

DAY 1 - 3: PORTLAND, OREGON

Before embarking on our long haul trip to Fiji, Australia and New Zealand, as the flights are long and out of Los Angeles, we always choose to leave a few days earlier and spend a couple days on the West Coast to make the trip a little easier.

Last year we stopped for three days in San Francisco and visited with Wendy's sister and her husband. This year we are stopping in Portland Oregon to visit with my son and his wife.

Flights were fine, just a short stop over in Dallas for an hour and a half for lunch (Hi, Monte!).

We arrived in Portland at about noon to be picked up by my son and daughter-in-law. The rest of the day was spent catching up and getting over jet lag.



Day Two was a hang out day for us, drinking beer, eating, playing games and watching movies.

As my son (not surprisingly enough) is also from South Africa, we decided on having a SA nostalgia party.

We made *pannekoek* (South African pancakes) and *Biltong* (South African beef jerky).

Day Three we chose as the "explore Oregon coast day". While we have been to Portland before, we have never seen the Oregon coast line 70 miles away.

The goal was to drive up to the mouth of the Columbia River which is also the state line between Oregon and Washington, visit Cape Disappointment Lighthouse and then drive down the coast looping back to Portland and stopping off at Seaside and Cannon beaches. The entire drive is reported to be extremely beautiful.

We packed sandwiches for the trip planning a picnic along the way. We left at 9.30 am in a dense fog. The fog continued for the entire drive all the way to

the river mouth where the fog lifted and was replaced by rain for the rest of the day and sleet on the way home. ARGH!! Welcome to Oregon winters!!!

We didn't get to see the lighthouse as it required a short hike through the forest and we don't hike in the rain!!! We didn't get to have our picnic for the same reason. Instead we went to lunch at a restaurant to get out of the rain. We did get to see Seaside and Cannon beach as it was viewable from the car.

So effectively we drove 200 miles for lunch!!

We did however stop off at a candy store that had the most amazing collection of fudge and candy bars. The SA nostalgia continued because we found two candy bars that cannot regularly be found in the USA but are very common in South Africa – "Aero" and "Crunchie" bars. You Brits and SAs reading this will know them immediately!



We also got to see the famous Haystack Rock and needle rocks at Cannon Beach, which are truly remarkable and quite stunning.

As you can see from the picture, it was a pretty grey day.

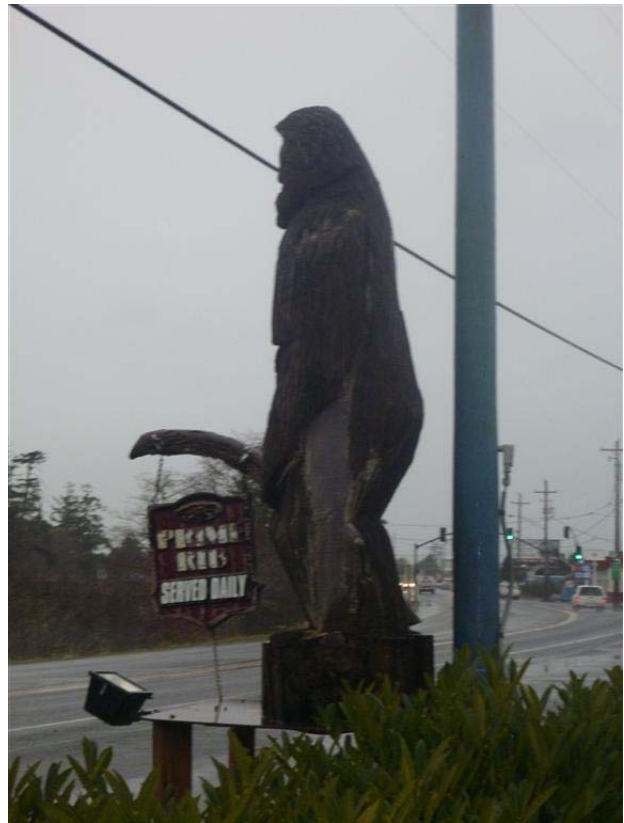
So although Cape Disappointment lived up to its name, we still had a great time and saw some really interesting things, even in the rain.

The cape was thought to be named in 1805 by a member of the Lewis and Clarke team when they finally arrived at the Pacific Ocean after trekking across America and there was not a single ship in sight.

Lunch was at a great restaurant called Big Foot Steakhouse where we had the best prime rib I have had in along time. Theme was Big Foot as this is big foot country and they had a great atmosphere.



Wendy next to Big Foot



They have another big foot statue out front, but the view from the parking lot is probably not what they intended!!

Tomorrow we fly to LA in the afternoon with an 8 hour layover until our flight on Pacific Air to Fiji. The flight is a not unreasonable 10 hours but we do cross the international date line, meaning that we leave on January 7 and arrive on January 9!

January 8 does not exist and this also happens to be my birthday. Sucks to be me!!! What, no birthday in 2012??? How can that be?

See y'all in Fiji!!