

Winter's a fine time to storm the Washington coast

Several spots just short drive from home offer spectacular views of winter weather



Roger Ward

Enjoy spectacular ocean views at spots along the coast such as Iron Springs Resort at Copalis Beach.

Iron Springs Resort overlooks the ocean, making it an ideal location for winter stormwatching.

By **Jackson Holtz**, Herald Writer

When the mighty Pacific brews to a froth, when winds howl south from the Gulf of Alaska, when rain falls in sheets, grab a hat and a raincoat and head to the Washington coast.

Don't retreat from the weather; face the elements head-on.

Where others see foul, many find exhilaration, peace and a deep sense of relaxation watching the winter weather wreak havoc.

Many spots along the Washington coast offer perfect views for stormwatching only about a half-day's drive from Everett.

Stormwatching is a sport best outfitted with warm blankets, hot cocoa and a romantic friend with whom to cuddle.

Close-up glimpses of the angry waves are available at several places along the hundreds of miles of coastline.

Iron Springs Resort at Copalis Beach, about halfway between the Columbia River and the Strait of Juan de Fuca, is a newly renovated collection of cottages perched on a cliff.

The resort was owned and operated by Olive Little and her family since 1947 until Little passed away, but it had fallen into disrepair. In 2010, Doug True of Seattle purchased the property and invested to spruce it up.

"As a family that returned to Iron Springs, year after year, it was important to us to preserve the welcoming charm that made this resort so unique," True said.

The new owners modernized the place, added cable TV and Wi-Fi, installed wood floors and purchased Northwest art to decorate the cabins.

At the same time, the new owners were careful not to mess with classic details that give Iron Springs its character: cedar paneling that's been recycled into end tables, and benches carved from fallen spruce trees.

Each cabin has a fireplace or wood-burning stove to enhance the romance and charm, and warm up guests after a winter walk.

Dogs are welcome, even encouraged. The resort provides water bowls and towels reserved just for Fido.

A bit farther north on the coast is **Kalaloch Lodge**, run by the National Park Service. This resort has a main lodge and several cabins. It's more rustic than Iron Springs Resort but comparably priced.

The more developed, seaside community of **Ocean Shores** offers a variety of accommodations. You may find a bargain, and the winter waves are just as spectacular. Be sure to ask about winter stormwatching packages.

Iron Springs Resort is offering a discounted rate with a minimum two-night stay that includes a bottle of wine, cinnamon rolls, souvenir mugs and two portions of Ivar's Clam Chowder. Kalaloch Lodge offers a special for booking early.

Pack a parka, bring a pal and enjoy Washington's coast all winter.

Resources

Reach the Washington coast by taking the Edmonds-to-Kingston ferry and then driving north around Olympic National Park on U.S. 101, through Forks, then south along the coast.

You can also drive south through Olympia, then west along Highway 8 to Highway 12. At Aberdeen, travel north to Iron Springs Resort or Kalaloch Lodge, or south to Ocean Shores.

Travel time is about five hours along the northern route. Allow about three-and-a-half hours the southern way.

Iron Springs Resort: Two dozen cabins starting about \$169 a night off-season. 800-380-7950 or www.ironspringsresort.com.

Kalaloch Lodge: Lodge and cabins at winter rates starting about \$98 including a discount for advance booking. 866.525.2562 or www.olympicnationalparks.com.

City of Ocean Shores: Learn more about accommodations in Ocean Shores at www.osgov.com/visitors.html.