes that have taken place on land and on the water during the 200 years since the Corps was here.*

*Before you leave, be sure to take a good look at the mural created by Italian artist Atillio Pusterla that spirals up the outside of the column. The scenes and figures depict the westward expansion of the settlers and Oregon's early history.*



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## ACTIVITIES TO TRY WITH YOUR CHILDREN:

*You will need: A map of Oregon and Washington, a blank sheet of paper, pens and markers*

*Optional, but good to have: A map of the United States, camera, binoculars*

### CHART YOUR COURSE

**Before you leave on your trip to Astoria, explore a map with your children.** First, locate your hometown on the map. Then locate Astoria and the Pacific Ocean. Remind your kids that when Lewis and Clark headed west, all the land that the Corps was planning to explore was to them a big, blank space on an empty map. It was their job to fill in that blank and create a map of the route to the Pacific Ocean. Discuss with your children that while the Corps saw a big, blank space on the map, this land was home to native peoples who had names for many of the prominent geographical features, though few of these names remain. For example, the river visible from the Astoria Column on which Fort Clatsop sits is now known as the Lewis and Clark River. Lewis and Clark referred to this river by its Clatsop name: the Netul River.

**Help your children find the compass rose,** a circular diagram printed on the map to show compass point directions. Have a conversation about directions: Point out north on the map and talk about which direction you will travel to reach Astoria.

**Once you arrive at the Astoria Column, your children can put their knowledge of directions to use.** You and your kids can look north to see where the Corps traveled along the shores of the Columbia River. Look for the Lewis and Clark National and State Historical Park sites that commemorate the Corps' exploration, including a view of "dismal nitich," Station Camp and Cape Disappointment. Then you can look southwest to see what we now call the Lewis and Clark River; at the last bend sits

Fort Clatsop and the area where the Corps wintered over when they were finally able to cross the Columbia. Due west is Point Adams where Clatsop Indian villages were strategically located to meet incoming trade ships. Today we know the area as Fort Stevens, where artillery was installed during the Civil War to guard the mouth of the Columbia. To the southwest, you can see Tillamook Head in Ecola State Park, site of Captain Clark and Sacagawea's arduous hike to what is now Cannon Beach. To the southeast is Saddle Mountain, a sacred site for the Clatsop and Chinook Indians.

**Note:** One of the most fun features of the Astoria Column is the chance to fly balsa airplanes from the top. Buy your planes at the stand at the base of the column, carry them to the top and watch them soar. Which direction do they go?

### TRY YOUR HAND AT MAPMAKING

To help your children get a feel for one of the tasks Lewis and Clark undertook – creating a map of their journey – **encourage your kids to create their own maps of Astoria.** As you look at the map together before your trip, you might want to point out that maps include landmarks such as parks or important buildings. Local maps, such as a map of Astoria, include places in and around the city that help people find their way.

As you drive around the city or at the end of the day, provide your young mapmakers with a blank sheet of paper, pens and markers, and invite them to draw a map that includes Astoria "landmarks" — restaurants, scenery, the Columbia River, the Astoria Column, etc.

