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## **Stop 42. Coeur D'Alene**

Arrival datetime: Wednesday, June 26, 7:00PM  
Sites visited: Lake Coeur D'Alene  
Accommodations: The Coeur D'Alene  
States traveled: Washington, Idaho

On the drive out of Olympic National Park, we thought we saw some more elk, but instead, it was two spotted baby deer and a doe. One bambi was so startled, it ran in the wrong direction and stayed in front of our car for about 3 full minutes. It came slowly out of its shock, then ran away after its mother and sibling.

We took the scenic route along the water. A ferry delay in Port Townsend gave us time to explore the little harbor town, which we found to be much like those in Connecticut. We lingered along the water, taking the ferry from Port Townsend to Whidbey Island and from there to Mukilteo. From both Ferries, we could see the snowy caps of Mount Baker and Glacier Peak. We said our goodbyes to the Cascades on highway 90, where the crevasses in the forest green mountains first looked like impossibly hard ski trails, then gradually became less steep and more green until we were driving by rolling light green foothills on which there were real ski slopes.

We drove through farm country that we had only before seen from airplanes, checkerboard quilts of pinkish brown, light green, deep brown, and dull gold. After several hours, we decided to take a break at Ginko Petrified Forest State Park. Ginko is a kind of tree found

around here and the forest is a desert full of petrified wood.

We had known from the car temperature gauge that the temperature outside was over 100°. Getting out of the car took us directly back to Death Valley. The familiar reflection of the sun's intense heat on our ankles burned as we walked around the trailside exhibits. The exhibits were petrified wood displayed as it was found, partial digs with one end of a tree log extended skyward, covered with a black metal frame and wire caging. It looked like a zoo for rocks. Little rocks that looked like petrified wood were all around the trail. There were great examples of petrified wood of all types, even some that were not indigenous to the area and may never have been so. We saw examples of Fir, Maple, Elm, Redwood and others. In the Visitor Center exhibits, there was even Sequoia. The Visitor Center movie proposed several theories, mostly that debris flow from some catastrophic event brought trees from as far away as the coast to land in lava deposited in this geologically unique place.

Rock collecting was prohibited at the park, but an enterprising local businessman had a rock shop right outside the entrance, so we were able to take home souvenirs of petrified wood.



*Petrified wood display in the Ginkgo Petrified Forest State Park.*

We drove on, comfortable in our air conditioning in the now 107° heat, reflecting that the temperature for us had risen by 54° since we left Sol Duc in the morning.

Our next reservations were at Glacier National Park. It was too far to drive in one day, but we had not known how far we would get in the drive across Washington State, so we made no reservations. After seeing a “Welcome to Idaho” sign that declared the state the “largest producer of silver in North and South America,” we decided we had driven far enough and arrived at someplace that was interesting. We stopped at a Visitor Information Center. It

was closed, but we saw an advertisement for a lakeside resort and Jennifer called to inquire. A reservation clerk at the Coeur D’Alene took five minutes to rhapsodize over its full fitness center, golf course, private beach, lake cruises, boat rentals, and five star restaurant. Then he quoted \$399 for a suite with a fireplace and a full view of the lake. Before Jennifer could respond, he said that, because we were so close and staying for only one night, would let us have for \$299. Jennifer hesitated. So he quoted \$299 for a mountain view suite without a fireplace, which he would let us have for \$199. Jennifer asked him to hold while she consulted with Michael. By the time she came back to the phone, the price had

dropped to \$179. When she asked if breakfast was included, the clerk said it was not, but offered to let us have the fireplace lake view suite for \$199. Jennifer asked if we needed reservations to have dinner in the restaurant. He put her on hold to check. When he said that dinner would be no problem at any time. We closed the deal.

The Coeur D'Alene was as fabulous as promised. From our terrace, the lake was bright blue in the late afternoon sun. We watched jet skis and other small boats whiz around the lake, and hikers climbing on sandy paths through the green hills that surrounded it.

We dressed for dinner and watched the lake turn shimmering in the twilight,

reflecting the bright lights of the boats that were returning from dinner cruises. After dinner, we walked around the outside of the hotel, on clean new docks and flower-lined sidewalks, past outdoor pools and lake view lounge windows. In the morning, we played racquetball for a half hour and prepared for a morning on the beach. But the overcast sky had not allowed the morning chill to dissipate, so we opted instead for indoor lap swimming and Jacuzzi. We ordered a room service breakfast and ate on our terrace, for by then the sun was out and



*View of Lake Coeur D'Alene from "The Coeur D'Alene."*

lake activities were in full swing around us. We did not check out until after noon.

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Miles traveled:	460
Departure datetime:	Thursday, June 27, 12:20PM
Departure weather:	79° Sunny