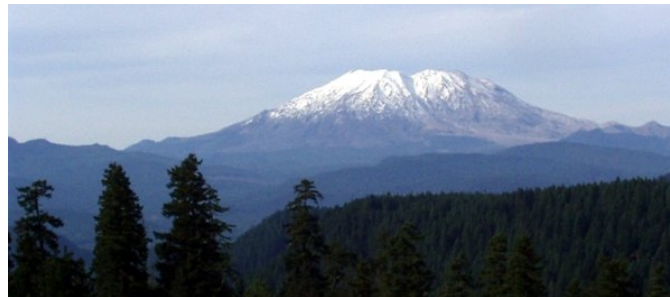




Mt. St. Helens – Windy Ridge

The Oregon S2000 Owner's Forum: [HTTP://OREGON.S2KI.COM](http://OREGON.S2KI.COM)

This drive will take you on the road less traveled to **Mt. St. Helens**. You will travel around the back (east) side of the mountain before driving through the "**Ghost Forest**" on your way up to **Spirit Lake** and the **Windy Ridge Lookout**. You can drive through the campgrounds that were hit by the eruption and even see the damaged and rusted cars still there. There are a number of interpretive centers and viewpoints on the way to **Windy Ridge**.

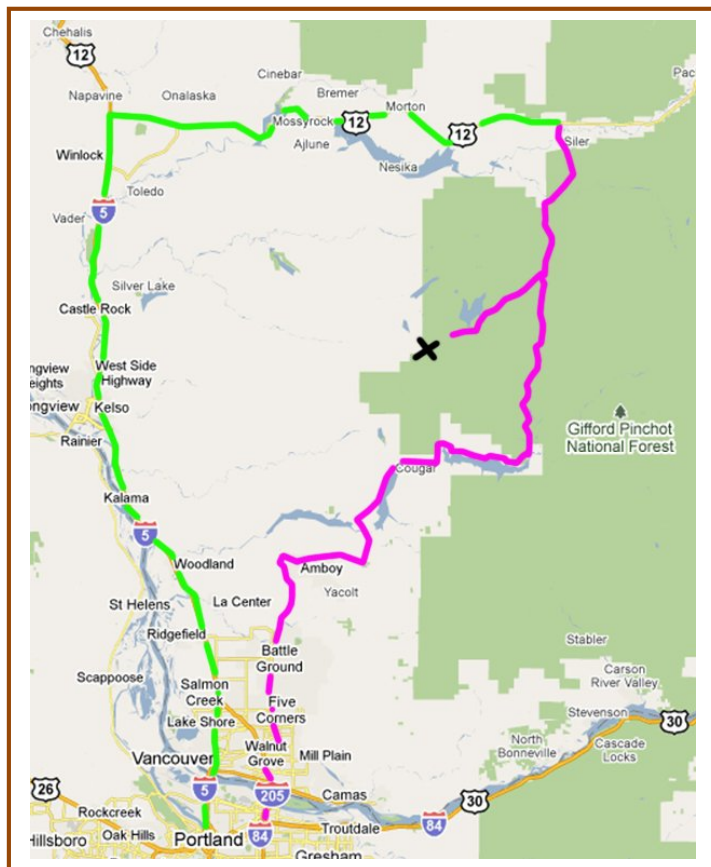


Driving = 45% 1, 25% 3 and 30% 4 **Scenery = 4**

Total Driving Time: 5 hrs. 30 mins / 274 miles

Find your way to *I-205* on the **Washington** side of the **Columbia River**. From the **Portland** area take *I-205* north across the river.

Portland to Windy Ridge - Driving Time: 2 hrs. 30 mins / 102 miles



Zero your odometer trip gauge as you leave or pass by the **I-205 / Hwy. 14 interchange** (the mileage points are based on this).

Continue north on *I-205* for **3.5 miles** and take the *Hwy 500* exit (**Exit #30A**). Follow the signs to *Hwy 500 EAST*. Once on *Hwy 500* get into the center or left lane - both become *Hwy 503*. The signs say "**to Brush Prairie and Battle Ground**".

Stay on *Hwy. 503* through **Brush Prairie** and **Battleground** to **Amboy (mile 27)**. At **Amboy** turn **right** / east on *Hwy 503*. *Hwy 503* will dead-end into *Hwy 503/Lewis River Road (mile 36.1)*. Turn **right** / east on *Lewis River Road*. Just east of **Yale (mile 39.4)** is **Yale Park** on your **right**.

You will want to stop here for a pit-stop (nice facilities) as the next rest stop is 1-1/2 hours away! This is a day-use area, but if you tell the entrance guard you just want to use the facilities there is no charge. **Yale Lake** is a beautiful setting!



Leaving the park, turn **right** / east on *Lewis River Road*. You will pass through **Cougar** and the road becomes *FS 90*. The highway winds along and above **Yale Lake and Swift reservoir**. You will enter the *Gifford Pinchot National Forest* and turn **left** /north on *FS Road 25 (mile 60)*. There are a lot of hills and nice winding roads – with little traffic. You will pass by the back-side of **Mt. St. Helens**.



At **mile 84** you will come to the turn-off (*FS Road 99*) for the **Windy Ridge Observation Center**. Turn **left** / west and then **right** into the **Wakepish Trailer Drop** to use the restrooms. Continuing west on *FS Road 99* you will come to a number of lookouts with great views of the devastated areas. You will also pass through the “**Ghost Forest**” – trees killed by the blast and still standing.



You are now in for some great hilly twisties. Remember that this is a National Forest and the Forest Service monitors driving – a ticket here will land you in federal court. Just prior to **Windy Ridge** is a nice overlook at **Spirit Lake**.

At **mile 101.4** you will arrive at **Windy Ridge**. This is near the base of the crater and gives you a direct look into the crater from below. This is the closest approach possible to the crater itself. There are restroom facilities here and many different scenic views of the mountain and devastated areas. There are no picnic facilities here and it isn't called **Windy Ridge** for nothing - dress warmly if you plan to spend any time here.



Returning back to *FS Road 99* you have two choices for your return to **Portland**. You can return the way you came (**2.5 hrs. / 102 miles**) or continue on north to **Randle**.

Windy Ridge to Randle - Driving Time: 1 hr. / 36 miles

Turn **left** on *FS Road 25* to **Randle**. *FS Road 25* becomes *Washington Hwy. 131* as you approach **Randle**. At **Randle** you will find a couple of gas stations and a couple of restaurants. You might want to try the **Mt. Adams Café** for lunch. It is at the intersection of *Washington Hwy. 131* and *Hwy.12*. [**GPS**: 9794 U.S. Hwy. 12 Randle, WA 98377]

Randle to Portland - Driving Time: 2 hrs. / 126 miles

Return to **Portland** will be west on *Hwy. 12* and then south on *I-5*. Head west on *Hwy. 12* through **Morton** and **Mossyrock**.



At the *I-5* intersection, head south to **Portland**.

Note: This route is only reliably open from July through October. Winter snows typically create havoc with the roads and the Forest Service needs time to repair them, replace bridges, etc. It is ALWAYS a good idea to contact the Forest Service before heading up there. Their number is: (360) 497-1100. You can also check their website for up-to-date information: <http://www.fs.fed.us/gpnf/recreation/current-conditions/>

This is merely a suggested drive. You can shorten it – lengthen it – reverse it – modify it – deviate from it or just stay home and detail your car.

Enjoy and Drive Safely! S2Ki Oregon -  The fun starts here!

Revised 1/1/2010