

**Food for Thought:  
Emergence of Food-Based Historical Museum Walking Tours**

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Museology

The purpose of this thesis was to explain why museums developed food-based walking tours and engaged in the trend of culinary tourism. This topic is significant to museology because despite the popularity of culinary tourism, it has not been studied in a museum environment. Through an email survey, this study targeted three history museums in New York, Florida, and Washington State with food-based walking tours and investigated why the museums developed this programming. This study was informed by three primary research questions: why design these programs, what are the benefits to the museum, and what are the benefits to the visitor? The results of this study showed that food-based historical walking tours were both popular with visitors and financially successful programs for the participating museums. All three museums created their food-based historical walking tours from preexisting programs. Two of the three institutions surveyed collaborated with their local communities in order to develop a food-based historical walking tour. All of the institutions surveyed reported that these types of tours were successful endeavors that expanded the museum's audience. The primary limitation of this study was the small sample size.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

The purpose of this thesis was to explain why museums developed food-based walking tours and engaged in the trend of culinary tourism. A “food-based walking tour” was defined as a walking tour with food being the focus. “Culinary tourism” was defined as tourism with the primary focus of enjoying unique food and drink experiences.<sup>1</sup> While multi-sensory tours have been researched to some degree, this particular phenomenon has not been studied in a museum environment. This topic is significant to the field because museums are often expected to develop unique programming that is relevant to both current tourism trends and visitor interests. Additionally, this type of programming seeks to attract a wider audience and draw new visitors. This thesis focused on the museum walking tour developers as opposed to visitor feedback in order to better understand the museum perspective and to document how programming of this nature was developed and executed, and how it impacted the institution. The data was collected through surveys distributed through email to program developers. This research method was employed in order to provide the interviewees with a means of explaining their methods and reasons for developing the programming.

The data used in this thesis was collected from three different museums in the United States that currently, or in the past, have conducted food-based historical museum walking tours. The three locations surveyed were The American Museum of Natural History (New York City,

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<sup>1</sup> Culinary Tourism: A Definition. Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance.  
<https://ontarioculinary.com/resources/culinary-tourism-101/>

NY), The Museum of Lifestyle & Fashion History (Delray Beach, FL), and The Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience (Seattle, WA).

## Participant Museums

### The American Museum of Natural History (New York City, NY)

The American Museum of Natural History is located in the Upper West side of Manhattan, New York City. It was established in 1869 by Albert Smith Bickmore<sup>2</sup> and is one of the largest museums in the world, with more than 30 million objects in its collections. Its mission statement is: “To discover, interpret, and disseminate—through scientific research and education—knowledge about human cultures, the natural world, and the universe”.<sup>3</sup>

The American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) began its food-based historical walking tours in fall of 2013 and continued them through spring 2014. The Public Programs department was responsible for the development of these tours. Three tours under the title *Taste the Museum* were conducted during this period: “Tea Ceremonies”,<sup>4</sup> “Beer from Around the World”<sup>5</sup> and “The History of Chocolate”.<sup>6</sup> The total attendance was roughly 600 individuals, with ticket prices ranging from \$40-\$45 for a two-hour tour. These events took place exclusively after-hours in the American Museum of Natural History in an effort to provide visitors with a more unique and intimate experience. *Taste the Museum* began as *Global Kitchen*, which was later modified to include a walking element throughout the building in order to accommodate

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<sup>2</sup> About the Museum, American Museum of Natural History, <http://www.amnh.org/about-the-museum>

<sup>3</sup> American Museum of Natural History, <http://www.amnh.org/>

<sup>4</sup> American Museum of Natural History, Taste the Museum: Tea Ceremonies. <http://www.amnh.org/calendar/taste-the-museum-a-walking-food-tour-tea-ceremonies>

<sup>5</sup> American Museum of Natural History, Taste the Museum: Beer from Around the World. <http://www.amnh.org/calendar/taste-the-museum-beer-from-around-the-world>

<sup>6</sup> American Museum of Natural History, Taste the Museum: A History of Chocolate. <http://www.amnh.org/calendar/taste-the-museum-a-walking-food-tour-the-history-of-chocolate>

more visitors and offer more opportunities for tasting. In addition to food, visitors were able to speak personally with experts, participate in interactive activities, and engage with the collections. While the AMNH has ceased this programming, it was deemed as a successful model for future programs at the museum.

## The Museum of Lifestyle & Fashion History (Delray Beach, FL)

The Museum of Lifestyle & Fashion History (MLFH) is located in Delray Beach, Florida.<sup>7</sup> It was founded in 1999. Its mission statement is: "To showcase lifestyle, cultures, people, places, fashion trends, clothes, architecture, furnishings, decorative arts, interior designs, locomotives and toys, and information about popular uses of artifacts by people/events of various periods of time<sup>8</sup>".

The Museum of Lifestyle & Fashion History has been conducting *Taste History Culinary Tours of Historic Palm Beach County, FL* since October of 2011.<sup>9</sup> They were designed by the Executive Director/Chief Curator, Lori J. Durante. These tours are an expansion of an existing narrated bus tour, *Narrated Bus Tours of Historic Delray Beach*. Inspired by celebrity chef Anthony Bourdain, Durante enriched the narrated bus tours by adding culinary experiences in ethnically diverse Palm Beach County. In addition to food, the tour also includes visits to emerging arts districts, historic buildings, and art galleries. Depending on the route taken, the tour can last from three to five hours and consists of a walking and bus tour that costs \$45-\$65 per person. Until 2012, participants received complimentary visits of the museum site before and

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<sup>7</sup> Museum of Lifestyle & Fashion History, <http://www.mlfhmuseum.org/>

<sup>8</sup> Mission Statement and Overall Goals, Museum of Lifestyle & Fashion History, <http://www.mlfhmuseum.org/aboutmlfh.html>

<sup>9</sup> Taste History Culinary Tours of Historic Palm Beach County. <http://tastehistoryculinarytours.org/culinaryfoodtours.html>

after the tour. Currently, MLFH does not have a physical site, but the tours have continued without interruption.

## Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience (Seattle, WA)

The Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience (The Wing) is located in Seattle, Washington.<sup>10</sup> It was established in 1967 in an effort to preserve the rapidly changing social and ethnic landscape of the Chinatown-International District in Seattle. Its mission statement is: “to connect everyone to the rich history, dynamic cultures and art of the Asian Pacific Americans through vivid storytelling and inspiring experiences”.<sup>11</sup>

The Wing has been hosting a number of food-based historical walking tours since September of 2014, including *Bruce Lee’s Chinatown* and a rotation of seasonal food tours (*Midnight Noodle Slurp*, *International Dumpling Crawl*, *Not Just Tofu*).<sup>12</sup> The tours last two to three hours and cost \$42.95 for visitors, which includes complimentary all-day access to the galleries. The tours follow parallel narratives, following culinary history and cultural confluences as well as family histories. A third narrative between tour locations encourages visitors to understand the neighborhood history as living and breathing rather than some relic of the past.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature review examined for this research included tourism as understood through the lens of museums and food interests. Tourism can be defined as “travel for pleasure”.<sup>13</sup> One type of tourism is “cultural heritage tourism”, which for the purposes of this thesis, can be

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<sup>10</sup> Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience. <http://www.wingluke.org/>

<sup>11</sup> About Us, The Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience. <http://www.wingluke.org/about/>

<sup>12</sup> Tours, The Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience. <http://www.wingluke.org/tours>

<sup>13</sup> "tourism". Oxford English Dictionary (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press. September 2005.

defined as the discovery of monuments and sites with significant cultural heritage.<sup>14</sup> The National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States defines heritage tourism as "traveling to experience the places, artifacts and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past,"<sup>15</sup> and heritage tourism can include cultural, historic and natural resources.<sup>16</sup>

Research has shown that tourists constitute a large part of museum visitor audiences.<sup>17</sup> Museums are currently experiencing a paradigm shift wherein the institution is moving away from being primarily about collections and focusing more on the individual.<sup>18</sup> This shift has prompted museums to consider the efficacy of current museum programming, and how to appropriately manage it. In *The Manual of Museum Management*, Lord and Lord suggest "two qualities characterize the successful management of public programs: visitor-responsiveness and creativity".<sup>19</sup> It is through this lens that this research attempted to understand the phenomenon of food-based multi-sensory historical museum walking tours.

## Culinary Tourism

Culinary tourism is defined as "the pursuit and enjoyment of unique and memorable food and drink experiences"<sup>20</sup> and is one of the fastest growing areas in the tourism industry.<sup>21</sup> In

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<sup>14</sup> Perera, Kamani. The Role of Museums in Cultural and Heritage Tourism for Sustainable Economy in Developing Countries. Academia.edu.

<sup>15</sup> Heritage Tourism. National Trust for Historic Preservation. <http://www.preservationnation.org/information-center/economics-of-revitalization/heritage-tourism/>

<sup>16</sup> Heritage Tourism. National Trust for Historic Preservation. <http://www.preservationnation.org/information-center/economics-of-revitalization/heritage-tourism/>

<sup>17</sup> Kotler, Neil and Philip Kotler. Museum Strategy and Marketing. Designing Missions. Building Audiences. Generating Revenue and Resources. Jossey-Bass Publishing, 2008. 105.

<sup>18</sup> Weil, Stephen E. Making Museums Matter. Smithsonian Books, 2002. 32.

<sup>19</sup> Lord, Gail Dexter and Barry Lord. The Manual of Museum Management. AltaMira Press, 2009. 87.

<sup>20</sup> World Food Travel Association. What is food tourism? <http://www.world-foodtravel.org/our-story/what-is-food-tourism>

<sup>21</sup> Smith, S. and Costello, C. (2009). Culinary Tourism: Satisfaction with a culinary event utilizing importance-performance grid analysis. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 15(2), 99.

2014, U.S. tourists spent \$220.3 billion on food services, totaling 24% of all travel spending.<sup>22</sup> Scholars suggest that memorable food and drink experiences significantly contribute to travel motivation and behavior and influence how tourists experience a tourism destination.<sup>23</sup> Culinary tourism has become a powerful tool to promote a destination or region.<sup>24</sup> According to Michael Dietler in *Culinary encounters: Food, Identity, and Colonialism*, “postmodernists have portrayed food as ‘embodied material culture’ and suggest that social and cultural identities can be expressed via food”.<sup>25</sup> Food plays a central role in cultural heritage tourism and has become a main travel motivator in the last decade.<sup>26</sup> There has been growing interest in the promotion of culinary tourism in many areas of the world that are not traditionally known for fine cuisine or as having a clear culinary identity, such as Australia, Canada, and the United States.<sup>27</sup> By developing and promoting culinary tours, regions can define themselves culturally. This is due to the connection between food and local community, because food can be identified as a cultural symbol of an area or destination, which determines the way tourists experience both local culture and the destination.<sup>28</sup>

## Museum Tours

There are many different types of museum tours in practice, including lecture, inquiry/discussion, audio guides, and more. The lecture style tour is designed to create an

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<sup>22</sup> U.S. Travel Association. (2015). U.S. Travel Answer Sheet 2015. <https://www.ustravel.org/research/us-travel-answer-sheet>

<sup>23</sup> Wolf, E. (2006). Culinary tourism: The hidden harvest. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.

<sup>24</sup> Hunter, M. (2006, September). A growing taste for culinary travel. International Culinary Tourism Association.

<sup>25</sup> Dietler, M. 2007. Culinary encounters: Food, Identity, and Colonialism. *The Archaeology of Food and Identity*. 222-223. (218-242.)

<sup>26</sup> Boniface, P. (2003). Tasting tourism – traveling for food and drink: New directions in tourism analysis. London, UK: Ashgate.

<sup>27</sup> Ottenbacher, Michael C ; Harrington, Robert J. A Case Study of a Culinary Tourism Campaign in Germany. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 2013, Vol.37(1), pp.3-28. 5.

<sup>28</sup> Kivela, J. and Crotts, J. C. (2006). Tourism and Gastronomy: Gastronomy’s Influence on How Tourists Experience a Destination. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*. 30(3) (354-377). 356.

interpretive framework by providing the visitor with contextual information while viewing artwork or artifacts.<sup>29</sup> The visitor is placed in a passive role and is neither engaged nor motivated to learn the material being presented.<sup>30</sup> The inquiry/discussion tour is designed to allow visitors to answer questions posed by the docent and is typically aimed at younger audiences.<sup>31</sup> However, this form of tour has been shown to be successful with adult audiences as well. Research has shown that questions help adults process and retain more information<sup>32</sup> and encourages greater learning through the participatory nature of discussion/inquiry.<sup>33</sup> The studies done regarding these more traditional museum tour settings informed this thesis and provide a basis for inquiry.

When an individual visits a museum, they do so through the intersection of three factors, which John Falk and Lynn Dierking refer in *The Museum Experience Revisited* to as the Personal, Sociocultural, and Physical Contexts.<sup>34</sup> The Personal Context refers to an individual's relationship with the museum both generally and specifically; it also dictates why the individual chose to visit and their personal preferred modes of learning.<sup>35</sup> These characteristics shape what the individual seeks in terms of fulfillment, what they enjoy and appreciate about the visit, and their personal agenda.

The Sociocultural Context embodies the individual in a larger context and is dependent on one's cultural background, including ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and country of origin.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Stone, Denise L. A Comparative Study of Two Art Museum Tours and Their Impact on Adult Learning. The University of Kansas, 1997. 142.

<sup>30</sup> Chambers, M. To create discovery. *Museum News*. 1989. 68 (3), 42.

<sup>31</sup> Stone, Denise L. A Comparative Study of Two Art Museum Tours and Their Impact on Adult Learning. The University of Kansas, 1997. 147.

<sup>32</sup> Lehman, J. R. and Lehman, K. M. The relative effects of experimenter and subject generated questions on learning from museum case exhibits. 1984. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*. 21 (9), 933.

<sup>33</sup> Grinder, A. L. and McCoy, B. The good guide: a sourcebook for interpreters, docents, and tour guides. (Scottsdale, AZ: Ironwood Press) 77.

<sup>34</sup> Falk, John H. and Lynn D. Dierking. *The Museum Experience Revisited*. (Left Coast Press, December 2012). 27.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 27.

Their relationship with the museum and its contents may differ from the museum staff, whose own Personal and Sociocultural Contexts dictate what is relevant and worthy of care, preservation, and interpretation.<sup>37</sup>

Finally, the Physical Context includes the architecture, the ‘feel’ of the building, and the objects themselves.<sup>38</sup> A subcategory of the Physical Context is Time, which refers to how much time is spent at the museum, how much time the visitor expects to spend, and how much time the visitor is willing to spend in the museum.<sup>39</sup> This aspect of the Contextual Model is crucial because leisure time and activities are dictated by the first three contexts, which impact how an individual chooses to spend their time. While leisure time is traditionally associated with relaxation, an increasing percentage of people are choosing to enrich and rejuvenate themselves through immersion in new ideas, spaces, and experiences.<sup>40</sup>

## Multi-Sensory Museum Tours

As museum tours become more personalized, the visitor not only observes ‘something’, they become ‘somebody’ through the experience.<sup>41</sup> Multi-sensory tours, which rely on active visitor participation with the content, may provide the visitor with a more individualized experience.<sup>42</sup> Long-term museum memories are not restricted to exhibitions and objects, but are often connected to multi-sensory, participation-based visits.<sup>43</sup> In *Investigating the Role of Emotion in Science Center Visitor Learning*, a study of twenty-two museum visitors conducted

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 29.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 39.

<sup>41</sup> Weil, S. “From Being About Something to Being for Somebody: The Ongoing Transformation of the American Museum” *Daedalus*. 128 (3). 247.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 247.

<sup>43</sup> Falk, John H. and Lynn D. Dierking. *The Museum Experience Revisited*. (Left Coast Press, December 2012). 201-2.

by John Falk and Katie Gillespie, it was found that four main factors influenced memory: novelty, identity-related motivations/expectations, emotion/affect, and rehearsal.<sup>44</sup> Museums offer a setting in which novel objects, events, images, and ideas are supported by interpretive materials such as labels, media, and knowledgeable staff. Additionally, museums present emotional and satisfying experiences, which are often retold after the fact, which reinforces memory formation.<sup>45</sup>

Research shows that multi-sensory tours have the ability to positively benefit museum visitors who are not visual learners and prefer other sensory experiences.<sup>46</sup> According to art educator Viktor Lowenfeld, there are two types of people: visual learners and “haptical” learners, those who need stimulus from touch or kinesthesia in order to function in the world.<sup>47</sup> John Falk and Lynn Dierking conducted a long-term study, *Understanding the long-term impacts of museum experiences*, of over 2,000 visitors and found that it was sensory experiences of smell, light, and touch that were retained and became trigger points in visitors’ memories.<sup>48</sup> Another similar study conducted in 1998 found 70 percent of participants rating “active, hands-on activities” as “very important” to their learning and experience. Falk and Dierking concluded that “sights, smells, and sounds combine to create memorable experiences that may have a lasting and possibly transformative effect on the participants”.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 203-4.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 204.

<sup>46</sup> Dodek, Wendy L. Bringing Art to Life through Multi-Sensory Tours. *Journal of Museum Education*. 2012. 37 (1). 115.

<sup>47</sup> Lowenfeld, Viktor. Tests for Visual and Haptical Aptitudes. *American Journal of Psychology*. 1945. 58 (1). 111.

<sup>48</sup> Falk, John K. and Dierking, Lynn D. *The Museum Experience* (Washington: Whalesback Books). 100.

<sup>49</sup> Bonnie Sachatello-Sawyer et al. *Adult Museum Programs: Designing Meaningful Experiences* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press). 117, 120.

## Use of Food in Multi-Sensory Historical Museum Walking Tours: Case Study

The Lower East Side Tenement Museum in New York City was founded in 1988 with a mission to tell the stories of the immigrant families that once lived on the Lower East Side.<sup>50</sup> The Museum had several walking tours already established when the Museum's Vice President of Education, Annie Polland, decided that a new tour, one that told immigrant stories through food, was necessary for a more complete understanding of life 'back in the day'. Adam Steinberg, supervisor for the Museum's walking tour programs, was chosen to design the new food-based walking tour, which launched in June of 2011. Steinberg assembled a committee consisting of Museum staff from a variety of departments: Public Affairs (David Eng), Visitor Services (Rachael Grygorcewicz), and Museum Shop and Tenement Talks (Helene Silver).<sup>51</sup>

Together with his committee, Steinberg found that "the immediacy of food memories would draw visitors into a rich scholarly field in the history of immigrant food culture".<sup>52</sup> The tour was designed to be a two-hour walking and eating journey of the Lower East Side and began by asking the visitors to recall a food memory of their own to share. This activity "put everyone in a good mood, encouraged everyone to share stories and engage in dialogue throughout the tour, [and] pointed toward the tour's theme, because almost every favorite childhood memory was about something made by a close family member at home on special occasions".<sup>53</sup> Steinberg made two conclusions from the development of the tour, namely, "one, the tour should interrogate the idea of 'authenticity'" and two, "we all bring different memories and feelings to

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<sup>50</sup> Steinberg, Adam. What We Talk About When We Talk About Food: Using Food to Teach History at the Tenement Museum. *The Public Historian*. 2012. 34 (2). 80.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, 81.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, 82.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, 86.

the foods we eat, so no two people necessarily have the same experience eating the same dish”.<sup>54</sup> Through the combination of walking, eating, and discussion, the Tenement Museum was able to engage its visitors and help “visitors realize that the immigrant stories we tell at the Tenement Museum are their stories too”.<sup>55</sup>

## Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this thesis was to explain why museums developed food-based walking tours and engaged in the trend of culinary tourism. This study was conducted using a survey methodology, employing an open-ended questionnaire to elicit qualitative data. Three museums were approached for this study and were forwarded, via email, a survey of twenty questions.

### 3.1 Sampling

The three institutions selected for the study were chosen based on the following three criteria: one, the museum had to currently offer or have offered food-based historical walking tours in the past five years; two, alcohol-based tours (such as vineyard tours, bar crawls, and brewery tours) and for-profit food tours (such as a factory tour) were excluded; and three, the museum had to have a history focus. The institutions were found using a Google search. The institutions selected were: the American Museum of Natural History (New York, New York), the Museum of Lifestyle & Fashion History (Delray Beach, Florida), and The Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience (Seattle, Washington).

The research was guided by three primary research questions used to organize and categorize the 20 questions on the questionnaire instrument (See Appendix A.1):

1. Why design these programs?

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 83.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 89.

2. What are the benefits to the museum?
3. What are the benefits to the visitor?

The instrument was sent to the three museums via email and were forwarded to the program developers. The developers of the programs had varying positions within their institutions, including public programs manager (education department, Kira Lacks, American Museum of Natural History), executive director (Lori J. Durante, Museum of Lifestyle & Fashion History), and director of education and tours (Rahul Gupta, The Wing).

### 3.2 Data Collection

Survey data was collected via email, which consisted of a total of twenty questions. The surveys were emailed to participating staff members at the American Museum of Natural History, the Museum of Lifestyle & Fashion History, and the Wing during February and March 2016.

## Chapter 4: Analysis, Results, and Discussion

The survey given to the participating institutions was broken into three primary sections with roughly seven questions per segment, totaling twenty questions.

### Research Question 1: Why design these programs?

#### Analysis and Findings

#### Survey Question 1: Who designed your museum's tour?

Kira Lacks, Public Programs Manager at the American Museum of Natural History, reported that their *Taste the Museum* tour was designed by members of the Public Programs staff.

At the Wing, the education team was responsible for the variety of culinary tours presented by the museum. The *Bruce Lee's Chinatown* tour took visitors to Bruce's favorite restaurants. The education team took turns researching, drafting, and mapping out the tours.

The *Taste History* tours at the Museum of Lifestyle & Fashion History were designed by Lori J. Durante, the executive director and chief curator.

A variety of departments and individuals were responsible for the three tours researched for this thesis.

## Survey Question 2 : How did you design this tour?

The American Museum of Natural History originally had a tasting series called *Entitled Kitchen*, which was held in a lecture hall. The programming was expanded to include a walking tour of the cultural halls, which allowed them to highlight their collections and experiment with a new, engaging program format. This way, the programming would not be restricted by the dimensions of the small lecture hall and could take advantage of the larger museum space.

At the Wing, the food-based historical museum walking tours followed parallel narratives, culinary history and cultural confluences as well as family histories. A third narrative between tour locations encouraged visitors to see the neighborhood history as living and breathing rather than some relic of the past.

*Taste History Culinary Tours* were an extension of the Museum of Lifestyle and Fashion History's *Narrated Bus Tours of Historic Delray Beach*, which began in 2004. Durante was inspired by celebrity chef, Anthony Bourdain, and his presentation of cultural foods in the countries he visited. She expanded the bus tour to include food tastings, which eventually became its own entity, *Taste History Culinary Tours*.

### Survey Question 3: Why did you decide to design this tour?

For the American Museum of Natural History, the designers began the process by choosing a Hall that could physically accommodate their needs and contain cultural elements that would lend themselves to an interesting and exploratory tasting experience. The AMNH program designers wished to emphasize the artifacts in their collections by creating hands-on experiences.

The Wing's primary goal in designing its food-based historical museum walking tours was to bring in more people and new audiences to experience both the museum and the neighborhood.

Due to the success of the Museum of Lifestyle & Fashion history's *Narrated Bus Tours of Historic Del Ray Beach*, the museum was motivated to enrich the cultural experience by incorporating food tastings.

### Survey Question 4: What is involved in the tour?

At the AMNH, *Taste the Museum* was a 'progressive dinner' wherein the visitor had the opportunity to travel to different areas in the museum, taste foods and participate in hands-on activities. The tour would begin in a theatre where the visitor would see a presentation led by an expert on the given topic while tasting the food that was being highlighted. Following the talk, the visitors would be guided to the next location to explore the Hall, continue their tastings, speak to the experts, and engage in further related activities.

The visitors who participated in *Bruce Lee's Chinatown* tour visited his first martial arts practice space, his first martial arts studio, the Bruce Lee exhibit at The Wing, and enjoyed a

meal consisting of Bruce Lee's favorite dishes at his favorite restaurant in the International/Chinatown District.

Individuals participating in *Taste History Culinary Tours* enjoyed a narrated local history walking and a bus tour that explored family-owned eateries, delis, and markets, as well as visits to art shops, meetings with local artists, and stops at emerging arts districts and historic buildings.

### Survey Question 5: When did you design this tour?

The American Museum of Natural History designed *Taste the Museum* in the fall of 2013, and it continued through the spring of 2014. The Wing Luke designed *Bruce Lee's Chinatown* in September of 2014. The MLFH's *Taste History Culinary Tours* were designed in the spring of 2011.

### Survey Question 6: How long have you been conducting this tour?

The American Museum of Natural History's took place for four months. *Bruce Lee's Chinatown* has been running for two years. *Taste History Culinary Tours* has been running for five years.

### Survey Question 7: What is the length of the tour?

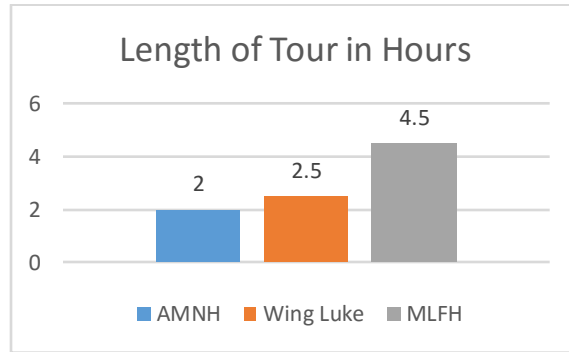


Figure 1: Average Length of Tour in Hours

The American Museum of Natural History tour, *Taste the Museum*, lasted one and a half hours. The Wing tour, *Bruce Lee’s Chinatown*, lasted two to three hours. The Museum of Lifestyle & Fashion History tour, *Taste History Culinary Tours*, lasted three to four hours.

### Survey Question 7a: How much does it cost the visitor to participate?

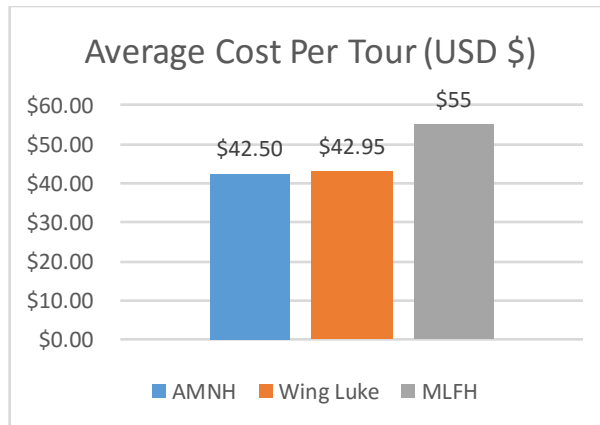


Figure 2: Average Cost Per Tour (USD \$)

*Taste the Museum* at the American Museum of Natural History cost the visitor \$40 to \$45, depending on the tasting. It cost The Wing’s visitors \$42.95 to participate in *Bruce Lee’s*

*Chinatown*. Visitors to the Museum of Lifestyle and Fashion History payed \$45 to \$65 to participate in *Taste History Culinary Tours*.

### Survey Question 7b: Does the visitor get a discount or complimentary access to the main museum prior to/after the tour?

Due to the unique nature of the walking tour at the American Museum of Natural History, *Taste the Museum* tickets did not include complimentary access to the museum. The ticket price was strictly for the after-hours experience.

The visitor had full access to the Wing all day on the day of their tour.

Currently, the Museum of Lifestyle & Fashion History does not have a physical presence; however, when *Taste History Culinary Tours* launched in October of 2011, visitors had complimentary access to the exhibit galleries prior to and following the tour. The tours have continued without interruption despite the loss of the Museum of Lifestyle & Fashion History's facility in February of 2012.

### Survey Question 7c: What accommodations do you have for visitors?

The American Museum of Natural History provided a coat check to give visitors a more comfortable experience, as well as a gift bag upon conclusion of the experience containing additional food samples.

The Wing accommodated some dietary restrictions for visitors wishing to participate in *Bruce Lee's Chinatown*, if the ticket was booked a week in advance.

The Museum of Lifestyle and Fashion History provided accommodations for wheelchair access if visitors provided them with advanced notice. Neither dietary restrictions nor

substitutions were provided due to the wide variety of cuisines being sampled and a desire to maintain the authenticity of food culture being showcased.

## Research Question 1: Why design these programs?

### Results and Discussion

The first section of the instrument was dedicated to understanding the development of this programming. All of the respondents reported that the food-based historical museum walking tours were adaptations of earlier programming. Additionally, all of the institutions developed these programs in an effort to engage new audiences, which proved successful in all three instances.

Two of the institutions cited a desire to establish or strengthen relationships with their respective communities and celebrate local family establishments through this programming. These respondents expressed a strong desire to highlight the individual stories behind the cultural foods being presented on the tour. The American Museum of Natural History, on the other hand, emphasized exclusive after-hours access to collections as a focal point for the tours in addition to the tasting experience. All of the participants reported that the tours created positive revenue and helped the institutions gain exposure.

The Wing Luke Museum designed its culinary programs, in part, to become a stronger economic driver for the neighborhood as a part of its new business plan. Development began after the museum conducted a survey of successful museum and tourist attractions and found that visitors were looking for “boutique” experiences, including on walking tours. The Wing Luke chose to promote Seattle’s Chinatown/International District in a way that focused on the artisan, the family, and their relationship to the food they make.

## Research Question 2: What are the benefits to the museum?

### Analysis and Findings

#### Survey Question 8: How does this tour relate to your museum's mission?

The American Museum of Natural History's mission statement is "to discover, interpret, and disseminate—through scientific research and education—knowledge about human cultures, the natural world, and the universe".<sup>56</sup> *Taste the Museum* allowed the museum to highlight its collections by incorporating a food experience with a tour of relevant museum objects and collections.

The Wing's mission statement is "to connect everyone to the rich history, dynamic cultures, and art of the Asian Pacific Americans through vivid storytelling and inspiring experiences". According to the respondent, *Bruce Lee's Chinatown* fulfilled the mission by introducing visitors to a richer understanding and experience of Bruce Lee and his history in Seattle.

The mission of the Museum of Lifestyle & Fashion History is "to offer educational programs, and history and retrospective anthropology exhibits showcasing lifestyle, cultures, people, places, fashion trends, clothes, architecture, furnishings, decorative arts, interior designs, locomotives and toys, and information about popular uses of artifacts by people and events of various periods of time".<sup>57</sup> *Taste History Culinary Tours* were designed to complement the

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<sup>56</sup> American Museum of Natural History. Mission Statement. <http://www.amnh.org/about-the-museum/mission-statement/>

<sup>57</sup> About MFLH. Mission Statement and Overall Goals. <http://www.mlfhmuseum.org/aboutmlfh.html>

museum's mission and were described by the institution as 'a museum exhibit on wheels' that combined the history, culture, and cuisine representative of the widely diverse State of Florida.

### Survey Question 9: How does this tour benefit your museum?

The American Museum of Natural History reported that *Taste the Museum* benefited the museum by giving visitors the opportunity to engage with collections in an interactive way by offering multi-modal educational activities that related to the artifacts inside the cases.

The Wing had participants on the tours become members of the museum, return for additional tours, and offer donations.

With respect to MLFH, the *Taste of History Culinary Tours* were a completely self-sustaining program due to grant and ticket sales revenue. According to Durant, they had a larger impact on the community by "exposing visitors to emerging arts districts, striving artists, and family-owned eateries in off-the-beaten-path areas of Palm Beach County".<sup>58</sup> *Taste of History Culinary Tours* offered the visitor the opportunity to explore and celebrate the multicultural history of Florida through food.

### Research Question 2: What are the benefits to the museum?

#### Results and Discussion

The primary benefit for the museums who developed food-based historical museum walking tours was increased revenue and exposure. All of the participants reported having consistently sold out ticket sales and experienced requests for advanced reservations. In one instance, one of the museums experienced sold out tour dates a year out. The participants

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<sup>58</sup> Museum of Lifestyle and Fashion History. Taste History Culinary Tours. <http://www.mlfhmuseum.org/culinaryfoodtours.html>

additionally described a stronger community relationship because of the food-based tour programming. All of the tours received either sponsorship from national/local businesses and/or collaboration with family-run restaurants in their area. Executive Director Lori J. Durante of the Museum of Lifestyle & Fashion History expressed that the *Taste History Culinary Tours* generated business, tourism, and pride in the multi-cultural community in Palm Beach County, which in turn benefited the museum. Education and Tours Director Rahul Gupta of The Wing also expressed a similar appreciation for the collaborative nature of The Wing's tours with the restaurants in the neighborhood.

### Research Question 3: What are the benefits to the visitor?

#### Analysis and Findings

### Survey Question 10: Do you have an exit survey for the participants of this tour?

Two of the museums surveyed had an exit survey for the participants of their tours. The Wing plans on beginning evaluation of *Bruce Lee's Chinatown* in January of 2017. The Museum of Lifestyle & Fashion History provided their exit survey, which is included in Appendix A.2, page XX.

### Survey Question 10a: What kind of feedback have you received for this tour?

For *Taste the Museum* at the American Museum of Natural History, they received very positive feedback. Participants greatly enjoyed the ability to be in the Museum after-hours, hearing from experts, and expressed having an accessible and enjoyable experience. The tasting component was the biggest draw, and the only critique received was that they wanted more – both in terms of food and tours.

The Wing received positive feedback on online tourist sites such as Trip Advisor in regard to the *Bruce Lee's Chinatown* tours.

The MLFH collected feedback via surveys distributed after the tours and frequently received positive feedback and comments on how enlightening the experience was.

### Survey Question 11: How popular is this tour?

*Taste the Museum* at the American Museum of Natural History was a very popular series, which would attract over 200 guests per event and often sold out.

Culinary tours at the Wing typically booked up two to three weeks after ticket sales opened.

When *Taste History Culinary Tours* launched in October of 2011, it was the first food-based historical museum walking tour of its kind in Palm Beach County, Florida. It expanded to serve six different cities in West Palm Beach County. The MLFH enjoyed over four years of sold out tours since then, and reported sold out dates through 2017. The institution estimated roughly 5,000 participants thus far.

### Survey Question 12: Have you considered designing other types of tours similar to this?

The American Museum of Natural History reported that *Taste the Museum* was a successful programming format, and planned on referring to the tour structure when planning future programs.

*Bruce Lee's Chinatown*, along with the other seasonal culinary tours that The Wing offered were the only programs of this type currently being offered with no others being planned in the near future.

Due to the early popularity of *Taste History*, the MLFH expanded the programming to include six cities.

### Survey Question 13: Have these tours had a positive impact on your institution?<sup>59</sup>

At the American Museum of Natural History, *Taste the Museum* attracted a new audience to the museum, which gave visitors exposure to other public programs and institutional offerings.

The Wing Luke reported a positive impact on the institution due to the tours, as evidenced by the rise in membership, visitation, and donations as a direct result of participating in the culinary programs.

The MLFH saw a positive impact on the institution directly related to *Taste History* and was able to expand and provide this programming due to its self-sustainability.

### Research Question 3: What are the benefits to the visitor?

#### Results and Discussion

The most frequently mentioned visitor benefit for all tours was trying new foods. The participating institutions conveyed additional benefits to visitors who participated in the food-based historical museum walking tours. For visitors to *Taste the Museum* (AMNH), the primary benefits were the opportunity to visit the museum after-hours, getting to meet with experts, and the accessibility of the information being presented. For The Wing, visitors were given a unique

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<sup>59</sup> The question asked here differs from the original question and two sub-questions asked in the survey instrument in order to consolidate data.

opportunity to walk in the steps of Bruce Lee and experience the Chinatown-International District the way he would have. At the Museum of Lifestyle & Fashion History, visitors were exposed to the rich multicultural heritage of Florida through food, contemporary art, and historical destinations.

## Chapter 6: Conclusions

The purpose of this thesis was to explain why museums developed food-based walking tours and engaged in the trend of culinary tourism. Three major conclusions resulted from this study. First, food-based historical museum walking tours are financially successful. Second, food-based historical museum walking tours create strong relationships between visitors and institutions. Third, food-based historical museum walking tours create collaborative relationships between the museum and local businesses.

### 6.2 Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that when planning a food-based historical museum walking tour, museum staff should:

- Collaborate with local restaurants, families, and artists
- Design walking tours that are at least one to two hours in length and that begin and end at the museum
- Utilize buses when the desired destinations of the tour are greater than five miles away from the institution
- Offer complimentary museum entry (if possible)

See Appendix A.4: Designing a Culinary Walking Tour (page xyz) for additional information on developing a food-based historical museum walking tour.

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# Appendix

## Appendix A.1: Survey Instrument

Why design these programs?

1. Who designed your museum's tour?
2. How did you design this tour?
3. Why did you decide to design this tour?
4. What is involved in the tour?
5. When did you design this tour?
6. How long have you been conducting this tour?
7. What is the length of the tour?
  - a. How much does it cost the visitor to participate?
  - b. Does the visitor get a discount or complimentary access to the main museum prior to/after the tour?
  - c. What accommodations do you have for visitors?

What are the benefits to the museum?

8. How does this tour relate to your museum's mission?
9. How does this tour benefit your museum?

What are the benefits to the visitor?

10. Do you have an exit survey for the participants of this tour?
  - a. What kind of feedback have you received for this tour?
11. How popular is this tour?
12. Have you considered designing other types of tours similar to this?
13. How successful are these tours?
  - a. Have these tours had a positive impact on your institution?
  - b. Which department is responsible for this tour?

# Appendix A.2: Taste History Culinary Tours of historic Palm Beach County, Florida



The first cultural culinary tour of its style in Palm Beach County, Florida • *Established 2011*  
**Experience the Cuisines, Culture, Art and History**  
**in**  
**West Palm Beach (Various Districts), Lake Worth & Lantana, Delray Beach & Boynton Beach**

**HELD YEAR-ROUND ON SATURDAYS PLUS PRIVATE GROUP TOURS AVAILABLE**

### FEATURING:

- Cultural Food Tasting
- Family-owned Eateries
- Delis and Markets
- Pastry Shops
- The Bakery Trail
- Local Art Shops
- Local Artists
- Emerging Arts Districts
- Historic Buildings
- Narrated Local History
- Food History
- Fun Off-The-Beaten-Path Food Tasting Experiences
- Combined Bus Riding & Walking Culinary Tour

### ACCOLADES:

- "...established food tour in Florida" - Huffington Post
- "Taste History Culinary Tours: Dive into Palm Beach's Food Scene" - USA Today 10 Best
- "10 Best Festivals and Fiestas in Florida" - The Culture Trip
- "...mission is both education and entertainment" - VisitFlorida
- "Top 22 Best Things To Do in West Palm Beach" - Vacation Idea Dream Magazine
- "Taste History's Greatest Hit Tour" - West Palm Beach Magazine
- "A Sense of Place..." - Palm Beach Daily News
- "Historic culinary tours combine sight-seeing and dining" - The Palm Beach Post
- "Delicious History Lessons: Taste History Culinary Tours" - New Times Broward Palm Beach
- "Soak up food, culture and history on a culinary tour" - Sun-Sentinel
- "Five guided tours to satisfy appetites for culture, cuisine and history" - The Coastal Star
- "All-in-One Food, Culture & History Tour" - Delray Newspaper
- "Culinary Tours Offer Delicious Diversity" - Boca Raton Observer Magazine
- "Take A Bite Out of History" - Palm Beach Illustrated Magazine
- "A bite of local flavor gamished with culture and history" - Florida Food & Farm Magazine
- "Exploring History and Food..." - Edible South Florida Magazine
- "Touring for a taste" - South Florida Parenting Magazine
- "History has never been so delicious..." - Florida Travel + Life Magazine
- "History buffs and foodies unite" - Palm Beach Gardens Lifestyle Magazine

Purchase tickets on-line at [TasteHistoryCulinaryTours.org](http://TasteHistoryCulinaryTours.org)  
**\$45 to \$65 per person**; FREE for children under age 14 accompanied by a paid adult family member.  
 (Maximum 5 children under age 14 free per tour)  
 Pre-payment required  
 Tours board at Macy's Boynton Beach Mall  
**561-638-8277 • [Tour@TasteHistoryCulinaryTours.org](mailto:Tour@TasteHistoryCulinaryTours.org)**

*Taste History Culinary Tours take place on the:*  
**FIRST SATURDAY to West Palm Beach**  
**SECOND SATURDAY to Lake Worth & Lantana**  
**THIRD & FOURTH SATURDAYS to Delray Beach & Boynton Beach**  
 (Except weekends of major holidays)  
**Plus private group tours are available**  
**Tours start at 11am and run 3 to 4 hours (Pre-paid Reservations Required)**

PRESENTING SPONSOR: ADDITIONAL SUPPORT: Patricia Ann Ravo Fund, Boris & Edith Rueger Fund; and Carl and Iris Apfel

Taste History is conducted by **561-243-2662 or 561-638-8277**

The Museum of Lifestyle & Fashion History is a non-profit 501c3 non-profit organization which operates the tours. The mission of the Taste History Culinary Tours includes food culture and food history therefore we are logistically unable to accommodate dietary restrictions. There are no dietary substitutions.

\*REGISTRATION PCH 11754. A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL FREE (800) 435-7352 WITHIN THE STATE. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE.\*

## Appendix A.3: Exit Survey for Taste History Culinary Tours

### Comment/Survey Card

#### **Taste History Culinary Tours** (a non-profit 501c3 program)

*You are welcome to leave gratuities in the tip box to help support tour program. Thanks!*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

-Name (First & Last) (Optional): \_\_\_\_\_

-Which CITY & STATE are you visiting from? \_\_\_\_\_

-If Applicable, which COUNTRY are you visiting from? \_\_\_\_\_

-Which CITY, STATE & COUNTRY are the other people in your group visiting from? \_\_\_\_\_

-If you are visiting from outside Palm Beach County, are you staying in a HOTEL or Seasonal Rental? **Yes or No** If yes, please name Hotel or Seasonal Rental and location \_\_\_\_\_

Which food tasting experience did you like? \_\_\_\_\_

Which cuisine was new to you, the first time you tasted it? \_\_\_\_\_

Which historical building or art gallery or art district did you like that was visited during the tour? \_\_\_\_\_

Which eatery, art gallery, cultural center or store did you make purchases during the tour or at the mall boarding location? \_\_\_\_\_

Name the restaurants, cafes, markets, art galleries, cultural centers and stores that were visited during the tour or located at the mall boarding location that you will go back to patronize and do business? \_\_\_\_\_

-Other than the tour fee, how much did you spend during the tour? \$ \_\_\_\_\_

-How did you hear about the Taste History Culinary tour? \_\_\_\_\_

-How Many People in your group? \_\_\_\_\_

-Your Age (Optional)? \_\_\_\_\_ What are ages of other people in group (Optional)? \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Comments about tour, specific experiences and any highlights:**

#### **Can we add you to our the Mailing List?, If so, complete below:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix A.4: Designing a Culinary Walking Tour

Based on the Recommendations chapter, this segment of the Appendix is intended to further offer suggestions and recommendations for the creation of a food-based historical museum walking tour.

Based on the results of this study, a successful food-based historical museum walking tour is typically adapted from a current walking tour program and thus, can be easily edited to include tasting opportunities. As noted in the Recommendation section of Chapter 6: Conclusions, reach out to your local community for collaborative food opportunities. Local and possibly national sponsorship are possibilities with mutually beneficial results for both the museum and the local partner. The museum will have a wider audience and the partner will experience increased traffic because of this collaboration.

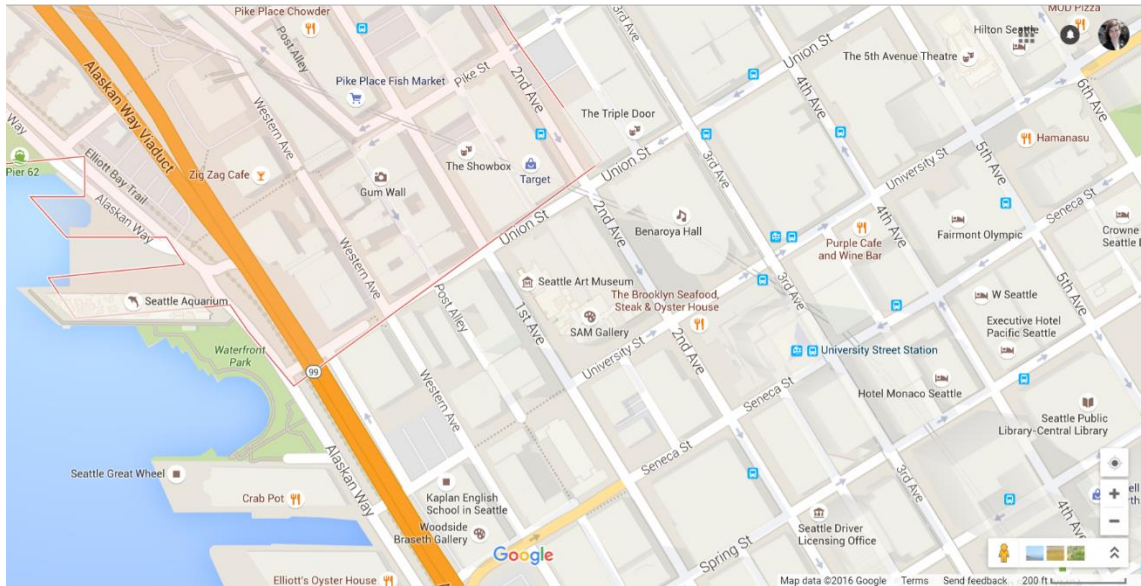
Third, it is recommended to create a walking tour that is at least one to two hours in length. The average person can walk roughly 3.1 miles per hour<sup>60</sup>, a statistic that should give the program designer a fairly good idea of how to create an appropriate walking route that doesn't fatigue the visitor. The fourth recommendation follows closely with the third, that is, arrange for bus travel if the destinations are too far apart or too far from the starting/ending point of the museum. Finally, it is recommended that the tour begin and end at the museum, with a complimentary visit being built into the tour cost. This will provide the visitor with context for the tour content as well as offer them a place to rest following the walking portion of their visit. Additionally, relevant in-house content can be offered at the museum to extend the tour experience.

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<sup>60</sup> Walking. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walking>

When designing a food-based historical museum walking tour, the designer or staff member should develop a project proposal to present to the appropriate decision maker or body, such as a Board of Directors, justifying the program, the need for it, and how it would benefit the institution. A table of contents for the program agenda might look something like the following:

1.0 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Program Description.....	1
1.2 Program Scope.....	1
1.3 Program Audience.....	2
1.4 Program Objectives.....	2
2.0 CULINARY TOURISM.....	3
2.1 How this topic fits into the museum mission.....	3
3.0 TOUR STRUCTURE.....	6
3.1 Introduction .....	6
Figure 1: Proposed Tour Route.....	8
3.2 Possible Affiliates/Sponsors/Collaborators.....	9
3.3 Educational Content.....	11
3.4 Accommodations.....	12
4.0 ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE .....	17
4.1 Staff.....	17
4.2 Timeline .....	18
4.3 Budget .....	18
4.4 Funding Sources .....	19
5.0 COMMUNITY INTERACTION.....	21
5.1 Inviting Participation.....	21
5.2 Additional Tour Elements.....	22
6.0 CONCLUSION.....	23



## Sample Food-Based Museum Walking Tour for the Seattle Aquarium

The map above illustrates a sample route for a hypothetical food-based walking tour based out of the Seattle Aquarium in Seattle, Washington. The tour would begin and end at the Seattle Aquarium. The Seattle Aquarium’s mission is “inspiring conservation of our marine environment”,<sup>61</sup> and considering this, the food-based historical museum walking tour would have a strong emphasis on enjoying seafood.

After an introduction at the Seattle Aquarium, visitors would follow a docent/tour guide to Pike Place Fish Market and Pike Place Chowder to not sample chowder and to observe the famous fish throwing fish mongers! Next, the visitors would head to Brooklyn Seafood, Steak & Oyster House and sample oysters. Following Brooklyn Seafood, Steak & Oyster, the tour would continue to Purple Café & Wine Bar to sample flash-sautéed calamari, Maine lobster baked mac n’ cheese, and spicy prawns. Next, visitors would reach Hamanasu, a sushi restaurant where they would sample different types of raw fish sushi. After Hamanasu, the next location would be

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<sup>61</sup> Inspiring Conservation of our Marine Environment. Seattle Aquarium.  
<http://www.seattleaquarium.org/conservation>

Elliot's Oyster House to try a wide variety of local oysters. The final stop before returning to the Seattle Aquarium would be the Crab Pot to try the Pacific Clambake. The total distance of this tour would be roughly 1.5 miles in length, and last roughly two and a half to three hours, with visitors spending 30 minutes at the Seattle Aquarium, 15 minutes at each location, and a total of 15 minutes of walking time.