

Earth Fair Food Market opens in Cape Town central

The Earth Fair Food Market @ St Georges, an open-air fresh food market, opens on 17 February 2011 on Upper St Georges' Mall, Cape Town, offering visitors and central city dwellers a smorgasbord of fresh, organic food. It will be open every Thursday from 12.30-6.30pm.



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"Many cities have iconic, fresh-food markets - Borough Market in London, the Dublin Food Co-op Organic Food Market and the Marché de Pont de l'Alma in Paris - now it's Cape Town's turn," says Jacqui Simpson, owner of the Earth Fair Market.

"In many ways it's a return to our roots. The Company's Garden originally provided fresh fruit and vegetables to passing ships and Greenmarket Square was somewhere where farmers could sell their produce. That's why upper St George's Mall in the historic heart of Cape Town is the ideal location."

The St Georges' Mall Market is based on the successful Saturday Earth Fair Market in Tokai, which has become so popular that is now also open on a Wednesday afternoon. The concept is one of a country market, where visitors can shop for fresh goods from local producers, building relationships with them in the process.

The choice spans smoked fish, speciality sausages, homemade pies, farm cheeses, fruit and vegetables, biltong, pâtés, organic nuts and grains, breads and a host of other products from small producers and artisans. Office workers will be able to snack on sushi, kebabs or pasta at lunch time, or meet a friend for a quick bite after work.

City behind venture

The driving forces behind the initiative include the Cape Town Partnership/ Central City Improvement District, Cape Town Tourism and the Upper St Georges' Mall Forum comprising a number of Central City companies, including urban developers Eurocape and the Taj Cape Town. The forum's objective is to promote the Cape Town CBD as one to rival that of other popular central city experiences around the world.

Andrew Boraine, chief executive of the Cape Town Partnership, said the market was a welcome addition to the Cape Town Central City. "We've learnt over the years that regular activities in public spaces are good for the city. The market will provide yet another reason for people to congregate and enjoy the central city at lunch time and after work."

Mariette du Toit-Helmbold, CEO of Cape Town Tourism adds that the market will give both tourists and locals an added incentive to visit the city centre. "We're especially encouraged by the market's focus on responsible and sustainable food enterprises and fine-food purveyors. Cape Town's abundance of fresh produce is the backbone of our unique gourmet culture. The location of the market links the cultural sites of the Company's Garden, St George's Cathedral and the Slave Lodge, offering visitors and locals alike the opportunity to linger in one of the most historically significant parts of the city."

Meeting the trend

Celebrity chefs, televised cooking competitions, the slow food movement and international culinary events such as Taste - in which Cape Town is one of the participating cities - have contributed to increased interest in food and cooking worldwide. This has prompted demand for quality, fresh ingredients and consequently the growing popularity of fresh produce markets.

The organisers believe that market also provides an alternative for the increasing number of people living in the inner city and wanting fresh, quality produce. The market will offer fresh produce and food that contains no preservatives or hormones and is not overly packaged. It provides an outlet for small, local producers and artisans as well as central city community upliftment programmes.

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