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FOODIE 4 FOODIE TOURS

BY ADAM SAWYER

SOMEWHERE ALONG THE LINE, city tours changed. They did here in the Northwest, anyway. Gone are the days of large roving packs of semi-interested tourists shuffling behind a megaphone-mouthed tour guide exalting a brightly colored flag or similar shame-beacon. Today's next-generation city tours have become the perfect melding of pertinent facts and lively discourse between the tour guide and a smaller, more intimate group—balanced and beneficial infotainment.

Culinary tours, in particular, offer insight, history and the overall culture of a city through the cuisine that defines it. They are like city tours with benefits. You might enjoy a good art walk, but you're guaranteed to like it more with a small bite and a glass of wine or cocktail. They are typically led by experienced and passionate guides working for companies that have established relationships with a number of purveyors, so waits and lines are circumvented. As a result, even groups of complete strangers more often than not morph into groups of mobile compatriots bound together by food, drink and discovery. They are as

enjoyable for locals as they are for out-of-towners and should be considered almost mandatory for foodies that find themselves in the Northwest. Here are four of our favorites:

Portland: Alberta Arts District Food Tour

The city that has become one of the culinary capitals of the U.S. has no shortage of excellent tour options. But the one that shines as the ultimate showcasing of both the city's food and soul, is the Alberta Arts District Food Tour. This on-foot excursion by Eat Adventures Food Tours delves deep into the poignant history of Portland's premier arts district. The tour visits murals and works by both local and world-renowned artists, as well as a diverse array of the neighborhood's notable eateries. It's an outing that simultaneously gives guests the cultural and culinary backstory of the city via the tangible evolution of its art and food.

Book tickets at eatadventures.com/portland-food-tours/arts-district-tour.

Boise: Historic Downtown Boise Food & Cultural Tour

Public art, architecture, history, and a very richly woven tapestry of ethnic influence all share equal time with Boise's outstanding culinary offerings on the Historic Downtown Boise Food and Cultural Tour by Indulge Boise. The artisanal craft beverage producers, as well as the purveyors of the inspired contemporary bites enjoyed at every stop on this tour, have deep roots of surprisingly varied backgrounds. Strong Asian, Italian and Basque influences, among many others, helped inform much of the city's charm and culinary identity. The story is told beautifully during the course of a walk through downtown, Old Boise and the Basque Block.

Reserve your spot at indulgeboise.com/tour/historic-downtown-boise-food-cultural-tour.

Seattle: Chef Guided Food Tour of Pike Place Market

If you've spent any time at all in Seattle, you have no doubt visited the Pike Place Market. One of the most iconic locations in the entire Pacific Northwest, the headlining highlights of the famous public market are fairly well-known. Airborne fish and the first Starbucks are rightfully celebrated. But Eat Seattle dives much deeper with their Chef Guided Food Tour of Pike Place Market. This gastronomic adventure explains how, where and why chefs pick their proteins and produce, providing context along with delectable tastings that help give culinary understanding beyond the market. The tour also reveals some hidden treasures and tidbits that even seasoned Pike Place regulars probably miss.

Go to eatseattletours.com/pike-place-food-tour to book your tour.

Spokane: Wander Spokane Wine Tour

Where would our cuisine scene be without Northwest wine? This four- to five-stop tour with Wander Spokane provides the history, insight and tastings that prove Eastern Washington takes a back seat to no place when it comes to food and wine. Tour guests visit a winery to tour the facility and learn about the winemaking process. And, of course, a food-pairing stop, because... well, what's wine without food? Historic downtown Spokane is the backdrop for this walking tour.

Book a tour with Wander Spokane at wanderspokane.com/food-wine-and-beer-tours.

