



Portland is an easy city to navigate on foot, by bike, or public transportation

Portland, says Smith, is also a very affordable meetings destination, making it easier for planners to keep within their meeting budgets. “When you talk about Portland, one thing that planners are always surprised about is how dog-gone affordable we are,” he says. “There is no sales, beverage, or food tax. We’re saving planners and organizations anywhere from 15 to 20 percent right off the top because of that. It’s a very affordable destination.”

### Variety and Accessibility

Another notable distinction about Portland is its easy accessibility to a variety of different landscapes and experiences, says Smith. “Portland, like every city in the Pacific Northwest, is all about the outdoors. Within an hour from here, we can get you to the Pacific. In 45 minutes, you can be on top of Mount Hood.”

In recent years, Portland’s food-and-drink scene has gained international acclaim. One of the city’s most popular nicknames is “Beervana,” a nod to Portland’s position as the beer capital of the world, with some 53 breweries within its city limits alone. In 2010, the city topped *Budget Travel’s* list for the “World’s Best Street Food,” thanks to the more than 600 food carts parked throughout the city, often in “pods” of multiple vendors. The City of Roses is also home to a coffee scene that rivals Seattle’s and is the birthplace of Stumptown Coffee.

“We’re probably best known for restaurants,” says Smith. “We started the food-cart craze, and we have more James Beard Foundation award-winning chefs, per capita, than any other city in America. Our food scene is just phenomenal.”

For AFTA’s conference, the city’s excellent dining scene was a major draw for attendees, says Rubsamén. “We do a lot of dine arounds during our conference,” he notes. Some of the attendees’ favorites, he added, included 23Hoyt, Bar Avignon, Irving Street Kitchen, and Paragon Restaurant & Bar, to name a few.

Noting another reputation which the city holds, Rubsamén says planners need not worry about the weather. “One thing that people always get nervous about is the rain in the Pacific Northwest,” he says. “But we’ve had gloriously sunny days there and, even in the rain, you’re never prevented from going to where you need to be. Portland is a great city to be in, no matter what the weather is. There’s a bit of something for everybody.”

Smith encourages planners to visit Portland to see all that the city has to offer, and to let Travel Portland assist them in any way possible. “Please contact us. That’s why we’re here. Our services are complimentary; we have no vested interest in what hotel you go to. We just want you to be in Portland. Let us help you. Once you get here, you’ll fall in love with it.” *SM Questions or comments? Email [dting@ntmlc.com](mailto:dting@ntmlc.com)*

## PLANNER IN RESIDENCE



**Alex P. Doyle, CMP,** vice president of national accounts for 21st Century Group, offers some insider tips on Portland.

is a local Pacific Northwest collection of brew pubs and restaurants. Voodoo Doughnut is also pretty cool to visit.

### What’s the best thing about holding a meeting in Portland?

Portland has a great airport, good public transportation, outstanding hotels, the world-class Oregon Convention Center, and great value. It’s about half the price of San Francisco. We also have a very sophisticated meeting network of services that includes DMCs, decorators, A/V technology providers, florists, designers, and local musicians, entertainers, and speakers.

### What’s your favorite thing about Portland?

The multitude of activities that you can do, including the great outdoors, the great cultural scene, the outstanding culinary scene, and the vibrant wine industry. In short, the options of lifestyles that you can have here.

### Where do you take out-of-town family and friends when they visit?

I love to take them to McMénamins, which

## ESSENTIAL Tool Box

### CONVENTION CENTERS & FACILITIES

Oregon Convention Center (375,000 sf)

ROOM TAX 6 to 8 percent

## READERS Recommend



**PINNACLE AWARDS GO TO:**  
• Travel Portland