



# Portland: A Food Biography (Big City Food Biographies)

*Heather Arndt Anderson*

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The infant city called The Clearing was a bald patch amid a stuttering wood. The Clearing was no booming metropolis; no destination for gastrotourists; no career-changer for ardent chefs — just awkward, palsied steps toward Victorian gentility. In the decades before the remaining trees were scraped from the landscape, Portland's wood was still a verdant breadbasket, overflowing with huckleberries and chanterelles, venison leaping on cloven hoof. Today, Portland is seen as a quaint village populated by trust fund wunderkinds who run food carts each serving something more precious than the last. But Portland's culinary history actually tells a different story: the tales of the salmon-people, the pioneers and immigrants, each struggling to make this strange but inviting land between the Pacific and the Cascades feel like home.

The foods that many people associate with Portland are derived from and defined by its history: salmon, berries, hazelnuts and beer. But Portland is more than its ingredients. Portland is an eater's paradise and a cook's playground. Portland is a gustatory wonderland. Full of wry humor and captivating anecdotes, *Portland: A Food Biography* chronicles the Rose City's rise from a muddy Wild West village full of fur traders, lumberjacks and ne'er-do-wells, to a progressive, bustling town of merchants, brewers and oyster parlors, to the critical darling of the national food scene. Heather Arndt Anderson brings to life in lively prose the culinary landscape of Portland, then and now.

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