

COMMUNITY COFFEE

THE CUP, THE VIBE,

THE QUEER QUOTIENT

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Coffeehouses have been an important part of the queer community in Portland since the early 1970s. Although there were other spots for queer folks to meet around town (bars, soda fountains, the usual cruising grounds), coffeehouses were sites of early organizing and political activism in both the anti-war and gay liberation movements that were happening at that time.

Although queer coffeehouses have become much more mainstream since their early radical days, they still provide an atmosphere for queer people to socialize that is distinctly different from the bar scene. In our survey, we managed to locate a whopping TEN queer-owned coffeehouses operating in the Portland area. (If we missed any, please let us know!) Each place we visited had its own feeling and emphasis, its unique aim and clientele.

One thing we discovered is that the queer-owned coffeehouses of Portland are an important part not only of queer community life; often these coffee shops serve as the hub of their neighborhoods, bringing together young and old, gay and straight. These shops all stand as an amazing testament to the commitment of gay business owners to their wider communities. They are places where tolerance and quiet activism are practiced daily, as the coffee is poured and the milk is steamed.