



## The Birkenstock date: Where to go when you feel herbal

One of the greatest benefits of living in Eugene is the town's great host of natural foods restaurants. While couples who frequent such places seldom refer to their togetherness over a bowl of mashed yeast as a "date," it is still entirely worthwhile to consider a meal *d'amour* that is enjoyable as well as healthy. And cheap, too.

The Homefried Truckstop is the closest and most notorious example of this avenue of dining delight. What sort of folks go to such a place? Stereotypes abound, of course. On any evening you're bound to find a few left-over flower children reminiscing about being beaten up by cops in the good old days, a transient or two, a nervous-looking business major who thought this was a burger joint, one or two folks who haven't bathed for quite a while, and a dog with a bandana tied around his neck patiently waiting outside for his master to emerge.

But at the Truckstop you *don't* have to have Birkenstocks strapped to your feet in order to be served, though shoes of some sort are required. And you *don't* have to be a vegetarian. Even Republicans can eat there.

Besides the more organic clientele, the Truckstop is starting to attract (heaven forbid!) preppies. Sometimes, on a crowded occasion, both species can be seen at the same table, passing a shaker of kelp in a manner that

would make Ronnie and Leonid envious.

The Truckstop offers a complete dinner menu during the evening hours, with both meat dishes and a great variety of sans-meat dishes available. All the food is "home-cooked," and, as the business is a cooperative, every effort is made to keep the quality of the food high and the prices low. And this translates to pleasure at all points of the process for the diners: a tasty and filling meal that's as much fun to pay for as it is to eat.

Our couple was fortunate to go to the Truckstop on a night when the musical accompaniment was good. The soothing, sensuous sounds of a twelve-string guitar and flute filled the audio specter of the restaurant on this occasion. They felt relieved, for the last time they had dined at the Truckstop the off-key singer's voice was so offensive they had to beat a hasty retreat back to the library vending machines.

Since both of our diners were vegetarians (and nearly broke) they opted for a plate of "fresh steamed veggies with rice and tofu" and a pot of their favorite tea. The food soon arrived on earthenware plates, accompanied by a healthy slice of whole wheat bread. The cost? \$3 each on this dutch affair. And the benefits? Untold thousands from a meal like this. Full of protein and vitamins and fiber, this good stuff filled both of their stomachs, and


so they were better able to enjoy each other's company and forget about books and machines for a while.

The best thing about the Truckstop is that it's not just a restaurant, it's a whole evening's

worth of entertainment. There's food, of course, all sorts of teas (herbal and non-herbal, just like the clientele) and coffee, music, and plenty of interesting people to watch. Just sit back and be organic.  
**by kirk knighton**

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