

Cheap 'n' Choosy

Getting by in the land of the potluck, yoga and tofu

By Lynette Chiang

Welcome to fabulously frugal Eugene, land of the potluck, sliding scale, recycled bicycles, card-carrying careers in Goodwill hunting. But don't be fooled. Locals demand both style and substance for their shekel, and there are plenty of creative local businesses willing to step up to the plate. Here's a day's worth of tips and tricks for the choosy cheapskate. The stops were compiled by a "blow-in" who spent four years dodging the Eugene rain, hail and rain armed with a rainjacket and a purse that holds no more than a \$10 bill. Pedal this way ...

WAKE UP to the 6 am crowing of a Eugene train whistle (free). If you're a morning person, head down to the most affordable drop-in YOGA class in town (Core Star, 2nd and Washington), taught by the rubbery John Perry. 1-1/4 hour, \$3-5. M-W-F-Sa at 9 am; Tu, Th, Su at 5.30 pm. Nicely limbered up, head to Keystone (5th & Lawrence) for BREAKFAST. Choose the delightfully gritty oatmeal sesame pancake \$3.50 or the saucy, ricey Vegan Powerhouse \$4.95. It's one place where the food doesn't taste of cooking margarine. The *EW* Calendar (free) is crammed with cheapies/freebies. You could get a BA on the meaninglessness of life for a fraction of your spendy college education. **MOVIES** 12 (Gateway Mall, Springfield)

has a \$1.50 daily special. Artier flicks are at the Bijou (13th & Ferry), \$3 for late night, \$4-5 Sun-Wed.

It's better outdoors on a sunny day and join the FAST NOON BIKE RIDE with Bike Friday (3364 W11th, M-F); see if you can pass guys twice your age. Let's do LUNCH. How about CHOW FUN, \$8.50 at Ocean Sky (18th and Chambers), the best juicy flat rice noodle, Or PIZZA: Try a margarita slice

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\$2.75, or Caesar+slice+slurp \$6.50 at Bene (Lincoln and West Broadway), outstanding thin crust, pity their soda fountain is uninspiring. Or the avant-garde Pizza Research Institute (13th and Lawrence) Vegan Chef slice \$4, a luscious fruit and veggie garden slathered in a tasty "proprietary" sauce. Or Cozmic's cheesy veggie slice \$3.50, or Sy's NY (12th& Alder) \$2.25; tip 'em nice or enjoy a slightly burned slice. Or elbow your way past school kids at the Taste of India (24th and Hilyard) lunch buffet.

SALMON WRAP: \$6.50, Cafe Glendi

(5th Street Public Market). Now walk off lunch on the SECRET WALK, a path winding up through moss covered trees, along a babbling brook with bridges and even a gazebo to contemplate the meaninglessness — all urban walkways should be like this. Mapquest your way to West 25th and Brittany Drive, look for the white path just near the bus stop. Nibble away on the best dark chocolate you will ever taste, local CHOCOLATE DECADENCE \$2.19 (cheapest at Kiva, 11th and Olive) — the right break, just the right bitterness. Now for afternoon TEA at the upscale ambiance of Savoure (West Broadway and Lincoln)

to the top of the class; you need a shovel to make a dent in it. The town's best berry PIE is also here, a la mode \$3.25.

Anyone for dinner? The BURGER at Turtles (Willamette & 27th) thwarts my attempts to be vegetarian — a perfect Monday \$6.50 burger and beer special. Slightly closer to home is Sakura (13th and Alder), home of the luscious Oregon Coast SUSHI \$5.50. Vegetarians will love the TEMPEH SANDWICH, a gourmet toasted treat \$6.50 at Cornucopia (17th and Lincoln) open late!

If you'd rather be the Iron Chef and DIY, TEMPEH/TOFU is the meat 'n' potatoes of many a Eugene diet. Buy direct from Surata (3rd and Lincoln), Tuesday and Thursday, 11-5 pm when they sell the 'overs. You can't end the day without the luscious vegan blueberry CHEESECAKE at Sweetlife (Monroe and 7th), \$3.50, or the giant TIRAMISU \$6 at Napoli (E13th and Hilyard), or Rusty's Handbuilt ICE CREAM SANDWICH \$1.80 — a giant slab of real ice cream between a giant pair of cookies half-dipped in bullet-proof dark chocolate, from wholemeal stores.

It's now Saturday, 9 pm — I'm heading out for some of that intelligent, inventive, gotta-dance ELECTRONICA at Freaks in the House, John Henry's (West Broadway and Olive). It's free, cheaper and funner than going to the gym. ■

Lynette Chiang's blog is at www.galfromdownunder.com




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