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Irreverent Insider Guide: Portland, Oregon: Eat, Drink, Listen, See, Feel... And More



Synopsis

Thinking about visiting Portland, Oregon? You need to read this guidebook first. A cranky, occasionally hilarious, highly-opinionated local author skewers the popular clichés and reveals some truly under the radar local attractions. Quotes: On the city's growing popularity: "...as a native of this city, I'm still a little disoriented by the relentlessly hip vibe that's begun to permeate even the most mundane of neighborhoods around here. My inner curmudgeon yearns for those days when Portland was regarded (to the extent it merited any regard whatsoever) as merely a smaller, less interesting version of Seattle." On Portland's famous food carts: "There's this Platonic food cart ideal that we all share. It involves a gloriously sunny day, a mouthwatering, no-crumbs/spillproof entrée, flatware that isn't a spork, and a non-tippy, non-communal table overlooking something picturesque yet urban| chirping birds too, probably, and lots of white teeth. But reality seldom comes close to that happy vision, that's what I'm saying." On local dive bars: "To paraphrase 'Fight Club', the first rule of dive bars is that they don't talk about being dive bars. Therefore one faces an existential problem when attempting to identify exemplars by so doing, do I rob them of their very dive-y essence?" And of course, on the weather: "Even after a lifetime of living here, at the ass end of two soggy weeks of unrelenting May rain I'm ready to get the hell out to someplace any place that's dry." The Irreverent Insider's Guide. Don't visit Portland without it!

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Customer Reviews

It may be irreverent for its easy humor and ability to call out the tourist traps, but this guide to Portland may claim that title for another sly reason: it smacks down the idea that you would ever again need to buy a guide book the thickness of a George R.R. Martin novel. Frommers, you've been put on notice. Concise, yet loaded with information, Steve McCall's perspective into Portland is wide and varied. From eateries, bars and spas, to the vibe and character of Portland's different neighborhoods, McCall's fluid, but direct writing style pulls you in. Its straightforwardness can also belie its eloquence. While it reads like an easy conversation between friends at a coffee shop, at the same time McCall certainly doesn't make it any easier on my traveling budget when he waxes poetic about Multnomah Falls or the stunning beauty you can expect to encounter on scenic road trips. Writing style aside, however, McCall has no qualms about upending the Portland cliches; in fact, he blows them out of the water first paragraph in. The result is a guide that conveys the soul of a city in the only way someone with a love for his stomping grounds can accomplish.

So much travel guide writing is puffy, touristy blarney. Guides like this are a robust alternative. McCall's perspective on his home city reflects decades of exploration and experience. He is not afraid to say 'meh' of an eatery, attraction, or area. He has discovered a great many of Portland's great places and activities. If Rick Steves wrote a travel guide on Portland, he should want McCall as his local eyes and ears, because one can see in McCall the inspiration of Steves' frank, practical style. I suppose it could have been longer, but that would have diluted its concise high density of worthwhile ideas. And while I am not from Portland, I have been there enough to understand its varying vibes. McCall's accurate description panders to no stereotype and omits nothing of note. An excellent value.

I kept anticipating getting to the real "insider" content. Instead, I just reached the end of the book and went "Meh."

Humorous and irreverent, full of useful information delivered in an easy to read concise book. I

enjoyed it very much and will refer to its recommendations again and again.

Engaging & fun read... looking forward to trying a number of experiences noted.

A brief personal account of things to see and do in Portland. Some good observation. Funny but perhaps a bit too hip.

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