

# CONNOISSEUR'S CLUB

PERFECT CITY

## Portland

**P**ORTLAND, OREGON, IS DECIDEDLY an outdoors city with riverfront festivals, art gallery walks, sidewalk dining, and strolls through world-renowned gardens.

The city also is captivating because it is infused with the natural splendor of the Pacific Northwest. Year-round snowboarding and skiing at Mt. Hood, or hiking and camping in the wilderness are within easy reach, as is the rugged Oregon Coast, windsurfing in the Columbia River Gorge, and the quiet desert beauty of Central Oregon.

As a source of pride, locals point to the city's environmental care, its revitalized downtown arts district, and a well-earned national reputation for handcrafted microbrews, small wineries, and coffee houses. Visitors keep coming back because unlike other West Coast cities, one doesn't have to come up with a battle plan to circumvent paralyzed, car-choked freeways. It's a city one can live in.

### FRIDAY AFTERNOON

After flying in to Portland International Airport, board Portland's fast, convenient light rail or catch a cab to your luxury accommodations, **5th Avenue Suites** (888.207.2201; [www.5thavenuesuites.com](http://www.5thavenuesuites.com); 506 SW Washington) in the heart of the city. Favored by many touring performers and dignitaries, the elegant property offers soaring ceilings, picture windows, sliding French doors, and colorful, Old World character. Off the lobby, there's fine dining at the **Red Star Tavern & Roast House**, as well as a full service **Aveda Spa**. Set in the middle of downtown, a block from Pioneer Place Shopping Center and Saks Fifth Avenue, the hotel also is within easy walking distance of Nordstrom. Don't forget, Oregon has no sales tax.



The best way to get a sense of the city is to walk five blocks to **Governor Tom McCall Waterfront Park**, a 1.5-mile stretch of lawn that hugs the Willamette River and is home to a number of nationally renowned festivals. The park's mostly level loop allows the best glimpse of the city's riverfront skyline, as well as breathtaking views of **Mt. Hood** and the still active volcano, **Mount St. Helens**.

### FRIDAY EVENING

After working up an appetite, head to Portland's revitalized **Pearl District**, which contains an impressive collection of art galleries, boutiques, and restaurants created out of the city's industrial sector. For a fusion of Caribbean, South and Central American cooking, served with foot-tapping Salsa music, dine at **Oba!** (503.228.6161; [www.obarestaurant.com](http://www.obarestaurant.com); 555 NW 12th Ave.). Attracting Portland's younger professional crowd, Oba's bar offers an impressive menu of Northwest wines and exotic cocktails. For a relaxing nightcap, there are plenty of trendy nearby watering holes. But for the best nighttime vista, stroll over to the **Portland City Grill** (503.450.0030; [www.portlandcitygrill.com](http://www.portlandcitygrill.com); 111 SW Fifth Ave.) where singles and businessfolk congregate for a bird's-eye, 360-degree view of the city.

### SATURDAY MORNING

Enjoy a memorable breakfast at the new **Everett Street Bistro** in the Pearl District (503.467.4990; [www.everettstreetbistro.com](http://www.everettstreetbistro.com); 1140 NW Everett St.). Indulge in Dungeness crab eggs Benedict or a scramble with Black Forest ham, local Tillamook white cheddar, and caramelized shallots.

Around the corner is one of the world's great bookstores: **Powell's City of Books** (503.228.4651; [www.powells.com](http://www.powells.com); 1005



Visual wonders surround Portland, including the nation's second-highest, year-round waterfall (facing page) and a replica of Stonehenge (above). The city boasts a superb park (right) and Powell's bookstore (below).

W Burnside). Open every day, its towering maze of shelves holds a wonderful jumble of new, used, and rare books. The store is a renowned local respite from the noise of digital communication.

### SATURDAY AFTERNOON & EVENING

In 1905, Portland, aka the "City of Roses," had 200 miles of rose bush-lined streets to draw attention to the Lewis & Clark Centennial. Today, a visit to the city isn't complete without perusing the **International Rose Test Garden** in Washington Park (503.823.3636; [www.portlandonline.com/parks](http://www.portlandonline.com/parks); 400 SW Kingston Ave.). The garden is one of the largest and oldest in the country, with more than 8,000 rose bushes. Above the garden, don't miss one of the most authentic **Japanese gardens** outside of Japan ([www.japanesegarden.com](http://www.japanesegarden.com)); spread over five acres, it features a lovely pavilion and a ceremonial teahouse.

For lunch, head to Portland's best pizza at nearby **Old Town Pizza** (503.222.9999; [www.oldtownpizza.com](http://www.oldtownpizza.com); 226 NW Davis). The parlor's haunted history will get your attention, while you sample a wide variety of local microbrews. Beneath the restaurant's rustic floorboards snake the **Shanghai Tunnels**, where, in the late 1800s, unsuspecting men were kidnapped and spirited off to work on ships headed for the Orient. Schedule a 90-minute tour of the tunnels in advance (503.622.4798; [www.members.tripod.com/cgs-mthood/shanghai\\_tunnels.htm](http://www.members.tripod.com/cgs-mthood/shanghai_tunnels.htm)).

Nearby, at the **Portland Saturday Market** ([www.portland-saturdaymarket.com](http://www.portland-saturdaymarket.com)), you'll find plenty of eclectic crafts to appeal to your inner hippie, including jewelry, wooden toys, clothing, and pottery created by local artisans. The market is open Saturday (10 a.m. to 5 p.m.), rain or shine, under the west end of the Burnside Bridge.

Finish your evening with an intimate culinary experience at **Paley's Place** (503.243.2403; [paleysplace.citysearch.com](http://paleysplace.citysearch.com); 1204 NW

21st Ave.). Preparing regional dishes with a French flair in a cozy setting, Paley's is one of the finest sites to indulge in the area's wealth of fish, meat, and produce. During the summer, the menu is likely to feature melt-in-your-mouth fresh Oregon Troll salmon and black and white truffles. During my last visit, I had a tender, suckling pig slow-roasted on the restaurant's rooftop spit. After dinner, stroll by the upscale shops and galleries on NW 23rd Ave.

### SUNDAY MORNING

The **Columbia River Gorge** is the area's must-see natural treasure. The majestic 80-mile-long channel, cut 4,000 feet into the Cascade

Mountain Range, draws droves of windsurfers and hikers. The most visually stunning way to experience the Gorge is to make a short drive to **Multnomah Falls**, the second-highest, year-round waterfall in the nation. Take the scenic route along the old Columbia River Highway for incomparable views of the Gorge, Mt. Hood, and several other famous waterfalls. Be sure to take a short hike to the stone **Benson Bridge**

that spans the cascade between its two tiers. If you wish, you can hike another mile up a very steep path to reach the top of the falls. (Check with rangers first for trail conditions.)

After your hike, enjoy Sunday brunch at the **Skamania Lodge** on the Washington State side of the Columbia River (509.427.7700; [www.skamania.com](http://www.skamania.com); 1131 SW Skamania Lodge Way, Stevenson). A great way to cap off a visit is to drive to the nearby **Maryhill Museum of Art** (509.773.3733; [www.maryhill-museum.org](http://www.maryhill-museum.org); 35 Maryhill Museum Dr., Goldendale) for an inspiring collection of Rodin sculptures and a full-sized replica of Stonehenge. Next door you can toast your trip at the **Maryhill Winery** (877.627.9445; [www.maryhillwinery.com](http://www.maryhillwinery.com); 9774 Highway 14, Goldendale) with a glass of its signature Syrah.

If wine is your passion, and you still have another day, you'll want to head south of Portland to tour vineyards in the **Willamette Valley** ([www.willamettewines.com](http://www.willamettewines.com)). Oregon's leading wine region has more than 200 wineries and is recognized as one of the premier Pinot Noir-producing spots in the world. —Deston Nokes



ABOVE LEFT: MERVYN REES/ALAMY ABOVE RIGHT: DANITA DELMONT/ALAMY INSET: NEIL RABINOWITZ/CORBIS LEFT: RON NIEBRUGG/ALAMY ABOVE: WARREN MORGAN/CORBIS