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OVERNIGHT in a LIGHT HOUSE

BY ADAM SAWYER



More Lighthouses:

New Dungeness Lighthouse, Dungeness, Washington: This lighthouse on the end of a long spit is only accessible via boat or 5-mile hike and affords the chance to be lighthouse keeper for a week. There are some restrictions and responsibilities; slots fill up fast, so check well in advance. newdungenesslighthouse.com/keeper-program

Browns Point Lighthouse Cottage, Tacoma, Washington: This restored 1903 cottage is on the National Historic Register, and guests become Honorary Lightkeepers. Duties include raising and lowering the flag, logging the weather and shipping traffic and tending the cottage and on-site museum. pointsnortheast.org/cottage-rental

Between the Pacific Ocean and the Salish Sea, there's a lot of coastline in the Northwest. It is just as scenically captivating as it has been hazardous for maritime traffic. Born of necessity, lighthouses have cast their beacons out to sea, guiding and even saving countless ships from disaster. Today, they have been automated, no longer requiring lightkeepers to keep the flame burning.

Lighthouses have become historical and cultural icons of the region. They are, without exception, photogenic structures in photogenic locations. But, beyond the potential for pretty pictures, every lighthouse possesses its own unique features and chapters of human history. From the Fresnel lenses to the lives of the lighthouse keepers and the lives lost at sea, each location houses countless stories. They evoke the romance of another era, and that's why we visit them. What's not so well known is the fact that there are a handful of these magnificent structures that offer overnight accommodations to the public.

Indeed, you can spend the night, a weekend, or a week at some of the Northwest's most famed postcard destinations, each one supplying its own set of enticing opportunities to unplug and unwind. Take in a sunset and sunrise from the lighthouse keeper's quarters, enjoy a gourmet breakfast, engage in a late-night stroll and, in some cases, perform the tasks required of the keeper. Whatever you do, leave the laptop at home and turn off your phone.



Point No Point Lighthouse

© United States Lighthouse Society

POINT NO POINT

Hansville, Washington

uslhs.org/about/point-no-point-vacation-rental/historic-keepers-quarters

Constructed in 1879, the Point No Point Lighthouse is the oldest on the Puget Sound. And as far as panoramas go, it resides in the fabled catbird seat with views of Mount Rainier, Mount Baker, the Seattle skyline and a number of neighboring islands. As if that weren't enough, Point No Point is also adjacent to a 61-acre nature park that is a prime spot for wildlife viewing.

Visitors have two distinctive overnight options. The historic lighthouse Keeper's home is exactly that, with a comfortable living room, formal dining area with breakfast nook, full kitchen, two bedrooms, and a full bathroom. Great for family and friends. Alternatively, the "Keeper John Maggs' House" is a one-bedroom cottage on the light station property, built by the first lighthouse keeper John Maggs and his wife, Caroline. It is the perfect option for a romantic getaway.

Hansville is located on the Kitsap Peninsula. For information about other local activities, go to visitkitsap.com.



Point No Point rental house

© United States Lighthouse Society

CAPE DISAPPOINTMENT

Ilwaco, Washington

parks.state.wa.us/380/Cape-Disappointment

If they ever start handing out awards for wildly misnamed places in Washington, Cape Disappointment State Park should win first place. Located near the bottom of the Long Beach Peninsula where the Columbia River meets the Pacific Ocean, it's a true Northwest treasure. The park is home to a couple of lighthouses, but it is the North Head Lighthouse that features a set of lighthouse keepers' residences within walking distance of the beacon.

Each home can accommodate up to six guests and provides overnight visitors with a living room, grand dining room, library and a well-equipped kitchen. One of the homes was even the subject of a paranormal investigation on the TV show "Ghost Adventures." These century-old two-story Victorians also showcase stunning ocean views and the opportunity to explore Cape (Not a) Disappointment at will.

For more information about visiting the Long Beach Peninsula, go to visitlongbeachpeninsula.com.



North Head Lighthouse





HECETA HEAD

Florence, Oregon

hecetalighthouse.com

The Heceta Head Lighthouse is one of Oregon's premier landmarks. The circa 1894 lighthouse casts beams 21 miles out to sea and is the brightest light on the Oregon Coast. Depending on who you talk to, it may or may not also be home to a handful of hauntings. What's indisputable is the majestic view from both the lighthouse and the lightkeeper's home, now the lovingly restored Heceta Lighthouse B&B.

Six rooms accommodate up to 15 guests per night. A time-honored tradition is a nighttime walk to the lighthouse. Get there on the right evening and watch perfectly cast beams rotate alternately through forest trees and out into the Pacific under a starlit sky. It's a privilege reserved exclusively for overnight guests, and it is magic. And, if you happen to be staying in the Lightkeeper's Room that evening, you'll be the temporary owner of the most unique nightlight in Oregon. The 1.5-hour, seven-course breakfast the next morning is one of the best on the coast and an unforgettable way to conclude your stay.

Heceta Head is located near the oceanfront town of Yachats; for information about the town, visit yachats.org.

