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Drinking in Portland

Where to Drink in Portland, Oregon

From [Karen Tina Harrison](#)

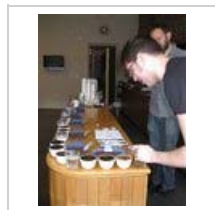
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In Portland, drinking is more than an after-work pastime. It's an obsession, with passionate partisans from all walks of Portland life. Whatever can be produced in liquid form is made in and around "Rose City" with finesse and flair. These local potables are consumed prodigiously and passionately by Portlanders and visitors who, by luck or by design, find themselves hoisting a glass in the USA's most enlightened drinking destination. Here are some of Portland's best spots to toast each other and the city's divine drinks. To know where to go for solid fare, see [Dining in Portland](#).

[Stumptown Coffee](#)



© Karen Tina Harrison.

Our era's coffee craze was birthed in the Northwest. Some credit Seattle's Starbucks, while others chalk it up to San Francisco's Italian coffeehouses. But Portland dining insiders maintain that their town was the big bang of java. Stumptown Coffee Roasters, founded in 1999, is the archetypal Portland café. Its half-dozen locations, including a popular hangout in the Ace Hotel, offer ever-changing blackboard menus of globally sourced coffees by the cup or by the pound. The only food sold in Stumptown is breakfast pastries, but they're cheap and good. Stumptown is wifi-equipped, and no one minds if you tweet all morning nursing a single cuppa. So you'll know your Costa Rican Villalobos from your Indonesian Jember beans, tastings are offered.

[Willamette Valley Wineries](#)



© Karen Tina Harrison.

The Willamette Valley grape-growing region, with over 200 wineries, lies a scenic drive south of Portland. Its rich volcanic soil and mild, wet climate yield world-class Pinot Noir plus fine Pinot Gris, Chardonnay, and Riesling. Visitors can sample Erath's award-winning Pinot Noirs in an indoor-outdoor tasting room. Hawks View Cellars, set like a manor on a grassy rise, is oft chosen as a party venue for weddings where the wine choice is a done deal. Wine tastings of Hawks View's acclaimed Pinot Gris and other varietals are held around a granite bar with commanding views of Mount Hood in the distance. At Alloro, a Willamette winery that resembles a Tuscan villa, expect to be welcomed by high-spirited retrievers.

[Clear Creek Distillery](#)



© Clear Creek Distillery.

This drinkers' destination provides a Portland tasting experience right in town. Clear Creek Distillery produces acclaimed strong liquors — brandies and eaux de vie — from local Hood River Valley fruit including apples, pears, and various berries. The family-owned business offers one-on-one tours of its trim distillery room that close with tastings of Clear Creek products, all available for purchase. And if these high-alcohol sips get to you, you can walk it off on the charming 23rd Ave. retail strip steps away.

[Full Sail Brewery](#)



© Karen Tina Harrison.

An hour east of Portland lies Hood River, a town celebrated for windsurfing on the namesake river and for Full Sail Brewery. This relaxation station is a cherished beer brewery whose full-flavored brews recreate the authentic tastes produced by America's original breweries before Prohibition wiped them out. Full Sail is a Portland foodie magnet for not just its high-quality, dozen-odd beers but for its excellent eatery, featuring fine pub grub that enhances what's in your glass. Full Sail is best known for classic brews like Amber, Pale Ale, and IPA, and its Session lagers (traditional and dark). An employee-owned operation, Full Sail offers one-on-one tours (use the earplugs) and sleek sportswear printed with its arty beer logos.

[The Gorge White House](#)



© Camille Hukari.

The Gorge White House, a picturesque farmhouse turned tasting room, is must-stop on visits to Hood River. Family owned and with bountiful flower gardens and storybook mountain views, The Gorge White House is regularly pressed into service as a country wedding venue. The ground floor of The Gorge White House is a tasting room where visitors can sip and buy wines and craft beers of the Columbia River Gorge. The old tractor shed holds single-winery tasting rooms, an art gallery, and gift shop. The Gorge White House offers two delightful souvenirs: superlative bars of Katrina's Oregon Chocolate and brown bags of easy-to-sprout dahlia roots from owner Camille Hukari's flowerbeds.

[Saké One](#)

Saké One is the United States' most renowned kura, or saké brewery. Its Japanese parent company established Saké One in Forest Grove near Portland following a nationwide search for the purest groundwater. This busy facility welcomes visitors

Drinking in Portland - Bars, Beers, and ...



© Saké One.

curious to learn how Japan's clear brew is created from nothing more than rice and water. After a short tour, visitors partake of low-cost tastings of Saké One's toothsome products, including coconut-lemongrass flavored saké. Saké One's gift shop sells every saké variety produced here plus apparel, exotic chocolates, and ceramic saké cups.

[House Spirits](#)



© House Spirits.

House Spirits' quirky setting is an industrial boulevard where you can comparison-shop for kitchen contractors. This liquor hatchery's mad scientist, Christian Krostad, honored his Norwegian roots by concocting his own aquavit, the caraway vodka guzzled by Scandinavians; he adds exotic star anise to the recipe. This Portland dining luminary has also launched a gin (Aviation), vodka (Medoyeff), and an "apothecary line" of spirits (mainly whiskey and rum). These are distilled in small batches and sold in numbered bottles resembling druggists' antiques. The entire House Spirits lineup is offered for tastings and purchase at the distillery. Every Wednesday, House Spirits throws a cut-price cocktail party at a Portland bar or restaurant.

[Oregon Beer Odyssey](#)



© Travel Portland.

Portlanders like to claim their town is the "craft beer" (independent micro-brewery) capital of the U.S., and the numbers bear them out: more beer is consumed here, and more brands exist, than in any other American metropolis. Visitors can sample Portland's best brews in the Oregon Beer Odyssey, a private tasting-cum-seminar given by beer expert Ben Edmunds, a Portland brewer with a diploma in beer-making (what, you didn't know you could major in beer?). His enjoyable class, often given at the beer-centric [Bailey's Taproom](#), clarifies what makes a beer good, and why Portland's beers are so renowned. The only place couples can have more fun with suds is in a bathtub.

[Steven Smith Teamaker](#)



© Karen Tina Harrison.

What do you do when your little artisanal tea line, Tazo, is bought by Starbucks? If you're Steven Smith, you move with the family to the South of France. As his website puts it, "After a year of wearing scarves and eating lunch for two hours, the path of tea called them back to Portland." Smith has criss-crossed the world seeking the choicest ingredients for his green and white teas, black teas, and herbal infusions. Portland dining duos are invited to partake of a tea tasting at Smith's elegant production studio. It is filled with Chinese Art-Deco rugs, antique teapots, and young teamakers as passionate as the boss. You may find it impossible to leave Steven Smith Teamaker without a box of Big Hibiscus tea.

[Cacao](#)



© Susan Breslow
Sardone.

Chocoholics, beware: this chocolate café is sure to prove overwhelmingly tempting. Cacao, with two pretty locations (one in the refined [Heathman Hotel](#)) is a sweet alternative to Portland's ubiquitous coffee bars. It proffers cold and hot chocolate drinks, handmade truffles and candies, and gorgeously packaged chocolate bars from all over the world. Cacao's hallmark treat — its inexpensive but ample "tasting" of three ridiculously delicious hot chocolates as thick as syrup — is possibly the sweetest treat a pair of Portland drinking disciples can share.

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