

Culinary Escapes offers walking food tours

Published: Friday, June 18, 2010

Since 2008, Culinary Escapes of Farmington Hills has catered to Michigan's culinary adventurers with walking food tours of Royal Oak, Birmingham and downtown Detroit eateries. Culinary Escapes was the first company in Southeastern Michigan to offer walking food tours, a trend already prevalent in Chicago, New York and Seattle.

Food tours are designed to give participants an insiders' view of an eatery's or chef's personal food philosophy, learn the origins of popular dishes and of course, sample tasty cuisine. Additionally, Culinary Escapes has focused



on exposing participant's palettes to a wide variety of regional Michigan delights, including a stop at one of the state's oldest farmers markets, custom wineries and the grilled cheese sandwich Oprah Winfrey dubbed "the greatest."

While the study ranked Michigan as one of the top 15 destinations for food-related travel, according to Ann Wilson, founder and owner of Culinary Escapes, Michigan food remains an undiscovered gem. "Many people are not aware of the amazing foods indigenous to our state," Wilson said. "From our cider mills to our coney dogs, the food of Michigan is steeped in rich traditions and stays with you long after the last bite. With our Culinary Escapes tours, we aim to shine a spotlight on the eateries that prepare the dishes featuring these local ingredients, as well as expose people to new experiences through food."

Highlighting Michigan cuisine has become a statewide mission; the Michigan Culinary Tourism Alliance was recently formed in partnership with the Michigan Department of Agriculture, Michigan Restaurant Association and Travel Michigan. The alliance plans to promote Michigan as a destination for culinary travel, increase restaurant menu offerings of local products and increase profitability for Michigan specialty crop producers. According to Renee Monforton of the Detroit Metro Convention and Visitors Bureau, Michigan has much to offer foodies. "We want to show both residents and the culinary traveler what makes Michigan special and we believe one of our greatest assets is our food," Monforton said. "Culinary Escapes has done a terrific job of flaunting those assets."

For ticket prices, participating eateries and other tour information, visit www.culinary-escapes.com or call 248-331-7296.

— From staff reports