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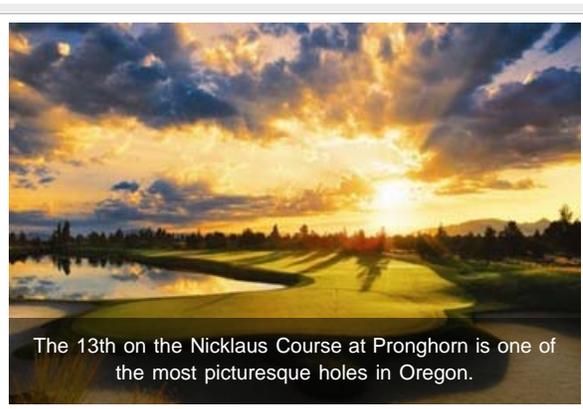
Central Oregon lurks as one of America's best golf destinations

By [Mike Bailey](#), Senior Staff Writer

BEND, Ore. -- You've heard of hidden gems when it comes to golf courses, but how about a hidden destination. That argument could be made for central Oregon, ranked among the top 50 golf destinations in the world by Golf Digest but still somewhat anonymous nationally. It not only boasts some of the best golf courses in the country but also some of the best golf weather anywhere.

The area has long been known as an outdoor recreation paradise offering activities such as skiing, rafting, fishing, hiking and cycling. And with more than 300 days of sunshine -- and much drier climate than people think of when they picture Oregon -- central Oregon is an ideal spot for golf.

In fact, you can play year-round, though the winters can get a bit chilly. More importantly, the quality of golf as well as the settings around Oregon communities like Bend, Redmond and Sisters are stunning. They are surrounded by snow-capped mountains, even in the summer time, and the courses are designed by some of the best in the business. Here's a look at a few of the courses:



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- > [Golf for everyone at Eagle Crest Resort](#)
- > [Pronghorn's Nicklaus Course in pictures: stunning](#)
- > [Tetherow Golf Club in Bend: The new Kidd in town](#)

If you go

Black Butte Ranch

The big news at Black Butte Ranch, a family-oriented resort located near Sisters, is the recent reopening of the [Glaze Meadows Course](#).

John Fought and associate Mike Gogel redid the original Gene "Bunny" Mason-designed course, and it hardly resembles the original. Thousands of trees were cleared out to restore the meadows, and greens complexes were rebuilt along with bunkers, many of them moved to give this course a classic look and feel with modern agronomics.

Glaze Meadows is now the perfect complement to [Big Meadow Golf Course at Black Butte Ranch](#). Big Meadow, originally designed by Robert Muir Graves in 1972, was also renovated a few years ago by Damian Pascuzzo.

Both courses feature incredible views of the surrounding snow-capped mountains and, of course, Black Butte, which is the centerpiece of this 1,800-acre spread. And both courses are also easy to walk.

Pronghorn

One of the stunning resorts in the Pacific Northwest, Pronghorn has two outstanding golf courses -- a Jack Nicklaus signature layout as well as a Tom Fazio signature layout.

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[Pronghorn's Nicklaus Course](#), the more difficult of the two, is open to the public, while the Fazio is private but open to some resort play now. Both are visually stunning and excellent tests of golf and forecaddies are required during peak season.

[Pronghorn's Fazio Course](#), though visually intimidating, is actually quite generous off the tee. The highlight, though, has to be the par-3 eighth hole, which is built over a lava tube discovered during construction. With temperatures often 20 or 30 degrees cooler than it is outside during the summer, the club sometimes holds special events underground in the tube, which can be accessed by stairs leading down from the green.

Eagle Crest Resort

With great views of the surrounding Cascade Mountains, Eagle Crest provides a perfect setting for family golf. Located just minutes from the Redmond Airport, there are four courses -- two championship venues as well as a popular [Challenge executive course](#) and a putting course.

Of the regulation courses, the [Ridge Course](#) is probably the most scenic, while the [Resort Course](#) offers a little more challenge with tighter fairways, including the signature second, a par 5 that plays down into a deep ravine.

With all the good golf in central Oregon, Eagle Crest is a solid choice at a decent price. And because it sits low in the valley, the golf season is longer than at some of the other resorts.

Aspen Lakes Golf Course

Designed by William Overdorf -- nine holes in 1987 and nine in 2000 -- [Aspen Lakes Golf Course](#) is Oregon's first Audubon International Signature course.

Besides being extremely environmentally friendly, the course features bentgrass greens and unique red-sand bunkers, ground from the existing red cinders that occurred naturally on the property.

From the back set of five tees, the course stretches to 7,302 yards. Much of the construction was done by the Cyrus Family, who owns the course, which is located near Sisters.

Sunriver Resort

While Bandon Dunes gets most of the attention when it comes to Oregon golf, Sunriver Resort isn't far behind as one of the country's best golf resorts with three championship courses and a terrific par 3 called [Caldera Links](#).

Located in the foothills of the Cascade Mountains, it has played host to numerous national championships, both on the amateur and professional level.

The Bob Cupp/John Fought-designed [Crosswater Club](#), for example, is situated on 600 acres of spectacular wetlands and woodlands, following the Deschutes and Little Deschutes rivers. It's been the host course of a major on the Champions Tour.

The [Meadows Course at Sunriver](#) is no less stunning. Bordering the Sun River, Fought paid tribute to great American holes of the early 20th century.

And then there's the Robert Trent Jones Jr.-designed [Woodlands Course](#), which features plenty of mountain views and beautiful water hazards.

Tetherow Golf Club

One of the area's newest courses, [Tetherow Golf Club](#), which is designed by David McLay Kidd of Bandon Dunes fame, is also located in the bend area.

The course is seeded wall to wall with fescue grass, and combined with rugged bunkers, knobs and knolls, it has a Scottish heathland look. The par-3 17th hole plays to a green that sits within old pumice quarry walls. Forecaddies are also part of the experience.

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Mike Bailey is a senior staff writer based in the Houston area. Focusing primarily on golf in the United States, Canada, the Caribbean and Latin America, he contributes course reviews, travel stories ... [\[read more...\]](#)



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