

HOTEL MONACO



This walk takes you to the city's beautiful Cultural District. In the South Park Blocks you'll stroll under 130 year old elms amid gardens, sculptures, museums and theatres, and enjoy the city's eclectic ambience. Along the way are chances to pick up some uniquely Oregon treasures and many places to do as the locals do: stop at a Benson bubbler fountain and enjoy a cold draft of Cascade Mountain water.

30

Minute Walk

- ◆ **BEGIN at the Hotel Monaco, SW 5th Avenue and Washington Street. Turn left out of the door, walk west on Washington one block, and turn left on 6th Avenue.**

In the street are tracks for the MAX light rail line that beginning fall 2009 runs from Portland's historic Union Station to Portland State, Oregon's largest university. The MAX is free within downtown Portland.

- ◆ **Cross Alder and Morrison streets.**

At 6th and Morrison you're at the city's "living room," Pioneer Courthouse Square, which holds 300 events each year, ranging from "Tuba Christmas" when 200 tuba players jam together, to castle building contests, using sand imported from the Oregon Coast. A milepost on the square's east side informs you that you are 5,361 miles from Moscow's Red Square, and 245 miles from Oregon's Crater Lake, among other choice destinations. Restrooms and tourist information are beyond the glass doors next to the fountain in the square.

- ◆ **From 6th Avenue, walk diagonally across the square to the brick staircase in the southwest corner. Either take the ramp up through the stairs or ascend the stairs to Broadway and Yamhill Street. Leave Pioneer Courthouse Square and walk west (uphill) on Yamhill one block. At Yamhill and Park Avenue, turn left on Park.**

On the right, a new city park hides an ugly urban necessity: a parking garage, buried underneath it. Pass the Regal Cinemas and continue on Park, crossing Taylor and Salmon streets. After crossing Salmon, veer slightly right to the water fountain at the edge of the park. It, like many others this walk passes, is a Benson bubbler. In 1912, timber baron Simon Benson gave 24 fountains to the city. From their ever-bubbling spigots flows water from the pristine Bull Run watershed in the Cascade Mountains east of Portland. Snowmelt and rain from Bull Run give Portland some of the nation's purest drinking water, untainted by groundwater pollutants. The watershed is off limits to development and even to hiking.

◆ **From the fountain, walk into the South Park Blocks,**

one of the city's earliest parks, from 1870. The blocks are the center of Portland's Cultural District and run south into the Portland State University campus, at the foot of Portland's West Hills. The blocks were planted in 1875 with American elms. In the early 1900s, Dutch elm disease decimated elms elsewhere in the U.S. but because of its relative geographic isolation, Portland has many surviving American elms. When the disease is occasionally found in Portland, even on one limb of a tree, the entire tree is cut down and every limb and branch chipped and burned, to avoid spreading the disease.

◆ **Continue south through this cathedral of trees.**

On the left is the back of the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall, whose front will be seen later. Cross Main Street. On the left is Antoinette Hatfield Hall, home to three theaters. Its modern roofline and exterior pay homage to the church next door to the south. Main Street offers access into the hall, where public restrooms are located in the lobby.

Next to Hatfield Hall is the spectacular First Congregational Church (1891), built of local black basalt and limestone (note the checkerboard detail in which the two stones alternate). It was designed to resemble Boston's Old South Church. Its stained glass is the work of Portland's Povey Brothers Art and Stained Glassworks which produced art glass from 1888 to 1929.

On the right side of the Park Blocks is the austere and imposing 1927 Masonic Temple, now called the Mark Building, part of the Portland Art Museum, next door to the south. As you cross Madison Street, look to the right between the two Museum buildings to a beautiful open-air public sculpture garden. You can enter the Portland Art Museum's excellent museum store from it. Beyond the garden, an enormous elm, planted in 1870 in the yard of a long-demolished home, presides over a much-altered scene.

To the left after crossing Madison is the Oregon Historical Society, in the unfriendly Brutalist architectural style, with an incongruous but fun eight-story-high tromp l'oeil (trick the eye) mural painted on the building behind it. As you approach the next street, Jefferson, a plaque notes that a wooden plank was placed here in 1851 on what was then a narrow mud path leading through a pass in the Tualatin Mountains and into the Tualatin River Valley. Planking the path with slabs of wood was a vast improvement that enabled valley farmers to haul more produce to Portland docks, helping feed the voracious appetite of California gold rushers in the 1850s.

◆ **Leave the Park Blocks by turning left onto Jefferson, then turn left at Broadway.**

The Oregonian newspaper offices occupy the southeast corner. In the northwest corner is Higgins restaurant, a pioneer in the use of fresh, local ingredients. Pass the Oregon Historical Society Museum store, where great Oregon gifts can be found. Cross Madison and Main streets. Ahead, under a giant "Portland" sign, is the city's beloved Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall, housed in a 1928 vaudeville theater. Cross Salmon Street. Columbia Sportswear's flagship store is on the left. The company, founded in Portland in 1938 and still run by the same family, is an icon of outdoorsy Northwest style. Cross Taylor Street.

◆ **From Broadway, turn right onto Yamhill Street**

at the clock-topped Jackson Tower, built in 1912 for the Oregon Journal, a defunct newspaper. On Yamhill, cross 6th Avenue. On the left is the Pioneer Courthouse, first built in 1869, and one of four primary locations where the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit hears oral arguments. It also houses the chambers (offices) of Portland-based judges on the Ninth Circuit. Visitors are welcome weekdays, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Photo identification is required and access is on the 6th Avenue side. Views through wavy nineteenth century glass windows in the rooftop cupola are excellent, and the interpretive displays are superb. Also wondrous is the wood-paneled courtroom, complete with fireplace. The elegant little red-roofed buildings next to the courthouse are public restrooms, now decommissioned.

◆ **From Yamhill, turn left onto 5th Avenue.**

On the right is an entrance to Pioneer Place, an upscale shopping mall. As you walk down 5th, note the lovely view on the left of leafy London plane trees with the gleaming white terra cotta building beyond them. That building was built in 1909 as the Meier & Frank department store. It is now Macy's. Continue on 5th to Washington, turn left and re-enter the HOTEL MONACO.

