

The Campanil

September 16, 2013

Weekends in Oakland: Lakeshore Farmer's Market

By: Amanda Polick

There's a reason that the Grand Lake Farmer's Market was voted "Best in the East Bay" by East Bay Express in 2010: you could come every Saturday morning for weeks and still see something new every time. So, here are some tips to get you started.

When: Saturdays 9-2 p.m. at the corner of Lake Park and Grand Avenue in Oakland.

If you want to beat the crowds and get a bite to eat, go early. For people-watching, go after 10 a.m. when the seating area is full, and find a little nook to eat your breakfast. If you want to get great deals on produce and other perishables, go at the end when the vendors are trying to get rid of last of their products.

Getting There: If you are taking public transit, the Lake Park Ave/Grand Ave bus stop is right across the street. If you are driving, try to park in the neighborhoods off Lakeshore Avenue. They tend to be less congested.

Don't Miss: The guys at Bicycle Coffee

No morning is complete without visiting these guys. They are always super friendly, joking around with one another and playing great music that will make you dance a little as you wait in line. This Oakland-based company not only cuts down their carbon footprint by bicycling to farmer's markets and for deliveries to local merchants, but their entire station at the market is on their trademark: bicycle wheels. And while their menu is minimal due to the lack of an espresso machine, you can't go wrong with their pour-over. It will be the best \$2.50 that you spend all day.

Check Out: Sukhi's Gourmet Indian Foods

You would probably find this one yourself because samples fly out of this booth, but put it high on your priority list. All six stuffed breads are vegan, gluten-free, and \$6 each. The variety of bread ranges from spinach to potato, and every sample is met with an odd but delicious pairing of chutney, ranging from mint apple to mango ginger; chutneys are only \$5 with a bread purchase. And while you're there, try the pumpkin paratha with the jalapeno chutney. You're welcome, in advance.

Food Truck Staples: So Good Belgian Waffles and the Roli Roti

The lines at these trucks (parked on Grand Avenue) are always long, but well worth the wait. So Good's little waffles are \$6 and allow you to keep your other hand free as you sip your Bicycle Coffee. They'll tide you over while you wait for your rotisserie chicken and roasted rosemary potatoes for \$7.50 from the Roli Roti.

For the Vegans: Uhuru Foods

Breakfast is not just for the carnivores! This little gem is easily overlooked, but worth noting. They not only have "egg" and "bacon" breakfast wraps for under \$7, but they even have a moist cornbread for under \$3.

Best Surprise: Donna's Tamales

Gluten free, vegetarian and vegan. You could start with the Roasted Cheddar Black Beans with Yams Tamale, make your way to the Sweet Corn Roasted Chile and end up with the Cheese Chile Corn, and still not be finished with Donna. Delicious.

Stick Around: Just because the market ends does not mean that your day has to. Head across the street to the Grand Lake Theatre for an afternoon matinee (\$7), or to Heart and Dagger Saloon (opens at noon) for a tasty adult beverage on their lush and green back patio, where new friends are made under the many umbrellas and quaint benches. And Walden Pond Books, just a short walk up Grand Avenue, is a great place to wander and browse. Their collection is as eclectic as any used bookstore, and the books displayed on the sidewalk are under \$5.