

Angie Beiriger

Portland's restaurants, breweries, and bars

From food carts to fine dining, get ready to eat, drink, and be wowed

As you begin to plan for ACRL 2015, make sure to budget time to find out why Portland has earned a reputation as one of the best food cities in the country. With raves from the likes of *Bon Appétit*, *Forbes*, *Saveur*, and *The New York Times*. Portland has become a true culinary destination. Portland is ground zero for the seasonal, sustainable food movement, and restaurants thrive on partnering directly with local farmers, growers, and ranchers. The surrounding

Willamette Valley offers some of the most vibrant vineyards in the country, producing Pinot Noirs that are prized around Portland and the nation. With more than 60 breweries, Portland's selection of local craft beer is unparalleled in the country. They don't call us Beervana for nothing!

In a town where your cocktail is as thoughtfully composed as your dinner plate, your bartender will show you why Portland's

local distilleries are producing some of the best spirits around.

Even the Portland airport will greet you with amazing food and drink. Restaurants like

Country Cat, **Laurelwood Brewery**, and **Gustav's German-American Pub** have established or are planning restaurants at PDX.

This article includes an array of restaurants, bars, and coffee shops organized by neighborhood. If you have a chance, plan

some time to visit, shop, and play,¹ along with checking out some of these establishments.

Convention Center

The neighborhood around the Oregon Con-



Lush farmland and seasonal produce drive the sustainable, locavore restaurant movement in Portland. Photo credit: J. Bower, <https://flic.kr/p/ddLVje>.

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vention Center is surrounded by chains like Starbucks, Chipotle, and Red Robin, but that doesn't mean there's no great food nearby. For breakfast or lunch, **Pine State Biscuits**, **Gold Rush Coffee Shop**, and **Tiny's Coffee** are a quick bus

trip or a 20-minute walk north on Martin Luther King (MLK) Blvd. Directly across the street from the Convention Center is the hip sports bar **Spirit of '77**, the closest place to grab a local craft beer, watch a game, or play some Skee-ball. A few blocks away, Oregon's version of fast food, **Burgerville**, offers a locally sourced, sustainable menu. More neighborhood offerings will be detailed on a map available at the conference.

About a mile directly north of the Convention Center, accessible via a hearty walk or by bus, is a cluster of excellent restaurants on or near MLK and Russell Streets. **Ox** restaurant features Portland-inspired Argentine food fresh from their indoor wood fired grill. It's very popular, so grab a cocktail at the adjacent **Whey Bar**,

while you wait for table. **Queen of Sheba** offers some of the best Ethiopian food in the city, bring a group and share a platter. **Russell Street BBQ** features huge plates of traditional southern fare and a great tap

list. The immensely popular tapas restaurant **Toro Bravo** serves memorable small plates of Spanish fare. If there's a wait, pop upstairs for amazing cocktails at the intimate hideaway **Secret Society Lounge**.



Lush Willamette Valley Vineyards. Photo credit: Harold Hollingsworth, <https://flic.kr/p/8vbnJT>.

The Lloyd/Broadway district in NE Portland is one of the closest neighborhoods to the Convention Center and is accessible via a quick Max or bus trip. Swing by **Frank's Noodle House** to try their amazing house-made, hand-pulled noodles.

The Blossoming Lotus serves some of the best upscale vegan food and cocktails in town. **The 15th Avenue Hophouse** features sampler trays of their extensive local craft beer tap list. **Milo's City Cafe** is a popular destination for neighborhood locals.



Toro Bravo Spanish Tapas. Photo credit: Lydia Brooks, <https://flic.kr/p/bucW6B>.

Board the Portland Streetcar at the Convention Center and venture down MLK to a couple of lovely culinary neighborhoods. About a mile south is the up-and-coming Lower Burnside Area. **Le Pigeon** is often on critic's "best restaurant" lists and focuses on fine dining in a casual atmosphere. True to its name, the **Farm Cafe** is one of Portland's original farm-to-table restaurants offering a lovely vegetarian selection and a fabulous wine

list. For cheap eats, grab a slice and pint at the ever-popular and slightly grungy **Sizzle Pie**. Or stay on the streetcar heading south to Taylor and walk a few blocks to the Water Avenue restaurants, bars, and coffee shops. Enjoy Italian-inspired dishes at **Clarklewis**, one of Portland's most established locavore establishments. The very popular **Boke Bowl** offers steaming bowls of the tastiest ramen in town. Peruse the vast selection of seasonal sandwiches at **Bunk Bar** while you sample the great tap list. Order a carefully crafted latte at **Water Avenue Coffee** and make sure you grab some freshly micro-roasted beans to take home as a souvenir. Cross Grand Avenue to grab a cheap and tasty taco at **Robo Taco**.

Mississippi and Williams Avenues

Accessible via the bus or a cab ride, Mississippi Avenue District and the nearby Williams Avenue are worth a trip for their diverse culinary offerings. Mississippi has a pretty high density of bars, restaurants, and food carts. Fresh, seasonal ingredients are the hallmark of the immensely popular taco joint **¿Por Qué No?**

Taqueria. Head over to **Lovely's Fifty-fifty** for some of the city's best wood-fired pizza. Grab a seat at the huge patio for great food,



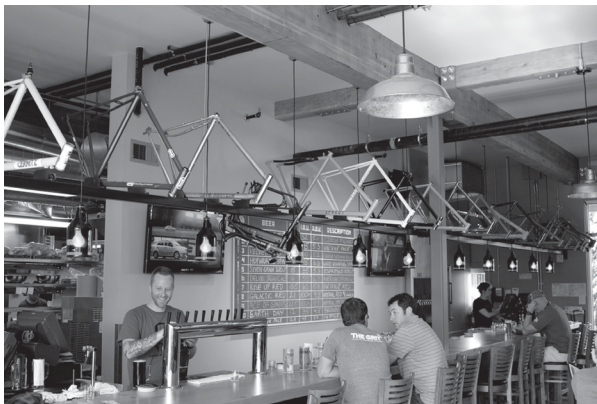
Handmade ramen noodles at Boke Bowl. Photo credit: David Burn, <https://flic.kr/p/cXkXRJ>.

fantastic beers, and excellent people watching at **Stormbreaker Brewing**. Pop over to nearby Williams Avenue for fresh and innovative cuisine at Lincoln restaurant. Bike aficionados will love the organic beers and multitude of vintage frames at **Hopworks Bike Bar**. Made from scratch and infused with specialty ingredients, the ice cream at **What's the**

Scoop will be a perfect end to your day.

Alberta Arts District

On this expansive street, you could spend all day wandering in and out of fantastic restaurants. Specialized food carts, Thai restaurants, and Mexican taco joints abound on Alberta, and it is a great street for breakfast and brunch options. The street is a must-visit for vegans and vegetarians. You can get killer vegan food, beers, and cocktails at **The Bye and Bye** vegan bar, indulge your inner comfort food addict with veggie diner food at **Vita Cafe**,



Bikes and organic beer rule at Hopworks Bike Bar. Photo credit: Will Vanlue, <https://flic.kr/p/9TktpE>.

and experience exceptionally elegant plates at the vegetarian oasis **Natural Selection**. Locals and critics rave at the upscale, exceptionally creative plates at **Aviary Restaurant**.

Townshend's Teahouse offers stellar tea selection and kombucha on tap, and **Random Order Coffeehouse** has a devoted following for its homemade pie and tasty cocktails.



Apex offers a huge outdoor patio and an extensive beer list. Photo credit: Scott Beale, <https://flic.kr/p/dUZCKz>.

SE Portland Division, Hawthorne, and Belmont

Accessible from buses downtown or a cab ride from the Convention Center, three close-in SE streets offer great options to dine like locals. Division Street has recently emerged as a premier foodie destination. Restaurants

like **Pok Pok**, **Ava Gene's**, and the **Woodsman Tavern** have received national recognition and a dedicated following. Plenty of cheaper and quicker options are available without the reservation or lines. Try **Bollywood Theater** for fresh and original Indian street food,



Communal tables and open space of Clyde Common. Photo credit: VJ Beauchamp, <https://flic.kr/p/31ukty>.

Nuestra Cocina for fresh, authentic Mexican, or **Pizza Maria** for you-know-what. With flavors like Stumptown Coffee and Burnside Bourbon, **Salt and Straw** ice cream has become a Portland institution, and **Lauretta Jean's** is a local favorite for their awesome

pie. The food cart pod at SE 28th and Division has become a huge hit, check out the ramen at **Hapa PDX**.

On lower Division, **Apex** and **Beer-**

monger's are located across the street from each other and boast the most extensive and best beer lists in the city. Neither serves food so grab something from the neighborhood joints **Double Dragon** (Modern Vietnamese)

or **Taqueria Los Gorditos**. (Outside food is encouraged!) Find out why vegans and carnivores alike rave over the beet tartare at the upscale **Portobello Vegan Trattoria**.

Hawthorne Street is a busy neighborhood with several established restaurants. **Castag-**

na is beloved for its NW-inspired, elegant meals. **Lardo** demonstrates how a sandwich food cart can evolve into a successful restaurant—try the Banh Mi! Transplanted Brooklynites love the pizza at **Apizza Scholls**, and Europhiles enjoy the mussels, frites, and

Belgian beers at **Bazi Bierbrasserie**.

Belmont Street

Belmont is a bit more residential than the other SE strips but has some great places to eat and drink. **Accanto** and **Nostrana** offer

fresh, Italian-inspired dining, but locals also enjoy paleo-friendly **Dick's Kitchen**. **Suzette Creperie** offers seasonally inspired crepes;

might steal the show. **Luc Lac** serves up great Vietnamese dishes with a hip, Portland vibe—the cocktail list, funky decor,



Portland's food carts fill whole city blocks, like this one downtown. Photo credit: John Dalton, <https://flic.kr/p/acfajb>.

they even have a gluten-free option. The cosmopolitan **Aalto Lounge** has great cocktails and a tremendous happy hour. Enjoy the excellent cocktails at **Circa 33**, and look for the bookcase that opens up a secret room. If you're looking for Portland's most authentic English pub, venture up the street to the iconic **Horse Brass**, a true Portland institution.

Downtown (SW)

If you want to skip the cab rides and stick to exploring downtown, you're in luck. There are so many options around the downtown neighborhood, the trouble won't be finding a place, it will be deciding which to choose.

Portland's Central Business District has many more good options for food and drink than most American cities. **Higgins Restaurant and Bar** is a longtime Portland favorite, very classy but not pretentious. Grab a seat in great little bar in the back, peruse the classic cocktail menu, and sample the duck or the pig plate. With their seasonal menu and elegant presentation, **Grüner** will make you believer in excellent alpine food. **Tasty n Alder** may bill itself as a modern steakhouse but their inventive small plates and cheese boards

and pumping music make it a favorite for lunch and late nights.

In the heart of downtown, **Clyde Common** provides a nice cocktail selection, communal dining with fellow travelers, and a great happy hour. More sophisticated and urbane than many Portland restaurants, **Departure** is a good place to see how well Portlanders dress up. Helmed by *Top Chef* alum Greg Gourdet, it offers separate vegan and gluten-free menus as well as amazing views of the city. For another impressive view option, the **Portland City Grill** provides good cocktails in a classic Portland setting, atop the "Big Pink" building. **Imperial** takes broiling and grilling to a new level and the associated **Portland Penny Diner** provides casual counter service and nice take out options.

Food carts abound in downtown but the most extensive and popular (and often shown on TV) area for food courts is located at 10th and Washington—it's like a mini United Nations with their diverse culinary options. Visitors flock to **Voodoo** donuts for the interesting selection in the iconic pink boxes, but many locals prefer **Blue Star** donuts. To unwind after a long day of conferencing, **Bailey's Taproom** is probably the best place downtown to sample local craft brews.

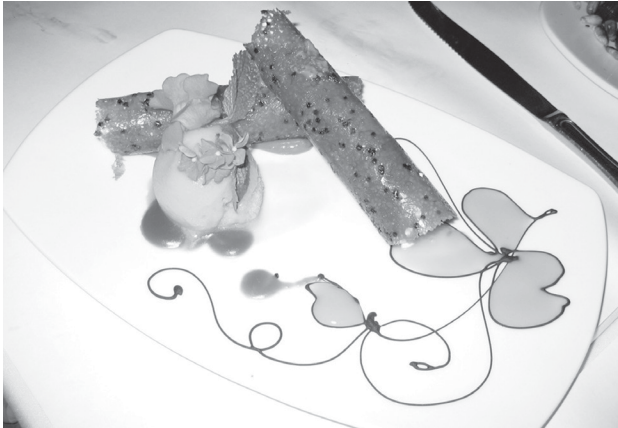
NW and the Pearl District

The Pearl District and outer Northwest neighborhoods host many classic bistros, bars, and coffee shops. **Andina** is the best Peruvian restaurant in the city and serves a legendary Pisco Sour. Located in a charming Victorian House in a bustling neighborhood, **Paley's Place** might be considered the grandfather of Portland's farm-to-table food revolution. **Prasad**

is a lovely haven for healthy vegan, raw, and gluten-free options. In addition to the huge selection of sweet treats at **Pacific Pie Company**, there is a huge selection of scrumptious savory treats like Australian meat pies and veggie pasties. Finish the evening with by sampling the wares at **The Pope House**—

a delightful old house converted into a bourbon bar.

Whew! There really is something for everyone in Portland, and we encourage you to get out and explore on your own. A lot of Portland



Beautifully composed dessert at Andina Restaurant. Photo credit: Little Kenny, <https://flic.kr/p/5avQtY>.

restaurants offer amazing happy hours if you want to get a quick sample of the menu with a cocktail or local craft brew. And remember to look for information on visits to great restaurants during the Dinner with Colleagues night at ACRL

2015. From food carts to fine dining, get ready to eat, drink, and be wowed. Welcome to Portland!

Note

1. Angie Beiriger and Dan Kelley, "Neighborhoods of Portland," *C&RL News* 74, no. 10 (2014): 554–59. *z*

More information on Portland restaurants, breweries, and bars

Additional information on the restaurants, breweries, and bars listed in this article, including address and pricing information, is available at <http://bit.ly/1Jdm0Ns>.

If you'd like to explore on your own, there are several useful restaurant guides to help you choose your own culinary adventure.

Check them out online, or look for a copy around town.

• Eater PDX: pdx.eater.com/

• Oregonian Diner: oregonlive.com/diner-2014/

• Portland Food and Drink: portlandfoodanddrink.com/

• Willamette Week Restaurant, Cheap Eats, and Beer guide: wweek.com/portland/cheapeats

