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# 'Portlandia' is everywhere!

by [Laura Hertzfeld](#)

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Image Credit: Scott Green/IFC

Making fun of hipsters (and especially hipsters making fun of hipsters) is a favorite pastime of so many, particularly on the Web. Who can resist classics like the [Hipster Olympics](#) or the recent [Ryan Gosling NPR Tumblr](#)? So it's no surprise that the IFC show *Portlandia*, starring hipsterdom royalty — *SNL*'s Fred Armisen and ex-Sleater-Kinney frontwoman Carrie Brownstein — is a hit with beard-donning bike riders in Brooklyn's Fort Greene and coffee nerds in L.A.'s Silver Lake. But how has it started to reach watercooler status everywhere else?

I'm a fan — I can't even [look at chicken on a restaurant menu](#) anymore without wanting to ask for its papers — but I have only seen the show on Hulu, since I don't have IFC. I did a quick survey of friends who claim to be obsessed with the show — none of them get IFC either, though the network says the show is its biggest hit, with 5 million viewers. I have to think the numbers explode when you count people watching online. Being available in clips on the Web and via Hulu has helped make “Portland” an adjective and “fixies” a household term. The show has even inspired jealousy from neighboring city Seattle — it's launched a rival ad campaign (“[put a plane on it](#)”).

In an extensive interview with the *New Yorker* this week, Brownstein [explained](#) the show's success: “In general, things in a place like Portland are really great, so little concerns become ridiculous. There are a lot of people here who can afford — financially but also psychologically — to be really, really concerned about buying local, for instance. It becomes mock epic. It's like Alexander Pope's ‘Rape of the Lock.’ I was standing in line at Whole Foods, and the guy in front of me says, ‘I really wish you guys sold locally made fresh pasta.’ And the cashier says, ‘Look, we do.’ And the guy says, ‘No, no — that's from Seattle.’ Really? You don't have a bigger battle?”

The honesty of Portland is also what makes the show a hit, Armisen writes in this week's issue of EW, on newsstands now. “Many of the sketches on *Portlandia* came from something real. Whenever we need to cast someone with a very ‘Portland’ look, we don't need costumes. We just use our crew. (Our budget doesn't allow us to use 50 extras.) In the ‘Dream of the ‘90s’ sketch, there's a guy using this rope yo-yo thing, and that's our prop guy. He had a ‘503’ tattoo — that's a Portland area code — and he drove our props around town in an ambulance. He couldn't have been more Portland.”

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In the wake of the end of another quirky, hipster-darling sitcom, *Bored to Death*, I'm wondering what makes *Portlandia* different — is it just that *Portlandia*'s sketch comedy style of three-minute increments are perfectly bite-sized and shareable online? Or is there some other secret sauce that's keeping you watching?

Follow Laura on Twitter [@laurahertzfeld](#).

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**Renohappycookies** | [5 days ago](#)

2 Likes

Season 1 is on Netflix Watch Instantly.

[Reply](#) | [Like](#)

**Daniel Doolittle** | [5 days ago](#)

4 Likes

I'm not so sure it's a matter of jealousy, we just know how great it is up here in Seattle. Even Fred and Carrie agree: "[Seattle] is a real city... there's a real skyline... there's s\*\*t to do here... people work here, there's industry... we [Portland] do birds and stuff, it's so twee and it's just like yuck." (Portlandia live show 12/28 at the Showbox Seattle)

[Reply](#) | [Like](#)

**cathie joy young** | [5 days ago](#)

1 Like

hahahahahahah!

[Reply](#) | [Like](#)

*in reply to Daniel Doolittle*

**Mm** | [5 days ago](#)

2 Likes

I highly doubt that this was a statement made in seriousness. If they said this in Portland with the die-hard Portlanders attending this show they would have been booted off of the stage. No question.

[Reply](#) | [Like](#)

*in reply to Daniel Doolittle*

**commentor** | [5 days ago](#)

14 Likes

I like visiting Seattle, but I love living in Portland.

[Reply](#) | [Like](#)

**Novato1979** | [4 days ago](#)

2 Likes

Visited Seattle and Portland on back to back weekends.....Portland Wins!

[Reply](#) | [Like](#)

*in reply to commentor*

**Jules** | [5 days ago](#)

8 Likes

Put a bird on it.

[Reply](#) | [Like](#)

**John Smith** | [5 days ago](#)

6 Likes

If anybody from Seattle wants to fight me , I'll be outside, waiting.

[Reply](#) | [Like](#)

**Stacie** | [5 days ago](#)

4 Likes

Meet you in Centralia!

[Reply](#) | [Like](#)

*in reply to John Smith*

**liz** | [5 days ago](#)

1 Like

Lol. My house will be open

[Like](#)

*in reply to Stacie*

**Jim** | [5 days ago](#)

2 Likes

Part of the reason for Portlandia's greatness is they know when to cut of a sketch. Just give us the jokes...the good jokes....and then get out. Editing is a good thing.

[Reply](#) | [Like](#)

**Jim** | [5 days ago](#)

1 Like

*in reply to Jim*

cut OFF a sketch.

I should learn to edit my own work.

[Reply](#) | [Like](#)

---

**Laura E.** | [5 days ago](#)

2 Likes

Two words: Carrie Brownstein. She's like a 21st-century Renaissance woman.

[Reply](#) | [Like](#)

---

**bkqueen** | [5 days ago](#)

2 Likes

I wish they would retire the word hipster, so sick of hearing it!

[Reply](#) | [Like](#)

---

**Helena Handbasket** | [5 days ago](#)

3 Likes

As a lifelong Portlander, I can tell you that this show doesn't represent Portland any more than Frasier represented Seattle. Yes, I have a sense of humor, but Carrie Brownstein and Fred Armisen, both non-natives, are often insulting and condescending toward Portland. And just FYI Carrie, I am sure the Whole Foods guy DOES have bigger concerns. It is possible to have more than one at a time.

[Reply](#) | [Like](#)

---

**Daffo** | [5 days ago](#)

3 Likes

Oh, Helena. You've just made yourself a poster child for the "Need to get a sense of humor, lighten up, and find a real cause to support" Portlander. No, honey, you don't have a sense of humor if you can't take a joke.

[Reply](#) | [Like](#)

*in reply to Helena Handbasket*

---

**Helena Handbasket** | [4 days ago](#)

1 Like

Well, honey, I think sometimes the line between someone laughing at you and someone laughing with you is a little blurry, but based on the comments she made in Seattle, it's clear to me where Brownstein stands. Why does she live here if it's so "yuck"? Yeah, the show is funny sometimes, it's just not for me. Whatever. My 2 cents. No big deal.

[Like](#)

*in reply to Daffo*

---

**Jay** | [4 days ago](#)

3 Likes

LOL. Can't tell if your comment is a joke? Having grown up in the NW during the rise of the hipsters in the late 80's and early 90's this show is spot on and funny as hell. I can also see some people not really "getting" it, thus the haters.

[Reply](#) | [Like](#)

*in reply to Helena Handbasket*

---

**Pam Lyons** | [4 days ago](#)

2 Likes

As a lifelong Portlander, I find this show very funny and often spot on with its characters. I often see myself and my friends in the characters and don't feel condescended to at all. Just FYI.

[Reply](#) | [Like](#)

*in reply to Helena Handbasket*

---

**Math330** | [4 days ago](#)

2 Likes

Just by mentioning "beard-donning bike riders in Brooklyn's Fort Greene and coffee nerds in L.A.'s Silver Lake", you put yourself squarely on the side of hipper-than-thou. Die hipster scum!

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By Jeff Jensen [Comments 898](#)



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- January 3
  - [Albatross](#)
- January 4
  - [Loosies](#)
- January 6
  - [The Devil Inside](#)
  - [Beneath the Darkness](#)
- January 13
  - [Contraband](#)
  - [Joyful Noise](#)
  - [Beauty and the Beast 3D](#)
- January 20
  - [Underworld: Awakening](#)
  - [Red Tails](#)
  - [Haywire](#)
- January 27
  - [One for the Money](#)
  - [The Grey](#)
  - [Man on a Ledge](#)
- February 3
  - [Perfect Sense](#)
  - [The Woman in Black](#)
  - [Big Miracle](#)
- February 10
  - [Safe House](#)
  - [Journey 2: The Mysterious Island](#)
- February 14

- [The Vow](#)
- 3. February 17
  - [The Secret World Of Arrietty](#)
  - [Ghost Rider: Spirit of Vengeance](#)
  - [This Means War](#)
- 4. February 24
  - [Act of Valor](#)
  - [Gone](#)
  - [Tyler Perry's Good Deeds](#)
- 5. March 2
  - [Hansel and Gretel: Witch Hunters](#)
  - [Project X](#)
  - [Dr. Seuss' The Lorax](#)
  - [Jeff, Who Lives at Home](#)
  - [Salmon Fishing in the Yemen](#)
- 1. March 9
  - [The Raven](#)
  - [John Carter](#)
  - [Silent House](#)
  - [The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel](#)
  - [Think Like a Man](#)
  - [The Bully Project](#)
  - [Playing the Field](#)
  - [Footnote](#)
  - [Jiro Dreams of Sushi](#)
- 2. March 16
  - [21 Jump Street](#)
  - [Mirror Mirror](#)
  - [Seeking Justice](#)
  - [Butter](#)
  - [Casa de Mi Padre](#)
- 3. March 23
  - [The Hunger Games](#)
  - [A Thousand Words](#)
- 4. March 30
  - [Wrath of the Titans](#)
  - [The Pirates! Band of Misfits](#)
  - [Goon](#)
  - [Snowtown](#)
- 1. April 4
  - [Iron Sky](#)
- 2. April 6
  - [American Reunion](#)
  - [The Cold Light of Day](#)
- 3. April 13
  - [The Three Stooges](#)
  - [The Cabin in the Woods](#)
  - [Bullet to the Head](#)
- 4. April 20
  - [Scary Movie 5](#)
  - [High School](#)
  - [House at the End of the Street](#)
  - [The Lucky One](#)
  - [Escape From M.S. One](#)
  - [The Wettest County in the World](#)
  - [Chimpanzee](#)
- 5. April 27
  - [The Five-Year Engagement](#)
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