

## Portlandian Beauty

Escape the scorching summer temperatures in the cool Pacific Northwest and indulge in Portland's eating, drinking and outdoor nirvanas

BY BECCA HENSLEY



Photos Courtesy Shutterstock, Blue Star

Words beginning with B rule when it comes to Portland, Oregon, a one-time blue-collar city turned hipster hamlet. Bucolic is one. Straddling the Willamette River, Portland is just 90 minutes from the waves of the Pacific Coast to the west, and only 50 miles from the otherworldly volcanic spectacle of Mount Hood to the east. Capped with a lugubrious sky that weeps rain more often than

not, the city's return for the gray weather is a carpet of startlingly emerald-colored landscapes. Beauty is also a big reason Portland has earned the nickname City of Roses, which officially comes thanks to its International Rose Test Garden, an expanse of 10,000 plants comprising 500-plus varieties.

Unofficially, Portland also goes by Beervana, a tribute to its more than 50 (and growing) brew houses. Since microbreweries occupy every barrio, quaffers can't go wrong. A few favorites: Southeast's The Commons Brewery turns out award-winning, small craft brews in a farmhouse-like setting. Hopworks Urban Brewery and BikeBar does organic beer in a renewably powered plant that is awash with bike parking. Try its year-round IPA. Or let the friendly guys at BrewCycle Portland show you how to imbibe on a two-wheeled pub crawl. Atop their giant bikes, large enough for 15 riders, you'll pump through Portland's streets, visiting three breweries in two hours, giggling all the way.

Not a beer drinker? Oenophiles get their fix at an increasing number of in-town wineries. The opposite of snobby, these tasting rooms are run by people who are passionate about the fruit of the vine. Try Cyril's at Clay Pigeon Winery. Prefer caffeine? Gulp your libation at the original Stumptown Coffee Roasters on S.E. Division Street, one of Portland's culinary main streets. Closer to downtown, Coava Coffee Roasters, pulls a mean shot of joe in its intimate bean shop.



Though ground zero for veganism and reverential to the bounty of homegrown fruits and veggies sold in its thriving farmers markets, Portland

ADVERTISEMENT

ADVERTISEMENT



lately has another foodie fixation: bacon. Don't even try to get through a day here without nibbling a little pork belly, scarfing up a ham hock or lunching on a loin. Whether in sandwiches, salads, atop

nachos, encased in eggs, as a garnish in your Bloody Mary, or as the main dish, the pig presides.

Pork out at places like Blue Star Donuts in the West End, where a bacon maple glazed variety melts in your mouth. Join the throngs at chatty Tasty n Alder, which specializes in smallish plates brimming with an evolving menu of enticements, such as pork schnitzel served with an over easy egg, ham, havarti and mustard braised cabbage. For a Dagwood that will change your life, nosh at Lardo, which began as a food cart and now boasts two locations. Locals rave over the pork meatball banh mi; the Korean pork shoulder sandwich is also a winner. At Pok Pok, where chef Andy Ricker garnered a James Beard award, feast upon Muu Paa Kham Waan, a garlicky boar collar meat concoction you'll want to wash down with a stout beer.

All the meat and beer necessitates some movement. Fortunately, with its network of paths and warren-like neighborhoods, this burg is exceptionally pedestrian and bike-friendly. Its multiple bridges stitch the two sides of the city together, inviting peregrination back and forth. For walking or biking choose the storybook-like Steel Bridge to cross over. Circa 1912, the romantic architectural marvel has double decks and vintage appeal. Funky neighborhoods abound, each with their own ambiance and collection of individually owned boutiques, galleries and eateries. Hawthorne brims with vintage shops, while the Pearl District has a futuristic warehouse feel. Division and Clinton streets hold blocks and blocks of restaurants, food carts and bars. Try Nob Hill for a ritzier gambol. Adjoining Forest Park, a wooded enclave, is ideal for hikes.

If beer, bridges and bacon aren't enough to convince you of Portland's B orientation, consider one more nominee: books. At Powell's City of Books on Burnside Street, the flagship outpost of the largest independent chain of bookstores on the globe, you'll need a map to find your way around. This immense, block-wide store, which puts both used and new books side-by-side, keeps Portland's love affair with the printed page aflame. Smelling like reams of bound paper should—a musty perfume of ink and pressed wood, cut by a faint whiff of crushed coffee beans—the colossal bibliophile mecca will make you reconsider reading *War and Peace* on a tablet.

Want more culture? Portland's Art Museum, the oldest fine arts museum on the Pacific West Coast, presents a stunning collection. Through Sept. 21, ogle *The Art of the Louvre's Tuileries Garden*, a special exhibit. Or get to one of a host of artful theater-cum-bars kitted out by a creative duo of brothers, the McMenamins. There, you can sip whiskey in a former classroom, watch a movie or throw a party for friends. Preserving historic buildings, turning them into something inventive and eccentric, the developer-restaurateur team mirrors the spirit of Portland, a locale that embraces its roots but willingly and relentlessly reinvents itself with a free spirit's distinctive ingenuity.

There's just one word to describe it all. Beautiful.

## When You Go

**Fly** SAT > PDX Good news: there are lots of options. Bad news: none are direct flights.

**Stay** Catch your z's at The Nines, a boutique haven in the heart of downtown.

[thenines.com](http://thenines.com)

**Eat** James Beard winner Andy Ricker's Thai cuisine at Pok Pok is not to be missed. [pokpokpdx.com](http://pokpokpdx.com)



**Do** Take a stroll in the Portland Japanese Garden, an elegant space that begs you to repose. [japanesegarden.com](http://japanesegarden.com)

---

This article appears in the [August 2014](#) issue of *San Antonio Magazine*  
Did you like what you read here? [Subscribe to San Antonio Magazine »](#)

---

Add your comment:

[Log In](#) [Create an account](#)

Create an instant account, or please log in if you have an account.

Email address (not displayed publicly)

Password

[Forgot your password?](#)

Characters remaining

Please enter the letters from the image below:

[Audio version \(mp3\)](#)

Post

SIGN UP FOR

WEEKEND BEST BETS | SAM SAYS | THE BUZZ | SNEAK PEEK

E-NEWSLETTERS

[Home](#) | [Best of the City](#) | [Arts & Culture](#) | [Eat & Drink](#) | [Events](#) | [Health](#) | [Home & Garden](#) | [Promotions](#) | [Style](#) | [Travel](#) | [Blogs](#)

[About Us](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Archives](#) | [Careers](#) | [Contact](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Subscribe](#)

Copyright 2014 Open Sky Media, Inc.. All rights reserved.

powered by **RIVISTA**