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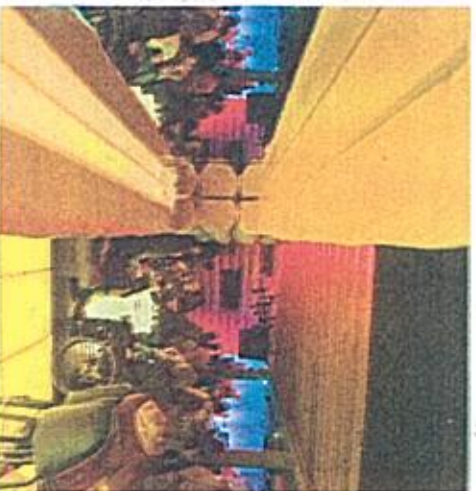
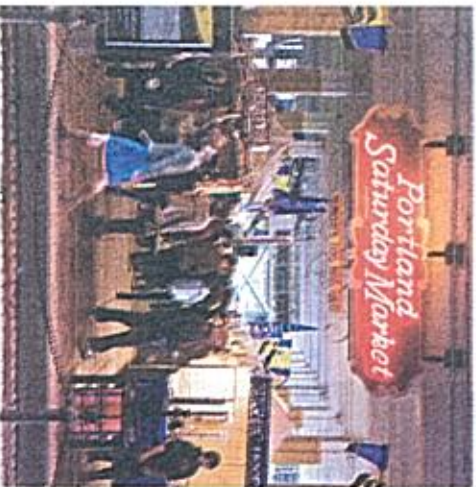
\$5 beyond the great

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TR 13

36 HOURS

Portland, Ore.



From left, the Portland Saturday Market; the Doug Fir Lounge, a place to hear up-and-coming bands; coffee at the St. Honoré Boulangerie; combing the shelves at Powell's City of Books.

Photographs by Bill Childers for The New York Times

The New York Times

Travel

“NICE” is an adjective that Portland, Ore., can't seem to shake. But below the fleece-clad and Teva-wearing exterior lurks a cool and refreshingly unneurotic city that marches to its own cosmopolitan beat. Truth is, Portland doesn't want to be Seattle, its highly caffeinated neighbor to the north. With less traffic, better public transportation and Mount Hood in its backyard, this self-styled City of Roses doesn't stand in anybody's shadow. Its vibrant downtown overflows with urban pleasures like chic restaurants, funky nightclubs and spritely neighborhood's cranking with youthful energy, but nobody's boasting. That's another nice thing about Portland.

Friday

6 p.m.

● Fresh Orientation

The pastel roses don't peak at the International Rose Test Garden (400 SW Kingston Avenue, 503-823-3636; www.rosegardentest.org) until late spring, but it doesn't matter: the view from this hillside terraced garden is fantastic year-round. Even if it's too

THE BASICS

Delta and JetBlue fly direct from Kennedy Airport to Portland. Continental has direct service from Newark. Round-trip fares run as low as \$218. From Portland International Airport, the 20-minute taxi ride to downtown costs about \$30. Better yet, do as the environmentally conscious locals do, and hop on the MAX Light Rail red line (www.tranet.org). The ride takes 30 minutes and costs \$2. Portland has an excellent public transportation system.

An \$8 million renovation turned the stodgy, historic Hotel Malloy into the chic, charming **Hotel Deluxe** (729 SW 15th Avenue, 866-895-2094; www.hoteldeluxeportland.com). The 130-room hotel has Art Deco Noir-style decor, a 24-hour gym, iPod docking stations and a spiritual menu (your choice of religious text). Doubles go from \$169 to \$249.

Portland's most original lodging is the Kennedy School (5736 NE 33rd Avenue, 888-249-9893; www.kennedyschool.com), a former elementary school that has been transformed into an elegant hotel. You can fall asleep in a classroom, grab a beer in the Detention Bar, or have breakfast in the mahogany-paneled cafeteria. Doubles range from \$89 to \$114.

The **Paramount Hotel** (808 SW Taylor Street, 503-223-9900; www.portlandparamount.com) has 154 spacious rooms, sophisticated style and is close to everything in downtown Portland. Doubles are priced from \$149 to \$179.

bird-soaked to see Mount Hood, you still get a bird's-eye view of colorful wood-frame houses surrounding a tidy grove of skyscrapers. Breathe in the pine-scented air and stretch your legs on the hillside paths of this precious chunk of green, five minutes from downtown by car (or 15 minutes on the efficient MAX Light Rail).

7:30 p.m.

● Bright Brasserie

The trendy Pearl neighborhood, Portland's answer to SoHo, has evolved rapidly from a raw industrial zone to a neighborhood of galleries, parks and condos. Take in the district's new maturity at the French restaurant Fenouil (900 NW 11th Avenue, 503-525-2225; www.fenouilthepearl.com). A sleek, soaring space, Fenouil makes the most of its location overlooking Jamison Park with big windows that roll up like garage doors in nice weather. Brasserie classics like roast duck with Armagnac prunes (\$26) and steak frites (\$27) join dishes like pumpkin and mushroom gnocchi (\$21), fried frog legs (\$12.50) and lobster beignets (\$14).

10:30 p.m.

● Downtown D.J.

With grunge fading into music history, Portland's nightlife scene has become a mixed bag — everything from jazz clubs to torchy boules to high-decibel indie hang-outs. H2O Martini Bar and Restaurant (204 SW Yamhill Street; 503-241-8122) draws a slightly older (up to 35) and dressier (neither jeans nor sneakers were seen) crowd. D.J.'s mix it up every night — salsa, hip-hop and house music — in a shiny space with three walk-in terraces.

Saturday

10:30 a.m.

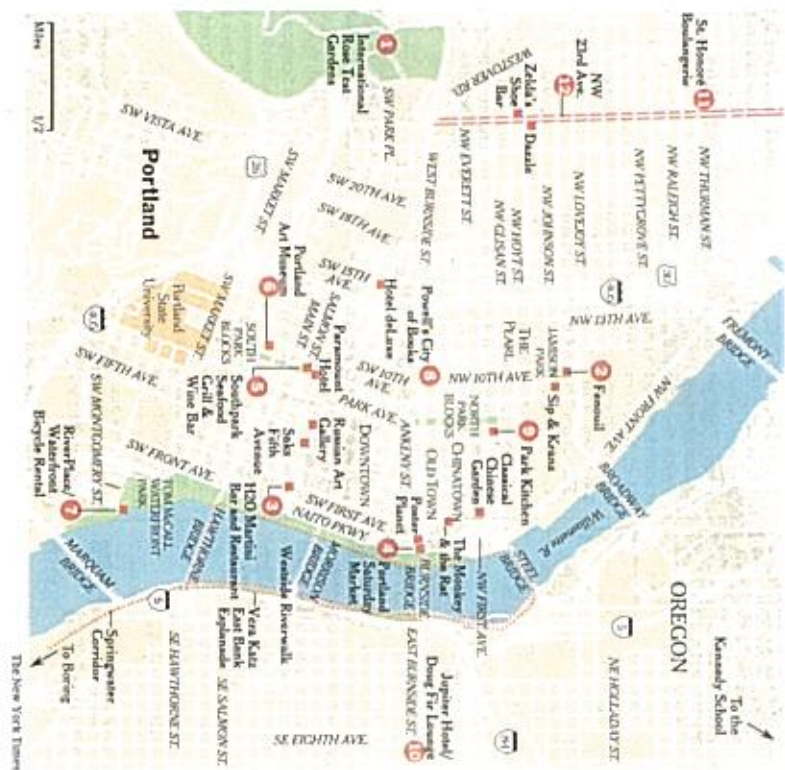
● Market to Teahouse

Even if you can't stand handcrafted soaps, dangly earrings, gauzy scarves, chunky ceramics, fancy pet bows, sloppy, street food and the people who make them, the Portland Saturday Market is worth visiting (www.portlandsaturdaymarket.com). Tucked under the Burnside Bridge, the market is a perfect starting point for a leisurely walk, with the east-front buildings of Old Town on one side, and the Westside Riverwalk on the other. Continue south to Foster Plant (28 SW First Avenue, 503-525-9373) for movie and art posters; the Monkey & the Rat (131 NW Second Avenue, 503-224-3849; www.themonkeyandtherat.com) for imported furniture; and the serene Classical Chinese Garden (239 NW Everett Street, 503-226-8131; www.portlandchinese.org), where you can refuel with a cup of tea in the ornate teahouse beside Zither Lake.

12:30 p.m.

● Strategize Over Lunch

Downtown Portland has about five neighborhoods, each with its own mood and fla-



vor, but it isn't very big. In 20 minutes, you can walk from Chinatown in the northwest to the cultural district in the southwest. Which brings you to lunch. At Southpark Seafood Grill & Wine Bar (901 SW Salmon Street, 503-326-1300; www.southparkcitysearch.com), you can plunk at the bar for a quick meal and ask for sightseeing suggestions from the young downtown crowd. Seafood holds center stage, including fried calamari and vegetables with spicy aioli (\$8.50) and a risotto with prawns, peas and pancetta (\$13.50).

2 p.m.

● Art or Shopping?

South Park puts you at the incongruous crossroads between the Portland Art Museum (1219 SW Park Avenue, 503-226-2811; www.portlandartmuseum.org) and Saks Fifth Avenue (850 SW Fifth Avenue, 503-226-3200; www.saksfifthavenue.com). Art lovers may be drawn to the museum's impressive collection of photographs, which runs the gamut from 19th-century daguerreotypes to contemporary landscapes, and Japanese scrolls from the Edo period. Shopping, meanwhile, may be tempted because the Portland store is the only Saks in the Pacific Northwest. Saksify both desires at the nearby Russian Art Gallery (518 SW Yamhill Street, 503-224-5070), which carries religious icons (\$800 to \$5,000), nesting dolls

(\$10 to \$700) and Gabel pottery, all imported from Russia.

4 p.m.

● Roll Out of Town Slowly

Shash your stuff, don your Spandex and rent a bicycle at RiverPlace, the shop- and restaurant-filled esplanade along downtown's eastern edge. Waterfront Bicycle Rentals has bikes starting at \$8.50 an hour or \$15 for a full day (6315 SW Montgomery Street, No. 300; 503-227-1719; www.waterfrontbikes.net). If you're feeling mellow, ride the three-mile loop that goes north to Tom McCall Waterfront Park, across the river to the Vera Katz East Bank Esplanade, and back across on the Hawthorn Bridge. For a tougher workout, stay on the East Bank Esplanade and continue south on the Springs Water Corridor for an 18-mile ride through the city's semirural outskirts. The trail terminates at the town of Boring.

6 p.m.

● City of Books

It says a lot about Portland that Powell's City of Books (1005 West Burnside, 503-226-4651; www.powells.com) is one of the city's prime attractions — a store so big that it provides maps. The dusty, well-lit store is larger than many libraries, with 68,000

square feet of new and used books. If your energy starts to flag, grab an espresso on the premises or, better yet, walk a few blocks north to Sip & Krantz (901 NW 10th Avenue, 503-336-1333; www.sipandkrantz.com), the nearest source for Stumptown Coffee, considered by many to be Portland's finest.

8 p.m.

● Hot Reservation

Serious foodies head to Park Kitchen (422 NW Eighth Avenue, 503-223-7275; www.parkkitchen.com). In a former garage, the restaurant has a warren of dark and cozy rooms that faces an open kitchen, where the chef and owner, Scott Dolich, combines elements of French, Italian and Northwest cooking in an imaginative fusion all his own. Start with the green garlic and lamb stew with preserved lemon (\$23.50) or pork belly made with pumpkin seeds and oranges (\$10.50). Main courses include lamb with curried spinach (\$23.50), and seared salmon with potatoes, sorrel and leeks (\$24.50). The food may sound fussy, but the results are subtly superb.

10:30 p.m.

● Hang Out, Rock On

Check out the latest indie bands at Doug Fir Lounge, connected to the trendy Jupiter Hotel (830 East Burnside Street, 503-231-9663; www.dougfir.com). It is Portland's primo spot to hang out, drink beer (draft Black Butte porter for \$4), rub shoulders with the young and pierced and catch emerging groups like the Decemberists. The room is surprisingly modern and woodsy for a dance club, with gold-toned lighting, a fire pit and walls clad in Douglas fir logs.

Sunday

8:30 a.m.

● Petit Dejeuner, S'il Vous Plait

For a taste of Paris, pop over to St. Honoré Boulangerie (2335 NW Thurman Street, 503-445-4342; www.salthonorebakery.com). A French-style bakery where Dominique Guélin bakes almond croissants (\$2.95), apple pleasure turnovers (\$3.50) and Normandy apple toast (\$3.25) — a mix of French toast, brioche and custard. The cafe is airy, with huge windows and lots of wicker. Equally important, the coffee (Café Uber) is among the city's finest (\$2.45 for a latte).

9:30 a.m.

● How Nice

As you make your way back downtown, window-shop along trendy NW 23rd Avenue, where you'll find cool shops like Dazzle (No. 704; 503-224-1294), which carries funky jewelry, and Zaida's Shoe Bar (No. 633; 503-226-0363). Then head east to the Pearl district, where Portlanders often congregate at Jamison Park to play bocce, sip coffee, hang out on the fountain steps and back in the likeness that pervades their city. ■