

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD



Clockwise from top left: the busy checkout area at Powell's, the "Pillar of Signatude" that many well-known authors have autographed, some of the volumes in the Rare Book Room.

OREGON'S CITY OF BOOKS

BY ELLEN ALBANESE | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

The serpentine line of customers stretches as far as the eye can see, past a bank of cash registers, around colorful displays of merchandise. Is it the latest theme-park thrill ride? The grand opening of a hot new restaurant? The premiere of the next "Harry Potter" movie?

Nope. These people just want to buy books.

With an inventory of 2 million new and used books, Powell's City of Books claims to be the world's largest independent bookstore. The store occupies a full city block, and you need a map to find your way around its three floors and 68,000 square feet (that's 1.5 acres). High ceilings and a slightly industrial feel attest to the building's former life as a used car lot and automotive showroom.

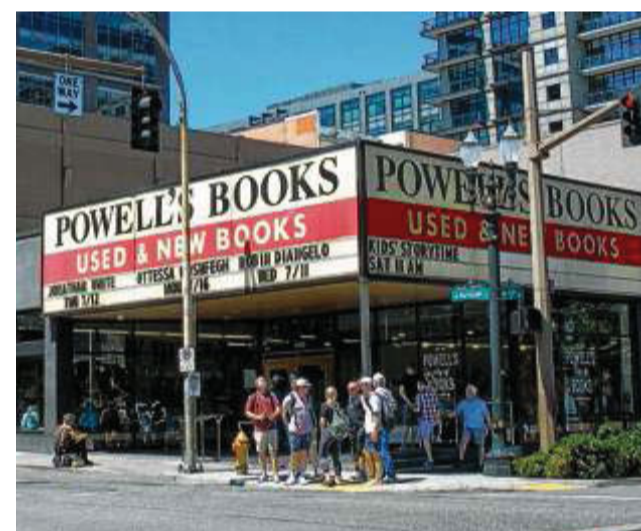
On a guided tour (offered on Sundays), we made our way through the store's nine color-coded rooms. Books in the Red Room teach you how to be a citizen of the world, with current events, social sciences, and local Portland titles. Looking for sci-

ences, robotics, and DIY? That would be the Pearl Room. New and used books are shelved side by side, said Desiree Ducharme, the manager of the used book department and our guide. "We take in about 20,000 used books a week," she said.

Father and son Walter and Michael Powell established the bookstore in 1971. Today there are five Powell's locations in Portland, including one at Portland International Airport. Open seven days a week, 365 days a year, the flagship hosts some 500 book and author events a year. Many visiting authors have signed the "Pillar of Signatude," Neil Gaiman, William Gibson, and Douglas Adams among them.

The Rare Book Room features an impressive collection of autographed first editions and other collectible volumes. Along with an 1814 copy of the first printing of Lewis and Clark's expedition journals, we got a kick out of a gorgeously colored "The Thousand and One Nights" and several first-edition Nancy Drew mysteries.

Powell's City of Books, 1005 W. Burnside, 800-878-7323, powells.com.



PHOTOS BY ELLEN ALBANESE FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Powell's City of Books occupies a full city block in downtown Portland, Ore.

HERE

SWEET DEALS IN VERMONT

As the snow melts and the sap begins to run, celebrate Vermont's brief but sweet maple sugaring season with one of three Sugar Season packages offered at the Woodstock Inn & Resort. Following a just-completed two-year, \$16.5 million renovation, the resort is offering up to 45 percent savings on newly renovated guestrooms, sweet treats, and spa specials. Stay in one of 10 oversized Woodstock Collection rooms, each with distinctive décor and amenities that embody a quintessential Vermont experience, from hiking and fishing to downhill skiing and (of course!) maple syrup production and history. All packages include luxury accommodations and a hearty country breakfast for two. Additional package perks include add on spa credits, bottle of wine, and maple welcome amenity. *From \$179 per night midweek and \$209 weekends. Available through May 16. 888-338-2745, www.woodstockinn.com/*

JUST SAY CHEESE

Cheese Journeys, a tour company promoting appreciation of artisanal cheese, food, and drink producers, is adding Vermont to its roster of international destinations. "A Summer of Love: Food Tripping in Vermont," a six-day, five-night foodie-fest, is centered around visits to Jasper Hill, Shelburne Farms, Hill Farmstead Brewery, and Vermont Creamery. (Aug. 8-13) Also included are a Cheesemakers Dinner with the executive director of the Vermont Cheese Council; 11th annual Cheesemakers Festival; visits to



Mad River Distillers, Lake Champlain Chocolates, the Burlington Farmers Market; and more. The tour will be led by Cheese Journeys' founder, Anna Juhl, with co-hosts Tenaya Darlington and Jeff Roberts offering insights on cheese, cocktails, cider, beer, and all things fermented. Participants have the option of free travel to/from Burlington via a luxury passenger van making stops at Fairfield Cheese Shop in Connecticut, Brookline's Curds & Co., and the Concord Cheese Shop. *\$3,100 double occupancy; \$3,600 single. cheesejourneys.com/vermont-august-8-13-2019.html*

THERE

HANDS-ON CULTURAL TOUR IN JAPAN

Enjoy a dynamic cultural adventure on Insider's Japan, a new 13-day, small group trip offered by Odysseys Unlimited. The tour travels to Tokyo and Kyoto and includes visits to off-the-beaten-path historic cities of Takayama, Kanazawa and Nara, and scenic Mt. Fuji and Fuki-Hakone-Izu



National Park. Hands-on activities include calligraphy, pottery, gold-leaf application, and cooking lessons conducted by preeminent masters in each discipline. Multiple departures are scheduled through Oct. 30. Includes round-trip transportation from select cities, including Boston. *Priced from \$5,757. 888-370-6765, odysseys-unlimited.com/tours/asia-the-far-east/insiders-japan/*

GET LAZY IN ITALY

Experience the authentic charms of Italy on Lazy Italian Culinary Adventures. Italian-born Francesca Montillo

leads, plans, and organizes culinary tours and customized trips to Tuscany, Sicily, Puglia, Emilia Romagna, Veneto, Umbria, and other regions. Designed to introduce travelers to "la dolce vita" — the good life — that celebrates the sights, smells, and tastes of her native land. Tours include hotels, cooking classes, winery visits with lunches on location, all excursions, all ground transportation, and most meals. Does not include airfare. When you return from your travels, continue your Italian culinary education with one of Montillo's cooking classes offered in the Boston area. *Culinary tours from \$3,795-\$3,999. www.thelazyitalian.com/*

EVERYWHERE

INFLATABLE GEODESIC TENT

Like the idea of camping but worry about the tedious task of setting up a tent? With The Cave, Heimplanet's inflatable tent, all you need is a pump and a few minutes of time. The spacious and stable geodesic structure's inflatable frame and inner and outer tent work together as one. You only need to assemble them once and, after that, you simply pump it up. Accommodates up to three people. Includes sewn-in bags for your belongings, and space at the entrance for cooking gear. A gear loft under the inner tent roof offers added storage, and is the perfect spot to tuck your lamp for ambient lighting. Waterproof Rip-



Stop Polyester fly sheet and RipStop Nylon inner tent offer weatherproof durability. *www.heimplanet.com/shop/Tents*; Available in the United States at major online retailers. \$598. <https://amzn.to/2sBvYHJ>

ONLINE TIPS FOR TRAVELERS

Say you've just returned from an awe-some trip to San Francisco or New Delhi or fill-in-the-blank destination, and you have a tip you're itching to share with fellow like-minded travelers. What to do? Like from France and Kim from Costa Rica have an answer for you: Triptipedia. This duo had a hard time finding precise travel information online, so they created a website for people to share their practical advice. Now you can add your voice to a community of more than 1,000 locals, travelers, and tourism professionals who share travel tips daily. A tip can be either short and simple, or more extensive, and include anything other travelers could benefit from — even helpful info about your own hometown. Each tip you write will include your biography as well as a link to a profile where you can add your social networks and your blog or website URL. Free. *www.triptipedia.com/*

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