

you really can taste the difference!™

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Top-Notch Tastes and Amazing Travel with Zingerman's Food Tours

Staff Guides share what they love about leading trips to delicious destinations



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I.A.N.

Four Steps to Tasting Great Food

AN INVITATION TO ENGAGE IN MORE MINDFUL EATING
OPENING OUR MINDS TO BEAUTY, WONDER, AND DELICIOUSNESS

To pay attention, this is our endless and proper work.
— Mary Oliver

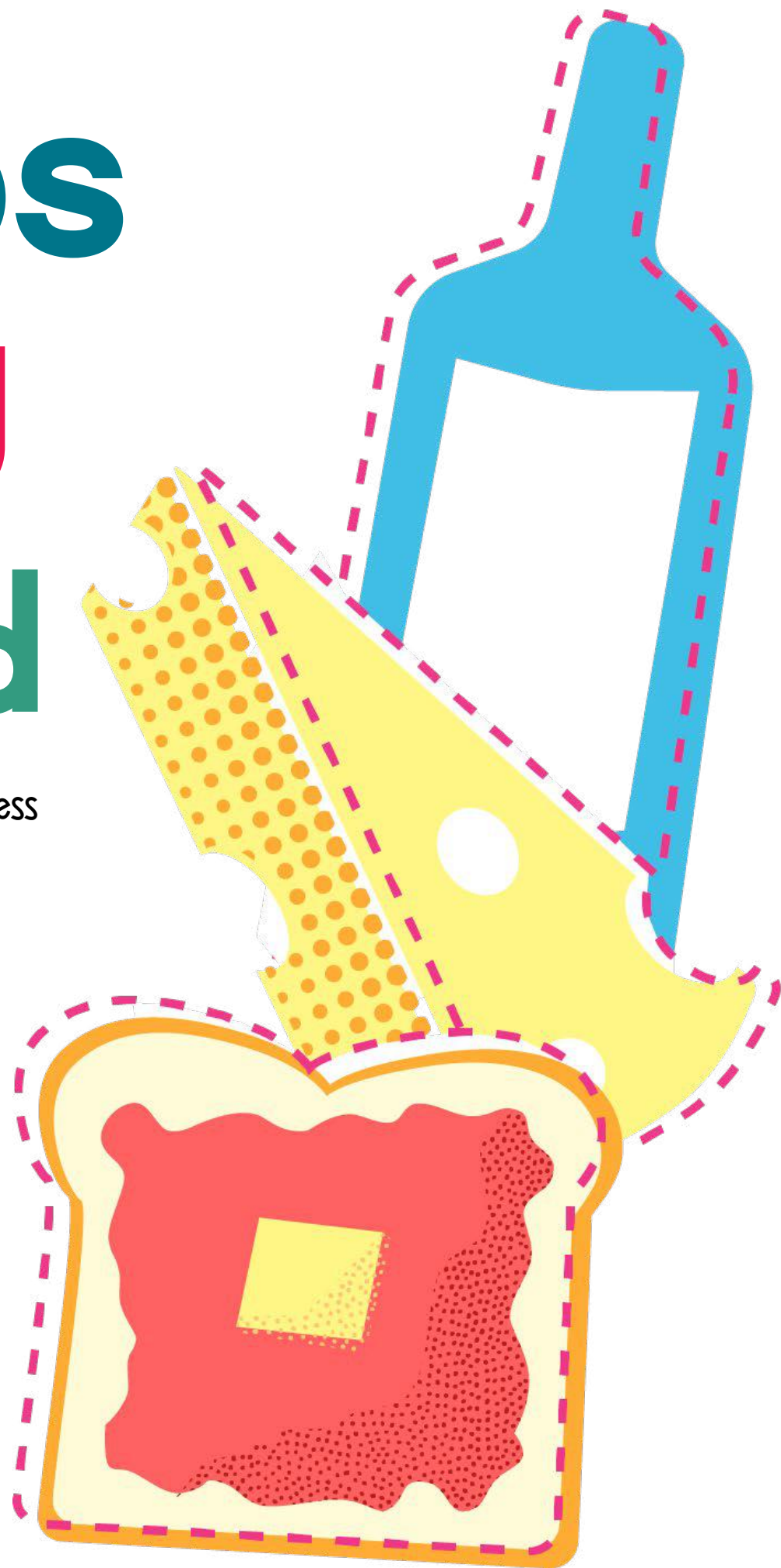
One thing you and I and your favorite cousin almost certainly have in common is that, along with every other person on the planet, we all eat regularly. What we eat, what we have access to, what we can afford to buy, whether we eat food we grew or fished or foraged for ourselves, we opt for fast food or the sort of factory-produced fish sticks that I grew up on, will certainly vary greatly from person to person. What we all also have in common—with the unfortunate exception of those whose sense of smell and taste has been taken from them—is the ability to *really taste the difference*. Everyone who's interested, I believe, can relatively easily discern high-quality chocolate or an artisanal loaf of bread from a commercial offering. They can learn to taste the nuances in flavor of an English cheddar from one made in Wisconsin or black pepper from white.

As I explain in far greater detail in the new pamphlet, "A Taste of Zingerman's Food Philosophy: Forty Years of Mindful Cooking and Eating," one of the key elements of our philosophical approach to food is the belief that "You really can taste the difference." Without this belief, Zingerman's would not exist. When people insist that they'll never be able to tell the difference between a great olive oil and a subpar one, I try to gently remind them that this statement is a belief and not a fact. I have said many times, and will surely say many more times in the months and years to come, that if you are willing to learn, I can teach you in two days or less to taste and score food within a point of where I would put it on the 0 to 10 scale (zero is terrible, 10 is terrific) that we've been using here at Zingerman's for years.

If you're interested in learning how to do that, the "Four Steps to Tasting Great Food" that we have been teaching and practicing here in the Zingerman's Community of Businesses for decades now are an easy and highly effective way to start training yourself how to do it. It's not just an academic exercise—the more mindfully we taste, the more beauty we bring into our lives. John O'Donohue—Irish poet, author, priest, and Hegelian philosopher—once said, "Beauty is so quietly woven through our ordinary days that we hardly notice it." The Four Steps are one way to start to notice it more systemically. If we were standing next to each other, I'd grab something that was nearby to taste together and begin the training. Since you're reading this and I'm likely nowhere in sight, I thought I'd begin the "conversation" here in writing. If you have questions, of course, reach out anytime at ari@zingermans.com.

The Four Steps to Tasting Great Food are an invitation to explore your food and your food philosophy more closely. Rather than the information age tendency to reduce things to a series of statistical facts, the Four Steps can start us on what might turn into—as it has for me—a wonderful lifelong journey through the culinary world. While we all have much in common, each of us will make our own unique way through that world. As Diane Ackerman writes, "It began in mystery, and it will end in mystery." The Four Steps guide us towards more effectively appreciating the flavor of our food, and actively training ourselves to focus our attention in ways that make that piece of great Parmigiano Reggiano you bought from us to be radically more rewarding to eat!

The cost of not paying attention may be more than simply missing out. Eating mindlessly may fill a need, but it is needlessly causing us to miss out on the awe and wonder that is all around us. Eating inattentively at best is neutral; in a quiet way, it can make the magical into the mundane. John O'Donohue writes, "When we lose sight of beauty our struggle becomes tired and functional ... constant struggle leaves us tired and empty." As he



sees it, this tendency underlies many of the world's current problems. And, he adds, "It is because we have so disastrously neglected the Beautiful that we now find ourselves in such a terrible crisis."

More mindful tasting is a small, meaningful step in a more positive direction. When we tune into the nuance of what we're tasting, we will, I'm confident, notice the difference. Our senses start to alight on the loveliness that's inherent in artisan cheese, hearth-baked naturally leavened bread, estate olive oil, the incredible historical Korean flavors that Ji Hye is cooking at Miss Kim, or the fried chicken at the Roadhouse. We begin more and more to make mindful choices about our meals, to buy raw materials more thoughtfully, and to realize that paying a few extra dollars to buy world-class pasta can actually make a tremendous difference in the quality of our lives. By all means, have a 401K, but while you're doing it, don't forget that tasting more mindfully, and the decision to eat more flavorful food where we can, will almost certainly add something special, something hard to quantify, to the quality of our lives.

There is a longer essay about these Four Steps to Tasting Great Food in the new pamphlet. For the moment, here's a quick look at how to do them. The first time you try them, it may feel a bit awkward. If you do it daily for a year, it will likely become second nature. Practice won't make perfect, but it will make "permanent." You will almost certainly be paying more attention to what you put in your mouth. And if you opt to eat more flavorful food—food that you grew in your own garden, food that you bought from an artisan producer, food that you bought from a store you care about and feel connected to—I am confident that the quality of your life will have been meaningfully enhanced in the process.

Continued on pg. 2

1. Know it

David Leon, director of the non-profit Farmer's Footprint, says, "Humans are not made up of cells, they're made up of stories." I would say the same is true for what we eat. It's hard, in my experience, to meaningfully appreciate or understand what great food has to offer us without knowing the story behind it. Why is it eaten so widely in its place of origin? Why is it made the way it is? What culinary characteristics are its current makers going after? And how are those different or still the same as those who were crafting it a few hundred years ago?

2. Look at it

This is all about the visual assessment. It's easy to pass by, but the benefit of looking at what we're about to consume more closely can be big. Diane Ackerman, in *A Natural History of the Senses*, says that as we pay close visual attention, "the colors and lights grow achingly intense." Before you take a bite, take a deep breath or three while you pause, like a jeweler looking at a gemstone, to look closely at the details. What you see will tell you a lot, especially if you have done the first step well.

3. Smell it

Diane Ackerman says, "Nothing is more memorable than a smell." I agree. And yet, very few Americans allow themselves to regularly, and very intentionally, assess the aromatics of what they are about to eat. Smell can send us back to our grandmother's kitchen, to walking through the market in Marrakech, or to the special dish that was prepared for you each year on your birthday. In less than a minute, mindful aromatic assessment can add a great deal of richness and a wealth of wonderful smells to your day!

4. Taste it

Last, but not least, we eat. Or, as we say here at Zingerman's, "We taste." Here in the ZCoB, we use the words "we eat" for more casual consumption. Tasting mindfully means paying close attention to the various and varied flavors of our food. To notice how they land on your tongue, the varied complexity of what we're consuming, the balance. Take in the sweetness, the savoriness, the salt level, the spice, the bitter, the sour, the beautiful! It's a great way to practice mindfulness at any point in your day.

Deep attention and intentional focus like this all add richness and depth to our days. I have met very few people in my life who have mindfully tasted great food and wanted to go back to bland industrial offerings. Tasting mindfully in this way alters what we experience when we eat. It enriches our days. In my experience, small tastes of big flavors satisfy in ways that large quantities of lower-quality food never can. Increased mindfulness can have a bigger impact on our lives, our work, and our world than many people might imagine. My friend, the Irish writer and story activist Gareth Higgins, says, "What the world needs now is the kind of wonder that comes naturally to children, merged with an adult consciousness capable of discernment about what really matters, and how to help make it happen." Mindful tasting—towards which the Four Steps to Great Food guide us—is one of the easiest and most rewarding ways I know to do that work.

There is much more on all this in "A Taste of Zingerman's Food Philosophy." John O'Donohue writes that "In Greek, the word for 'the beautiful' is *to kalon*. It is related to the word *kalein* which includes the notion of 'call.' When we experience beauty, we feel called." Great food has been calling to me for over 40 years now. As I share in the new pamphlet, paying it deep attention has altered my life in hugely meaningful ways. I rarely go more than a few minutes without going through some version of the Four Steps to Tasting Great Food. For you, mindful eating may be casual, or, perhaps, like me, great food and cooking could even become your calling! I happily answer that call every day!

Ari

MISS KIM **짬뽕**

INSPIRED BY KOREAN ANCESTORS. MADE WITH MICHIGAN INGREDIENTS.

Two-time James Beard semifinalist Chef Ji Hye Kim's food is rooted in Korean tradition and adapted to showcase Michigan's bountiful produce. Enjoy smashed potatoes, tteokbokki, housemade kimchi, bibimbap, Korean fried chicken, and more.

"The dishes at Miss Kim offer history lessons interspersed among layers of flavor and texture. For the tteokbokki, rice cakes, on her menu, she turned to a centuries-old recipe that was served at the royal palace in Seoul. ... In Kim's version, batons of chewy rice cakes are crisped and tossed in a deeply savory soy sauce with silky shiitake mushrooms, a glossy poached egg, and seasonal vegetables."

— Food & Wine

Visit misskimannarbor.com to view the menu, make a reservation, or order online.



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FIND OUT MORE & APPLY NOW AT ZINGERMANSJOBS.COM

Hiring has begun for a fun, fast-paced holiday season! Positions are full or part-time, day or night shift in the warehouse and service center, and all Zingerman's Mail Order (ZMO) jobs include great benefits and perks! Ninety-nine percent of all the employees at Zingerman's Mail Order started their story by working during the holidays. Some folks return year after year to make some extra cash and spend time with a crew they consider their friends. Start your next chapter at Zingerman's Mail Order and see where your story takes you.



"I started working at Zingerman's Mail Order in November of 2021 and was hired as a full-time employee in January of 2022. Zingerman's is a phenomenal and consistent place to work! They truly do care about their employees. I recommend taking the time to learn and access what Zingerman's offers you as an employee—I was extremely surprised about the amount of "free" training that we receive and are expected to utilize! It is truly one of the best experiences you will have. Even if you decide to pursue other opportunities in the future, rest assured, that you will NEVER FORGET THE ZINGERMAN'S EXPERIENCE!"

—Davee Hunter, Core Crew

"I was hired on for the Holiday in September of 2020, and I was hired year-round in February of 2021. I currently work in Pastry as a Station Coach. The biggest thing that surprised me about working at ZMO was how much scientific thinking and Lean principles play a role in the work we do every day. If I had to pick just one piece of advice to give to anyone interested in working at ZMO or Zingerman's in general, it would be this: Do not be afraid to fail in the pursuit of learning. Squeezing the opportunity out of failure takes practice, but it is something that I have learned to do more through Zingerman's than any other place I've ever worked, and I'm all the better for it."

—Max Saalberg, Pastry Station Coach



"I started as a holiday staffer in October of 2018 and was hired as a full-time employee in February of 2019, just after my first holiday. Now I'm the day-to-day supervisor of the warehouse. I'm responsible for making sure the production line is running smoothly and at the correct pace to ship all the orders we have for the day. I've joked that we're the most educated warehouse in the country because it seems like everyone has a hobby that you wouldn't expect. You'll meet a lot of very cool, very interesting folks, some of whom like the same things you do. And, this is an organization that will invest in you and develop your strengths if you have the initiative to start the conversation. Talk about your interests and where you want to be—we probably have an idea of how to help you get there."

—Rob Davis, Floor Leader

Top-Notch Tastes and Amazing Travel with Zingerman's Food Tours

our staff guides talk travel, tasting, and what they love about leading Zingerman's food tours

One of the beauties of the complex ecosystem that is the Zingerman's Community of Businesses is the wealth of wonderful, if still little-known, ways that we bring remarkable Zingerman's experiences to the world. The latest of those "off the beaten Zingerman's track" highlights to get national attention came a couple months ago when Zingerman's Food Tours was featured in a big *Wall Street Journal* article about culinary travel! Food Tours are, for a host of good reasons, hot stuff in the ZCoB right now!

Writer John Steinbeck once observed that, "People don't take trips, trips take people." Which is exactly what these amazing excursions do. They take our tour guests to the next level—letting them see, taste, and learn things that neither you nor I as caring but casual travelers would ever have the chance to do on our own. Forty years of building relationships with artisan food producers, wonderful connections to makers of world-class wines, decades of deep fascination with finding out more and more about foreign cultures, and strong commitment—as with everything we do—to delivering an exceptional experience all come together in our Food Tours. Each excursion takes a small group of folks who love food, who love learning, and who hope to go to places that other people only think about.

To get behind the scenes on these super fine Food Tours, to hear the stories that aren't always told, and to share why these trips are so darned special, I had the thought to sit down with a few of the folks who lead the Food Tours, with whom tour attendees spend a week on the road, to come together to have a conversation with me and Zingerman's Food Tour managing partner, Kristie Brablec. You can read the rest here for yourself. I'll just say that I left our chat feeling exceptionally inspired, and, introvert that I am, ready to sign up for one of these special tours. Scroll through the list of delicious destinations on the Food Tours website. The toughest part is probably deciding which of the twelve different tours we offer that you, in the words of John Steinbeck, want to be taken by!

Ari

Cast of Characters: Ari Weinzweig (Zingerman's Co-Founding Partner),

Kristie Brablec (Managing Partner at Zingerman's Food Tours), Mara Ferguson (Keynote Liaison at Zing-Train and Guide in Ireland), Sean Hartwig (Specialty Food Manager at Zingerman's Deli and Guide in Sicily), and Jenny Tubbs (Director at Zingerman's Press and Guide in Spain)

Ari: So, Kristie, for folks who may be reading about Zingerman's Food Tours for the first time, could you share a bit about your own journey here, leading to you doing what you do as the Managing Partner of Zingerman's Food Tours in the Zingerman's Community of Businesses (ZCoB)?

Kristie: I came to Zingerman's as a lapsed artist, who'd been working for natural area preservation within the parks. A fellow rower who worked at Zingerman's suggested I work for Zingerman's Mail Order, and I initially said no. Eventually, I decided to give it a shot. I thought, "I'll do this for a little while," and then—I don't know if I've ever told you this—I met you the first day I was working. I think I probably had purple hair or something, and you told me not to check my personality at the door, and that it was nice to have me there. No one had ever said that to me as an artist. It was always something along the lines of, "Take the nose ring out." "Your hair is weird." "No painted nails." All the rules. I knew right then and there that I would probably be in the organization for a very long time.

I was a vegetarian when I started. I'd grown up on fast food and didn't know anything about food. It took me a while to come to understand the power of artisanal food. And I think the moment that really connected food on a deep, emotional level for me was when I met Majid Mahjoub from Tunisia. I sobbed.

And honestly, the whole time I worked at Mail Order, I didn't understand the Food Tours we offered. I knew they were run from a separate department within Mail Order, but as someone who didn't work in that department, I didn't understand them. It was confusing who ran them, how they got to be a guide, and what experience we offered. They felt out of reach. When I became the Service Steward at Zingerman's, I called Toni, our Managing Partner at Mail Order, and I told her I understood most of every service interaction in this organization, except for this thing that we do at Food Tours. And she said, "Okay, come with me to Tuscany." The trip was in three weeks. I was only six months into my role as Service Steward, but I said, "Okay. I'm gonna go to Tuscany with Toni."

I had a vision for where I wanted to go on the airplane home. I just knew. I had always struggled to find where my place was in the organization, and I knew it the instant I was in Italy with Toni.

Ari: Awesome. I'm glad I asked this question. I didn't know most of that. And then you became a Managing Partner, four or five years ago?

Kristie: Five years ago. Basically, I became a Managing Partner, did two full years, and then the pandemic hit.

Ari: For each of the tour guides who are here today, how has your life and your food philosophy or worldview been impacted by your work on the food tours?

Mara: Any time you travel, it expands your horizons and awareness about the way people live where you're visiting. Growing up, we didn't really do any international travel outside of Canada. It's been a wonderful experience to go to Paris and actually taste the cheese there. And then to be in Ireland and see the giant oyster

beds in the bay—how they manage those and take them to market. It's truly expanded my understanding, and honestly, it just makes you realize how small you are.

Sean: Having grown up in the organization, utilizing the learning tools through food—tasting, selling, and learning about cultures—in a stateside brick-and-mortar retailer is somewhat of a myopic approach to learning about the great ingredients in the food. Being able to visit the places where the food comes from and bring people along for that journey paints a much broader picture. It's like going from black-and-white to color. You dispel some notions that you have and it allows you to be more authentic—not only in working with people, but in working with the food. There are so many times when we get to connect with the people who make the product, where they put the love into the food, and you can convey that and people receive it. And that's really special.

Jenny: When we teach about our service experiences at Zingerman's, we talk about changing our world with one meaningful interaction at a time. These experiences create small ripple effects. I saw a correlation to this most recently in our tour of the Basque region, where we visited a farmer of the *Alubia de Tolosa* (the black beans of Tolosa) and learned about the farmers keeping alive the tradition of the bean. And the association that protects the ties to the origin of the bean. Together, these farmers are growing here and there—in their backyard or front yard—not on huge farms with mass production, but in small plots, with its roots in the land in which it is meant to be grown. And having it prepared in a way that really honors the bean. Listening to them talk, you can hear the deep connection to the history and the love of that tradition. Experiences like this remind me that it is about the small, meaningful

actions—one farmer doing what they can do has this outward ripple effect on our foodways. Staying connected to that, and connecting the folks who come on our tours with that, really gets me excited. When a farmer is opening this bean pod to reveal beautiful black bean pearls to us, and people are feeling this swelling in their hearts all over this bean and its story, and the keepers of that story... it's truly something special.

Ari: Yeah. I love it—their heart swells, like a bean as it cooks in the pot.

Kristie: This is a large part of what I think about in terms of how to grow this business and why I do what I do. As you are a lapsed anarchist, Ari, I am a lapsed artist—and for a while, I thought they were not the same, but now I have realized that art and food are very much the same. To me, the most profound change in my own personal life has been a reconnection to my roots as someone who was raised on a farm and has generations of farming in her family. How one person like me, or Jenny, or Mara, or Sean, or you—or any one of our customers—has an important role to play in consumerism, and the way that we choose to spend our money and what we choose to put in our bodies really does matter—not just for our own health and wellbeing, but for the health and wellbeing of the people that we work with. And I take that role very seriously. We couldn't do what we do without our producers, period. Or our guests. It's about the will and the passion of our guests and the open kindness of our farmers and purveyors who invite us into their space and tell their stories. We are just the conduit. So, I think of it as being the orchestra conductor—just because you're the conductor, doesn't mean you're always in the spotlight, right? You have many pieces of the orchestra playing to come up with the symphony of sound. And we are the conductors of that.

Jenny: I've heard Ari say that the person who is carrying the speakers in from the van is no less important than the conductor or the band leader.

Kristie: Probably more so. We're just the ones who help bring it all together. If you don't have all those other people, it doesn't work. I ask myself how we as conductors can make space for the viola player to shine while supporting all the other players. I think about this metaphor a lot in creating a vision—for myself and for us to think about in the future for Food Tours.

Ari: Could you share a moment from a tour when you've seen a traveler just light up?

Kristie: I had one instance in Tuscany at the Selvapiana winery when a guest started a toast. By the end, every single person had said something, and every single person was crying. They were going through the transformation together. It was one of those moments in which you watch a group become a family. It's a rare thing, and it's beautiful to be part of. To see an entire group of people share some of their deepest fears and gratitudes is really an honor—in a way that I can't even put into words.

Sean: I'm thinking of a guest on the Hungary tour who didn't drink wine. He had come along on the tour with his wife. We met up with him afterward at the Deli—

Kristie: Yes! He ended up becoming a huge wine fan. He'd never had a situation in which he connected with it in the past. He was open to learning, and then all of a sudden he found it and it changed his approach.

Sean: Some guests, you see their lives change on these tours. They haven't been presented with the way in

which we get into people's lives. They get exposed to that level of intimacy, and it stays with them.

Mara: I've been thinking about this group dynamic. This past time in Ireland, we had a lot of solo women travelers. Seeing them bond over the course of the tour was delightful. They just all became the best of friends. When everyone meshes like that, it makes it even more of an experience.

Kristie: It's an alchemy of love.

Mara: Yeah. It's an honor, honestly. In terms of a "get it" moment, we have our first meal at the Fumbally Stables with the chef, Rose Greene. The first dish she gave us was created from various greens she had just plucked out of her garden. It was just such a humble and beautiful start to the meal. It felt like, at that moment, people knew, "Okay! We're in for this!" Because it would be easy to take them to some fancy place and sort of wine and dine them, which we do, but it was just that the ingredients were so humble. I really enjoyed that.

Kristie: We had a wonderful guest who wasn't sure she was going to like the food, but she ended up being one of the most adventurous eaters on the tour! And she ended up building an outdoor kitchen with a pizza oven when she got home! I love that. I always tell people that they don't have to like it, but at least try it. You're here to expand your horizons. That's what travel is. I want your head to be so full, and your world to be so big, you don't know how to fit back into your house—not physically—but you know? Just a big "Wow!"

Ari: Are there producers that we visited on a tour where you already liked their product, but then when you got there, it altered your perception of their work?

Kristie: Laura di Collobiano, who produces the Tenuta di Valgiano Olive Oil that we've been selling for nearly 30 years now. I was flabbergasted when I showed up at her estate. It's the most incredible place. We visit her on our Tuscany tour. It's mind-blowing.

Jenny: The Conservas Ortiz, from whom we get our tuna. The moment we walked into the building in Ondarroa where the company was founded over 100 years ago. Originally, it was also their home, and there remain some artifacts from that time. There's still a small production floor there. Everyone said the visit was the most amazing highlight of the tour up to that point, and we had had day after day of amazing highlights. They were just so completely enamored with being able to see the whole process done with such care—all by hand.

Mara: I didn't know what to expect with Sheridan's Cheese and Ballymaloe House [the amazing restaurant, country house hotel, and cooking school in south Cork], but it felt like home there. We are kindred spirits, organizationally. Ballymaloe had always been this sort of culinary beacon, and then being able to go there? I was even more impressed and overwhelmed. And that was just really, really special.

Sean: The salt flats in Marsala. Seeing this sea salt that we carry at the Deli being hand harvested—just the natural conditions it takes to get sea salt to your table, done in a traditional manner, is incredible. Or the whole wheat durum flour grown and milled in Castelvetrano, used in the Pane Nero bread of the region. It has a fascinating history. Then, onto the Ragusano cheese—the traditional cheese production with the wood boxes. And those pistachios from Bronte—how they grow, and what it takes to harvest that crop, is just incredible.

Ari: Kristie, could you say a bit about what makes our Food Tours unique?

Kristie: We have spent 30 years building relationships with some of these people. Some, nearly 40! The reason why we are given access, or then learn about someone else who will give us access to some of the places we go is because we've been building these connections and friendships for so long. And even with newer tours, it takes a lot of work, but once they get to know us, they see that we're truly invested in creating these authentic connections and experiences. As Ji Hye [Ji Hye Kim, Chef and Managing Partner at Miss Kim] and I work on our new Food Tour to Korea, we are navigating this. It takes time and effort and energy, and being okay with rejection, and going back, and being willing to still go back and say, "We want to share your story." And it might be a farmer doing work they love. And sometimes their response is, "What do you mean you want to do a tour? I have a garage that I make my wine in. No one wants to see us." And I say, "Actually, they do!"

It's sometimes hard explaining to our guests what we do at Zingerman's, let alone explaining to some of these farmers in Europe and Korea what we do, and having them understand that we want to be that conduit to teaching people about their work. When we connect on this level, we're showing these folks that we value their passion and their product. It's an honor to be a part of that. I want people to be engaged, informed consumers when they come home. If you haven't learned something, or many things in a day, we're not doing our job. And I would say, as a guest on the tour, you are going to get more out of these tours the more you engage. You gotta get in there and show your curiosity. Curiosity is the key to the game.

Ari: For fun, what's a tour that you don't lead that you would love to go on as a guest?

Mara: Morocco.

Sean: Now that I hear about Korea, I'm intrigued, but I think Denmark. That's the next little pocket of the world I want to explore.

Jenny: I'd love to go as a guest to Sicily.

Kristie: I think it's hard for me because I'm designing all of them. So it's a little bit different.

Sean: What's one that you haven't designed that you'd want to go on, Kristie?

Kristie: I want to go to Vietnam. I'm really excited to branch out into that continent. I'm excited about this work in Korea with Ji Hye.

Ari: If you were going to tell me one thing about going on a Food Tour that I probably wouldn't know from just looking at the website, what would it be?

Mara: You're gonna have so much fun. We're a really fun group and our guests are really fun.

Sean: I think it's one of the most unique ways to expand your capacity as a human in a safe space where you're taken care of.

Jenny: There's a delightful sense of self-discovery that I witness people go through on these trips. And the joy. Most recently, with a husband and wife. He was doing some sort of magic trick for the group, and she was laughing, full-bodied, saying, "I don't know this person! I didn't even know he knew this trick!"

Kristie: Ha, yes. When you're traveling this way and you don't have that worry about having to make a decision, or who's going to drive, or how to get there. We get to experience people just melting some of their stress away. When you see it happen, it's such a pleasure. And it's just like, my God, welcome to the party.

Honoring Washtenaw County's Black Community

a special dinner for new center at the roadhouse
with award-winning author adrian miller



**History is not the past. It is the stories we tell about the past.
How we tell these stories ... has a lot to do with whether we cut
short or advance our evolution as human beings.**
—Grace Lee Boggs

Historian Eddie Glaude, Jr., who is the Chair of the African American Studies Department at Princeton, writes, “Responsibility cannot be lost, it can only be abdicated. If one refuses abdication, one begins again.”

I’m all for new beginnings. New beginnings, I’ve learned though, require different pasts. Or, maybe more accurately, a different story about the past than the one we’ve grown accustomed to telling. When we do change the way we tell our stories, we will, in the process, also change the way we see the world. In the spirit of Dr. Glaude’s statement, my friend, the Irish writer Gareth Higgins says, “Imagining a new story is a privilege. It is also our responsibility.” What follows is an attempt to practice some of each.

History, contrary to popular belief, is neither static nor written in stone. The 20th-century Mexican poet, Octavio Paz once said that “A society is defined as much by how it comes to terms with its past as by its attitude toward the future: its memories are no less revealing than its aims.” While most of us have been taught that history is merely just a set of facts mostly there to memorize, it’s actually the opposite. If, as I learned while reading the work of Gareth Higgins over the last few years, stories are just beliefs made manifest, then history is made up of those same beliefs made manifest in the context of what’s already happened. Change our stories and we will, in turn, change our beliefs. Change the stories we tell about the past, and we change what we teach. In the process, we will also alter the present and the future both. We can see this in the efforts to repeat the old stories in the banning of books and the refusal to alter our history lessons to include the full story.

James W. Loewen, who taught at the HBCU Tougaloo College, wrote, “The antidote to feel-good history is not feel-bad history, but honest and inclusive history.” Which, of late, got me to wondering: What if we are, both the Zingerman’s Community and the community of Washtenaw County, who we are, in great part because of the benefits that have accrued to us from the long history of the Black community in this area? What if we/I started to trace our roots to that community rather than the more typical ways those stories are told? What if we start to tell the story that we have been able to achieve what we have achieved in great part because of the Black business community that contributed so much to helping make the town what it is. Professor Noel Ignatiev of the DuBois Institute at Harvard frames things very well:

Like every other aspect of American society, (history) assumes a different tint when it’s looked at through a color-sensitive lens. ... In looking at the history of Afro-Americans in this country, one must look at it not as if this is some exotic group of interesting people in a foreign country about whom we ought to learn a little bit more, but rather understand that the history of black folk in the United States is central to the history of Americans as a whole. That applies to the shaping of the American national identity, to the particular forms that the American republic takes, to the meaning of citizenship, to the meaning of westward movement, to the meaning of labor movement, of reform, of every other aspect of American society. If you re-insert the Negro into their proper place in that history, then it reshapes how we look at all the rest of the history, as well.

The history of Washtenaw County’s Black community includes fascinating and inspiring individuals like Mary Aray, who settled on farmland in 1817 not all that far from where the Bakehouse now is. It would include her son Asher Aray, who was a conductor on the Underground Railroad. It would include the 741 African Americans who were listed as living here in the first formal census of the town in 1827 and the 12 free Black farming families living in the area in 1837, the same year the barn at Cornman Farms was constructed in Dexter. It would include the Black Canadian Charlie Baker and the Russian-Jewish refugee Tom Cook who, together, created the collaborative Ann Arbor Foundry in 1920 a mile or so to the north of where the Deli is now. It would include stories of George

Jewett Jr. (for whom Jewett Street is named) who was born in 1870—Jewett went to Ann Arbor High and became a captain of the football, debate, and baseball teams and was the fastest sprinter in the Midwest around 1890.

It would reflect the fact that in 1915, our county had the second-highest level of Black home ownership in the state per capita. It would include the array of highly skilled Black barbers who set up shop downtown. It would mention James Moore’s restaurant and the important contributor to community culture, the Dunbar Center. It would also include mention of Midway Lunch, a popular restaurant run by David and Mozelle Keaton, a few blocks from where the Deli is now. Sadies Beauty Shop, Julia’s Tea Room, and Josephine Tea Room on North Fourth. It would talk about Al Wheeler, the city’s first Black mayor, who served in the role in the years I attended U of M. It would share that the neighborhood in which we were fortunate enough to open the Deli was THE Black business district and that we were down the block from the iconic DeLong’s barbecue. It would share that even though it wasn’t illegal for Blacks and whites to dine in the same restaurants, it was well understood that doing so was not okay. I wrote in *The Power of Beliefs in Business*:

In fact, history would demonstrate that beliefs speak louder than laws. Willis Patterson, professor emeritus of the U of M School of Music grew up in Ann Arbor. Speaking about the 1940s, he remembers a good restaurant that “was on Washington Street. That was a fine, fine restaurant. There was never a sign that said No Blacks Allowed. And I don’t recall anyone saying that they have been told that they were not supposed to go in there. But somehow or another, the African American community knew that we were not welcome in those places, so we didn’t go.” Same went for lodging. “The Allenel Hotel was the classic hotel in Ann Arbor. Again, we understood that, that was not a receptive place to African Americans.” In fact, in the entire town in that era, he says, “I am not aware of there being a restaurant that they could feel they were welcome.

The history would also, sadly, include the gradual decline in the number of Black-owned businesses in Ann Arbor, so much so that in 1992, the *Ann Arbor News* wrote that barber “J.D. Hall still cuts hair in what is believed to be the only downtown Ann Arbor commercial building owned and operated by a black businessman.” What was once a healthy and thriving Black business community—which was succeeding despite biases, both systemic and personal—has to a great extent disappeared. What happened? Local historian Deborah Meadows cites the same factors that played out in so many other cities: redlining, gentrification (which, through our own success, we have pretty clearly, if unintentionally, contributed to), systemic and interpersonal racial bias, and de facto segregation.

With all those stories in mind, when I look to the future, then it seems clear to me that we would and should appropriately support the re-development and re-story-ation of that community. Not, of course, in lieu of our connection to the entire community—we care deeply about every customer, every person who makes Ann Arbor what it is, and we have obviously received incredibly broad support from so many of all walks of life. Rather, this is an especially strong commitment to a particular part of our community, made in the effort to help rebalance our ecosystem. And if it’s true, which I believe it is, that a healthy Black business community was an important part of what had made

A Special African American Foodways Dinner

Tuesday, September 12th
7 pm at

*Zingerman's
roadhouse*

Tickets are available at
zcob.me/newcenter for \$90

Additional options for donations
will be available.

Menu

Including recipes from Adrian Miller's book, *Black Smoke*.

Plated Appetizer

BBQ Pâté

Pit-smoked whole hog pâté on fried saltines, with Fred Wheeler's honey hot sauce

Family Style Entrées

Texas-Style BBQ Short Ribs

In the style of Austin, Texas' C.B. "Stubb" Stubblefield's slow-cooked smoked Bar-B-Q Brisket

Memphis-Style Chicken

In the style of "Big Moe" Cason's smoked BBQ chicken, with red tomato BBQ sauce

Family Style Sides

Mashed Potato Salad

In the style of the recipe used at the New Zion Missionary Baptist Church in Huntsville, Texas, with mayo, yellow mustard, pickle relish, green onions, and hot pepper sauce

Smoked Cabbage Slaw

In the Eastern Virginia style of Jason Pough's buttery smoked cabbage

Roadhouse Buttermilk Biscuits

Koolickles

A seriously Southern tradition—cherry flavored Kool Aid-soaked pickles

Plated Dessert

Roadhouse Banana Pudding with Nilla Wafers

Ann Arbor such a positive place for us to open the Deli back in 1982, then I can see that symmetrically, a healthy Black business community is an important part of making Ann Arbor a great place for the ZCoB to do business in 2082.

As part of that work, we are excited to be able to actively support the work of what folks around town know as NEW! If you don't yet know it, it stands for Nonprofit Enterprise at Work. The folks at NEW have quietly, but with incredible effectiveness, worked to support, enhance, and rebalance our local ecosystem. They have contributed greatly to the community, focusing on helping those in underserved communities to start and run healthy and impactful organizations. In nature, the healthiest ecosystems are the most diverse. The more effective NEW is, then by definition, the better our community will be. We are, after all, all in this together. As author and activist Charles Eisendrath writes, "The interest of each is the interest of all."

Here's a synopsis of their important work from the skilled staff at NEW:

For three decades, NEW has provided nonprofits with services that build internal capacity and deepen their impact. Along with organizational development consulting, this includes fiscal sponsorship, office space, bookkeeping and financial services, and IT support. We also provide learning communities, where mission-driven leaders can learn and grow in their leadership with the help of local expertise and their peers' real-world experience. Together, we're helping boards go beyond the basics, growing financially resilient organizations, elevating visionary leaders, and creating champions for social change throughout southeast Michigan. We also uplift the guidance from our community's most influential BIPOC leaders to help us center justice as we move towards transformation.

Last year, NEW began an inspiring project to take their work—and in the process, the town—to the next level. It's called NEW Center Transformation and you can read about it in great detail on their website: new.org/new-center-transformation. The folks at NEW are thinking big—the total fundraising goal is \$15,000,000. In one small step to support the project, we will be hosting a special dinner at the Roadhouse on Tuesday, September 12 at 7 pm.

The amazing culinary historian and award-winning author Adrian Miller has agreed to fly in from his home in Denver to be our guest speaker. This will be Adrian's fourth guest appearance as a special dinner speaker at the Roadhouse! He and I met nearly 20 years ago at the Southern Foodways Alliance, and we've been talking regularly ever since! In years past, we did a dinner around his book, *Soul Food: The Surprising Story of an American Cuisine, One Plate at a Time*, and another around the food and history of Black street vendors. A third, unforgettable dinner—which by total coincidence, fell on the same night that President Obama was inaugurated—on Adrian's book, *The President's Kitchen Cabinet: The Story of the African Americans Who Have Fed Our First Families from the Washingtons to the Obamas*. Adrian has deservedly won James Beard Awards and currently serves as the head of the Colorado Council of Churches. Honestly, it's worth coming to the event just to hear Adrian speak—he does his research diligently, is a great storyteller, and is a really nice guy to boot! Proceeds from the dinner will go

to support NEW's fundraising efforts! Seats will be limited, so book soon! Ticket purchases will have an option to donate over and above the ticket price, so that we can help raise more money for NEW.

Adrian's most recent book, *Black Smoke: African Americans and the United States of Barbecue*, has won a wealth of awards around the country. It's an in-depth, intriguing, and insightful look at the history of barbecue in Black communities all over the U.S. The menu for this special dinner will be based on the new book!

The dinner and the contribution to NEW will be, in the spirit of what I wrote above, a wonderful way for everyone at the Roadhouse to mark the restaurant's 20th anniversary! It will help us to help support NEW's important work in "Growing for Equity and Change." It's a way for us to honor what the community has done for us, and, at the same time, to help ensure that the community will be healthier, richer, and more diverse for many decades to come. A few years ago, artist George McCalman produced a beautiful book with illustrations entitled, *Illustrated Black History: Honoring the Iconic and the Unseen*. McCalman says of this work that he wanted to make the story of the Black community in the U.S. that was "accessible but also steeped in history, had resonance and substance, but was also really beautiful." The same goes, I will say, for this work as well.

Over the last 10 years or so, I've been working on a metaphorical model of organizational ecosystems. I hope to have a pamphlet published about it late this fall. In the model, beliefs are akin to the root systems of our lives. We don't see them, but everything above the surface is always 100 percent correlated to the root system below. The same is true in companies and in communities. All our actions are based on what we believe. Our support of this project is based on ours. The belief that the more diverse our community becomes, the better lives all of us will have. The belief that inequitable ecosystems are unhealthy for everyone. The belief that small actions directed toward doing the right thing can and do make a difference. The belief that what was once done wrong can, over time, be made right. The belief that every human being deserves to be treated with dignity. In her book *Fen, Bog & Swamp*, author Annie Proulx writes about the amazing work done by the Indigenous peoples of northern India to create root bridges that make it possible to cross the region's deep natural ravines. The bridges are "formed by training the roots of the sacred rubber fig trees across ravines, a labor that takes fifty years of work but that lasts hundreds more." This project is a metaphorical corollary to those bridges. Work in which our beliefs can help to slowly build a bridge between the community's past and a more caring, collaborative, and inclusive Ann Arbor in the 21st century. It might take half a century of work, probably barely visible in the day-to-day, but it is good work that will last hundreds of years.

Deep thanks to everyone at NEW for all their great work. And to all of you for supporting us so caringly and lovingly for so many years. To everyone who works at the Roadhouse, both in years past and right now as I write. I feel honored to be able to support this project, to be in a position where we can honor the past contributions of Washtenaw County's Black business community, and make a small contribution to its positive future!

Ari

happy new Year!

for a sweet start, Let us do the baking.

Rosh Hashanah begins on the evening of Friday, Sept. 15 and ends at sundown on Sunday, Sept. 17

holiday specials from zingerman's bakehouse for rosh hashanah

challah turbans

Gorgeous saffron-colored challahs in the traditional round shape. Enjoy them with or without dark rum-soaked sultanas and red flame raisins. Round loaves, two sizes.

Available 9/11–9/25

bumble honey coffee cake

This honey of a little Bundt cake is made with delicious Michigan buckwheat honey, freshly milled organic rye flour, golden raisins, toasted almonds, citrus zest, black tea, and sweet spices.

Available 9/11–9/25

fancy schmancy rosh hashanah cookie box

A festive gift box filled with two brand new cookies: Roasted Apple Rugelach and Cinnamon Stars. Cinnamon stars are traditional for Yom Kippur; the star symbolizes that the sun is down and the fast can be broken.

Available 9/11–9/25

more rockin' challah

A beautiful five-strand braided loaf brushed with honey and topped with magnanimous amounts of anise, poppy, and sesame seeds.

Available 9/11–9/25

rugelach

These are royally good cookies. Cream cheese pastry folded up with special fillings, sprinkled with sugar, and baked until golden brown. Sesame almond, date, apricot, raspberry, currant walnut, or chocolate.

Available daily in September

babka

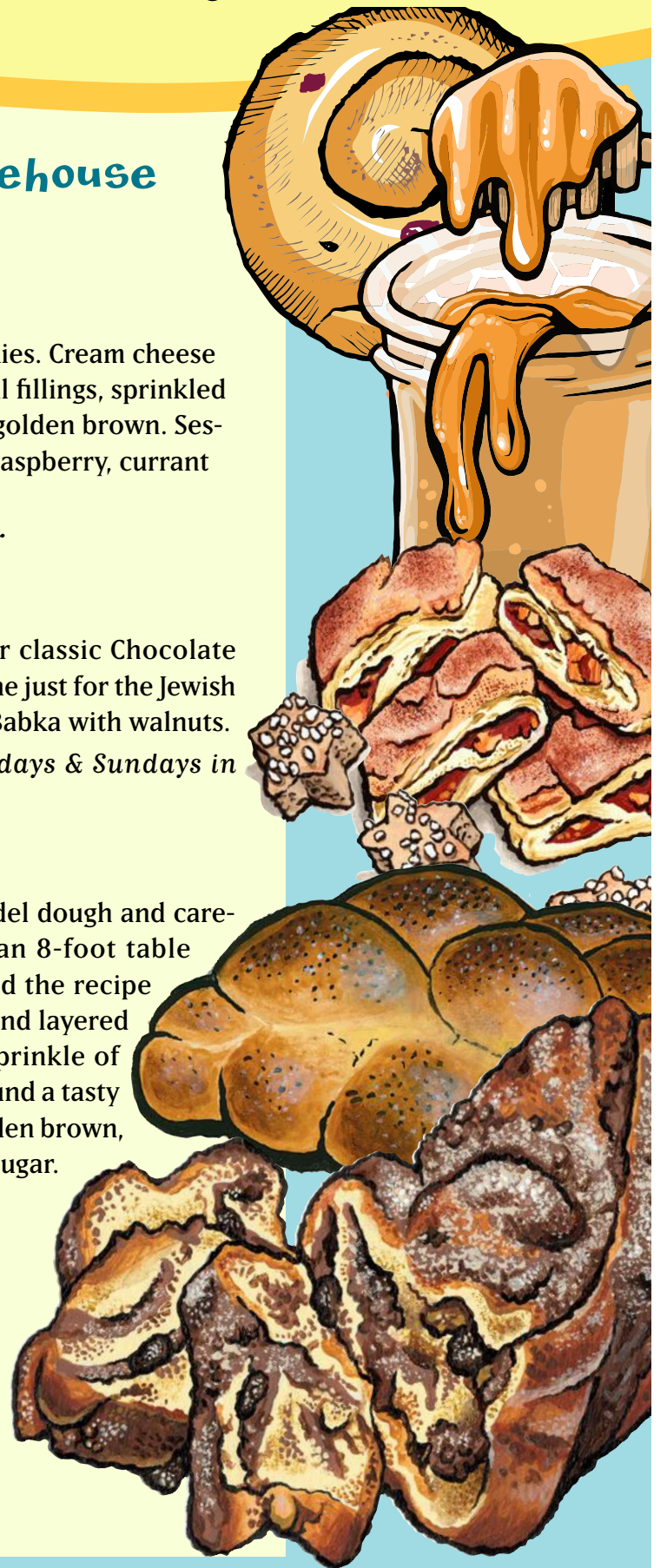
We'll be baking up both our classic Chocolate Raisin Babka and a special one just for the Jewish High Holidays—Eve's Apple Babka with walnuts.

Available Wednesdays, Fridays & Sundays in September

apple rétes

We take our own fresh strudel dough and carefully hand-stretch it over an 8-foot table until it's thin enough to read the recipe through it. Then it's folded and layered with melted butter and a sprinkle of bread crumbs, wrapped around a tasty apple filling, baked until golden brown, and dusted with powdered sugar.

Available 9/11–9/25



Psst: We have special Rosh Hashanah menus at the Deli and Roadhouse, too! Head to zingermansdeli.com and zingermansroadhouse.com for more information.



3723 Plaza Dr. Ann Arbor, MI 48108
734.761.7255 | bakewithzing.com



3711 Plaza Dr. Ann Arbor, MI 48108
734.761.2095 | zingermansbakehouse.com



422 Detroit St. Ann Arbor, MI 48103
734.663.3400 | zingermanscatering.com



3723 Plaza Dr. #5
(inside Coffee Co.) Ann Arbor, MI 48108
734.619.6666 | zingermanscandy.com



3723 Plaza Dr. #5 Ann Arbor, MI 48108
734.929.6060 | zingermanscoffee.com



8540 Island Lake Rd. Dexter, MI 48130
734.619.8100 | cornmanfarms.com



3723 Plaza Dr. #2 Ann Arbor, MI 48108
734.929.0500 | zingermanscreamery.com



422 Detroit St. Ann Arbor, MI 48103
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620 Phoenix Dr. Ann Arbor, MI 48108
888.316.2736 | zingermansfoodtours.com



100 N Ashley St. Ann Arbor, MI 48103
734.230.2300 | zingermansgreyline.com



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888.636.8162 | zingermans.com



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