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Put Your Feet on the Street in Detroit's Eastern Market

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by Lisa Diggs

Trained as a social worker by profession, Linda Yellin accidentally stumbled across her new direction as operator of a tour company in Detroit. A longtime supporter of the city, and passionate lover of food, Linda volunteered to be a tour guide during the celebrations surrounding Detroit's 300th birthday. She led groups through historic Eastern Market, and absolutely loved the experience, except for one thought that gnawed at her. She wondered how a tour of Eastern Market could be complete without food-tasting being a part of it.

That simple question eventually blossomed into her [Feet on the Street](#) tour company, which offers public and private tours of Detroit. Most of those revolve around food through *Delish Detroit*, the company's gastronomical side, designed to encourage people to explore Detroit through progressive walking, car and bus tours of restaurants, cafes, bakeries, breweries, pubs, and specialty food markets, throughout the city.

The company's signature events are the *Come Hungry Leave Happy* tours of Eastern Market. They offer these walking tours throughout the year, and even on cold, blustery days, attendees souls are warmed by the food and knowledge gained through the experience.

I joined the tour on a brisk Saturday to find about twenty five adults, eager to start the exploration. There were groups of old friends using the tour to reunite, co-workers who wanted to do something outside of work together, couples looking for something new to do, a few people who wanted to learn their way around Eastern Market, and folks who simply wanted to eat great food. There was even a dynamic duo that was enjoying the tour as part of a full day of Detroit activities that the daughter had gifted to her father.

At the start, the large group was split into two, so as not to overwhelm any one destination upon arrival. Each group would eventually hit all the same "hot spots," though on this day, we would settle for warm spots, walking briskly and cautiously from one unique business to another.

It's been my experience in the past that very few people really know there way around the whole Eastern Market area. Many have come only for big events like Flower Day and food truck rallies. Others are fans of a particular restaurant or shop, and tend to return to the familiar time after time. I am certainly guilty of the latter myself.

Feet on the Street, helps expand horizons by including a wide variety of venues along the way, which one might not expect. For example, we popped into [Signal Return](#), a unique print shop that



does professional projects and offers classes. Yet, we also stopped by and saw their neighbors at [Berts](#), which is an Eastern Market institution.

We even crossed the freeway to go to Gratiot Central Market, a phenomenal place to buy meat and fish, that is all too often overlooked by visitors who do not realize it's there. While on that side of the freeway we ventured to an art gallery, and took a peak at one of the city's newest culinary gems, [Antietam](#).

The destinations were numerous, and each had its own style of taking part. Some let the food speak for itself, (pizza, fruits, cheeses, breads, hummus, grape leaves, nuts, etc.), while others had a spokesperson waiting to tell their story. When the businesses don't provide a spokesperson, and even when they do, each company's story is enhanced by facts and tales brought to life by the tour guides.

The only thing you may not have time for during the actual tour, is making purchases, so plan accordingly. Leave yourself some time after the tour to go back and make shop or have a drink. Many of the participating businesses even provide discount coupons for attendees, but beware that most of the discounts expire the same day.

There is so much to explore in Eastern Market that one tour cannot possibly take you to all of them. Not only that, but each tour is its own unique experience depending on the crowd, the guide, the weather, the season, and the participating businesses. Once you go once, I won't be surprised if you decide to go again and bring others along for the next adventure.

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