



Portland is for Wanderers

People move to Portland to stick out, not fit in. I've learned it is the best place for wanderers without an agenda. Walking for miles through the neighborhoods led me to understand what makes Portland hard to define. There's no obligation to stick to the norm. Each individual can flourish in their own uniqueness.

When I first moved here, I didn't have a clear idea on what to expect. Portland seemed like a sleepy town with its quirks and rainbow of interesting characters. Though after a few years, I've witnessed this city become a playground for those trying on new identities. There are hidden gems in each neighborhood with a fusion of cultural differences. Each with its own aroma of spices, beer hops and indie music. I've come across people in different stages of their life. They move to Portland for many reasons or none at all.

Most of the folks I meet here are usually from California. It's as if all the Cali people who migrated up to the Pacific Northwest needed a break from the hustle culture of constant meetings, sitting in traffic or hearing about someone's new job in tech. There's a distinct mentality around the workforce that I've become accustomed to. It's less about the grind and more about having the freedom to create. Gigging is as common as the squirrels that run from yard to yard.

Wandering the streets started off as a pastime and lended itself into a people watching exercise. Every corner of the city has its own eclectic nature. This was contrary to the fast paced culture I was bred from in Los Angeles. Interactions altered between making friends while waiting in line for free ramen to community bike rides with naked strangers.

In Portland, my conversations are centered around what flowers are blooming this season, when is a good time to visit Mt. Hood or what shows are playing at the Alberta Street Pub. While it's been tough to find my community, I've found it's great to be in the company of anyone who enjoys music. I tend to gravitate toward the art scene among indie creatives. Strangely, there aren't high expectations of artists, which is a breath of fresh air. I thought there would be a similar cutthroat atmosphere and have found it to be more collaborative.

Portland is more than a hub for weirdos and active hikers. Whatever group of wanderers you're looking for, you'll bump into them sooner or later. It's been fun to explore my varying interests and connect with folks by wandering around. Portland's charm lies in its ability to draw in those seeking relief from the relentless hustle and bustle. The city brings about a collaborative spirit, allowing artists to breathe easy without the cutthroat pressures often found elsewhere.

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