

WOMEN TO ADMIRE

Judith Timson singles out eight women who made her year, T5



TRAVEL & LIFE



DRONESCAPE/TRAVEL PORTLAND

Portland's Tilikum Crossing is the largest car-free bridge in the United States.

Locals feed buzzing Portland food scene

Fresh fare sparks tours in West Coast city that has more than 600 food carts

EMMA YARDLEY
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

PORTLAND, ORE.—There are few sure things in this world, but here's one of them: If you go to Portland, you will eat well.

With a winning combination of fertile farmland, a year-round growing season and proximity to both the Pacific Ocean and eastern Oregon ranchland — along with the pioneering attitude of its citizens — this riverside city has been quietly living the farm-to-table lifestyle long before it was cool.

"We are so proud that there are so many local producers of just about anything you can name," says Heidi Burnette, owner of Forktown, a food-centred walking tour company in Portland.

"It's rare when a restaurant *doesn't* source its meat, cheeses, bread, vegetables, wine, beer or even its pickles locally."

With more than 20 farmers' markets within the city limits, it's easy for chefs to pick up seasonal ingredients to ignite their creativity — and craft dishes that can only be tasted in Portland.

"So many of our farmers are growing produce that's meant to be consumed here and *not* be shipped across the country," says Burnette. "For example, different varieties of berries are being bred for really intense flavours, but are so fragile they need to be eaten right away or they'll bruise in their containers."

Oregon has no sales tax, and shipping costs are low within the state because the growing zones are so close to each other (Portland has strict rules on urban sprawl, to protect local farmland), which means customers can taste top-notch cuisine at a fraction of what it would cost in other major U.S. cities.

Access to affordable produce is also one of the reasons food carts started popping up all over empty Portland parking lots in the mid-2000s. Proprietors were able to produce tasty finger food at an affordable price and take it straight to the people.

"Portland is a very unique street food capital," says Brett Burmeister, a food-cart tour guide and managing editor of Food Carts Portland, a website that keeps tabs on the city's cart trends and trappings.

"We have laws on the books that say no business in the right of way (on roads), so we never really grew a food-truck scene."

PORTLAND continued on T4



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Bartender Joe Hock prepares a batch of Gin Gin Mules — ginger, lime, sugar, sugared gin, ginger beer and muddled spinach — at Sidecar 11, a craft cocktail bar in North Portland.



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Food carts began appearing around Portland in the mid-2000s, but didn't really take off until the 2008 recession.



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Mee Sen Thai Eaterly is the first stop on Forktown's food tour of the cool North Mississippi Avenue neighbourhood.