

WHAT TO SEE IN PORTLAND, OR

Listed below you will find a couple of sights and my personal favourites to do in Portland. Since Portland was my town of exchange I do not know as many things about the other cities like Eugene, Corvallis, Ashland or La Grande. However, it would be just great if somebody could add tips about their places similar to the ones here, too! Please feel free to forward them to me ([marcobehrmann\[at\]web.de](mailto:marcobehrmann[at]web.de)). I do not want you to believe that just because I stayed in Portland, and have many tips here for Portland, that a year at one of the other Oregon cities is not the same exciting. The tips listed here, however, are interesting for all Baden-Wuerttemberg students in Oregon, because many things you can already see and experience during your orientation weeks.

(BTW: This is almost everything I did (among other things, of course) within my 2 ½ weeks of re-visiting in June 2004; but it took me a year of living in the city in 2001/02 to figure out which were the hot tips ☺)

Here are my personal Must-Sees

- Oregon History Center in SW Park blocks right south of PSU (This museum features very interesting and well researched exhibitions about the development of Portland as a city as well as about the whole Pacific Northwest as it was discovered from the sea and the Columbia River; good place to check out during your orientation weeks; you get a student reduction with ISIC or other student ID card)
- Council Crest Park (considered the highest spot in Portland; nice views to Mt Hood, Mt Adams, Mt St Helens and even Mt Rainier on some days as well as to Beaverton; take Bus 51 [Vista]; the Bus driver often feels himself as an informal Portland guide; tell him that you are visiting and he even might stop for you at nice viewpoints to take pictures. If you go by bike, you cross the Vista Bridge [Nickname: Suicide Bridge], however, the hill is steep)
- Pittock Mansion (enjoy one of the best views to Portland from NW; Bus 20 [W Burnside], may need to walk a bit (The museum however is not worth the money, but the view from the Park, which is even for free!))
- Rocky Butte: Joseph Wood Hill Park (My favourite spot in NE Portland: views to Mt St Helens, Mt Hood, Mt Tabour, PDX Airport, the Columbia River, Portland downtown)
- Mount Tabour (in SE Portland [ca. SE Hawthorne & 60th] one of only two still active volcanoes within city borders worldwide; nice view downtown and to Mt Hood; take Bus 15 or the bike)
- Japanese Garden (best Portland Skyline calendar view; also make sure to see through a spot of the trees to Mt Adams)
- International Rose Test Garden (wonderful in late May and early June; again: nice views)
- Washington Park (take the red or blue westbound Maxline and make sure to check out the Washington Park station)
- NW 23rd Ave ("Nobhill"): Nice restaurants, pubs, coffee shops and shops: The In-Street [Take Portland Streetcar or Bus 15 NW23rd]
- Brew Pubs (e. g. Bridgeport Brew Pub [NE Marshall & 14th] or Lucky Labradaor [SE Hawthorne & 9th], etc.)

- Happy hour appetizers at many SW Portland Restaurants (For about two dollars plus a purchase of a drink you get a good meal! And maybe enjoy the nice location. Tip about 15-20% here!)
My personal favourites:
 - "Stanford's" at Riverfront Marina and
 - "McCormick's & Schmick's" at Riverfront Marina as well as
 - on the 30th (!) floor [the view is gorgeous!] of the US Bancorp Tower [W Burnside & 6th] the "Portland City Grill"
- People Watching: A good place for is Pioneer Courthouse Square (from the Starbucks right on the top of the fountain); but any coffee shop is just fine for people watching
- Powell's bookstore: largest independent bookstore in the world (W Burnside & 10th)
- Portland Saturday Market (Saturdays and Sundays under the west end of Burnside Bridge)
- Shopping: Lloyd Center (largest Portland downtown shopping mall; you can get there by an red or blue eastbound Maxline within fareless square; there is an ice stadion within the shopping mall)
- Portland Chinatown Gate (nicer than the one in San Francisco)
- Chrystal Springs Rhododendron Garden in SE Portland near the Reed College (Bus 19 [Woodstock], or if you take the bike, you better come from North taking 12th, because Bybee Bridge across a little creek there is closed for reconstruction until September 2004. This park is very nice early in the year (March – May when the Rhododendrons are flourishing. Admission is free on Tuesdays and Wednesdays and from November to March)
- Bike the bridges (even TriMet [the public transport company in Portland] has released a little biking guide including this tip)
- For bikers: Springwater Corridor: Very nice biking trip through all SE Portland. Start at the OMSI going south. You can go as far as Gresham and take the Maxline back. This paved off-traffic-trail used to be a railway track.
- Willamette Jetboat Excursion. I just did it five days ago! Wow! You will get wet. So choose a great and sunny day. I did it once in October which probably was not the right time. They run from May to October. It is worth the money (28\$). You get many stories about all (!) Portland bridges (not only the ones in downtown!), the Willamette River, Portland's famous or well-off inhabitants, and the Willamette falls. The tour takes about 2.25 hrs and goes north as far as St John's Bridge and south as far as Oregon City on the Willamette. Board at the USS Blueback Submarine near the OMSI south of SE Hawthorne Bridge
- Seasonal: Christmas Lights:
 - SE Peacock Lane (around Christmas for one of the most known Xmas Light Streets in Portland)
 - The Grotto (very nice at Christmas for the Xmas Lights, but also nive Mt St Helens & Mt Adams views during the day from the upper level where the convent is located; use elevator for a small fee)
 - Oregon Zoo (in Washington Park: also Christmas Light Parade)
- Oregon City:
 - Oregon Trail Center (good tour and very good tourist information center)
 - Willamette Falls
 - Oregon City's "public" elevator

This is what you might want to see, but in my opinion is not among the upper priorities

- Willamette Stone State Park (the smallest State Park of Oregon, in NW Portland; this is basically the zero-meridian for the West of the US from where every claim used to be referred to. Right on the border between two counties near the big cemeteries. Nearby: Nice views to Mt St. Helens. Take Bus 20 [W Burnside] and good hiking shoes. You might want to connect this trip with your Pittock Mansion visit)
- Mill's End Park (smallest park in the world, Guinness book of records [SW Naito & Taylor]; my flowerpot at home is smaller, though...)
- USS Blueback Submarine Tour (quite interesting, but just a submarine; it was one of the submarines used in the movie "The Hunt for Red Octobre" (Sean Connery) before it was brought to Portland)
- OMSI: Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (you can really leave this out if you do not have kids with you)
- Oregon Maritime Museum: at the Waterfront (SW Naito Ave near the Saturday Market). However, the steam wheeler on the waterfront belongs to that museum too. The movie Maverick (w/ Jodie Foster) was filmed on that boat.)
- Ira Keller's fountain (east of PSU campus near the PSU bookstore)
- Oak's Amusement Park (in SE Portland at the Willamette): a good place to spend money, though... ;-)
- Oregon City: John Mc Laughlin House (just a house...)
- Vancouver, WA: historic Fort, historic Victorian houses (Marshall's row)

You can get more detailed information from good tour books

Also, a new book that I just found published in the 2nd edition is:

- "The Portland Handbook – A practical guide to international residents"
This book includes much interesting information about not only institutions you need, places to go, sight to see, rental, insurance, public transport, buying a car etc. but also about architecture, history etc. in Portland, OR! Very well done. You can definitely get it at Powell's. Might also be available via Amazon.

What also helps much for getting around in the city (not as much for cultural issues, though ;-;) are:

- the Yellow Pages (called "QuestDex" in Oregon)

Free Newspaper: There are weekly free newspapers with more good places and tips. For Portland, make sure to grab the

- "Willamette Week" (Wednesdays),
- "The Portland Tribune" (twice a week) or
- "The Portland Mercury"