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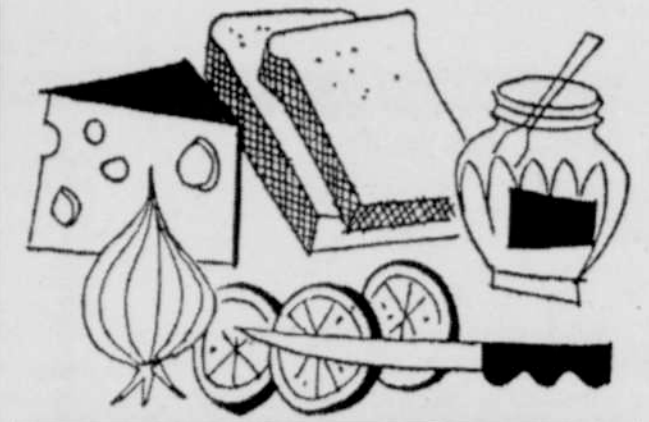
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BY MEG DALY

### Portland's own SoHo

It's a land of quaintly restored homes, antique shops and baby strollers. It's so damn cute it could be a parody of itself. It's SoHo: South of Holgate (also known as Sellwood). This floral, toddler-ridden and "family"-friendly neighborhood is home to some of the city's best culinary experiences. From Caprial's on one end to Papa Haydn on the other, this pseudo 'urb is bursting with eateries. Here are some highlights, traversing north to south, to get you started.

#### Assaggio • 7742 S.E. 13th Ave.

Assaggio fairly screams "romantic." Only you'd never hear anyone raising their voice in unseemly ways here. Think red velvet, savory and lush—Assaggio was made for lovers. Share a bottle from the excellent wine list and indulge in the chef's selection of three pastas—perhaps the penne with zucchini and prosciutto or spicy spaghetti with tomato, eggplant and green olive. Entrees change daily. Desserts include homemade gelato and a tiramisu that's to die for.

#### Fat Albert's • 6668 S.E. Milwaukie Ave.

The only reason not to eat at Fat Albert's is if you can't get in. This hole-in-the-wall breakfast joint only seats about 18 people, so get there early to partake in the homiest, yummiest, egggiest wonders this side of Uncle Vic's farm. Friendly servers keep your coffee hot, pat you on the back and call you "hon." My favorite omelet is Kim's Fave—bacon, cheddar and avocado, with sour cream and salsa optional. It's also my buddy Elizabeth's fave. And Stacy's fave, Cat's fave....

#### Gino's Restaurant & Bar • 8051 S.E. 13th Ave.

Here are my friend Rebecca's instructions for a fabulous date at Gino's: Split a large Caesar salad, a plate of steamed mussels and a bottle of wine. Simple as that. I like this as a late-meal stop (late for me is 9 p.m.) to share the cheese plate with friends. Large portions of tasty pasta dishes round out the Old World, come-as-you-are charm of this Sellwood staple.

#### El Palenque • 8324 S.E. 17th Ave.

I've been dining at this Salvadoran-Mexican gem since I was a college-age pup. And it has only gotten better with age. Back then we came for the mounds of cheap rice, beans and cheesy goodness. Now I go for the more nuanced flavors of the mole sauce and the pupusas—deep-fried homemade meat or bean roll-ups. Run by a Salvadoran family, El Palenque has held true to its origins and holds steady amid the revolving door of culinary crazes. Plus, like its sunny decorations, it's always been a haven for those of all stripes.

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
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