

winter getaways



Food, Drinks and Rock 'n' Roll

A quick guide to Seattle nightlife

By Katie Cornell • Photos by Carl Adelson

If Eugene is boring you, Portland is not far away enough for a vacation and you're looking for some new Northwest culture, head up to Seattle for a weekend. The big city on the Puget Sound offers rainy outdoor activities, outstanding art and music ... and a chance to find your nightlife niche. These are just a few vibrant places to grab a bite and/or drink.

Restaurants

If you're looking for a fun Friday night outing, check out Bizarro's Italian Café,

1307 N. 46th Street. Going to Bizarro's is like visiting your crazy artist aunt's home that she also uses as her studio. The space, adorned with an upside-down Christmas tree, portraits of naked ladies, shattered mirrors and antique trinkets, makes you forget you're there to eat. The menu is moderately priced (entrées range from \$12-\$20), but the rich, flavorful Italian dishes accompanied by the cluttered old home atmosphere compensate for forking over a few extra bucks. Try the "Forest Floor Frenzy," a

generous portion of penne drenched in sautéed mushrooms, various spices and a sweet, creamy sauce.

For a more unique dining experience, check out Queen Sheba, an Ethiopian restaurant at 916 E. John Street. The little restaurant tucked away in the buzzing Capitol Hill district offers delicious options for vegetarians, an authentic ambiance and friendly service. Go with friends because the Ethiopian communal dining experience creates special intimacy. You can really break the ice on a date by feeding each other injera (like a spongy, fermented tortilla, but good, I promise) to begin the meal. And definitely try some tej — it's

like honey sticks dipped in a sweet white wine.

After a night out on the town, you may expect to wake up with an insatiable desire for a greasy, heart-attack-on-a-plate remedy. Consider Beth's Café at 7311 Aurora Avenue North. The '50s-meets-punk-rock diner offers an affordable menu 24/7. Its staple meal is a 12-egg omelet with all-you-can-eat hash browns and toast for about \$8.

in the Capitol Hill area; there are plenty of places to grab an \$8 cocktail, see a show or just have fun people-watching. Stop in at Comet Tavern if you want a John Henry's/Max's kind of atmosphere. There's good beer on tap along with grungy, graffiti-ridden bathroom walls, pool tables and high ceilings covered with dollar bills. (When I was there, a friend asked the bartender if he was in charge of putting the dollar bills up there. He said, "They didn't get there themselves.") When someone puts on Metallica, you can always move on.

Cha-cha ... cha! The Cha Cha Lounge is the place to go for cheap well drinks and late night tequila. This Día de los Muertos-inspired venue, which has a sister bar in L.A., collects a number of young socialites who love everything from hip hop to speed metal. The dim, red lighting makes it hard to focus on the velvet paintings and the Mexican wrestling costumes, but keep your eyes open: The décor is a retro delight. If you're looking for a cheap souvenir, take some pictures in the photo booth by the bathrooms; you can laugh at your own stupidity when you find them in your back pocket a week later.

If you decide to stay on Pike Street, make sure to check out who's playing at Neumo's. The spacious, two-level funhouse opened in 2004 and has hosted acts like Death Cab for Cutie, Wolf Parade, Brian Jonestown Massacre, Blue Scholars and many more. This month, Hot Mess! is scheduled to play, and so

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Another popular choice is the breakfast burrito, which is approximately the size of a newborn child. Beth's Café also encourages creative exploration with a supply of blank paper and crayons.

Bars/Venues

Perhaps the easiest way to blow your last paycheck on vacation is at the big city bars. However, you can't pass up the unique opportunity to run into some eclectic night creatures you haven't already found at John Henry's on '80s Night. Take a night to explore Pike Street

are Suzanne Vega, The Walkmen and Les Savy Fav. In December, you can check out Swollen Members and Vixen.

Beyond the bars and restaurants is a city full of life. It's nice to walk down the streets and hear a buzz of foreign languages swirl around the outside of bars and restaurants. It's equally pleasing to be able to head down to Pike Street Market and see a disheveled old man, strumming away on his guitar outside the first Starbucks, as he confuses and horrifies tourists with his lyrics. And don't be afraid to step into an erotic bakery and blush at the provocative pastries. Seattle is full of memories waiting to happen. ■



The buzzing Capitol Hill district