

Feed your hunger for Detroit on city tour

By Maureen McDonald on 01/11/2017 · 1 Comment



When three out-of-town sisters descend on Barbara Simons apartment near Belle Isle, they want her to plan a fun tour with delightful food and a culinary education. She seldom disappoints.

Recently, she invited her sisters from Philadelphia, Syracuse, N.Y., and Prescott, Arizona, to sample a “Feet on the Street Tour,” a day before Barbara was scheduled to sing with the choir at Jefferson Avenue Presbyterian Church in Detroit. On this day they would try roasted nuts at Rocky Peanut, smoked Gouda cheese paired with raspberries at DeVries , coffee and tea at Beyond Juicery, pizza at Supinos and mixed fruit and nuts at Germack Pistachio Company.

“Any excuse for us to have a sisters weekend, we’re up for it,” says Nancy Fredette of Baldwinsville, outside Syracuse. “Add food and we’re here.”

They signed up for the “Come Hungry, Leave Happy” brunch tour that continues through all four seasons.



Linda Yellin describes the history of the Eastern market area during a break at Supino’s Pizza.

Nearly 30 people braved a frigid day for a tour led by Linda Yellin, who’s owned Feet on the Street Tours for 14 years. With such brisk weather she reduced her time pointing out murals and fascinating city lore and concentrated her lectures inside the heated, covered sheds and the storefronts in Eastern Market.

“Our Eastern Market tours are the most popular,” she says. “People from all over the country and the region hear about it and want to learn, especially how foundations and organizations are contributing grass roots efforts to improve the arts and music along with food offerings in this district.

“The tours are “an opportunity to connect with people, help dispel the myths of living here and share all the wonderful things going on in the city.” – Linda Yellin, owner of Feet on the Street Tours

“People like the personal relationship I have with the vendors and store owners. They get a behind-the-scenes knowledge of the new murals, they get in early to Supinos before a line wraps around the building, and they get special attention wherever they go,” she adds.

The group marches together to DeVries & Company where Duke Saulte teaches them about cheese, vinegar, fruit and veggie pairings for the holidays. He serves redskin potatoes with brie, shrimp with Havarti, cheddar with herbs and blue cheese on crackers drenched in cherry balsamic vinegar.

Then people split off and tour Shed 2 and 3 where vendors have hydroponic veggies from Leamington, Ontario, and butchers have an array of specialty meats. One merchant has a dozen varieties of fresh-made donuts and an urn of Honeycrisp apple cider. There’s plenty of Brussel sprouts, kale, celery and squash.



Maggie Gremore checks out Aunt Nee's fresh guacamole while Maureen and Jeff Van Hook make a purchase from Carlos Parisi during Linda Yellin's strolling culinary tour through Detroit's Eastern Market.

Supino's pizza is one of the favorite stops. The tiny restaurant has helped define the city's emerging restaurant scene and has been touted in *The New York Times*, *CNN Money* and *The Food Network's Diners, Drive-ins, and Dives* and *Food & Wine*. People nosh on four different pizzas, with sauce and without, always bearing the signature thin crust from a recipe the owner, Dave Mancini, inherited from his Supino, Italy, ancestors.

Yellin has a long history of leading tours in Detroit. She has bachelor's and master's degrees in social work from Wayne State University and worked **at an** agency near Belle Isle in the 1980s. She spent more than 25 years in private practice. In 2001 she began volunteering for Preservation Detroit (then called Preservation Wayne) leading tours of Eastern Market.

“I loved the tours,” she says. “It was an opportunity to connect with people, help dispel the myths of living here and share all the wonderful things going on in the city.”



She

Linda Yellin poses with Aunt Nee’s reps Carlos Parisi and Nady Bilani during a recent strolling culinary tour through Eastern Market in Detroit.

started doing her own tours in 2003 so she could elaborate on food, music and culture, moving far from a script on preservation and architecture. Her tours take people all over the city she loves.

People query her about safety, the climate for entrepreneurs and the sustainability of businesses.

She tells them DeVries & Company has been operating in the same storefront for more than 100 years and has one of the first Otis elevators. Supinos opened in 2008 and recently opened a fine dining Italian restaurant next door, LaRotinella.

Another enduring business she visits with her patrons is Bert's Warehouse, a 33,300-square-foot entertainment complex. In the summer the crowds drink beer and soda pop while eating ribs and brats and listening to karaoke on the sidewalk. The scene moves indoors for winter. The vibe stays convivial.

Owner Bert Dearing continues to work toward buying back the building. He displays a series of murals at the entrance to the performance venue by renowned artist Curtis Lewis. Around the corner there's the new Paradise Valley boutique and a Motown museum with portraits of Detroit's biggest stars.

Yellin cites each mural around the market as a proud mother might do, speaking up for her adopted city and all the promise yet to hatch in the market.

The sisters are pleased. Everyone leaves with a full belly.

For more information call (313) 393-2055 or go to <http://www.enjoythed.com/index.php/tours/27-eastern-market>

◆ & Co., Bert's Warehouse, Beyond Juicery + Eatery, Come Hungry, Detroit Eastern Market, Feet on the Street Tour, Germack Pistachio Company, Leave Happy, Linda Yellen, Rocky Peanut Company, Supinos Pizza



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