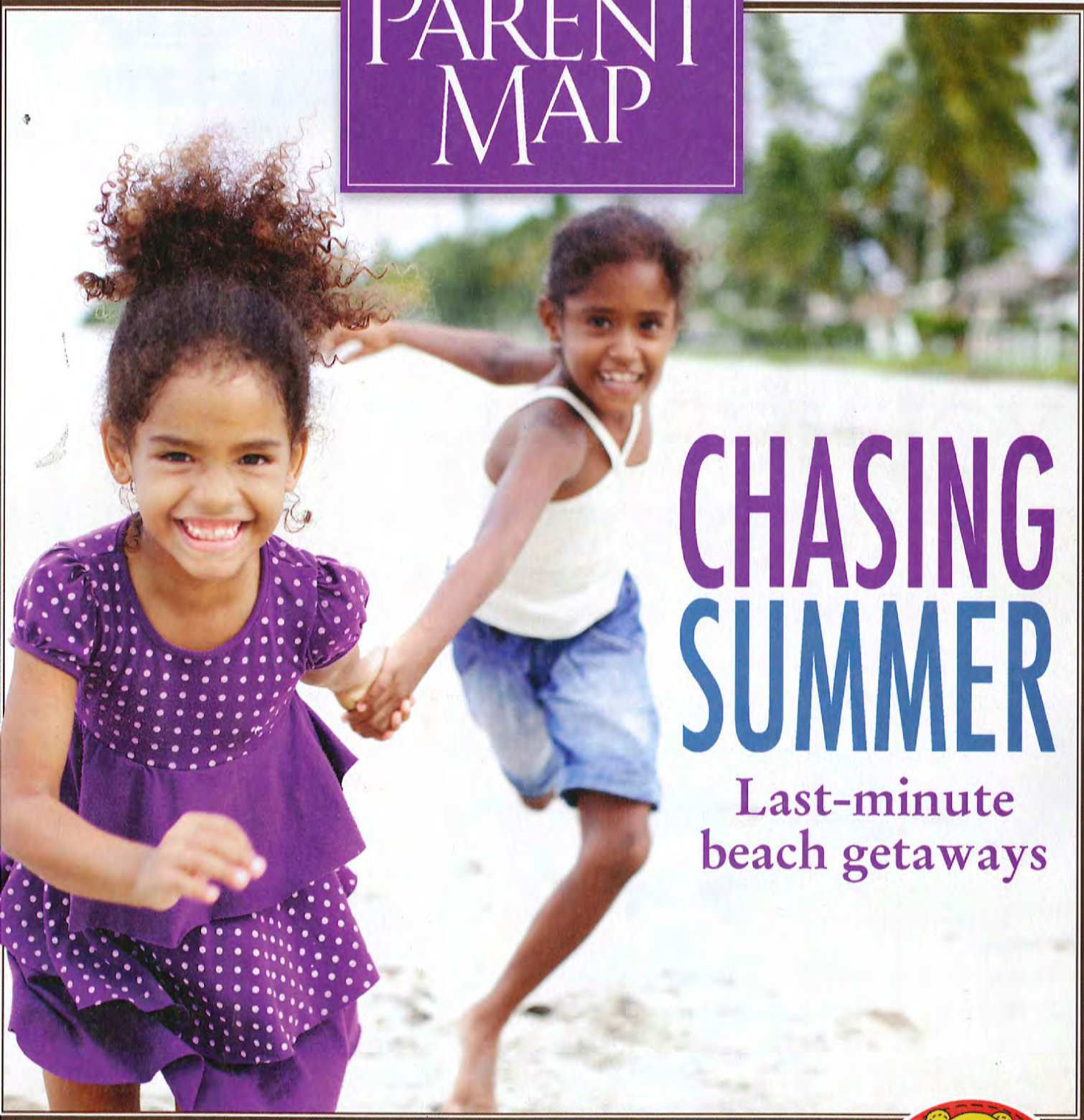


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feature

CHASING SUMMER

continued from page 9

SLEEP ...

OLYMPIC SUITES INN, FORKS.

Nothing fancy here, but the spacious apartment-like suites make this affordable motel a nice home base for exploring the rain forest and coast. There's ample room to spread out hiking gear, dry rain-soaked clothes and cook dinner. Rates: \$95-\$110, plus \$10 to use the kitchen. Pets welcome, \$10 per pet. 800-262-3433; olympicsuitesinn.com

THREE RIVERS RESORT, FORKS.

Rent a cozy cabin, with a full kitchen, a short drive away from the beaches at La Push. The resort cafe serves tasty burgers, crispy fries, pizza and the like. Cabins sleep between two and six guests. Rates: \$93. Pets welcome for \$15. 360-374-5300; threeriversresortandguideservice.com

RENT A REAL LOG CABIN.

For the ultimate family getaway, book the **Rialto Beach House**, which sleeps seven. Though not on the beach, this impressive log cabin sits on a quiet, wooded lot on the Quileute River. Rates: \$250 per night, three-night minimum, 360-460-5483; rialtobeachhouse.com

PITCH A TENT.

For \$12 a night, you can stake out a little swatch of rain forest to sleep in. Olympic National Park's **Hoh Campground** boasts 88 sites along the river and features family campfire programs in the summer. An alternate park campground is **Mora**, set along the Quillayute River with 94 sites. All campsites are first-come, first-served. nps.gov/olyml/planyourvisit/campgrounds.htm

ALL BOOKED UP: Last-minute planning tips

Go midweek. The most popular destinations are often booked to capacity on August weekends. If you're able to make your getaway early in the week, say Monday through Wednesday, you'll have more luck snagging that waterfront cabin.

Call for cancellations. Got the weekend free, but everything is booked?

EAT ...

This region probably won't win any foodie awards, so pack a stocked cooler and make use of your cabin kitchen or camp stove. A few local eateries will hit the spot for casual dining. Try the **Three Rivers Resort** near La Push (see left) for burgers. In the town of Forks, **Pacific Pizza** makes a decent pizza pie, and the **Forks Coffee Shop** serves up diner food with a side of logger ambiance.

2 Visit the North Beach

COPALIS BEACH TO MOCLIPS

Head to the hidden stretch of Washington's coast known as the "North Beach" for sandcastles and solitude.

Pack up the beach chairs and flip-flops, but leave that to-do list at home. The sand stretches for miles in this infrequently visited coastal treasure known as the "North Beach." From the town of Ocean Shores, head north on State Route 109, hugging the coastline for 30 miles through tiny towns like Seabrook, Pacific Beach and Moclips before the road peters out at the mouth of the Quinault River. Like Ocean Shores, cars are permitted to drive right on the beach in some spots, though the density of cars on these beaches is far lighter. Some lodgings have private beach access; others are within walking distance to a public beach.

Plans change sometimes, and a popular lodging may have a cancellation at the last minute. If you can be flexible, call a few places and ask to be put on the waiting list for your desired weekend.

Find alternate lodging. Vacation rental websites such as vrbo.com and homeaway.com allow you to search for vacation rentals that are available on your specified dates.



DO . . .

Indulge in lazy, sunny days on the sand, then let the sound of the ocean lull you to sleep at night. Mobile phone service is spotty on this stretch of the coast, making it even easier to truly unplug.

BUILD CASTLES IN THE SAND.

The largest public beach access here is the 364-acre **Griffiths-Priddy Ocean State Park**, a prime spot for building sandcastles, riding bikes and beach-combing. Hike along the natural **Copalis Beach Spit** (four miles round trip), where low dunes beckon to those looking for a peaceful respite. Bring your own buckets and shovels for building castles, or purchase sand tools in nearby Pacific Beach at **Hi Flyers Kites & Things**, where you can also pick up a kite to fly and a delicious Mexican mocha. Washington State Discover Pass required.

COMMUNE WITH WILDLIFE.

Soaring bald eagles and ospreys fish for their dinner, scoters bob along in the surf, and large flocks of feeding shorebirds meander to and fro. Watch the sandpipers probe into the sand with their beaks, like needles on a sewing machine, as they search for tasty treats, such as small crabs.

VISIT THE MUSEUM OF THE

NORTH BEACH. The North Beach has a rich past as a bustling logging area, fishing grounds for the native Quinault tribe and the end of the line for the Northern Pacific Railroad. Imagine, Moclips once hosted 5,000 tourists each weekend. Make a stop at this funky museum to see the fascinating trove of artifacts and historical photos, and to chat with one of the volunteer docents. moclips.org

DIG FOR CLAMS. The meaty Pacific razor clam lives on intertidal coastal beaches. Clamming is fun for all ages; all you need is a clam shovel or tube, a bucket to put your clams in and your clamming license. Kids will especially enjoy the task of finding the “clam shows,” or characteristic dimples or doughnuts in the sand that indicate a submerged razor clam. (Note: Digging for these clams is regulated by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and permitted only on designated weekend mornings, usually from October through April.) wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/shellfish/razorclams

SLEEP . . .

SEABROOK VACATION RENTALS, SEABROOK. The concept of an all-new beach town may seem a little contrived, but after a visit to Seabrook, built in 2004, you'll be hooked.

Amenities for families are numerous: an indoor pool house, pottery studio, cruiser bikes to ride, pocket playgrounds, outdoor fire pits and miles of beach to roam. Oh, and the brand-new beach cottages you sleep in are pretty sweet, too. There are 200 homes in all, and different cottage configurations can sleep from two to 20. Rates vary, but start as low as \$69. 360-276-0099; seabrookwa.com

IRON SPRINGS RESORT, COPALIS BEACH. This newly remodeled resort dates back to the 1940s as a place for families to unwind, fish and wander beautiful beaches. When the True family bought and remodeled the collection of 28 cabins they had vacationed in for decades, they prioritized sustainability and preserving the resort's charms. The remodeled cabins reopened in 2011, and the result is stunning. Each cabin has a full kitchen, wood-burning fireplace and deck. The onsite general store stocks basic groceries and supplies. Dogs are welcome. Rates: \$159–\$289. 360-276-4230; ironspringsresort.com

THE GULL WING INN, MOCLIPS.

Entering one of Carla and John Kelly's vacation suites is like stepping into your very own vintage beach cottage, lovingly decorated with restored thrift-store finds and hand-sewn curtains. Your door is a stone's throw from the walking path to the beach. If you like the inn's nostalgic “shabby chic” décor, Carla runs a small antique shop up front, so you can take it home with you. Pets welcome, hot tub onsite. Sleeps two to seven. Rates: \$60–\$85. gullwinginn.com

PITCH A TENT AT PACIFIC BEACH STATE PARK. This 10-acre camping park has 2,300 feet of wide-open ocean shoreline. The park's campground is open and treeless, offering tent campers little privacy from one another, but makes up for it with the swell beachfront location. Reserve at parks.wa.gov.

EAT . . .

While most lodging on this part of the coast includes a kitchen, good groceries are hard to come by. Bring your ingredients from home or make a stop in Aberdeen. Last-minute gourmet ingredients can be found at **Lil's Pantry** in Seabrook. Also in Seabrook, **Mill 109 Restaurant** serves up pastas and steaks, although seating is at a premium. Locals head to **Paddie's Perch** in Pacific Beach for homemade pie and steaming bowls of clam chowder.

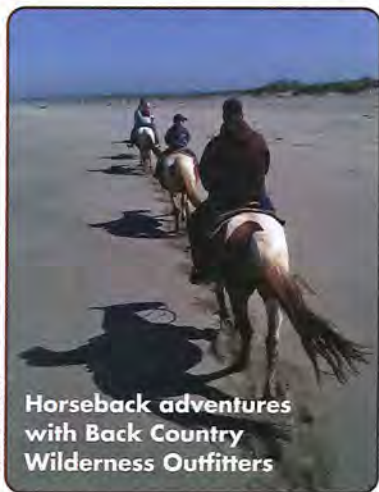
3 Play on the longest beach

LONG BEACH PENINSULA

It's not all go-carts and saltwater taffy in this quintessential beach town. From cranberries to Lewis and Clark, the region's heritage is everywhere.

The town of Long Beach is a real beach town. Bike rentals, kite shops and funky junk stores line the main drag. Midsummer brings throngs of families in search of fun, and they usually find it. Up the peninsula, the historic town of **Oysterville** makes for a nice walking tour with a stroller. Include a stop at nearby **Cape Disappointment State Park** for a dose of nature and history and you've got a fantastic family getaway.

continued on page 12



Horseback adventures with Back Country Wilderness Outfitters