

Travel



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What a backyard: sea, mountains, rivers, falls!

PORTLAND, Oregon — If this was the first scene of a Hollywood movie, the cameras would zoom in on the spectacular Oregon coastline, go up the Columbia and Willamette rivers and focus on the city set against the green hills. Act one would begin with men and women sprawled around the fountains and the red brick amphitheater steps of Pioneer Courthouse Square. The first words of dialogue might be "the mountains are out today."

People talk about the weather everywhere in the world, but a really nice day in Portland means that you can see Mount Hood rising in a cone of white against the eastern sky.

The other mountains reign like a parade of kings to the northeast — Mount Adams, Mount St. Helens, celebrating the fifth anniversary of its eruption, Mount Rainier, 14,408-foot-high king of the Cascade Range.

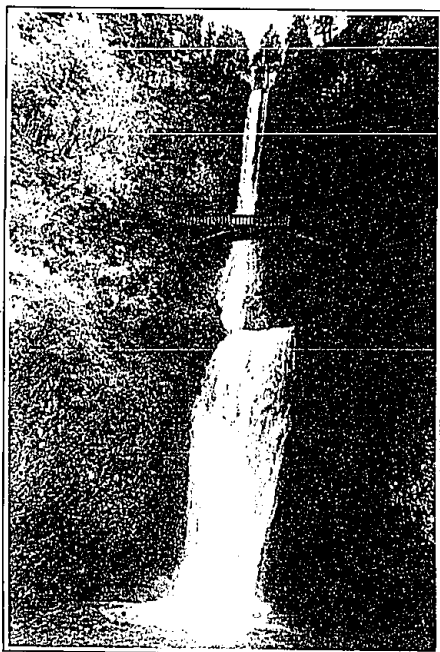
Sometimes it is hard to define a city, to explain what makes it different from other cities. Portland is like that at first.

YOU WALK the walkable downtown streets, visit the gardens and zoo in Washington Park, stroll the Saturday Market and cruise the river, but you don't really have the pulse of the city until that day when someone says "the mountains are out today."

That's when you realize that the mountains, the Columbia River and Gorge, and the Pacific seacoast, are all part of Portland's backyard. Portlanders live and work on these city streets, but they climb, swim, ski, boat and play in the mountains, forests and waterways that surround them.

In early spring the rhododendrons and azaleas make their own little mountains of color around the two restored historic districts, among the new office towers that are part of a major urban renewal plan and in the many "people places" tucked into Portland's downtown area.

By the end of May, the roses have been added to the riot of color at the Saturday Market, held the Saturday and Sunday under the Burnside Bridge, and to the



gardens and flower stalls of Pioneer Courthouse Square.

THE SQUARE is the unofficial center of town. By noon on Saturday, people are gathered on the red brick amphitheater steps, with flower gardens and flower carts to anchor them to the brick "floor" and 15 totally incongruous Greek pillars rising around the edges of the square, just for the fun of it.

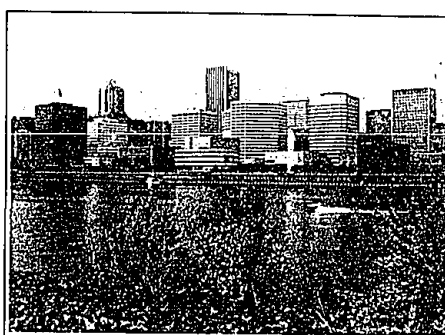
The pillars make perfect sense in a square that is a really a circle. A name is sculpted into each of the 48,000 bricks on the floor of the square. Portlanders who paid \$30 for their own brick have their names on the square forever.

You see a lot of people doing the Courthouse Square Stoop, head bent, trying to find the brick that

contains their name. They could pay \$6 for a map that pinpoints each name exactly, but the stoop is more fun.

IT WAS a cool sunny day when I visited the square but people also use it in Portland's familiar drizzly rain, bringing their lunch bags from the office or eating in outdoor cafes, listening to the musical events or just feeding the pigeons. In the middle of the square, popular at any time of year, is the stall that sells elephant ears, light pastry dipped in honey.

It is an easy fifteen-minute walk from the major downtown hotels to Courthouse Square or to most of the city parks. Mill Ends Park, the smallest park in the world, takes up about one square yard on Front Street, adjacent to the milelong



The Portland area is brimming with beauty. The city skyline and the Bonneville Dam (left) are impressive but the most breathtaking scenes are those of the Portland area's mountains, rivers, forests and waterfalls. At left is the Multnomah Falls, the largest and most picturesque of the falls near Portland.

—Photos by Micky Jones

Waterfront Park, built along the river on what was once a six-lane freeway.

If you don't want to walk, there is free bus transportation anywhere in the downtown area, between Interstate 405 and the Willamette River.

You'll have to pay bus fare, or drive a car, to the two major parks, uphill to the west, where Portland shows off its cultivated natural wonders. Forest Park is actually a 5,000-acre forested area within the city limits, with 58 miles of hiking trails; the 32 mile Wildwood Trail

has been designated a Scenic Trail by the National Trail Act.

JUST SOUTH of this enormous park you will find Washington Park, setting for the Western Forestry Center, the International Test Rose Gardens, the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, the Portland Zoo and one of the most beautiful Japanese gardens in America.

All of this city touring is a great preamble to the day trips that are a

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logical part of a Portland visit. Spend a day in the Columbia River Gorge, a day visiting Mount Hood and at least a day on the spectacular Pacific seacoast. You can also wander south through the vineyards and flower-growing fields of the state.

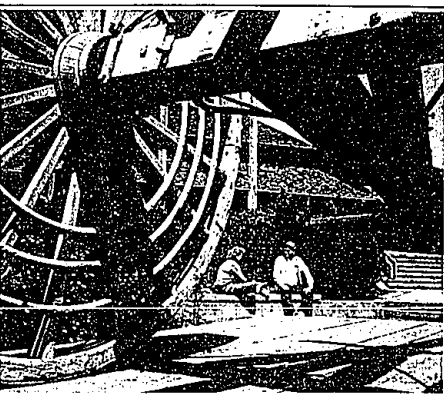
If you drive the 169-mile loop through the Gorge and around Mount Hood, you can see a great deal in one day, but it is always better to give yourself time to play a little as you go.

You'll get your first spectacular view down the Columbia River from the visitors center set on a cliff high above the gorge, and you should take time to stop at the many waterfalls cascading like blurred white ribbons down the mountainsides along the road. Multnomah Falls, 35 miles east of Portland, is the largest and most picturesque, with an old lodge at the foot of the falls to complete the picture.

PADDLEWHEEL TOUR boats leave several times a day from a berth near the Bonneville Dam and Oregon State Fish Hatchery, 44 miles east of the city. Self-guided tours will take you through the history of the gorge and a variety of river-related attractions, including a chance to watch the fish swimming up the fish ladders while you watch through an underwater window.

The large well-known hotels in the city include two beautifully restored hotels, the Westin Benson and the Heathman and the Portland Hilton and the Portland Marriott. The Marriott is close to the river, the other three about seven blocks from the river. A new inn-type hotel called the Alexis is under construction on the river.

For more information, contact the Portland Convention and Visitors Association, 26 SW Salmon St., Portland, Oregon 97204.



A couple enjoys the Western Forestry Center near Portland.

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