

# Folk school opens in Joseph

Learn carving, weaving, blacksmithing and more

By **TIM TRAINOR**  
East Oregonian

School is about to be in session in Joseph.

Prairie Mountain Folk School, the brainchild of Jennings Hotel owner Greg Hennes, plans to start its first set of classes during the week of March 24.

Those courses include how to build a staked bench, exploring natural dyes, blacksmithing, carving a wooden spoon, weaving and how to make your own herbal vinegars.

It's a slate that Hennes hopes will introduce the folk school concept to the community, and will allow the nonprofit to evolve into more offerings and a bigger workspace in the future.

Some classes — like carving a wooden spoon — will be taught by locals. Hennes and his friend Tom Bonamici, who is a University of Oregon design instructor, will lead that five-hour, one-day class. Joseph resident Lyle Witherrite will lead the blacksmithing class, where students will learn to forge a hook. June Colony of Wallowa will teach the lesson on natural dyes.

But other courses, like the three-day weaving class, will be taught by visiting artists. North Carolina-based designer Amber Jensen will teach students who are as varied as the instructors in both geography and demographics.

"We've got some people signed on from here, others who are coming in just for the classes," said Hennes.

Hennes said the nonprofit offers a 20 percent discount for Wallowa County residents. The costs of the courses vary, from \$65 for spoon carving, which includes all relevant materials, to \$295 for the weaving course.

Hennes got the idea for the school after attending the North House Folk School in Grand Marais, Minnesota, years ago. He learned timber framing skills there and saw what a valuable asset a folk school



Photo courtesy Prairie Mountain Folk School  
**One of the first classes at the folk school in Joseph will teach students how to build a staked bench.**

was to the community. He said it can offer a way for a community to preserve important knowledge, and also offer local youth the opportunity to find careers.

"I certainly see it that way," said Hennes. "If we can find a young kid who just goes wild for timber building or something, it can offer them a way to make a living in their hometown."

Hennes said he hopes to offer future courses in that vein, as well as boat building and field trips and other longer, more complex offerings. Hennes said he will work to not duplicate experiences already provided by the Josephy Center, Wallowa Resources and other local businesses.

The nonprofit is hosting some of the courses on the street-level event space beneath the Jennings Hotel. It also purchased a small brick building on W. McCully Street across from the hotel. Hennes said that the 600-square-foot structure will allow for some classroom space in the short-term, and the empty lot

next door offers room to expand.

As for the Jennings, it too has seen substantial renovation during the winter. Hennes said at least eight rooms will be available for rent at the formerly dilapidated downtown hotel, and possibly as many as 11 by Memorial Day. Local contractors have been working overtime on space that now includes a shared sauna, kitchen and baths.

A fundraiser for the folk school, called Prairie Mountain Feast, is scheduled for April 1 at the Jennings Hotel. The \$70 meal is produced by Tournant, a Portland-based, farm-focused company created by chefs Jaret Foster and Mona Johnson.

For more information on the folk school, visit [www.prairiemountainschool.com](http://www.prairiemountainschool.com) or call Hennes at 503-863-6757. You can also RSVP for the fundraiser dinner there as well.

*Tim Trainor is opinion page editor at the East Oregonian. Contact him at 541-966-0835.*



Melissa d'Arabian via AP

**Banana oat muffin.**

## Banana oat muffins make for a quick breakfast or snack

By **MELISSA D'ARABIAN**  
Associated Press

Like many families, we try to minimize the amount of processed sugar we eat. But, it is lurking everywhere, and we are eating far more processed sugar than our grandparents did. How to combat this trend that seems to have sneaked up on us?

A few ideas: First, let's read the ingredient list and nutritional information on labels of every single food item we put in our carts. That sounds like a lot of work, but as we get familiar with our favorite foods, the task will become less daunting.

But we need to know exactly what is in our food, and you might be surprised by what "healthy-sounding" foods have processed sugar or other weird ingredients and chemicals hiding in them. Remember that sugar can have lots of different names, such as "syrup" or "sucrose" (the suffix "ose" usually means sugar), so the sugar gram count can be helpful.

Second, buy more foods without labels. When we buy whole foods and then cook them ourselves, we know exactly what is going into them. Third, favor sugar from natural, unprocessed, whole sources. While fruit-sweetened foods still have sugar, it's not a highly processed derivative, and it brings with its sweetness a full set of other nutrients. Bananas, apples and dates bring vitamins, minerals and fiber along with their sugars. Try recipes using them as sweeteners.

Last, keep production of treat items in-house, meaning make less healthy items homemade, so you can control what goes in. Craving brownies? Make them at home, so at least you see exactly what is going into the recipe, and you can even search online for slightly healthier version if you want. At minimum, you'll likely be skipping a host of flavors and preservatives than if you bought a store-made brownie sitting on the shelf for days or weeks.

My banana oat morning mini-muffins don't use any white processed sugar, and yet are just sweet enough to scratch the sweet-tooth itch. I usually bake a batch or two and freeze them for a quick breakfast or snack on-on-the-go, or to add a treat to their lunchbox or to a family Sunday brunch. They're small so they thaw in minutes. As a bonus for our family, I can easily make these little guys gluten-friendly for my intolerant daughter since there's no wheat flour in the recipe — I just use gluten-free oats.

### BANANA OAT BREAKFAST MINI-MUFFINS

**Servings:** 26 muffins  
**Start to finish:** 40 minutes

- ½ cup (gently packed) pitted dates
- 2 tablespoons coconut oil (or other oil or butter)
- 2 medium bananas, ripe, roughly chopped
- 2 eggs, room temperature
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 ¼ cups rolled oats (gluten-free, if making gluten-free)
- ¾ cup almond flour
- 1 ½ teaspoons baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt

Heat the oven to 350 degrees F. Mix the wet ingredients: Place the dates in a small bowl and pour ½ cup boiling water on them and let them sit for 5 minutes to soften.

Once soft, pour off the excess water (do not drain; leave them very wet), and use a fork to smash the dates gently into a loose paste. In a stand mixer using the whisk attachment (or hand mixer), mix the date paste, coconut oil and bananas on medium high speed until soft and creamy, about 2 minutes.

Add the eggs one at a time, mixing after each one, and add the vanilla. Prepare the dry ingredients: Place the oats in a dry blender or food processor and pulse until oats become a coarse powder.

Pour into a bowl and add almond flour, baking powder and soda, cinnamon, and salt and whisk to mix. Add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients half at a time, mixing after each addition. If the dough becomes too thick for the whisk attachment, fold in using a rubber spatula.

Use a small ice-cream scoop or a table-spoon to scoop dough into a mini-muffin pan fitted with paper liners.

Bake until muffins spring back to the touch, about 17-20 minutes.

*Nutrition information per serving: 68 calories; 30 calories from fat; 3 g fat (1 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 17 mg cholesterol; 55 mg sodium; 8 g carbohydrate; 1 g fiber; 3 g sugar; 2 g protein.*

# Porto: Wine, hills and sunsets in Portugal

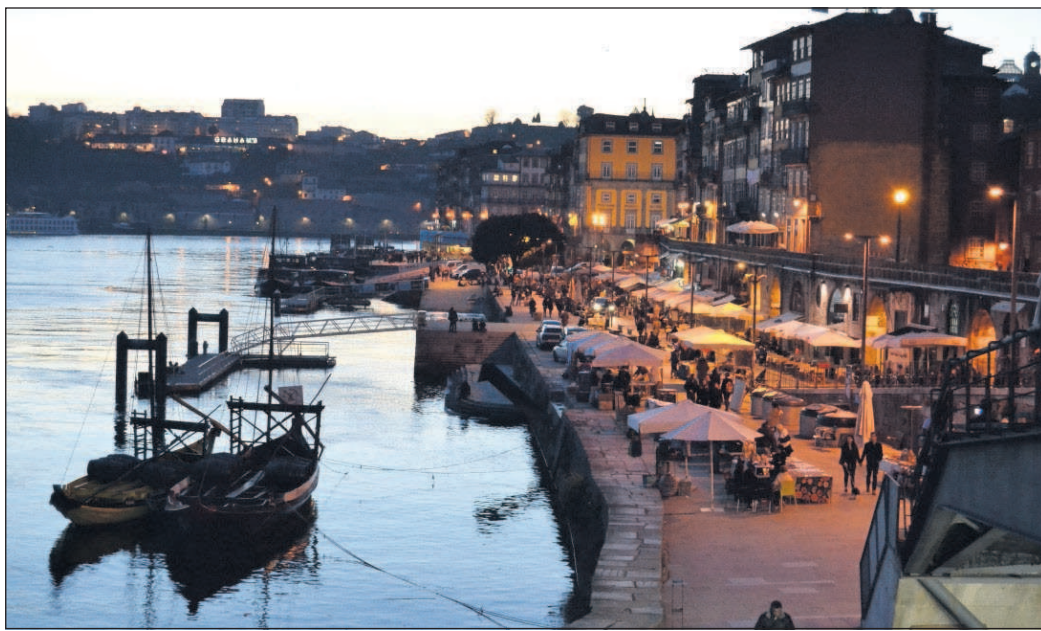
By **ALBERT STUMM**  
Associated Press

PORTO, Portugal — I was lost, looking for port wine caves dug into hills across the bridge from Porto. I trudged up a hill and rounded a blind corner, sidling against a stone wall to avoid tour buses flying toward me, when I stumbled on the highlight of my day: a nearly empty tasting room and private wine-cellar tour.

It was a reminder that in Portugal's second city, everything cool seems to be right around the corner, or more likely, just up a hill.

Porto's historic core is set upon two hills, with the rejuvenated downtown between them spilling down to the Douro River. A pedestrian promenade lined with medieval merchant houses and café tables runs underneath the two-level Luis I Bridge, which joins the upper and lower sections of Porto and the city of Gaia. On one side is the twin-domed Porto Cathedral, on the other is the circular Monastery of Serra do Pilar. When the sun sets, the colors of the white monuments, stone towers and terra cotta roofs blend together, and the entire city glows orange. It's one of the world's most spectacular cityscapes.

Porto is small enough to walk past the highlights in half a day, but I spent nearly a week hoofing it around, taking in one stunning sunset after the next. Lookout points are labeled on tourist maps as miradouros. Each is unique, though none is a match for Praia da Luz, or beach of light. A historic trolley runs from the center to where the river flows into the ocean in the Foz do Douro neighborhood. A short walk brings you the rocky beach, where I nursed a glass of vinho verde, Portugal's light, dry white wine,



Albert Stumm via AP

**This Feb. 16 photo shows the waterfront Ribeira district along the Douro River in Porto, Portugal. The river separates Porto from Vila Nova de Gaia, where the famous port wine caves are located.**



Albert Stumm via AP

**This Feb. 21 photo shows the warehouse at the Croft port wine house in Vila Nova de Gaia, Portugal. The stone building, which is dug into the side of a hill, keeps hundreds of wine barrels that age for up to 40 years.**

on a plush lounge chair. The sun dipped into the Atlantic where medieval maps once depicted fire-breathing sea serpents.

Fortunately, there's more to Porto than postcard-worthy pictures, with more to come. The thwack of hammers echoing off the tiled facades

on nearly every street heralds a tourist boom. Already, the downtown around Avenida dos Aliados, which was seedy as recently as five years ago, has new life.

Concept stores run by collectives of crafters have opened along Rua do Almada. Workshop Popup combines four stores into one for cork handbags, locally designed clothes and handmade souvenirs actually worth buying. It also offers private cooking lessons for a bargain at a show kitchen in the back. For nightlife, the string of bars and restaurants around Rua da Galeria de Paris has a range of choices, from sophisticated to rowdy. The bars get busy almost every night of the week but often not until 11 p.m. or later.

One of Porto's best-known sites is Livraria Lello, a bookshop in a grand neo-Gothic 1906 building on Rua das Carmelitas that features a massive curved staircase, elaborate painted plaster ceiling and a stained-

glass skylight bearing the Latin phrase "Decos in Labore" (dignity in work). There's a fee to enter (tickets are 5.5 euros online), but the fee entitles you to a discount on purchases.

I waited until the end of my trip to dive into port wines, those supple, fortified dessert wines the city is known for. After dinner at a friend's apartment, my hosts, an architect and an owner of a design studio, pulled out a white port made by Taylor that's typically served chilled as an aperitif. They recommended visiting Taylor's tasting room, one of the biggest, and Croft, the oldest. They also urged me to stay away from the expensive, flashy options along the waterfront.

It was while searching for Croft the next day that I stumbled on Churchill's, which isn't listed on most maps of the port circuit. Their wine was rich and full, and slightly less sweet than others. A guide led me through the "cave," a warehouse dug into the granite hill with a steady temperature in the 60s. Hundreds of oak barrels were stacked four high, aging port for up to 40 years. Turns out the British commercialized a product the Portuguese had been making for centuries, which explains the Anglophile names.

At Croft, founded in 1588, the charming tasting room with tables and stools made from wine barrels led into an impressive cellar with stone arches and casks the size of small houses. Taylor was the most commercial of the three, but the 10-euro entry fee includes a three-wine sample and self-guided audio tour, so it's a good choice for a novice with time for only one stop.



Albert Stumm via AP

**This Feb. 16 photo shows Porto, Portugal, from the Vitoria lookout point. Spectacular sunsets are a major tourist attraction and places to view them are labeled on maps as miradouros.**