

Two Days in Portland

Portland, Oregon has quietly become a destination. It has done so not just for the civically minded who come to marvel at a public transportation system that rivals any found abroad, and not merely for itinerant bookhounds to worship at the temple that is Powell's, the largest independent new and used bookstore in the world. Portland also may very well be the leading contender to the throne when it comes to the pairing of sustainability with culinary sensibility.

Certainly start after touching down in the afternoon at Powell's, whose preeminence in this tidy but dynamic city speaks to the literacy of its inhabitants. After becoming lost for hours in its stacks, emerge to walk through the gently-drizzled streets of Portland. The core of the city is a mere five blocks wide and twenty blocks long, but its skirts trail off in all directions.

When the feet finally fatigue, dinner beckons. In its unique three-level design, with a ceiling of pressed tin and floors of polished wood, Higgins Restaurant and Bar on SW Broadway has become recognized as one of the preeminent proponents of Northwest cuisine. But one meal is not enough for this evening—venture to Paley's Place on NW 21st Avenue, where a similar commitment to high quality local ingredients is infused with a cosmopolitan sensibility befitting the owners' previous stints in New York and France.

For a nightcap, the abode of the moment is the Jupiter Hotel—chic, buzzing, and thoroughly not conducive to sleeping. If a restful snooze is in the offing, the Hotel Lucia offers a cool, modern take where dreams will come.

The next morning brings a short jaunt following breakfast at the charming Bijou Café, where the potatoes and the muffins defy faint praise. A little further away but readily reachable by the omnipresent buses is Washington Park at the base of the West Hills. Here can be found the Washington Park Zoo, the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, the World Forestry Center, and the twin jewels of the Rose Garden and the Japanese Garden.

Wander back for an early dinner at Wildwood. Its opening in 1994 heralded the seminal development of regional dishes and the notion of "cooking from the source". Although Cory Schreiber has turned over his reins after 13 years at the helm, the restaurant continues to maintain the same high standards that made it a culinary touchstone.

Before leaving, be sure to visit one of the six sparkling New Seasons markets, an exemplar of merchandising elegance whose

adherence to a philosophy of local and sustainable foods effectively precludes their expansion beyond Portland.