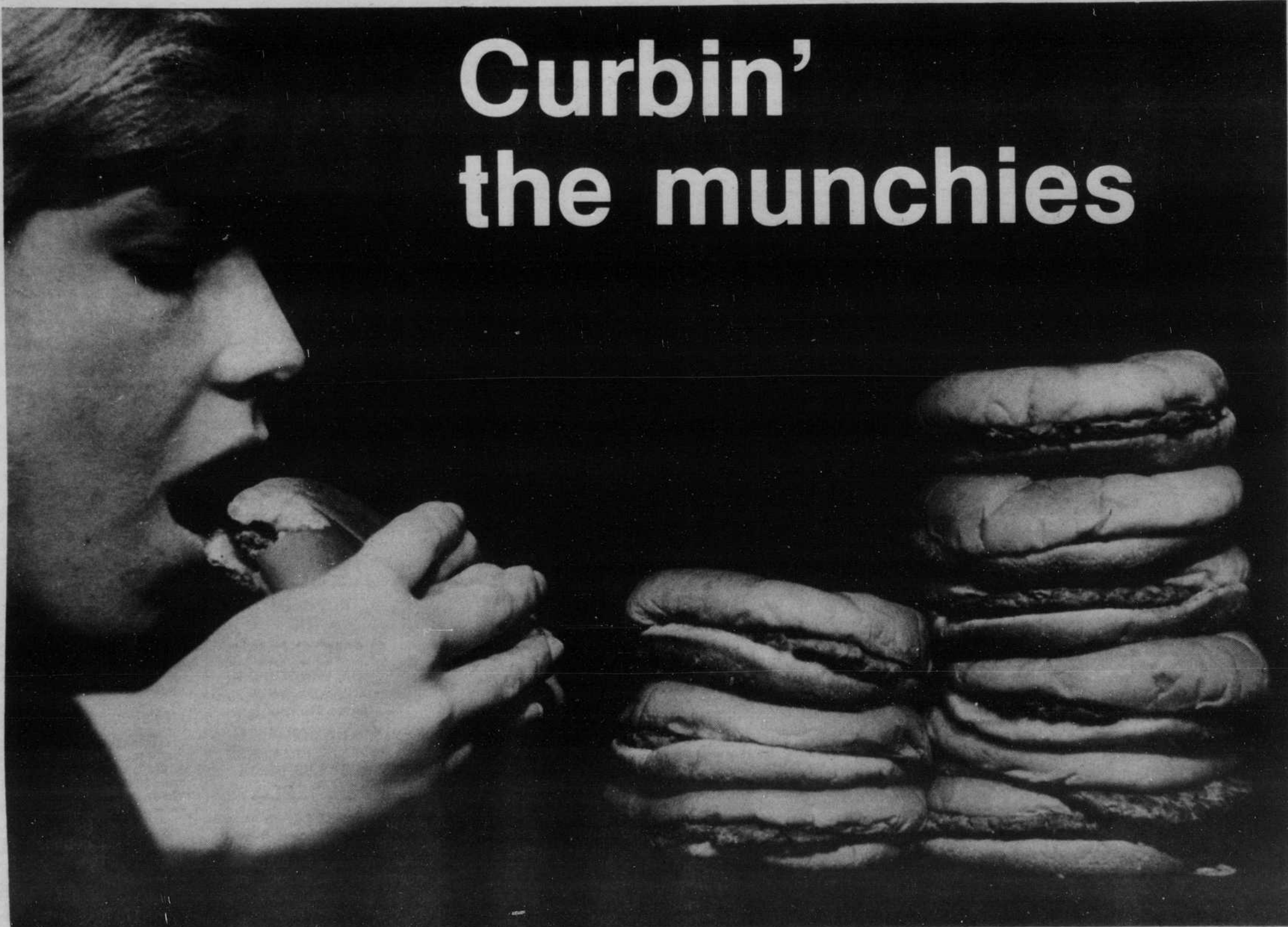




Curbin' the munchies

Cheap eats abound in Eugene

Some restaurant guides feature the best food, damn the cost. Other guides tell you where to find decent food at a decent price.

On the other hand, the following survey won't pretend to provide a unique and definitive insight on the quality of eating establishments in this city. Instead, we're going to tell you where to get the cheapest food in Eugene — damn the quality.

Toward that goal, we've set the purely arbitrary amount of \$2.50 as the maximum cost of meals. Because of the relatively low price range used in selecting establishments, consumers should in some cases be willing to accept a little less flavor and a few more rodent hairs per gram of vegetable matter. Again, the emphasis is on quantity, not quality.

HICKERY FARMS of OHIO — 218 Valley River Center. It doesn't cost anything to eat at Hickery Farms, and the vittles, generally crackers, smoked meat and cheeses, are high-quality stuff. Dress up in your best clothes and cruise through the place like you're actually going to buy something. If the clerks are derelict in keeping the sample plates adequately stocked, don't be afraid to furrow your brow and insist that they slice you off a chunk of that expensive sausage, just like rich people do. It should be mentioned that at some point the clerks will catch on to the fact that you're not going to buy anything and give you the bums' rush. Nothing is free.

LYON'S RESTAURANT — 1933 Franklin Blvd. Forget the restaurant and go straight to the lounge, which offers frequently restocked reserves of popcorn, tortilla chips and hot sauce to anyone making a pretense at purchasing beverages. Unfortunately, the price of a pitcher of beer recently shot up to \$3.75, but if you have a little self-control you can recoup your investment in net junk-food consumption. The service is above average and the atmosphere is quiet, comfortable and conducive to conversation, which is a good thing since the picture on the big-screen television has more capacity for distortion than a WISTEC laser show.

HARD TIMES LUNCHES — 1236 Kincaid St., next to University Bookstore. Hard Times Lunches are sponsored by the Eugene Council for Human Rights in Latin America. The small profits the organization realizes from the lunches are sent to El Salvador and Guatemala to aid refugees. A typical lunch costs \$1.50 and might consist of a bowl of vegetable or beef soup, a bean tortilla, a few slices of fruit and a glass of punch. The food is simple, edible and filling. Meals are served on Wednesday and Thursday from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

HARRYS ON THE CANAL — 3300 Centennial Boulevard. Monday through Friday hors d'oeuvres are served from 5 to 7 p.m. in conjunction with happy hour. A draft beer costs 75 cents and a glass of house wine is \$1. Clever low-budget diners can nurse a single drink until they've had their fill of the free stuff on the menu, which changes every night. Monday is pizza night, Tuesday is taco night and Thursday is chili night. Wednesday and Friday is the chef's choice.

EAST BROADWAY PIZZERIA — 652 E. Broadway. Like most pizza establishments, East Broadway's normal prices are prohibitive to the lower classes. But every Wednesday you can purchase a small pizza with three ingredients and a pitcher of beer or soft drink for \$5.00. The package will feed one pig or two normal people.

PADDOCK TAVERN — 3355 E. Amazon Dr. Tuesday night is hot dog night at "The Pad," where the best low-budget 'dogs in town can be had for 25 cents apiece. Count on waiting in line, and a long-time customer notes that reserves of ketchup dwindle to dangerously low levels as the evening progresses. Pitchers of Rainier beer go for \$2.25 on Tuesdays and whenever there is an event on the quality big screen, which attracts The Pad's sports-oriented clientele.

BEER GARDEN — South end of first floor, EMU. On the other hand, if you're into marginal hot dogs, go to the Beer Garden in the EMU, usually held on Fridays. Hot dogs sell for 25 cents, except on those rare occasions when the law of supply and demands whittles the price down

to nothing. When that situation occurs, they become an excellent bargain.

EMU FOUNTAIN COURT CAFE — South end of first floor, EMU. Monday through Friday, the Fountain Court offers hot, four-course meals with real meat for \$1.75. Main entries are reputed to be Salisbury Steak, German Sausage, Italian Veal Steaks and Seafood Platters. Despite the worldly titles, the food often has that generic, bland flavor geared to appeal to the lowest common denominator. On the other hand, it is unlikely that you will find a better-balanced meal in Eugene for a lower price unless you're in the habit of dressing like a wino and begging for food outside religious establishments. The Fountain Court also has a variety of breakfasts available for less than \$2.00.

PEKING MANDARIN — Corner of Hilyard Street and 13th Avenue. Like most Chinese restaurants, the Peking Mandarin charges \$5.00 and up for full-course meals. But Monday through Friday, the restaurant offers luncheon specials for \$1.95. The meals consists of a main course, tea or coffee and the obligatory fortune cookie. Main courses change each day. Lunch is served from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

UNIVERSITY DORMS — University campus. Lunch and dinner at the dorms are too expensive to be considered a real bargain, but for \$2.50, walk-ins can have all the breakfast they can stomach. Most cafeterias begin serving breakfast at 7 a.m. and stop at 10:30 a.m. That's three and a half hours of non-stop, mmm-mmm good eating.

KONA CAFE — 853 E. 13th Ave. Every Saturday morning the Kona Cafe has a breakfast special for \$2.15, which includes two eggs, hash browns and toast. On Wednesdays, from 5 to 8 p.m., it sponsors an all-you-can-eat "Beggar's Banquet" for a varying price depending on the main entrée. The Kona is known for the earthy intellectuals that frequent the place, both in front of and behind the counter.

Story by Sean Meyers
Photo by Bob Baker

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