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'Portlandia': A Tour of Portland, Oregon that Knows Where its Chicken Comes From

by [Jenie Skoy](#)

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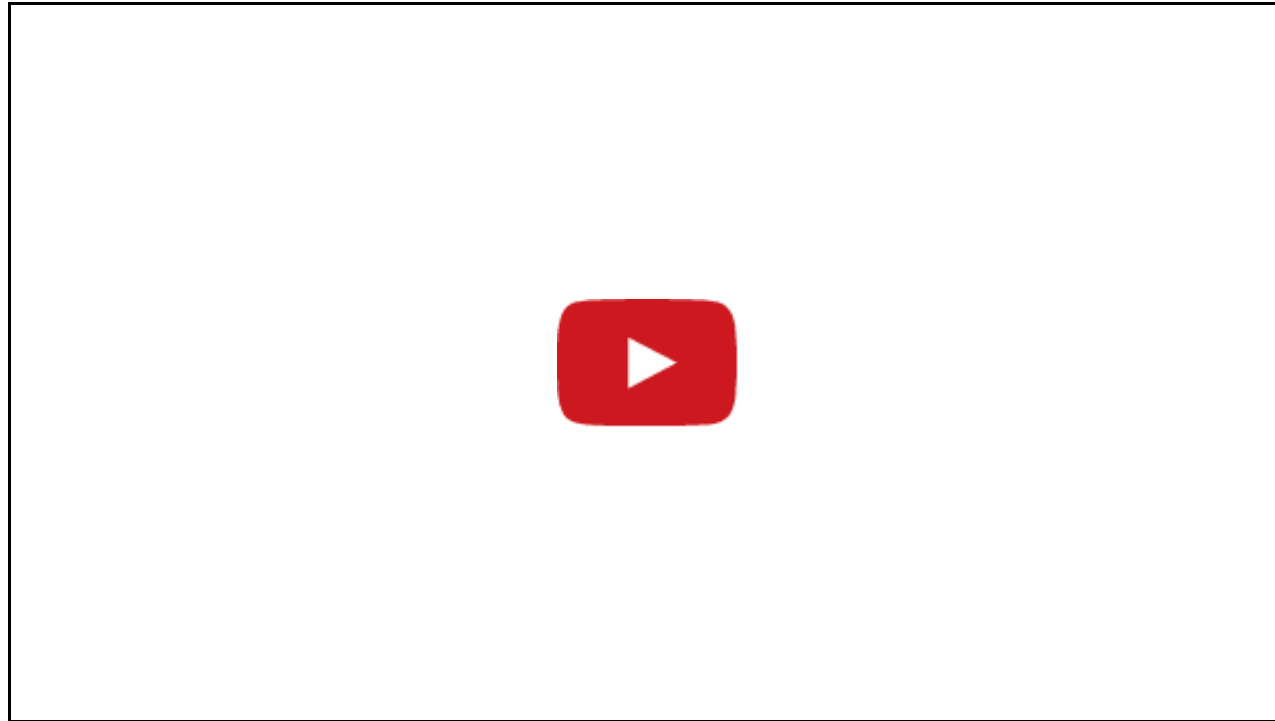
Associated Press

In its four seasons, IFC's *Portlandia* has offered snapshots from dozens of enclaves in and around [Portland, Oregon](#). PDX may be where "young people go to retire," but it's also a great escape to forget about growing up for just a weekend. From the uppity, yet historic, Pearl District to low-brow North Portland, you can enjoy moments from the show -- and see how the real Portland compares to Fred Armisen and Carrie Brownstein's version.

Be your best vintage self

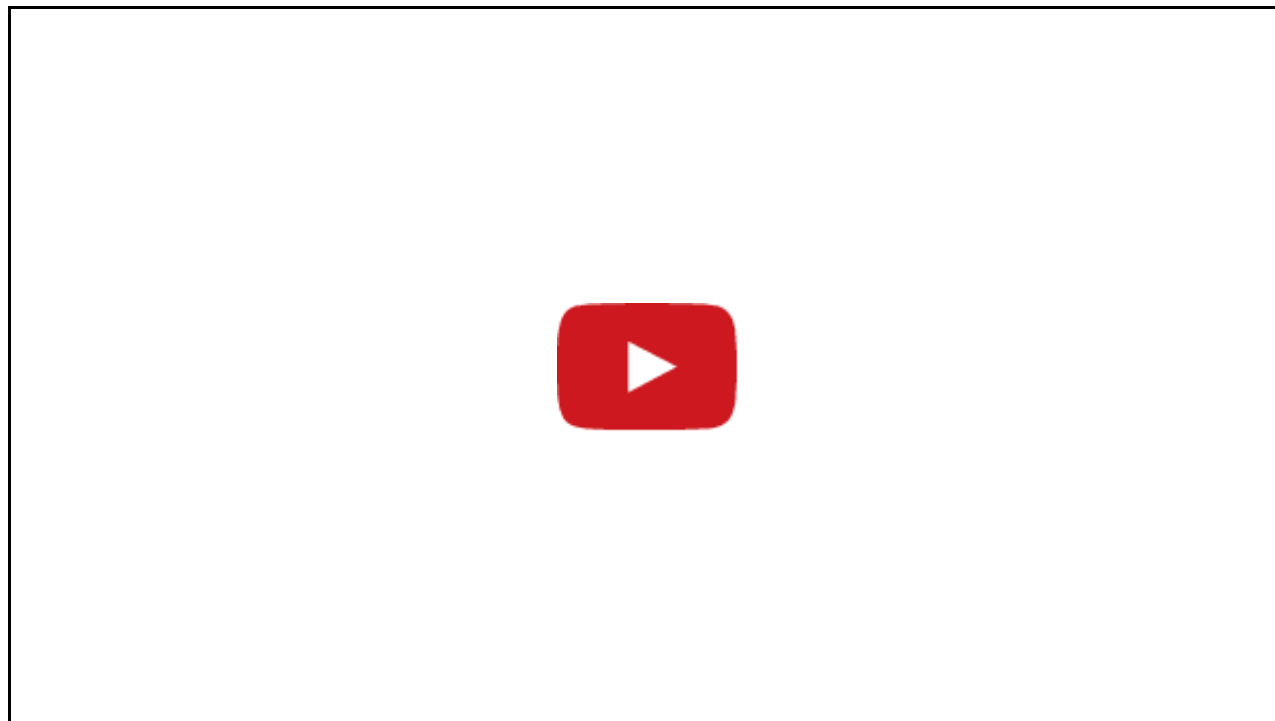
The [dream of the 90s](#) is alive in Portland, but so are the 1890s, 1950s and pretty much period you want to embody -- especially if you anchor the look with skinny jeans and a smile that says you own it (even if you found your outfit in a box on the sidewalk marked "free to a good home").

Start with the 1890s by getting your 'stache waxed, mutton chops trimmed or a straight-edge shave at [Modern Man Barber Shop](#), where the aftershaves are all custom-made. Eat turn-of-the-century lumberjack food (thick-cut bacon, grits and fried chicken with gravy) at [Pine State Biscuits](#). Or watch butchers chop up your lunch from an exhibition butchery at [Olympic Provisions](#), where part of *Portlandia*'s self-deprecating "Dream of the 1890s" was shot.



Where to hang your hat

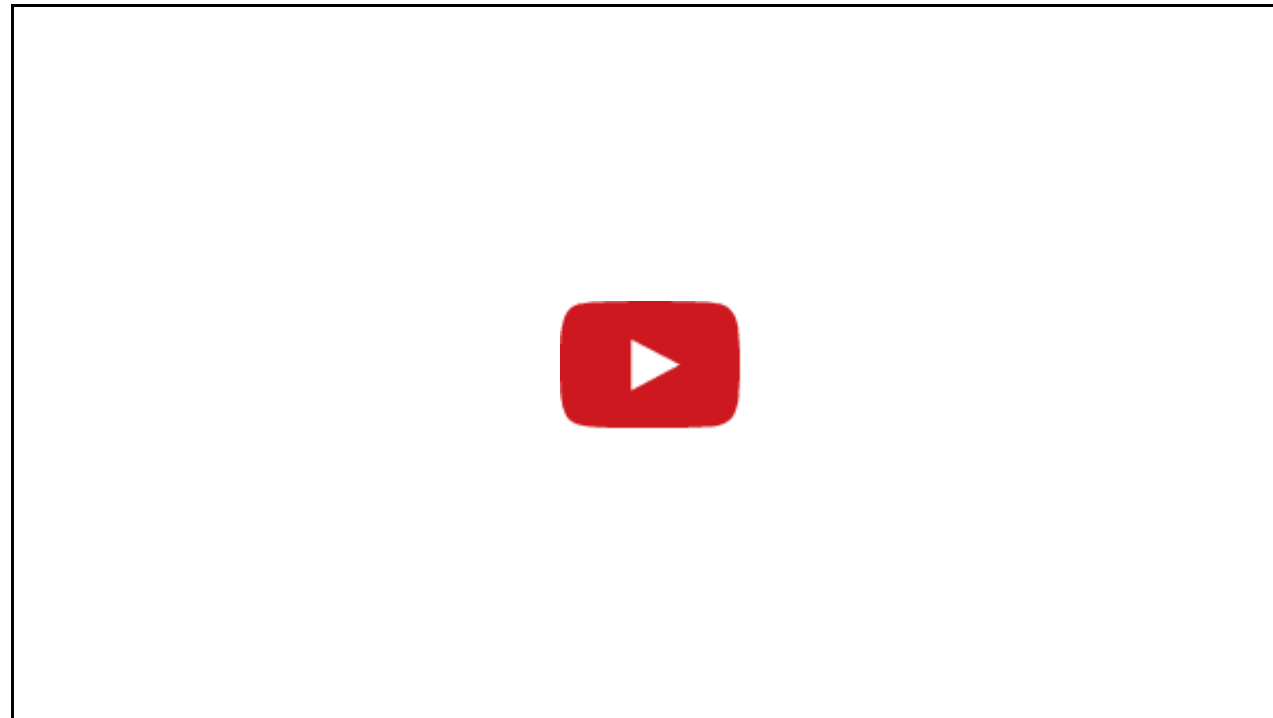
The [Ace Hotel](#) doesn't offer manual typewriters or a [bike valet](#), but you can buy custom bow ties, request a rubber ducky or order Stumptown-coffee room service. And like *Portlandia's* "Deuce Hotel" skit, some rooms come with turntables. Because, driving cars is so yesterday (especially one reeking of petroleum), you can borrow a bike from the hotel or rent a handmade Hufnagal bike. The hotel's continental breakfast features local fruit grown with pesticide-free love along with farmstead cheeses.



Your ride matters

You can't be a true Portland resident unless you go by bike, as does Armisen's bike messenger -- [one such skit](#) was shot outside the iconic, block-wide [Powell's Books](#). (At Powell's you also can pay homage to Portlandia's "[Feminist Bookstore](#)" sketches while browsing the store's extensive feminist section.)

When you finish, if you're in the mood for a beer, pick up [Hop in the Saddle](#), which outlines routes to bike to the 52 breweries in PDX. There's even gluten-free [Harvester Brewing](#). Or you can bike near the deliriously fragrant [Rose Gardens](#) or from food cart to food cart with [Pedal Bike Tours](#) and holler like Armisen's character, "I don't have a driver's license; I don't need it!"



Welcome to Doggie Central

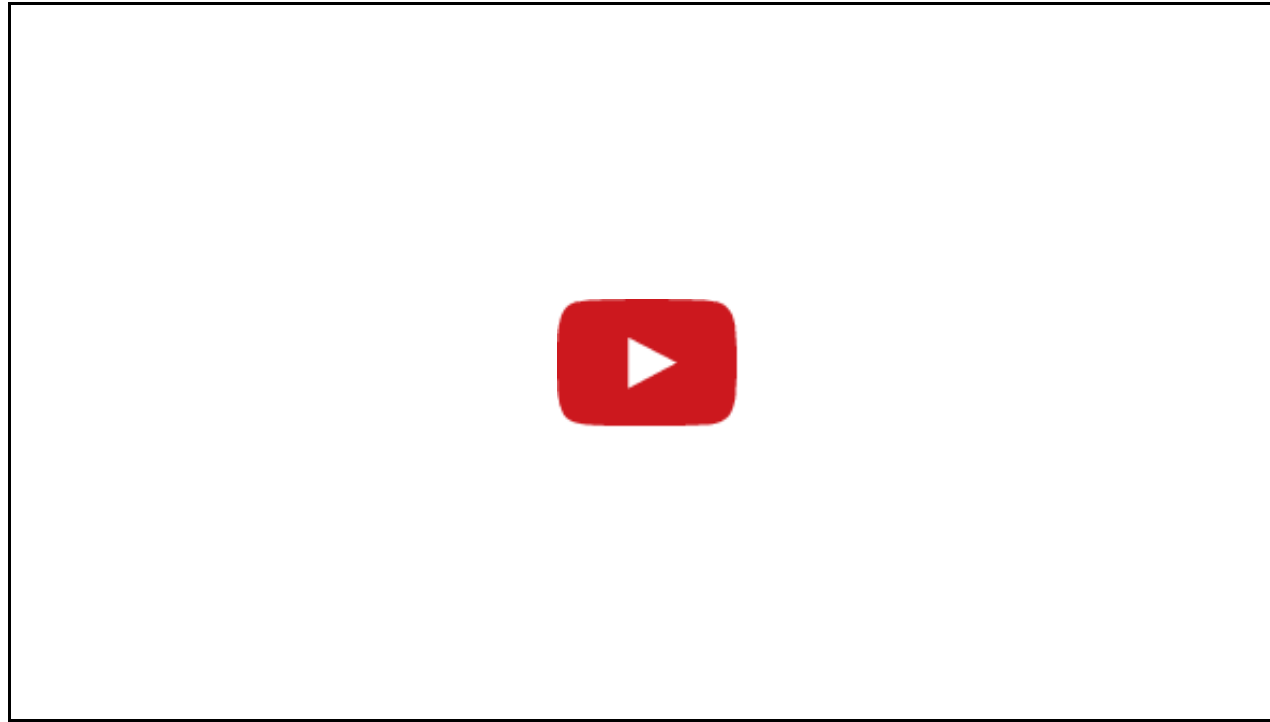
This is Portland, where dogs manage businesses, run for office or work as [Snuggle Express](#) office therapists. So yes, bring your dog, but treat him or her like the real person he or she is. Buy a collar at [Hip Hound](#) or throw a birthday bash with his best-groomed doggie pals (where they can bob for apples and break a piñata too) at [Lexi Dog Boutique and Social Club](#). Please, whatever you do, do not tie your dog to a pole, like the poor pooch in the "[Who's Dog is This?](#)" skit



Coffee is Portland's middle name; Real is its first

In Portland, find delicious, perky and, of course, highly certified coffees: fair-trade, shade-grown, lemur- and woodcreeper-friendly as well as the lesser known, my-kids-played-on-the-beach-instead-of-illegally-slaving-away-on-a-coffee-plantation certification.

It seems so wrong to dip a donut in sacred [Stumptown Coffee](#), but if you must, make it a Miami Vice Berry from [Voodoo Doughnut](#). Stop in at [Public Domain Coffee](#), where the baristas help decide how to roast the beans. And remember: baristas in Portland are artists and highly qualified (some with doctorate degrees in subjects like rainforest ethno botany). So, don't act frivolous when ordering. And maybe become familiar with *Portlandia's* "Coffee Shop Manifesto."



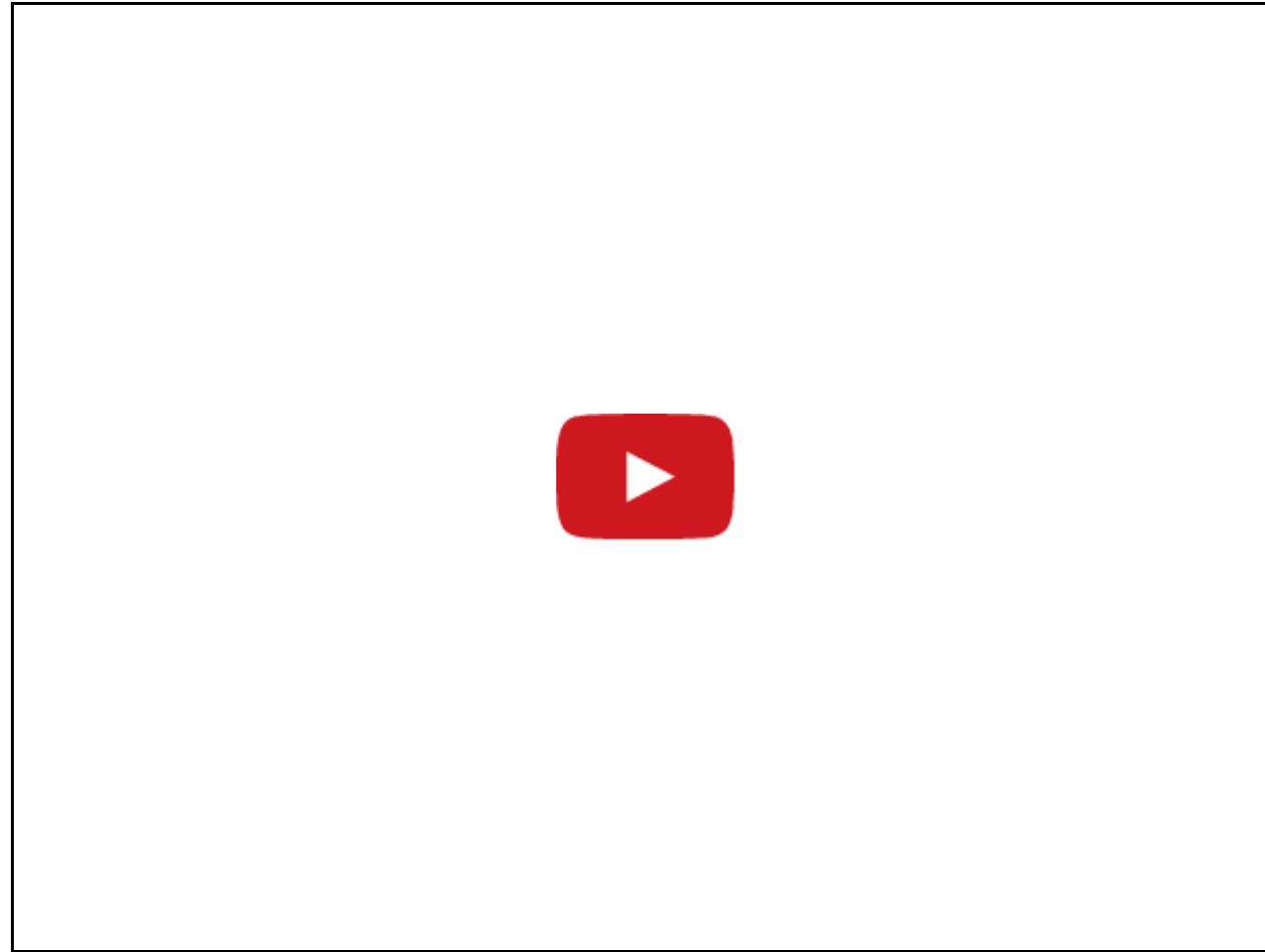
Put a bird...in your stomach

Yes, the following restaurants should know [where your chicken comes from](#), because they're named after birds: [Le Pigeon](#) and its younger sister [Little Bird](#). The chef at the former and also co-owner of the latter is 2013 James Beard award-winner, Gabriel Zucker. Does the chef rebrand celery? You'll have to go to find out.

Portland has too many foodie hot spots to name. It has cold spots too, for that matter, like ice cream joint, [Salt and Straw](#). There's [The Meadow](#) for salt, chocolate and pepper; and [Ava Genes](#), for salads, snappy appetizers and Neverland lighting -- oh and cool bathroom fixtures that make you wish to use the loo twice. For a quintessential PDX night out, visit flamboyant [Le Bistro Montage](#) for Cajun gumbo around a communal table that's below a life-sized Last Supper painting. Your leftovers are wrapped by tinfoil artists possibly trained by masters in Florence (either that or by aliens).

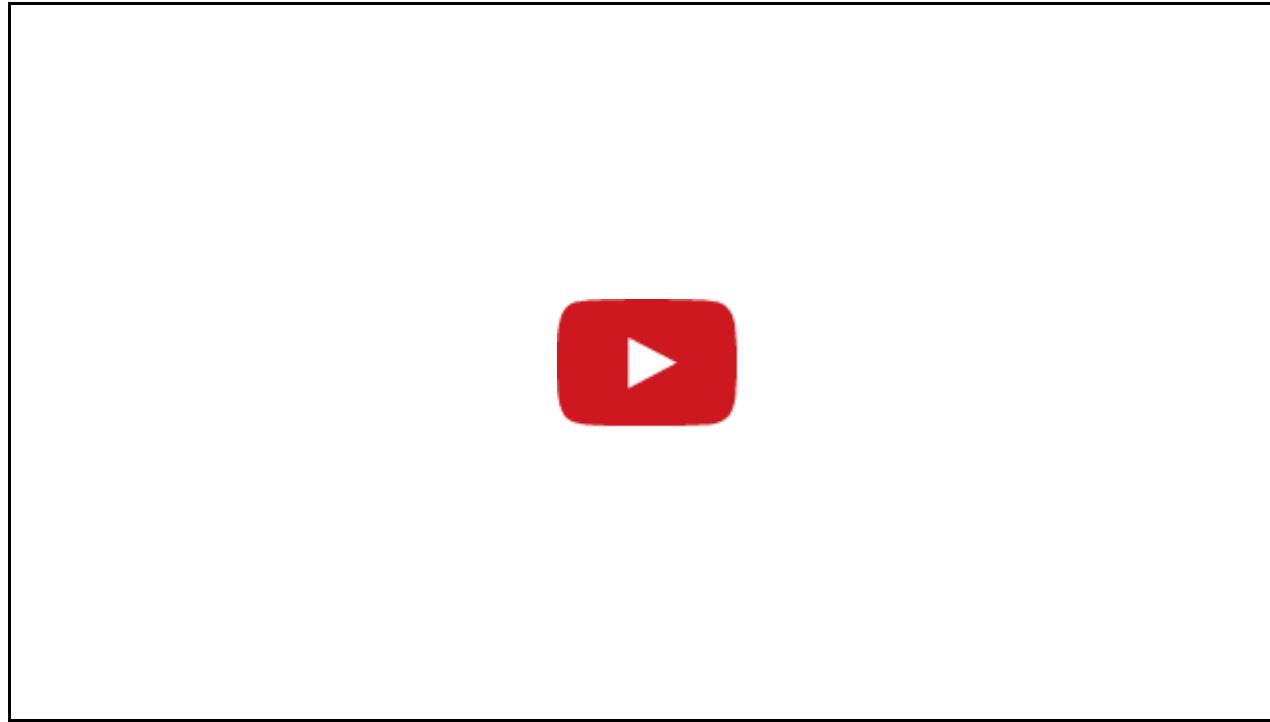
Be free or stay home

If you can't go freestyle canoeing, dress in 1970s polyester and roller skate at the old-fashioned [Oaks Park](#) rink in Sellwood, or go to the weekly 1980s night at the [Crystal Ballroom](#). Or try blues dancing at [Lenora's Room](#) where you can dance with a hipster, a polyamorous flapper, an Abraham Lincoln look-alike, a vegan software developer (who steps on you while testing his Google Glasses) or some dude with a Jerry Garcia beard who lives in his car.



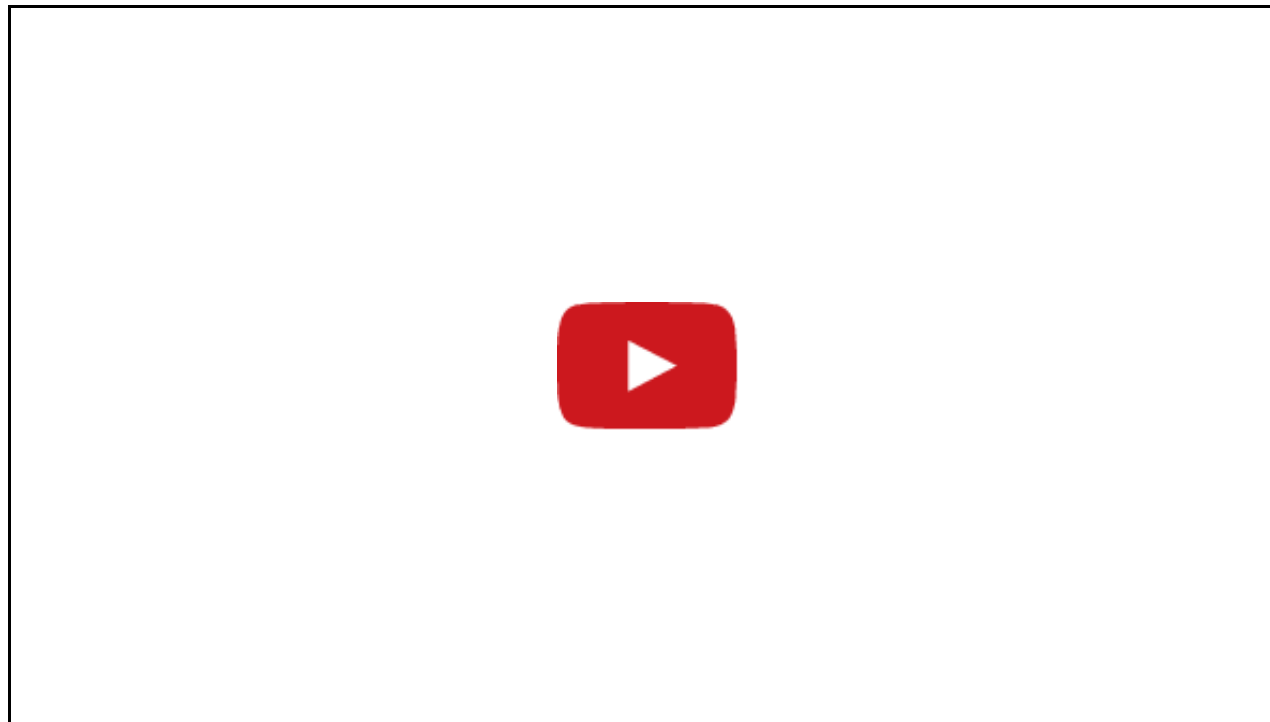
Buy or DIY: or buy from DIYers

Be socially responsible when you shop (and bring your own bag) because if you're not, the EcoTaliban may come after you. Buy from local designers in the DIY scene at [Radish Underground](#) or support two or three businesses in one at places like [Tender Loving Empire](#) (music, handmade gifts, record label headquarters, screen printing studio, art gallery.)



Yes, movie food is that good

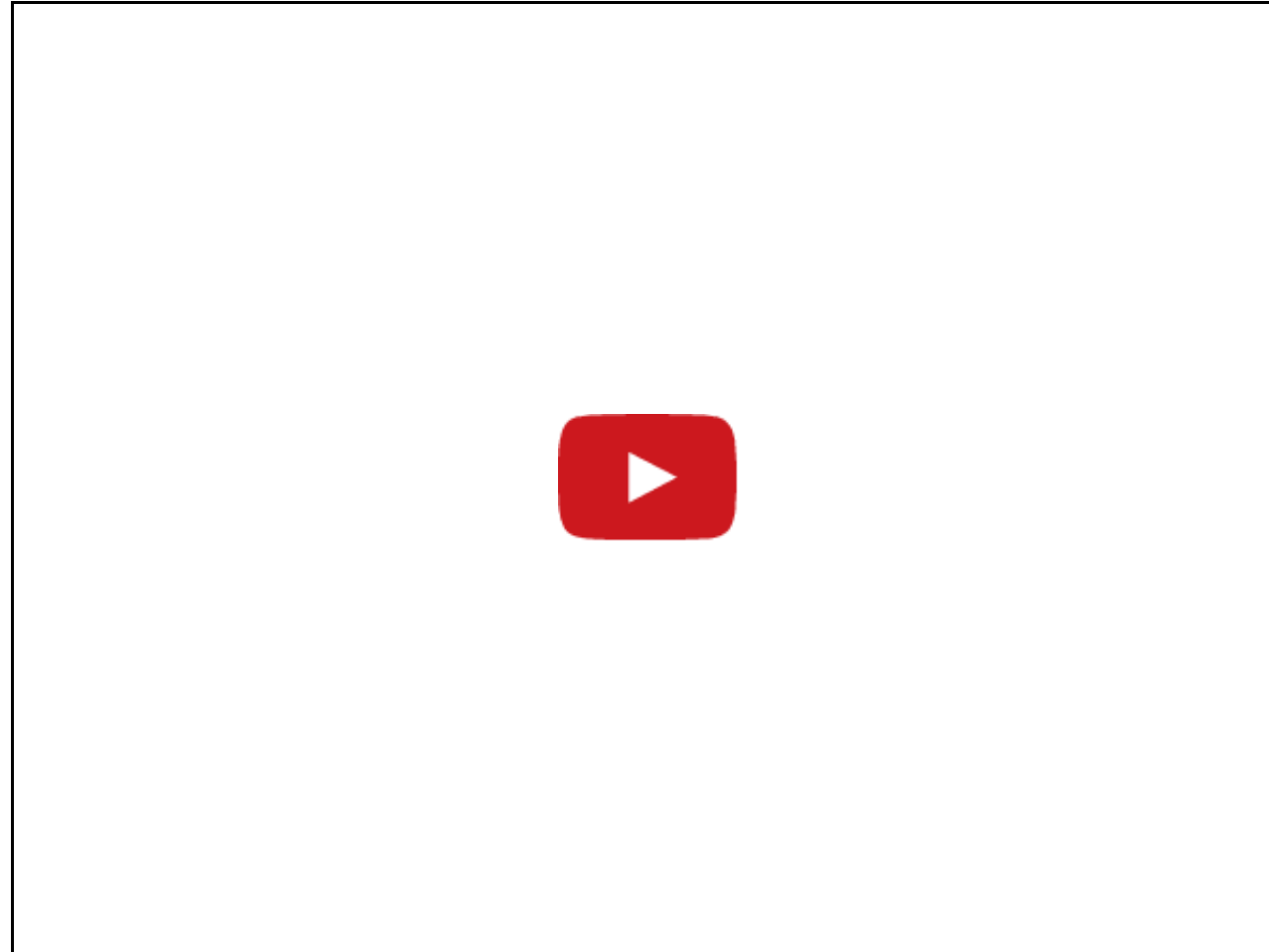
In *Portlandia's* "Artisan Movie Food" sketch, two clerks with ridiculous afros foist food on an innocent soda-pop seeker. But there is a real theater that's gone gourmet: [Living Room Theaters](#) in downtown. The menu: Hoison steak flank skewers and ham and cheese with béchamel sauce. Oh and a cheese board. Eat in the dark, but be careful with the cheese knife and skewer please.



Poetry in a glass

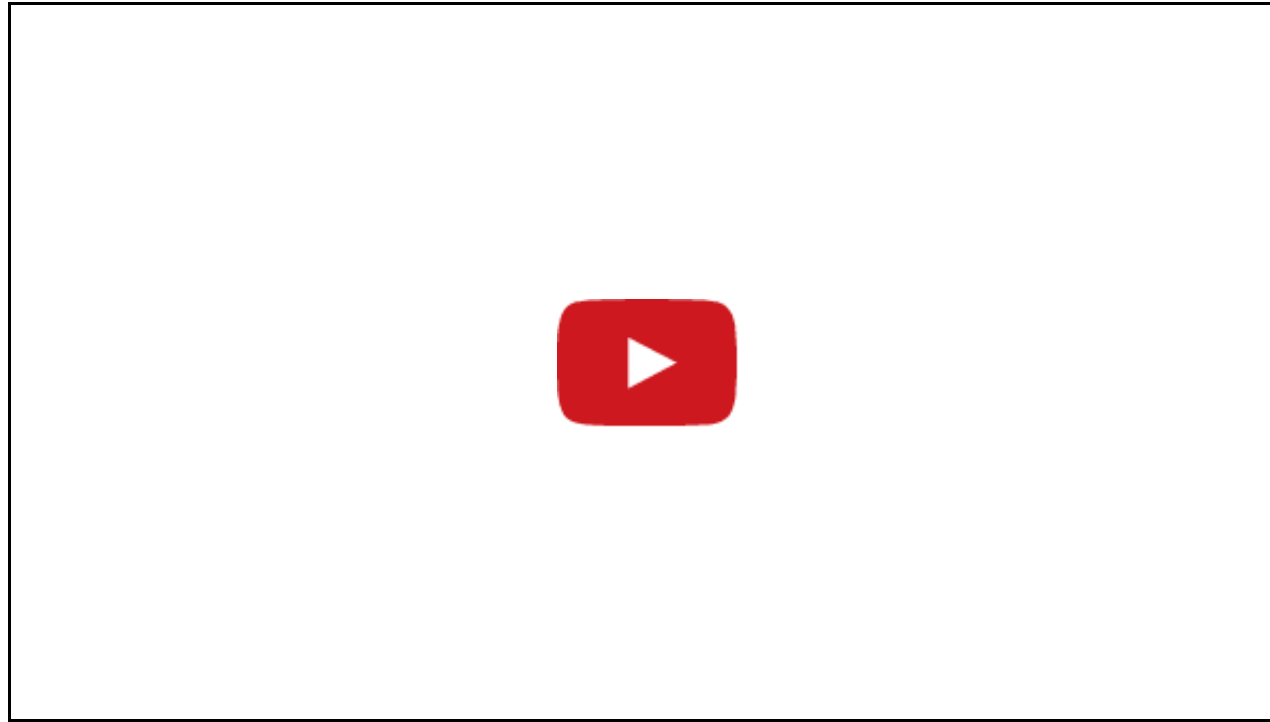
Imbibe at spots where *Portlandia* characters fall for a mixologist at [Fifth Quadrant](#) or [Mint 820](#),

where you can order a Dragon Milk. Unfortunately it isn't sourced from Medieval dragons flown in for the annual [Renaissance Fair](#), but rather it's made from Momokawa pearl sake, vodka, coconut syrup and cream.



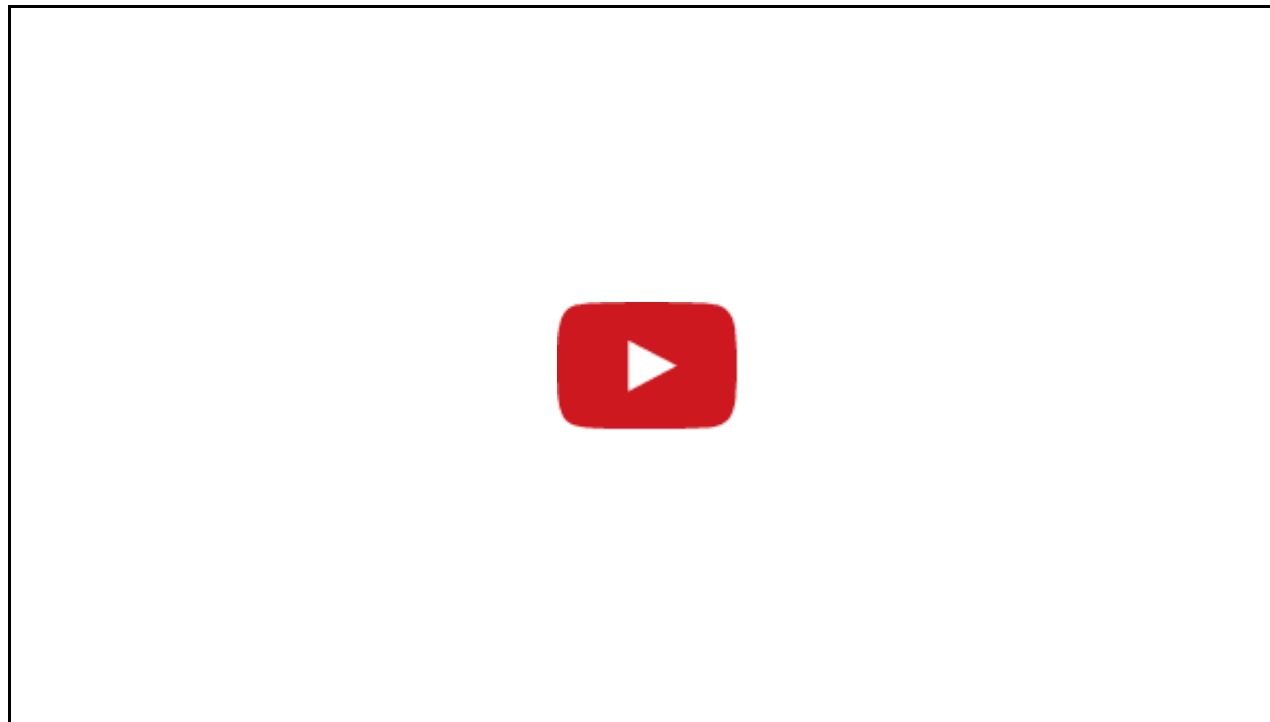
Wear queenly hats, in a gender-neutral way

You may not find artisan light bulbs downtown, but you'll find fussed-over artisan hats at [Pinkham Millinery](#) made by internationally-known couture hat maker, Dayna Pinkham. You can even humble brag because Pinkham makes hats for the Royal Family. Or head to [Yo Vintage!](#), then go to [Ruby Jewel Scoop Shop](#), which serves small-batch ice-cream. Sit by an old soda fountain and watch clerks making candy -- because you never know when candy-making skills might help you survive Portland's apocalyptic agave syrup-shortage.



Live music, as opposed to dead

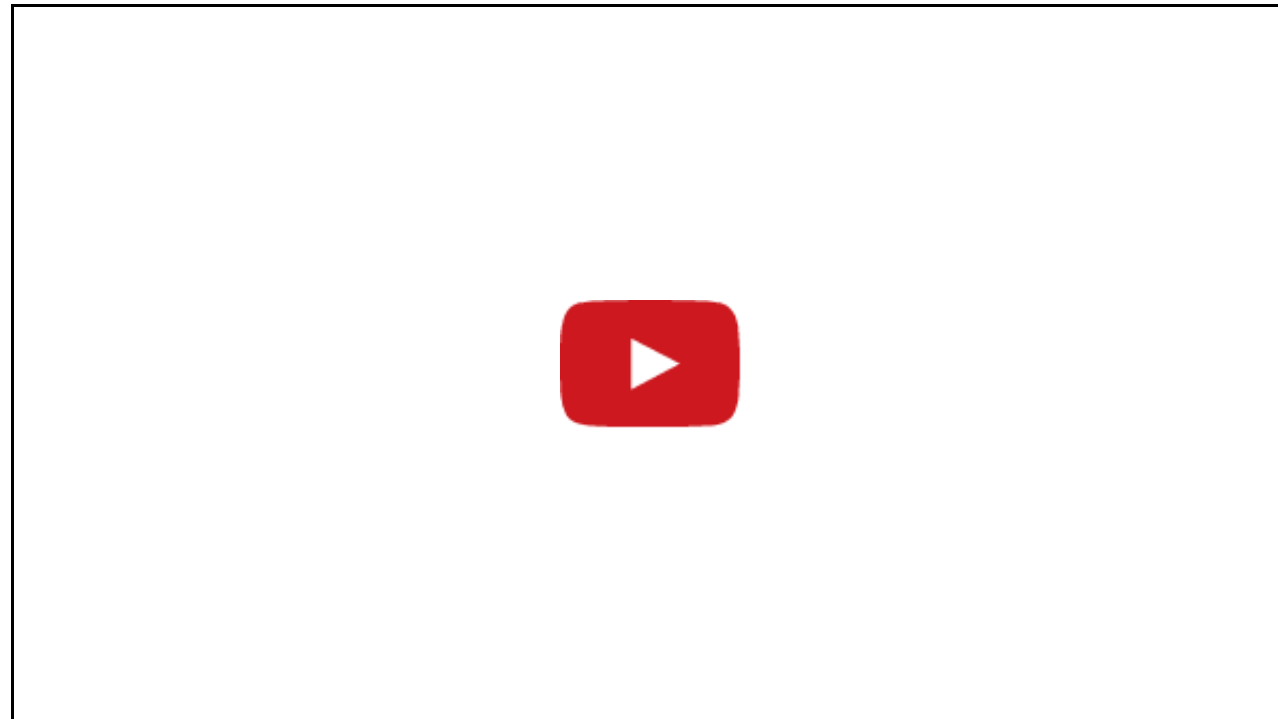
Instead of listening to the Battle of the Gentle Bands, or parent band, [Defiance of Anthropomorphic Sea Mammals](#), go to popular venues [Doug Fir Lounge](#) or [Mississippi Studios](#). Or check out [Lovecraft Bar's](#) "goth, post-punk, horror" dance scene where you can watch local circuit-benders plugging cables into electronic machines they crafted from circuitry from abandoned talking toys and defunct kitchen appliances.



See artifacts, which is a two-fer: art and facts

At the [Oregon History Museum](#) in downtown Portland, use your "imagination brains" (as an

Armisen character says) to taste what rabbit stew might have been like for Lewis and Clark. Or practice saying "Sacagawea" while you check out the 85,000 artifacts -- even some 1890-lumberjack-cool ones -- from the Pacific Northwest.



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terry



i was stationed at portland while i was in the military and found it to be a beautiful city, i enjoyed chinatown. the japanese gardens and the downtown. the market under the bridge is not to be missed. there are not enough words to describe the place but if you get a chance to visit do so by all means.

June 22 2014 at 9:26 PM



Melbournebilly

hat is the cheapeast way to get from St. Louis to Portland

May 13 2014 at 5:46 PM