

# The Ultimate Portland, OR Bucket List

Maybe you've watched the pilot of *Portlandia* or have several Portland food cart names saved on a list in your phone... Either way, it's not an overstatement when we say that Portland, OR, is truly iconic. Located on the coast of the Pacific Northwest, Portland, OR is the [top place to live in Oregon](#) with its *Twilight*-esque nature and several delicious donut shops. However, Portland offers much more than just the luscious PNW nature and sugary treats. In fact, we've compiled a list of 13 must-dos to add to your Portland bucket list. So whether you've lived in Portland your whole life, are just moving into your [rental home](#), visiting for the weekend, or are [apartment hunting](#), you're sure to find something in this article to pique your interest.

## 1. Feast at the food carts

Starting off this Portland bucket list with you guessed it, food carts! Portland has a renowned food scene and believe it or not, some of the best bites can be found at food carts.

Our first recommendation is [Montavilla Food Carts](#) located just two blocks from Montavilla park in Eastern Portland. This spot has plenty of outdoor seating and 15 diverse food carts with a variety of options. "Whether you're looking for a Portland staple gyros and burgers, indulge in some Thai or Indian, or perhaps just get a drink from Bobablastic or the beer cart, Yard's got you covered," says The Yard Management's Aleksa Belic.

Our other food truck spot is [Hinterland Bar and Carts](#) also located in Eastern Portland. "The cart lineup at Hinterland includes Paper Plane (burgers), Hunker Down (elevated bar food), Thai Panther (family style Thai food), Pizza Gold (slices and whole pies), and award-winning Matt's BBQ Tacos (tacos)," describes Hunker Down's owner Ryan Schenk. Not only do they have amazing food, but they also feature a cocktail menu, eclectic assortment of local beers on draft, and indoor and outdoor spaces – perfect for dining year round. "All of these touches make Hinterland one of the most elevated and unique bar and food cart destinations in Portland," claims Ryan.

## 2. Create something new

If you're in the mood to get creative, we can't suggest [High Low](#) enough! This cozy artist-run space in Southeast Portland offers both regular classes and guest workshops perfect for all levels. They focus on realist drawing and painting, but their main mission is to "share our enthusiasm for fine art by making art education as affordable and accessible as possible," describes fine artist and illustrator Chaitanya Thompson.

## 3. Become a bookworm at Powell's

It wouldn't be a Portland bucket list without mentioning Powell's City of Books! This bookstore is truly a cultural landmark with its vast selection, cozy reading nooks, and unique flair. If you're

looking to convert one of your [spare rooms](#) in your [Portland, OR home](#), you're sure to find several spines you want to fill your shelves with. Even if you're not a self-proclaimed bibliophile, this store is truly a must next time you're downtown.

## 4. Take an architectural walking tour

Love architecture? The [Architectural Heritage Center](#) (AHC) is one of Portland's best kept secrets! AHC offers several options and takes extreme pride in introducing people to Portland's unique, historic, and most interesting architecture. "Whether it's a walking tour of one of Portland's many neighborhoods, an exhibit in the West's Block building on the Central Eastside with items from the foundation's one-of-a-kind collection, or an engaging talk on Portland's history, the AHC wants to help you get to know Portland, inside and out," says communications manager Cailee Cunningham.

## 5. Caffeinate up – the PDX way

One of the things the PNW – specifically Portland – [is known for is its coffee](#), so we'd be remiss to not include one of our favorite cafes. Located between downtown and Old Town, [Kilo D'Cofi](#) offers the rich and diverse flavors of Mexican coffee culture while bringing both a unique and authentic experience to the heart of Portland. "This spot is where tradition meets innovation, making it a must-visit for coffee enthusiasts and newcomers alike," says CEO and co-founder Carlos Sanchez Huizar. Unsure what to order? Try their iconic cookie cortado – "coffee in a cookie cup!"

## 6. Shop Portland's unique boutiques

Did you know Portland also has some of the best shops? Regardless of where in the city you're exploring, you're sure to find some great shopping, but here are two to add to your list.

[Gifty Kitty](#) is a unique shopping experience and whimsical treasure trove like no other. Located on Mississippi Ave, this eco-friendly and cat-themed wonderland offers both local and international art alongside delightful gifts. "Whether you're a feline fanatic or just love a unique shopping experience, GiftyKitty is a meowgical destination filled with joy and charm," says owner Clody Cates.

If you're looking for a less feline focused shop, [Glow Gifts](#) is one of our favorites. Their modern baskets are filled with locally made goods and are the perfect housewarming gift (also perfect for other celebrations too, of course). Not only do they assemble each gift with lots of care, but they also offer candle making events perfect for any group of friends.

## 7. Take a unique tour of Portland

One of the best ways to get to know a new city is by taking a tour of it! [The Potlandia Experience](#) offers a very tour for both locals, new residents, and visitors alike. On the party bus

you'll make stops at all the local favorites like dispensaries, voodoo donuts, food carts, rose gardens, the Pittock mansion, and Burnside Skatepark, to name a few. During this tour you'll also get to enjoy the "local cannabis scene and [learn] about Portland's amazing history," says owner Matt Onkka.

## 8. Find Portland's best "foodie" spots

The PNW is also known for amazing seafood, so you definitely have to check out one of our favorite seafood restaurants. The [Seasons & Regions Seafood Grill](#) is "dedicated to bringing together the finest ingredients of the season in our favorite recipes from different regions of the world," says manager Curtis Hren. This seafood spot also features organically grown farm-to-table produce from their own Heirloom Ridge Farm!

If seafood isn't your thing, [Hey Love](#) is another one of our favorite Portland spots to grab a bite. Located in southeast Portland, this bar and restaurant had an incredible plant-filled space along with "an array of dangerously drinkable cocktails and a warm-weather-inspired menu," describes owner Aaron Hall. Whether you're there to grab late lunch, dinner, or brunch on the weekends, there's definitely something on their menu you're sure to enjoy.

## 9. Practice peace at the Portland Japanese Garden

Speaking of [plants](#), you need to add the Portland Japanese Garden to your bucket list. Located on the hills of [Washington Park](#), this place features eight separate garden styles, an authentic Japanese Tea House, art exhibitions, meandering streams, intimate walkways, incredible views, and the best gift shop. The meticulously manicured yet simultaneously free gardens allow for perfect moments of reflection. Bringing about both gratitude and peace through the appreciation of nature and its beauty, we really cannot recommend strolling around enough.

## 10. Browse the vintage booths

Although [Portland](#) might not be known for its Japanese garden, it is definitely known for its vintage scene. Located in the Central Eastside, [Memory Den](#) is the largest vintage mall in Portland with over 160 local vendors with booths full of vintage clothing, furniture, home decor, and more. General manager Kira Dalman invites you to "get lost in this nostalgic destination, while exploring the two floors filled with hidden treasures." Did we mention on the weekends they also have vintage sets and a bar? Well, we can't think of a better way to spend a weekend day than by sipping and sifting through all the vintage treasures this place has to offer.

## 11. Grab a drink

Still looking for a place to sip? Look no further! Portland definitely has some of the best bars and we'd love to share three of our top faves with you.

[Cereus PDX](#) located in Northeast Portland offers one of the most creative global spanning cocktail menus in the area alongside amazing Colombian comfort food. Chef Diego Fuentes hails from Bogota and serves up the best gluten-free tapas. Unsure what to order? COO Bradley Thomas Stephens especially recommends their Colombian arepas, *patacones*, ceviches, and empanadas – all of which are made from scratch daily.

If you're in the mood for a marg, [Bar Cala](#) has some of the best. Their menu also features several creative cocktails and Latin flair food. Regardless of what you order, Bara Cala is the "perfect place to meet friends for a cocktail or celebrate life's special moments," they say. This spot even has live DJ on Friday and Saturday nights, making it *the* spot to dance the night away.

For an especially Portland experience, look no further than [The Houston Blacklight](#). "A ripple in the space time continuum, The Houston Blacklight is a portal to a hedonistic escape where the drinks flow, the food delights and the welcoming vibe is always right," describes owner Mariah Pisha-Duffly. This spot definitely celebrates the uniqueness of Portland as seen by their embodiment of radical self expression, creativity, and sensory joy.

## 12. Go on a donut crawl

You know we had to include it... Portland has some of the most [iconic donut shops](#), we did mention it's this city is for foodies, right? Whether you stop by Voodoo Doughnut for their recognizable pink boxes filled with sugary treats, Doe Donuts for your choice of all-vegan donuts, Pip's for mini ones with a side of chai, or our favorite Blue Star, you're sure to have your sweet tooth satisfied. In fact, why just pick one when you can spend a day going to several? We'd love to know which shop and donut was your favorite!

## 13. Check out a new art exhibit

Our last spot to add to your list is none other than [Verum Ultimium Art Gallery](#) in southeast Portland. Just mere steps from the renowned Hawthorne Boulevard, this gallery has some of the best exhibitions. This spot "sets itself apart from Portland's other fine galleries by presenting juried works from an international pool of artists for each exhibit [with] each exhibit [exploring] a different theme specifically intended to spark the artists' most intuitive urges," describes founder Jennifer Gillia Cutshall. Portland is also known for its art scene, and what better way to get immersed in it than by visiting Verum Ultimium!