So you’re new to OSU:

A seasoned student’s guide to Corvallis

You’ve done it, you’ve made it to Oregon State University. Whether this is the first time living on your own or you’re just new to the area, you will run into some… conundrums. Some issues or needs that you just don’t know how to solve. Or at the very least, with so much to do or utilize here, you may find that you are missing out. Now I’m not here to help you decide on any life path (the keys to happiness are: connect, live in the moment, be active, give, and be thankful). Oh wait that’s not what I’m here to do.

What I am actually here to do is to pass on my knowledge. I spent over 7 years as a student here and the knowledge I accumulated about the area and the resources at OSU is written in these pages. Of course, I’ll admit to loads of bias going into this advice, but isn’t that always the case? There are two ways to read this guide: A) read it through all the way and pick out things you’d like to know B) when you run up against one of these conundrums, go to the section/specific conundrum that might offer insight and just read that. Such knowledge can also become outdated and links may turn to 404 errors, but at least the names of the programs and options can get you started on your quest to solve your conundrum.

CONUNDRUM QUICK LINKS

- Transportation – How can I get there?
- Consumables – What can I eat?
- Financial Need – I need help. What are my options?
- Activities – What can I do for fun?
- OSU Resources – What am I missing out on?

Major Conundrum: How do I get around? Transportation

It’s true, Corvallis is not that big. For someone coming from a big city, the ability to navigate this small town might seem like a laughable matter. But even for them there may be some alternative modes of travel to reconsider! If you’d rather not read my thoughts on this section, check out the Student Sustainability Initiative site that provides a well-organized guide to alternative modes to transportation, including some not listed here. The OSU website also lists some tips on getting around.

Biking

Corvallis is very bike friendly (in the top 5 small cities that are bike friendly). There are bike paths along the Corvallis-Philomath Hwy and from Bald Hill to campus, and so many others. There are even yoga studios in Corvallis who offer discounted classes for people who ride their bike in rather than drive. And there are bike racks galore! Tip: Register your bike with campus security in case it gets lost or stolen.
**Conundrum: Bike Flat tire/I need to repair my bike.** If you need to work on your bike, the bike shop in the Dixon Rec Center offers access to tools and affordable parts to fix any issues you may run into. The bicycle collective offers similar services to fix up bikes, learn about bikes, and to buy cheap bikes/bike parts. There are also a few bike repair shops downtown that are very helpful. And, if it’s pouring rain (because it will) you can always put your bike onto the public bus and ride home when it (hopefully) clears up.

**Conundrum: I don’t have a bike.** The bike loan program through the Student Sustainability Initiative offers bikes ready to go. Rental rates are $35 per term, $15 per week and $5 per day. Reserve at the Adventure Leadership desk in the Dixon Rec Center. The bicycle collective also offers very affordable bikes. Or you can check out the Wednesday OSUsed sale for cheap bikes that need fixing up.

**Driving a car**

**Conundrum: Parking on campus.** The hardest part of driving a personal vehicle is parking on campus. On weekends and before 8am and after 5pm you can park without a permit in most areas (not the “reserved at all times” ones including Student Health Services spaces but other spaces with green and red signage are fine). **Tip: be warned, if you leave your car in certain parking lots when it’s a home football game day, they can still tow it, even if it’s a weekend!**

If you want to park during the week, you can buy an annual pass (or term pass) from OSU Transit and Parking. These allow you to park in the green (student/visitor) spaces. There are almost always spots available in the parking garage near Dixon Rec Center but as the day goes on finding green spaces elsewhere gets harder. You can also buy daily passes from the automated parking pay stations (debit/credit cards accepted) located in the Reser Stadium parking lot, the visitor lot adjacent to the Crops building and in the visitor parking lot across from McNary Dining Hall. There are limited parking-metered spots near the Kerr Admin building, by Dixon Rec Center, and off of Monroe and 14th but again these fill up fast. You can also attempt to find a free parking spot on the side streets near campus but you’d be lucky to find one past 8am (try near the Tsunami Center/EPA building or the residential area south of Western Blvd). On the north side of campus is a residential area with 2 hour street parking that works well if you need to do a quick run into campus. There are also 15-30 minutes loading zones around many buildings if you really need a quick in and out (this was a godsend when transporting boxes of mailing surveys). And parking is free the first week of all terms (in the spaces with green signage). Finally, if you have an appointment at the Student Health Services (SHS) office, you can drive and park in the reserved spaces behind the building and receive a permit when you check-in at the front desk for your appointment. And if you ever get a broken leg/other difficult-to-walk-with injury, ask Student Health Services and they can help you get a special parking permit while you’re injured. **Tip: When summer classes are in session, you must have a parking permit to park on campus during weekdays.**

**Conundrum: I got a Ticket!** You’re going to want to pay that. If they trace it back to you it can create holds on your student account and do things like prevent you from graduating. And they also will put boots on cars that repeat offend. If it is your first offense, go into the Parking office and talk kindly to them. They may convert it to a warning or reduce the fee depending on your charm level. Or you can easily pay it online through the OSU student online portal.

**Conundrum: I left my lights on and now my car is dead.** Call the OSU Public Safety dispatcher at 541-737-3010 for assistance.
Public transit

Corvallis public transit system

_All Corvallis buses are free!_ No ID needed! There are additional costs for the Albany, Philomath, and Coastal bus systems. Check the CTS (Corvallis Transit System) [website](#) for the most up-to-date route information and download the app. _Tip: the buses are quite punctual in the morning but knowing their arrival time gets harder as the day goes on. Take the bus to campus and take OSU Saferide home (see section below) or bike home._

You can also call the dispatch center for the current location of your bus (541-766-6998). All buses are equipped with bike racks on the front. No food or drink is permitted. And the stops are rarely announced but if you need to get off at a certain stop, the driver or fellow passengers will often let you know where it is. _Because people are just friendly in Corvallis._ No Service Sunday and major holidays. Most routes are “flow-through” meaning that at the transit center (downtown) the bus will switch onto another route. This can be great or a real hassle depending on where you’re trying to go. Ex: catch the route 5 off of campus and it turns into the route 6 towards south town.

Night Owl

After hours, there is Night Owl service, with a more limited route option, it remains free and can get you home late night (and safely if you’ve just had too much fun at a bar). Again, check out the CTS site.

OSU shuttle bus

You’ll see white buses driving around campus that offer free shuttle service around OSU only. Wait at a stop and indicate to the driver that you want a ride so that they will stop. Unless you’re going pretty far, it may just be faster to walk to your destination though.

OSU Saferide

Run by the ASOSU, this service provides rides home after dark. The main intention is to help people get home safely rather than walking in the dark but many people use it as a convenient way home after a late night. They only deliver to and from campus and residences, no bars or restaurants. And you must have 2 or less people in your party. All must be OSU students. To arrange, just dial _541-737-5000_ after 7pm (_6pm in winter term_), give them your name, ID number, location, and destination. They will give you an estimated time for pick-up. Be outside and watch for either a white car or van with the orange OSU Saferide logo and wave them down. During busy times the wait can be 45 minutes but that just means a little extra study time!

_**Conundrum: I don’t feel safe.**_ Use the OSU Saferide service to get a ride home _541-737-5000_, call campus security _541-737-3010_, or use one of the blue emergency call buttons located throughout campus. In case of an emergency, call _541-737-7000_. Refer to the _Dept. of Public Safety_ for nighttime safety corridors and additional information.

WeCar

Rent a car for short term trips to and from campus. Once signed up through the OSU/Enterprise agreement, renting the car is easy and relatively cheap.
Taxi cabs
A few taxi companies exist in Corvallis and are always an option for getting home safely. Call the company to arrange a ride.

- Beaver Cab (541) 738-8294
- Auto-Taxi (541) 752-8294
- Fast-Cab (541) 753-3278
- Auto Taxi (541) 752-8294

Getting out of Corvallis

Greyhound
The Greyhound bus leaves from downtown Corvallis but the prices can be on the spendy side.

Renting
If you’re renting for a qualifying school or OSU work reason, rent from the University Motorpool. There will be an online training you need to keep up-to-date on (and then you will often be asked to drive for field trips if you admit to having done this training). Or, if work related, ask your business office travel specialist for the Enterprise information under the OSU corporate account. This offers discounted rates and most importantly free one-way travel (a great way to get to the airports for conferences, etc.)

Amtrak
Leaves from Albany. It is the more expensive option but with comfortable seats, bathrooms, and free wi-fi (when it’s working) it can make for a fun travel experience.

Airports
The Eugene airport (EUG) is far less hassle than PDX but tends to be spendier. A 45 minute drive down a country highway compared to 2 hours through Portland traffic can be worth it. Check the budget airlines of Allegiant and Spirit for cheaper options out of Eugene.

Boltbus
Leaves from Albany and only travels to major locations like Portland but tickets can be as cheap as $1/one way! (Usually more like $8-12).

Grad student Listserve
If you’re a grad student, rides are often offered/requested through the CGE (Grad student union) social listserve.

OSUrideshare
Match up with other OSU people to share rides.
Hut shuttle
With pick-up on campus, this airport shuttle is used for transport to/from PDX airport. Rides are ~ $45 one way.

Coast to Valley Express bus
To get around the local area and to and from the gorgeous Oregon coast! Rides are $10 one way from the coast or as cheap as $1 to Philomath.

Major Conundrum: What do I eat (especially with limited funds)? Consumables
Welcome to the land of great, cheap seasonal produce. From spring to fall, there is something growing in the fertile valley lands worth consuming.

The First Alternative Co-op
In two locations (north and south) the Co-op offers clearly marked alternative food from locally made tortillas, grass-fed beef, bulk items, to tempeh. And many farms send their local seasonal produce here. And man it can be tasty. You can also join the co-op. Membership offers member-discount days and helps keep the co-op in business. Ask any worker for details. Tip: Be warned, if you’re on a budget go here to get a few choice items and then shop elsewhere for staples like crackers, etc.

The Farmers’ Market
Even if you don’t go to buy things, the music and occasional street performances with dogs (and even cats) strolling through just embodies Corvallis. Eggs, meat, produce, art, flowers, honey, baked items, and other street food can be found here along with local activist booths that can offer a great way to get involved in the community. The summer market is held downtown from 9-1pm on Saturdays and Wednesday afternoons. Tip: SNAPS (formally known as food stamps) can be used at the farmers market! There will be an EBT booth at the market that allows you to convert your food card money into wooden tokens that is then accepted by all vendors selling non-prepared food. There is also a program that (when funds are available) add $6 extra dollars to your spending to make your money stretch farther. During the winter months, a smaller version is held at the fairgrounds on Saturday morning 9-1pm.

But what if the prices of these two places are just too much? Like in most major cities, the experience and convenience of these options does inflate the prices. Going to produce stands at actual farms or doing u-pick options makes for much cheaper produce. I can and freeze produce for year round consumption for things like blueberries ($1.75/lb at Anderson’s blueberries u-pick farm) and free apples from neighbors. Just driving around my neighborhood I’ve seen $1 bags of plums someone was selling off of their porch. Ask around and chances are someone will know of some excess orchard fruit that needs eating. Which leads me into my eventual point: College is all about networking! Might as well start with trying your skills at getting free/cheap fruit before you try to network your way into a job… 😊

Many farms also offer CSA (community supported agriculture) boxes. By paying in advance for produce it helps the farms get the needed capital at the beginning of the season and provides your family with fun and bountiful produce often delivered to your door. Most programs include tips on how to cook what arrives at your doorstep and come with known favorites like lettuce. The drawback: it’s a lot of produce, too much for one or even two people in many cases, but great for splitting between roommates/families. Connect with a local farm for more options.
The student organic farm (off Hwy 34) grows produce for the food bank but also sells the excess at the ALS (Animal Life Science) building foyer 9-11 during the spring/summer season. Cash only and honor system. Be warned, these deals can be to die for so get there as soon as possible for best selection! And if you want to learn about gardening or when they will have produce, sign up for the Organic Grower’s Club listserv. While you’re at it, go volunteer at the farm if you’re into gardening. Did I say networking yet?

Conundrum: Where do I grocery shop for cheap and healthy? If the above section didn’t help, buying in bulk from places like Winco and Fred Meyer for items like whole wheat pasta, falafel mix, veggie chips (make sure they aren’t stale) and trail mix can be a cheap and healthy option. Spices in bulk are also MUCH cheaper than in the little pre-packed jars. Grocery Outlet also has an organic/natural selection that can be very cost effective (as is the rest of the store, just don’t go there with any type of grocery list, it’s hit and miss). And if price is no option, Market of Choice and Trader Joe’s will have what you’re looking for.

Conundrum: I want meat that I can trust. Buying half/quarters of animals is becoming a popular option where it exists. Rather than paying for the middle man, if you eat a lot of meat, you can connect with a rancher and ask to buy a whole section of the animal. You’ll need a large freezer for this but it greatly reduces the price of free-range meat, allows you to learn how to cook all parts of the animal, and you know where your meat comes from.

Clark Meat Center
Run by a student organization, cheap local meat can be found from 1-5:30 at the white building across from Peavy field. While it’s almost always frozen (most grocery store meat would be previously frozen anyway) and has limited selection, staples like ground beef are worth the trip. Sign up for the newsletter to get updates on weekly selections and for hours of operation: Osumeatcenterretailstore1-request@lists.oregonstate.edu

Where do I find tasty meats for a holiday dinner? The Clark Meat Center sells delicious smoked turkey (Thanksgiving) and ham (Christmas). Reserving one in advance is recommended.

Conundrum: Where do I buy local honey? In largish quantities from the Brewing supply store in downtown Corvallis. They also have a great assortment of brewed beverages and even some hard to find hot sauces. And if you ever want to learn how to brew, they can help you get started with the needed equipment and connect you with a local brewing club.

Conundrum: I’m a vegetarian/vegan, what resources are there? There is an active club that offers great tips and options. And Corvallis restaurants are decidedly great at having options for people with dietary restrictions. I would recommend Laughing Planet (try their tempeh!) and Cafè Yumm for hearty vegan lunches.

Conundrum: I don’t eat gluten. The co-ops have many gluten free options and alternative baking products. Even the natural section of Fred Meyer carries Bob’s Mill products and other gluten free alternatives. Some of the bakeries (Great Harvest for example) and restaurants (China Blue, Magenta, etc.) list gluten free menu items. If you’re highly sensitive, there is a new completely gluten free restaurant in Philomath! Eats and Treats serves classic favorites from kitchens that are completely gluten free. And if it’s your first time (or you’ve brought a friend and it’s their first time) you get a free chocolate chip cookie while promotion lasts.

Conundrum: Where do I go to eat? This one, I’m leaving to you. Getting restaurant recommendations from new friends provides a great chance to bond and I love discovering new restaurants for myself. If you’re on a
budget, there are a few pricey restaurants in downtown Corvallis so don’t be afraid to ask for a menu before sitting down and make sure it’s in your price range. Otherwise, happy exploring!

Major Conundrum: What do I do for fun? Activities
What do I do? The answer: everything! The best way is to be connected to both campus events and to what’s happening in Corvallis (“Like” the Corvallis Maven on Facebook or visit http://visitcorvallis.com/calendar-of-events/ or http://corvallisoregon.tumblr.com/

If you have a particular interest, see if there is a student club (like the Asian Pacific Cultural Center has almost monthly events) and sign up for their listserv. The OSU calendar usually has limited event details (http://calendar.oregonstate.edu/). All cultural groups are required to hold an annual celebration event. These are sometimes free with food or have very reasonable admission. They can be small events or huge, awesome or a little awkward. The problem is getting a ticket. If you have a cultural night you want to attend, go to Snell Hall (ASOSU 1st floor) to pick up a ticket as soon as they become available, especially if the event is free or one of the more popular ones (India night, Africa night (they had a live cheetah one year), or the Drag show).

Conundrum: I need a unique gift! Many Hands Trading Company always has something for that last minute gift. And if you sign up for their newsletter, they have secret passwords that get you 15% off your purchase. Oregon Tea and Coffee has a great selection of loose-leaf tea and tasty coffee. If allergies have you down, some of their allergy tea has local ingredients thought to relieve some of the reactions just like local honey. But you’re in the grass capital of the world now, so something stronger is necessary for many people.

Conundrum: It’s my birthday! Where can I get free stuff? There are lots of options but for the best deal, China Blue offers a free meal on your birthday (ID required) as long as you have one person who is paying. They have gluten free and veggie options too.

Going out
There are also tons of cool restaurants and bars. Bourbon week at Block 15, culinary week (fancy restaurants offer cheaper chef plates once a year), and great happy hours abound. But those are best to discover on your own.

Conundrum: Where do I go to dance? Dance nights like Country western at Jack’s, and salsa night at Impulse, or more of a club atmosphere at Peacock (top floor). The OSU Ballroom dance club also has free dance lessons followed by open dance many times a year. The Women’s Center and cultural centers may also have classes like belly dancing or hip-hop depending on instructor availability. Or, take a PAC class for credit!

After dark
Late night activities on campus provided by OSU. From poker to movies to ping-pong tournaments and more.

Tip: Avoid downtown dining (or heck, even driving) post football game, or during mom’s and dad’s weekends at OSU!
Other things to watch for by season

**Fall**
- **Fall Festival** in Corvallis offers food, music, and lots of local art and products
- Corn mazes, pumpkin patches, and hayrides at local farms
- Cider tastings at 2 Towns Ciderhouse
- Rent a cider press from the downtown brewing supply store to make your own cider

**Winter**
- Downtown winter solstice celebration, downtown wine tasting event
- Christmas concerts and music

**Summer**
- Fireworks (hard to see from downtown) and 4th of July festival in downtown Corvallis
- **DaVinci Days**
- Float the Willamette river
- Rent outdoor equipment from the Adventure Leadership Institute at the Dixon Rec Center (rafts, tents, etc.)

**Spring**
- Hoo-Haa Earth Day celebration at the Student farm
- The majority of cultural nights

**Conundrum: Where do I go clothes shopping for cheap?** The consignment stores in Corvallis are excellent. Bring in gently used clothes for credit at the Second Glance stores and get an additional 10% off from their email newsletter coupons. You could basically be shopping for free! There are also many thrift stores outside of Goodwill and lots of chain stores for all your needs. The closest shopping mall is in Albany at the Heritage Mall. Consider a clothing swap (also called a naked lady party) where you convince all your friends to go through their closets and bring their old items for a swapping party! The Women’s Center on campus also has this event at least once a year.

**Major conundrum: What other OSU resources am I missing out on?**

**Conundrum: I need to print this.** The library offers the most expensive option on campus. The Milne Computer lab is cheaper and it is often easier to find a free computer there. There may also be computer labs in your department building available for use. Many cultural centers and the ASOSU center allows free printing to a certain page limit once a term. If you need business cards or other professional print jobs, the OSU Printing and Mailing office offers student discounts.

**Conundrum: I need to study but I have my kids with me.** Our Little Village offers free short term childcare for OSU students. There is a center in the Dixon Rec Center and the Valley Library. Check online for use policies and hours of operation (they are closed summers).

**Conundrum: I’m so stressed I can’t think!** There is a free Mind-Spa on campus that offers a quiet area to meditate and enjoy the room’s many relaxation tools. OSU students also get a few **free counseling sessions** by
licensed professionals to help with everything from relationships to organizing your time all through the CAPS office. The Student Success Center also has resources for things like time management and even editing help with written assignments.

**Conundrum: How do I get a job after college?** The Career Center has many resources that can help with this difficult question: mock-interviews, skill matching tests, and resume assistance. You’re also in a networking mecca. Informal interviews with professors, or people they know, can lead to a better understanding of the job market you’re going into and even a possible job when finished. Internships, work-study jobs, volunteering, and career fairs are all things to take advantage of while here and not just in the last term of school. It’s estimated that 2/3 jobs are given due to networking rather than an impressive resume. And my own two cents here, the myth of a dream job plagues our generation. Instead be open to possibilities post-graduation that you may not have considered. Chances are what might seem like your dream job will not make you happy. Take this time to explore and find a job you like doing with people you like. And remember happiness is often a choice. *step off the soap box*

**Conundrum: I need help with overall wellness.** Student Health Services has an office in the Dixon Rec Center that provides one free nutritionist and physical therapist session a term. Longer term care, acupuncture, and massage are also available for additional charges. Beaver Strides is an OSU program that helps you track your activity with free swag throughout and a chance to win raffle prizes. Sign up at the beginning of the term. Corvallis Community Acupuncture offers a sliding scale for clients.

**Conundrum: I’m tired of lugging my gym and toiletries to and from the gym.** Dixon has lockers available to rent by term or year. Aside from Dixon, there may be showers and lockers available in the building you work in/go to class. Ask around.

**Conundrum: I need legal advice.** Free legal consultation is available to students in Snell Hall. This isn’t meant for very serious or long term problems but for lesser problems like landlord issues or how to deal with a ticket.

**Conundrum: I need a creative outlet.** The OSU Craft Center in Snell Hall has pottery, painting, screen printing, and more for very moderate fees. Classes are also available for a reasonable price. Or if you play an instrument, join the group of musicians who meet to play regularly in the Peavy courtyard. The group usually meets noon Fridays. All ability levels are welcome!

**Conundrum: I want to get outside but I don’t have the gear!** The Adventure Leadership Institute in Dixon offers affordable rentals to students. Trips with knowledgeable guides are also available there for a fee.

**Conundrum: I want to take an exercise class but there are so many options!** There are PAC courses; actual courses you can take for credit. They cost an additional fee and if you want a class, sign up as soon as possible! These fill up very fast. If you don’t want to deal with attendance or credit, you can sign up at Dixon for a Fitpass. This lets you get into numerous classes for a once a term fee. Check the schedule for each term to make sure there is a class you want to take. Fitpass classes are offered for free the first week of each term so you can try it before you buy. And if you’re a grad student or faculty, you can sign up for OSU’s staff/faculty fitness classes. There are numerous classes in the community as well.
Major conundrum: I am having financial trouble

College is expensive. And while most of this guide has assumed you may be on a budget, this section offers specific programs that may help.

The OSU food pantry
This offers free food to students who are in financial need. Go to the ASOSU website to find the days they are open. Get there early if you want the best selection. A volunteer will walk you through the options and you go home with free food. Be prepared to wait in line.

Food for Oregon
A collaboration of the Oregon Food bank and Oregon State University Extension Service, Food for Oregon is a database of local and regional community food resources in our state.

SNAPS (formally food stamps)
A state run program that provides an EBT card (works like a debit card) that you can buy groceries (no prepared food) with. If you work 1 hour at a work study job, you will likely qualify. Graduate students with GRA or GTA positions are not eligible for SNAPS benefits. Go to the Snell Hall student assistance office and they can help you fill out the form. Or go to the downtown Benton County social services office. Also at this office you can also apply for other financial assistance like heating costs, WIC (Women with small children), medical costs, etc.

Mealbux
Get money on your OSU ID card that can be used all over campus to buy food. This is only given to students in need at the beginning of each term. It is also through ASOSU with directions online. The deadline is early in the term so apply soon.

Financial aid
If all this is not enough, talk with the Financial Aid Office. They may have additional loans or scholarships to consider if your hardship is dire. There also may be lists of privately funded scholarships, ask your college student services office or similar admin office. It’s hard living on a budget, but the amount of debt you come out with can cause a lot of stress when you’re looking for a job so be careful with the amount of loans you take out.

Conundrum: I want to go to a conference but I can’t afford it.
First check with your department office, many have travel fund scholarships. The ASOSU also offers a subsidy for conference attendance (it’s a lot of work for $150 but still). The organization in charge of conferences often has discounted student rates and even scholarships for attending.

Conundrum: Where do I find coupons?
There will be inserts in the mail and a student survival guide will be coming as well. If you lose it, you can go online and print off some of the coupons. Some stores also offer discounts to OSU students with ID card, it never hurts to ask!

Conundrum: Movie theatres are expensive! Carmike offers matinee prices to students all day every day. Tuesdays also have small $1 popcorn and soda options and the super matinee price of $5.25 weekdays between 4
and 5pm show start times. Regal 9th street offers matinee prices Mon-Thurs for students. OSU student clubs also have free showings of movies throughout the year. And don't forget about your local theater… Darkside!

The time I spent at OSU and Corvallis is likely to be some of my favorite years. It will go by fast, so remember to work hard but also to enjoy yourself. I wish you the best of luck! ~Stacey

This document WAS CREATED by Stacey Frederick and edited by Helene Serewis.

Please write to: forestry.gradprograms@oregonstate.edu if you discover errors or broken links. We'd appreciate hearing from you!