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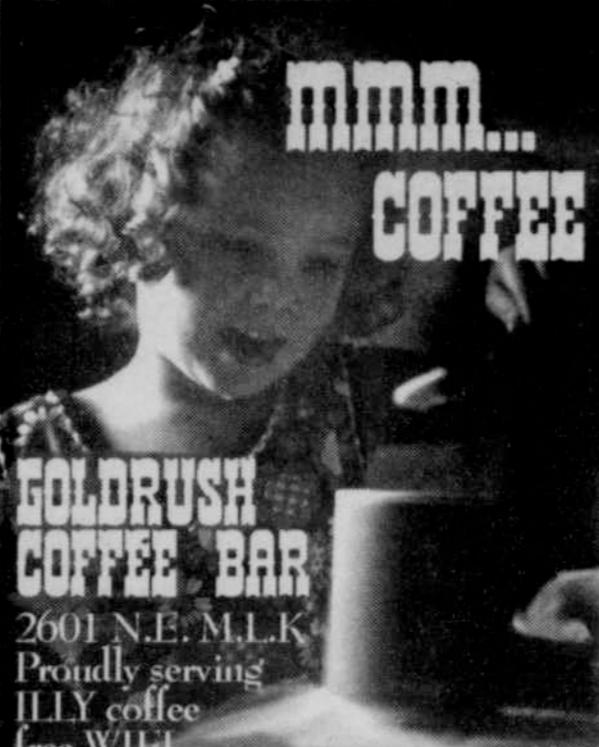
eating out



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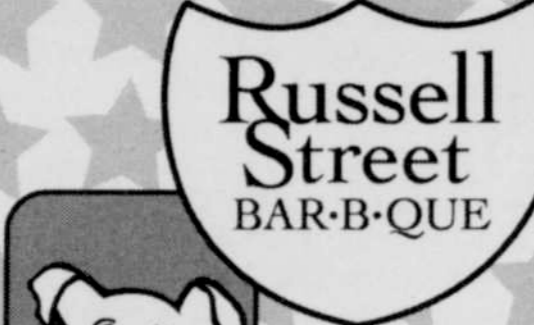
mmm... COFFEE
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epiqueerean
BY MICHAEL E BARRETT

Tea time

Twice a month, Epiqueerean sends you and your appetite out for good food. But this is Portland, where even good food is secondary to a beverage culture known around the world. High-quality pinots, hearty beers and diverse blends of coffee define and reflect our leisurely lifestyle. I'm not British, but I am partial to the notion that there's nothing like a good cup of tea, and I've found three locales in Portland where it's not only tea time all the time, but the myriad colored and herbal concoctions achieve nothing short of an epicurean art form.



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The Tao of Tea's Tao and Leaf Room • 3430 S.E. Belmont St.

The interior of Tao's flagship teahouse resembles what you might expect from a cozy roadside café somewhere in the mountains of India, China or Japan. I'm convinced its rustic charm infuses itself into the drinks, too. Served in traditional teaware culturally apropos to the tea's native land, you'll enjoy the harmony of warmth trickling down your gullet meshed with the gentle cascade of small water features tickling your eardrums. You can get your drink to go, but why would you? The Tao is an oasis of relaxation. High on my list is the 500 Mile Chai. This spicy, full-bodied Indian tea boasts an abundance of flavor derived from ginger, cloves and cinnamon blended to perfection with small black leaves. Choose to accentuate it with honey, and you'll unleash its aphrodisiacal power.



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JOHN street cafe
8338 N. Lombard
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The Tao of Tea's Standing Still Mountain • 2112 N.W. Hoyt St.

Tao's sister teahouse occupies a large open space featuring an enclosed Japanese tatami tearoom for your tea ceremony or a bit of privacy. Try the Super Fancy Golden Ceylon, a rare tea with a fabulous name, or allow your palate to experience the intricacy of South American Yerba Maté. Feeling peckish? The fragrant Missy Roti flatbread served with raita and tamarind chutney is a truly brilliant complement to any cup of tea. Standing Still also makes downright healthy smoothies of tea, fruit, soy milk and ice.




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Tea Chai Té • 734 N.W. 23rd Ave.

Blink and you might miss this comfy teahouse overlooking Northwest 23rd from its second-floor windows. So don't blink! Head straight upstairs and peruse Tea Chai Té's tempting menu of brews. If you want the taste of dessert without the calories, the Caramel Crème Brulee black tea is an excellent choice. The aromatic equivalent of a caramel latte, this rare tea's tinge of sweetness satisfies. On the lighter side, the Pear & Green Tea possesses a yin-and-yang balance of natural fruit and muddled tea, perfect on ice during these hot summer days.