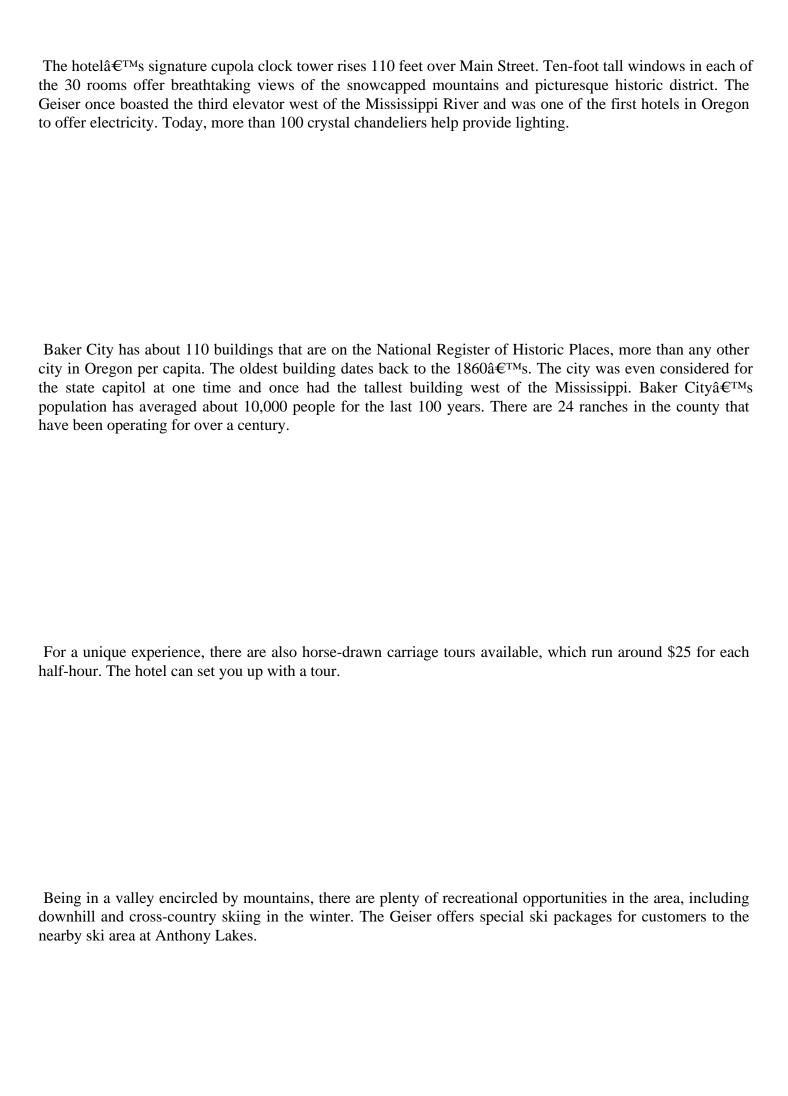
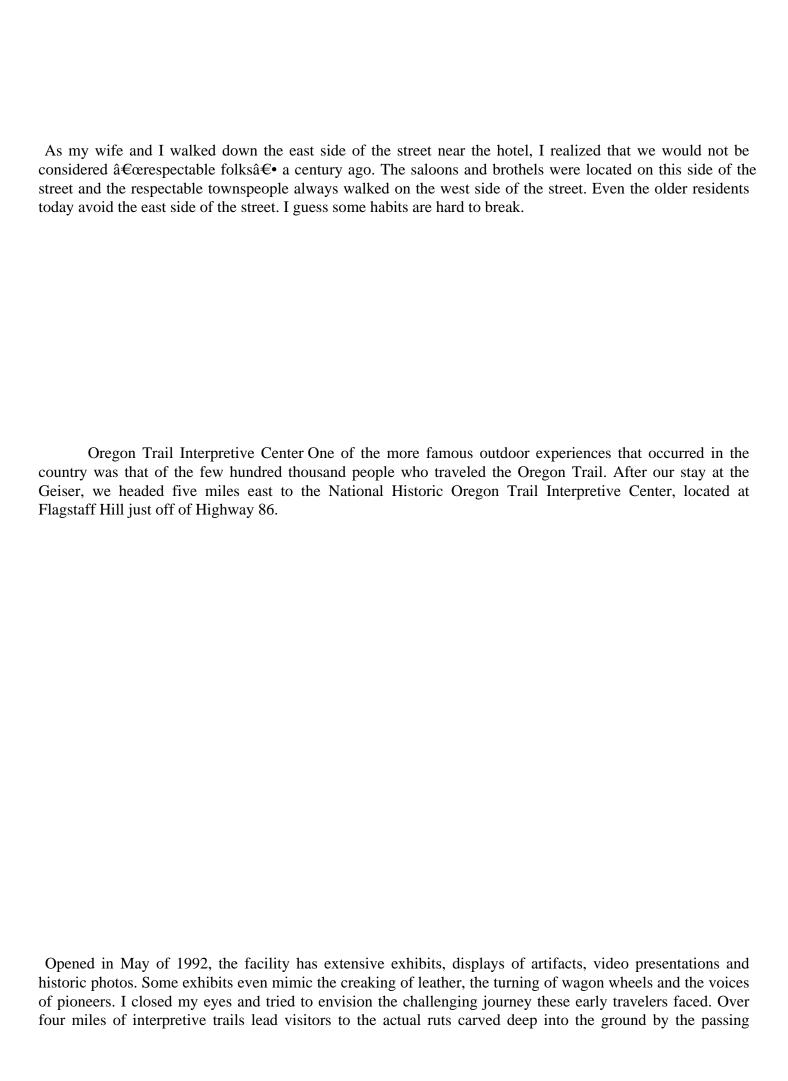
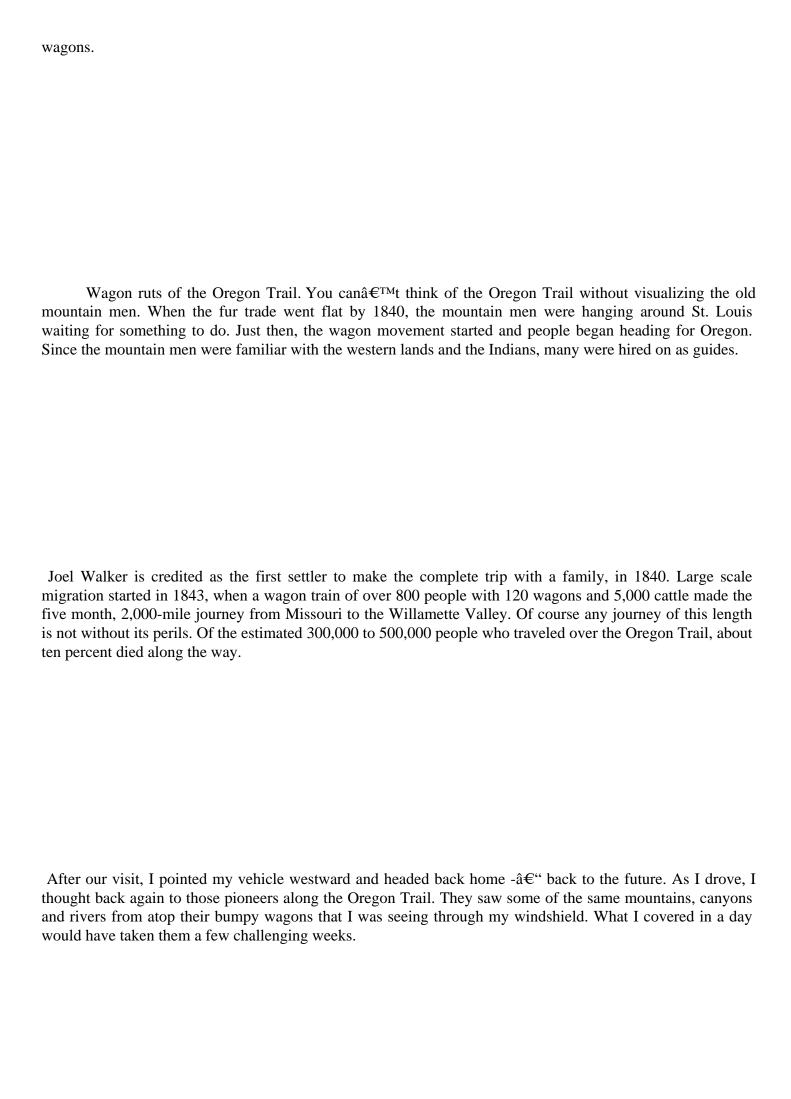
by Scott_Staats Although I prefer being outdoors, I don't mind being spoiled indoors once in a while. When I head over to the eastern and northeastern parts of the state for some exploring, I usually stop off in Baker City. As I've found out over the years, the town itself can be the destination. Geiser Grand Hotel, All Photos by Scott Staats Two places worth a stop are the Geiser Grand Hotel and the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center. I once heard it said that if you travel fast enough around the planet heading east that you can actually go back in time. Although I never hit warp speed, by the time I pulled into Baker City it did feel like the late 1800s. For anyone who loves history, this town will swallow you up. The Cupola Suite of the Geiser Grand Hotel in Baker City, Oregon I've stayed at the Geiser Grand Hotel twice, the last time in their Cupola Suite that overlooks the historic downtown and the Elkhorn Mountains. I also enjoyed one of the best meals of my life on my last visit -– coconut shrimp. Built in 1889 during Eastern Oregon's gold mining boom, the Geiser once had the reputation as being the finest hotel between Salt Lake City and Seattle and served as the Baker City stagestop.

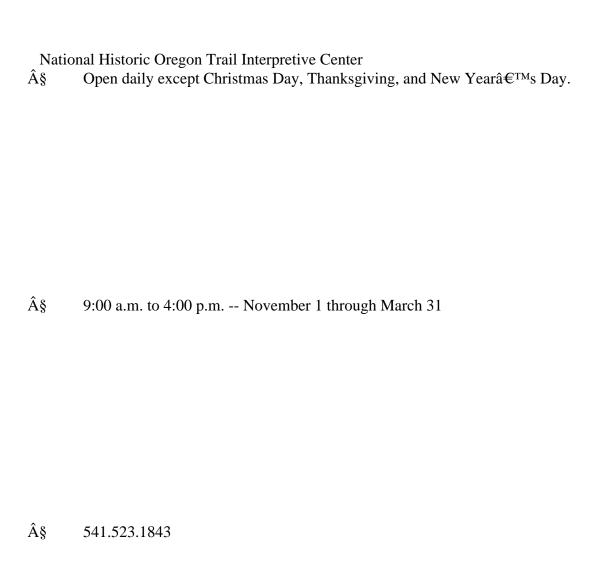
Exploring Baker City: Even an outdoor person spends some time indoors

"Its relationship to the community is what makes the Geiser Grand so unique,― said owner Barbara Sidway. "The hotel reflects the history of the community, its pride, exuberance, confidence, its decline and subsequent rebirth.―
The hotel was saved from demolition by the Sidways in 1993 and reopened in 1998 after about seven million dollars in restoration costs. "The fact that it is a living, breathing hotel just like it was a hundred years ago makes it far more special than if it would have become a museum or turned into condominiums,― said Sidway.
While dining under the hotel's famous stained glass ceiling (the largest in the Pacific Northwest), it didn't take much imagination for me to conjure up visions of white-gloved waiters a century ago serving such delicacies as their renowned Maine lobster or green turtle soup. However, I was very satisfied with the shrimp.









Geiser Grand Hotel, 888.434.7374, www.geisergrand.com

