

Made in PDX: A City of Makers

Written by Becky Antioco

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photo: [TravelPortland.com](#)

Portland, Ore., is a city of makers. Long known for its craft-beer scene and free-spirited vibe, you'll find innovators in each of its distinct neighborhoods, and more culinary options than you could experience in a lifetime. There are famous debates: Voodoo vs. Blue Star doughnuts, Salt & Straw vs. Ruby Jewel ice cream. The one thing everyone can agree on is, there's something about Portland that fosters individuality and creativity, and we visitors are all the happier for it.



photo: [TravelPortland.com](#)

I think the tale of every city is best told through its food, and by walking its neighborhoods. And shopping. But let's start with the food. Which is what I did, with brunch at [Tasty n Alder](#). It's a modern steakhouse, but brunch is really where it's at. The menu is inspired by Chef John Gorham's travels and is a global collaboration of styles and dishes. Great food, creative cocktails, a fun beer and wine list — and a milkshake and fries combo. What more could you want?

Portland was basically the first food-truck hot spot. You'll find pods of trucks throughout the city, but don't miss [Portland Mercado](#). It's the first Latino public market in Portland, representing a vast array of Latin American food, entertainment and products. Bring some friends and sample traditional fare from Mexico, Colombia, Haiti and more.

For a sampling of Portland's more established and iconic foodstuffs, head to [Pine Street Market](#). I couldn't resist a hot dog topped with mac and cheese from OP Wurst (who could?). Thankfully, I was traveling with a group eager to share the bounty, sampling burgers from Bless Your Heart, Korean barbecue from Kim Jong Steakhouse, some Marukin Ramen, topped off with some soft serve from Wiz Bang Bar, brought to you by the owners of Salt & Straw. That was a good day, indeed.



photo: [TravelPortland.com](#)

When out exploring, each of Portland's neighborhoods has a different flavor, if you will. To the southeast, you'll find Division Street, named one of America's 10 Best Foodie Streets by *Food and Wine* magazine, and the eclectic Hawthorne Belmont District. On the west side, The Pearl is Portland's best-known arts district. Nob Hill, or Northwest Portland, gives a glimpse into the city's architectural history, with boutiques housed in the historic Victorian-style homes. Of course, Portland being the city of roses, you can find the International Rose Test Garden in Washington Park. The brand-new Portland Japanese Gardens are a bastion of reflection and solitude in this area as well.

To the northeast, the Mississippi District is quickly emerging as one of the trendiest neighborhoods of east Portland. You could (and I did) spend an afternoon getting lost among the clothing boutiques, specialty markets, neighborhood bars and eateries. Wander over to Alberta Street for a

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multicultural Portland experience.

In Portland, there's a story around every corner. At [ADX](#) you can try your hand at becoming a maker yourself. There are too many coffee roasters to count, but [Cup and Bar](#) (pictured on previous page) combines two of my favorite vices: coffee and chocolate. You can grab a pint of craft beer on nearly every corner, try some specialty tea at [Smith Teamaker](#), or try some of the best chocolate you will ever sample at [Alma Chocolate](#) (pictured above). Is cheese more your thing? Ancient Heritage Dairy is one of the first urban dairies in Portland, and you can buy their specialty cheeses next door at Alma's.



photo: Jamie Francis/TravelPortland.com

An absolute must for those of us in love with the smell of leather and the pleasure of a new handbag or wallet, at [Orox Leather Co.](#) brothers Martin, Kevin and Levi Martinez continue their family tradition of creating handcrafted leather products that are beautiful, stylish and stand the test of time. After purchasing a hat while in Portland, I've been unable to resist the urge to buy gifts from Orox (some for myself) upon my return to Phoenix.

If time is limited, but you want to explore some of the items that boast the slogan, "Made in Portland," [Made Here PDX](#), right across the street from the famous [Powell's Books](#), features products from some of the city's best makers.

Of course, Portland is an outdoor paradise as well, with miles of hiking and biking trails close to the urban center. Countless entrepreneurs have turned their passions and hobbies into thriving Portland businesses. It's nearly impossible to experience all there is to eat, explore, and do in Portland in just one visit, but it's sure fun to try.