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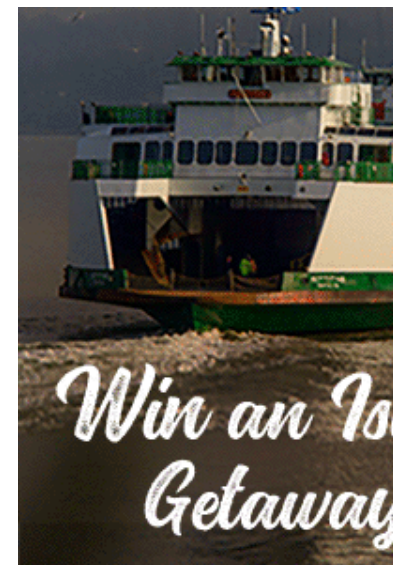


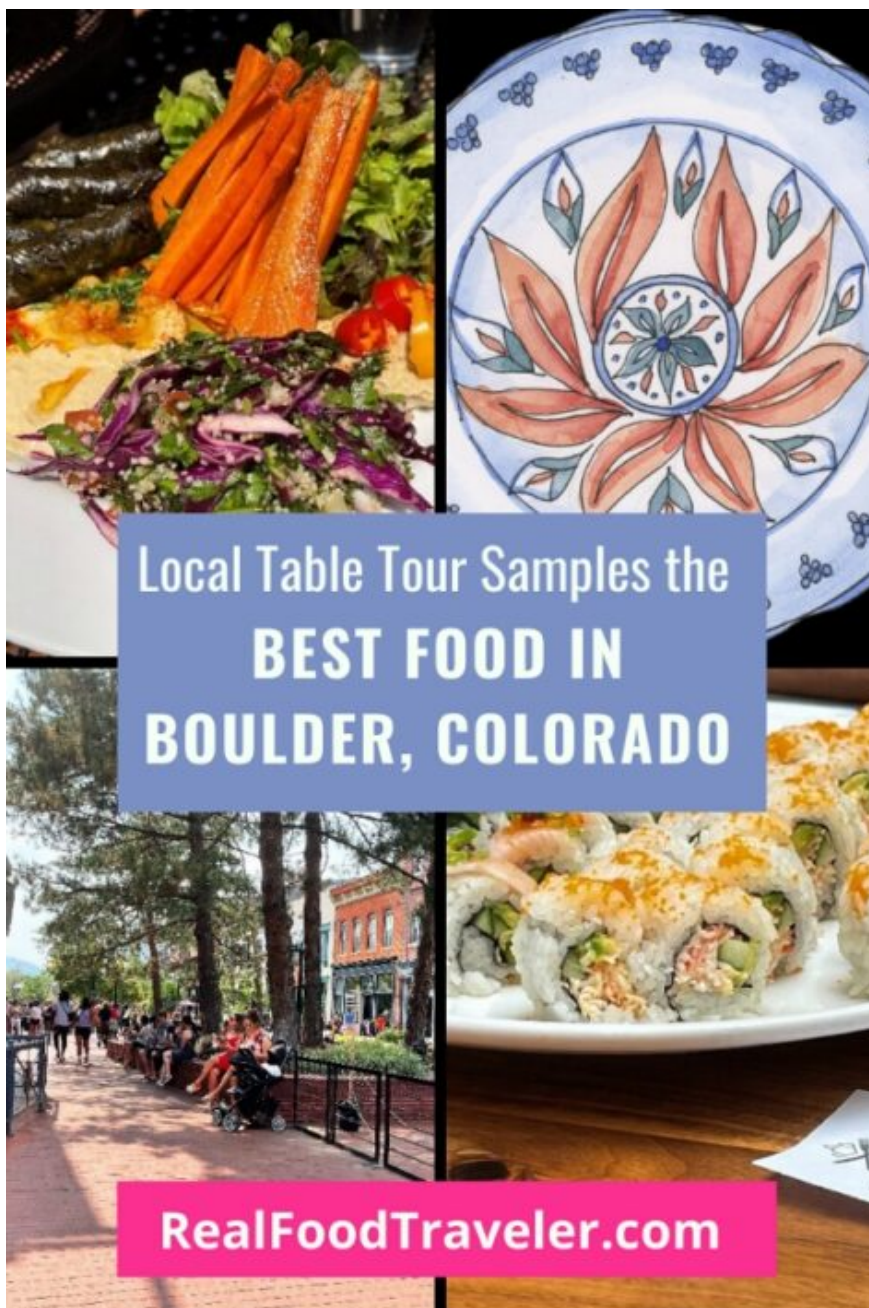
When traveling, a food tour is an excellent way to sample local cuisine while also getting to know what's authentic to the region. Choosing a really knowledgeable culinary tour company makes all the difference like the one writer Sandy Bornstein used on her recent food tour in Boulder, Colorado.

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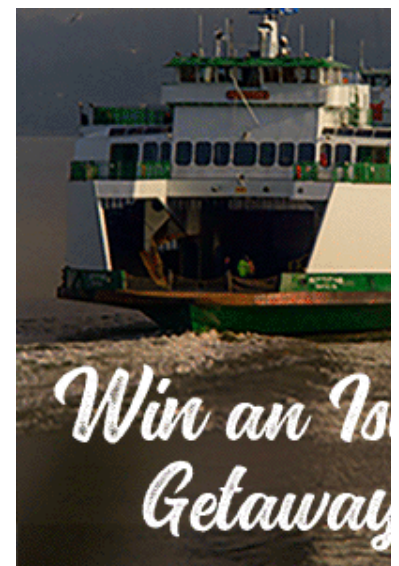
Hungry for more? Here are some food tour tips when you travel.

Sampling Some of the Best Food in Boulder on a Local Table Tour

Visitors coming to Boulder, Colorado for the first time often pull off on the westbound scenic Highway 36 overlook between



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the McCaslin Boulevard and Foothills Parkway exits. At this vantage point one can see the University of Colorado's notable, red-tiled roofs and the city's picturesque backdrop, enormous slabs of sandstone known as The Flatirons. While Boulder's outdoor activities are the main draw, the city's dining experiences should not be neglected.

Living nearby, I can attest to Boulder's diverse food scene. I have visited a plethora of quality restaurants showcasing outstanding menus using local ingredients. While doing research for an upcoming book about Boulder, I participated in a [Taste of Boulder](#) Food Tour led by Megan Bucholz. Not surprisingly, I was the only person from Colorado on the tour. The other participants came from cities across the United States.

Megan is the Founder and Chief Tasting Officer for Local Table Tours. After a graduate school friend went on an out-of-state food tour with her family, she returned home with the idea that Megan should launch a local food tour business. In 2010, no one was offering Colorado food tours. It is unlikely that Megan would have started her food tour business in 2011 if her friend had not introduced this idea. Without a regional model to rely upon, Megan created a brand showcasing locally owned businesses. In addition to her tours highlighting Boulder cuisine, Megan offers similar experiences in two other Front Range locations – Fort Collins and Denver.

Prior to the pandemic, Megan worked with 90 establishments across the three cities. She rotates through these vendors to be sure each group tour is not identical. When asked about her rationale for this approach, Megan stated, "That keeps my business model different from so many other food tours. It is an interesting experience rather than a cookie-cutter food tour." Megan also offers private tours which are catered to the needs of the participants. My visit took place when some COVID



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restrictions were in flux. Masks were not mandated inside but there were public concerns regarding the increasing number of Delta variant positive tests. In the aftermath of the pandemic, Megan plans to reinstate specialty tours like Booze, Brews, and Bites and perhaps bring back her Coffee and Chocolate Tour.



*You'll make your way along the iconic, pedestrian Pearl Street Mall and its restaurants
on the food tour.*

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I met the tour group in a courtyard adjacent to a red-bricked restaurant with full sized picture windows. Our group congregated around a couple of wrought iron round tables, partially shaded by orange umbrellas. Inside the narrow restaurant resembling a café, Manal Jarrar was preparing a Middle Eastern feast for our small group. On a side wall, a chalkboard menu outlined the small number of breakfast and lunch options.

Without any formal restaurant training, Manal, along with her husband Saib, opened the restaurant in 2009. While Manal didn't share any details about her prior Middle Eastern life, she casually mentioned that her Palestinian heritage was a wonderful resource. While we were waiting for two people who were running late, Manal served iced chai tea. This heavily spiced chai tea, prepared onsite, was a primer for the upcoming sampling. My senses were on full alert as I tried to parse out the complexity of the spices. Our selection included a Mid-East Sampler for vegetarians, a Mid-East Sampler for carnivores, and a chicken shawarma platter, along with two baskets of sliced pita. Before leaving the restaurant, we snacked on small slices of baklava.

Since I no longer eat meat, I did not try this savory dish, Chicken Shawarma with onions and tomatoes. From my observations, I could see it was a big hit. When we left the restaurant, the platter was empty.



The chicken entree offered on our food tour at Arabesque.

Having visited Israel several times, I am always happy to taste foods created by chefs who once lived in the region. Manal's vegetarian combo plate included hummus, baba ganoush, tabbouleh, grape leaves, and salad. It was both colorful and delicious.



The Mid-East Sampler Platter.

Megan frequently includes a stop at Arabesque because she feels “it is a hidden gem of Boulder.” Before relocating to Denver, Megan lived nearby and would walk past this restaurant. She was often lured inside by the complexity of the aromas coming from the kitchen. While the menu only relies on a few basics, I can see why lovers of Mediterranean cuisine would be interested.

Hungry for more? Here's a homemade chai recipe from PBS's Travel Bare Feet.

SAVORY SPICE SHOP (2041 Broadway)

After walking briefly on the pedestrian-only Pearl Street Mall, we turned onto Broadway so we could visit a locally owned spice shop. Mike and Janet Johnston opened their first location in Denver. After expanding to an online presence and opening a second shop in Littleton, the Boulder store was launched. Their products are now available in dozens of locations throughout the United States.

The store's signage offers useful assistance in finding particular items. We were free to browse through their

products from around the world. Surprisingly, only a small percentage of items were labeled organic. I required a clerk's assistance in order to find the few packages designated as organic.



Inside the Boulder location of the Savory Spice Shop.

Hungry for more? Head to Alaska for a Juneau Food Tour.

JAPANGO (Pearl Street)

In the heart of the Pearl Street Mall, I found myself in one of my favorite Asian restaurants. Our small group was directed into a small private tasting room near the restaurant's entrance. Sitting around an elevated rectangular table, we were treated to a special cocktail made with blended aged rum, bitters, Asian pear, and an edible crimson hibiscus flower. Two appetizer options were placed on the table. Due to my dietary

restrictions, I did not taste the pork and shrimp shumai with spicy mustard, but I was able to sample the crispy and flavorful Brussels sprouts.



Crispy Brussels sprouts at Japango.

The handmade rolls were served on an oversized platter. The colorful assortment included Spicy California – California crab, avocado, and cucumber; Chicago – shrimp tempura, avocado, green leaf, burdock, kew pie, and eel sauce; Hanami – tempura asparagus, avocado, cucumber, yellow tail tuna, plum, spicy onion, and truffle oil; New Orleans – spicy tuna, avocado, and masago; and Lochness – avocado, cucumber, Japanese pickle, mushroom, spinach, sesame oil and togarashi. Based on my past experiences, I was not surprised that the group quickly gobbled up the sushi rolls.



A selection of sushi at Japango.

Hungry for more? See what's iconic on a St. Louis culinary tour.

JUNGLE (2018 10th Street)

The Jungle is a tiki bar. This restaurant is a sister restaurant to Super Moon, previously known as Arcana. During the pandemic, their dining shifted to a Caribbean-style burger shack with an emphasis on carry out service.

To complement our freshly made strawberry daiquiris, our tour was served some snacks— seasoned French fries and Plantain Fritters made with ginger, orange, and garlic. Both items included dipping sauces. While listening to the bar's vinyl record selection, I sipped on my tropical drink and took a few bites from an oily fritter. Fried foods are usually not part of my nutrient-dense diet.



Fried Plantains from Jungle.

Hungry for more? See where Sandy sampled food in Moab, Utah.

Save room for dessert on the Local Table Tour

PIECE, LOVE & CHOCOLATE (805 Pearl Street, Boulder's West End)

Chocolate is always an exceptional finale to any event. I was happy to see the food tour end at a chocolate shop operating for more than ten years. As we approached the storefront, we were greeted by Greg, the owner of Piece, Love & Chocolate, carrying a tray filled with a small selection of freshly made ganache. These whipped chocolate delicacies are made with equal parts of cream and chocolate liquor and do not have any

sugar. The remnants on the plater were leftover pieces from recent batches of truffles. Most of the chocolate creations and pastries are made by a team of chocolatiers and pastry chefs. In addition to the sample, we were offered one truffle. I tried one of their unique specialties, a basil truffle. I ended up purchasing more for later consumption at home.



Greg, the owner of Piece, Love & Chocolate greeted us with samples.

Unlike other food tours that frequent the same places on every tour, Megan wants each tour to be slightly different. If you are considering taking a tour, don't assume that you would visit the same places. The itineraries are constantly changing. With five stops in Boulder's historic downtown area, a Taste of Boulder Food Tour offers an introduction to the Pearl Street Mall area along with flavorful food samplings and complimentary alcoholic beverages.

— Story by Sandy Bornstein, photos by The Traveling

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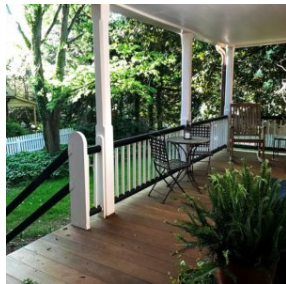
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by Sandy Bornstein | Oct 22, 2021 | 0 comments | Boulder

Colorado, Colorado, food tour, mid-east, pedestrian mall, sampler platter, Sandra Bornstein, Sandy Bornstein, sushi, tour



Author: Sandy Bornstein

Sandy has visited more than 40 countries and lived as an international teacher in Bangalore, India. Sandy's award-winning book, *May This Be the Best Year of Your Life*, is a resource for people contemplating an expat lifestyle and living outside their

comfort zone. Sandy writes about food, family, intergenerational, and active midlife adventures highlighting land and water experiences, historical sites, and Jewish culture and history. You can follow Sandy on Facebook and Instagram.

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