

Oregon's Heceta Head Lighthouse Bed and Breakfast

by Rhonda Ostertag
photography by George Ostertag

A silver moon, a restless ocean and a beacon in the night—travelers couldn't ask for a more magical retreat than the Heceta (Ha-see-tah) Head Lighthouse B&B, north of Florence, on the central Oregon coast. The accommodations are in the historic Queen Anne-style home of the assistant lightkeepers. The home sits atop a sea terrace overlooking one of the country's most stunning coastlines. On the seaward jut to its north blinks Heceta Head Lighthouse. Perched 200 feet above the sea, this icon is the most photographed lighthouse in Oregon.

The 1892 light station, consisting of both the lighthouse and the Keeper's House, is on the National Register of Historic Places. The site bears the name of a sea captain, Don Bruno de Heceta, who sailed along this coast in 1775. The beacon's first-order Fresnel lens is the brightest light on the Oregon coast.

On a grassy flat of the otherwise forested headland, a white picket fence surrounds the gleaming white gingerbread clapboard of the B&B. The six guest rooms with romantic and nautical themes occupy the second floor of the Keeper's House. Decorated in period furnishings, the rooms convey a comfort-



able elegance befitting the house's era, purpose and place, although a lightkeeper's existence would have been far more austere.

The first floor dining and sitting areas burst with charm, from the brass spyglass aimed out the window, to the slumbering cats, Marley and Dawn, to the fresh-cut flowers. Until the 1930s, this was an isolated outpost. Visitors today still relish in the escape it provides from modern disruptions.

Open year-round, the inn's hallmark is its seven course gourmet breakfast. The breakfast is a tradition started by the original hosts, Mike and Carol Korgan, and carried on today by their daughter, Michelle Korgan and her partner Steven Bursey.



Lion Caves (a California and Steller's sea lion rookery), the historic port of Florence and Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area—all to the south. Cape Perpetua Special Interest Area, to the north, reveals another stunning coastal headland, and its cliffs, high seas and forest are all linked by trails.

Because visiting the inn becomes a tradition with many who pass through its doors, rooms should be reserved in advance. Like Rue, you, too, may find this coastal retreat hard to leave.

**Heceta Head Lighthouse
Bed and Breakfast**
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Since hospitality flows in the blood, everyone is quickly put at ease, and no one walks away hungry.

Guests rave about the delectable morning ritual that can stretch out over an hour-and-a-half. A rotation of breakfast menus is used, but all have the signature seven courses and come together with fabulous Oregon-grown products like Oregon lox, Marion berries, Tillamook cheese—the works. One favorite, an eggs strata-style savory bread pudding, is made from ingredients available on Heceta Head—farm fresh eggs, bread, cheese, broccoli, rosemary and dried seaweed. Michelle is compiling a recipe book on these elaborate breakfasts.

Room prices contribute to the maintenance of the historic facility. Some rooms have ocean or lighthouse views, but the cozy cottage porch provides everyone with a window on the sea. Passersby include migrating gray whales and barking sea lions. Below the Keeper's House, the incoming sea batters Conical and Parrot Rocks offshore.

As if history, scenery and fine food weren't enough, an amicable ghost roams the Keeper's House (according to folklore). Identified by a reliable Ouija board as "Rue," she is thought to be the wife of an 1890s assistant keeper. Personally, I think she stays on for the breakfasts.

Seasonally, the state park opens the lighthouse for guided tours. Short trails journey to the Cape Creek beach cove or to the lighthouse, while a longer trail zigzags over the dramatic headland to Carl G. Washburne Memorial State Park. The photogenic bridge spanning Cape Creek is one Oregon's famous Conde B. McCullough-designed bridges, noted for their architectural beauty.

Visitors can also check out the privately operated Sea

