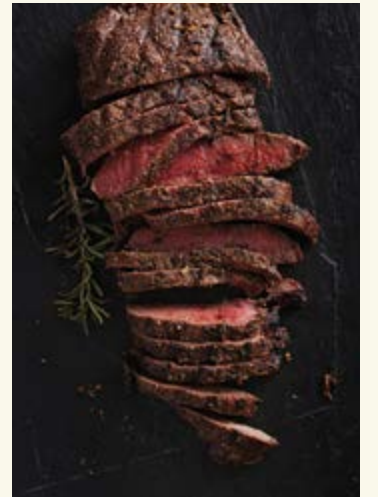


EPI-CURIOUS

A guide to finding West Michigan's
specialty & gourmet grocery stores.



Eager to know the best places to purchase specialty food items? West Michigan's food scene is continuously growing so we're featuring our amazing community of specialty and gourmet grocery stores. From butchers and cheesemongers to specialty beverage shops, our goal is to make it as easy as possible for our readers to find local businesses to support.



Also included in this year's EPI-CURIOUS section are some articles about the items you can purchase from these local stores and how to enjoy them at home - from creating the perfect cheese plate to pairing your favorite beers with certain foods, we've got you covered.



BYRON CENTER MEATS

8375 Freeland Avenue SW, Byron Center | 616.878.1578
www.byroncentermeats.com | www.harvestbox.com
info@byroncentermeats.com

Welcome to your hometown butcher shop, where we've been serving our community for 70 years. We are family-owned and USDA-inspected and specialize in fresh and frozen beef, pork, poultry, seafood, bison, lamb, goat, and veal. Enjoy local, grass-fed, organic and traditional cuts for your family meals and special occasions. We serve daily samples of meats and cheeses, provide recipe ideas and cooking tips and love serving our customers...we'll even carry your bags to your car. Preorder items through our website at byroncentermeats.com. Looking for convenient home delivery with free shipping? Shop our online store at HarvestBox.com for all-natural meats from local farms. Use Promo Code "ONTHETOWN" by March 31, 2018, for \$20 off your HarvestBox.com purchase of \$199 or more.



GRAND CENTRAL MARKET & DELI

57 Monroe Center NW, Grand Rapids | 616.454.5300
www.grandcentralmarketgr.com
gcmarketgr@gmail.com

As downtown Grand Rapids' leading Grocerant, we strive to serve our community - blurring the lines between a Grocery Store and Restaurant. We stock our shelves with staple and gourmet groceries from locally produced dairy, bread, fresh & frozen meats, produce, snacks, and fresh flowers. Our Executive Chef, Cheryl Powell, and her team prepare scratch made meals, sides, and desserts that fill our deli cases ready for you to take home. Cheryl is an expert caterer, specializing in custom-tailored private event menus, corporate business catering and more! We do all of this while offering breakfast and lunch options in our newly expanded diner. Stop in for a bite and pick up your groceries or already prepared meals before heading home.



How to Make a Cheese Plate Like a Professional

Have you seen any of the videos of cheesemongers making unbelievably beautiful cheese and charcuterie platters on the internet? Ever wish you could do something similar? You can do it! Follow our guidelines, use our pictures for inspiration, and if you don't have time, call us 48 hours beforehand and we'll do it for you!

The most important thing to do is go to your favorite cheese and charcuterie shop (I like Aperitivo...). Talk to your cheesemonger. Ask for suggestions and tastes of the cheeses and meats!

A few things important in laying out a platter:

TEXTURE

It is important to have cheeses of different textures. I like to have one really soft and creamy cheese, one on the harder side, and a wild card (either semi-hard or a blue).

MILK/TASTE

Depending on your crowd, you can provide great variety in flavors by representing different animal milk's on the board (cow, goat, sheep, buffalo). Typically they provide a contrast in flavor profiles, while at the same time complimenting one another! Use all goat and sheep

milk cheeses if your guests have dairy sensitivities.

SHAPE/SIZE

Pick cheeses that are the right amount for your party. If your crowd is having dinner afterwards, you won't need as much as if you are making the cheese board the meal...your cheesemonger can help with your specific details!

MEAT

If you are putting charcuterie on your platter, offer a variety there also. Salamis are great, but don't

forget about the melt-in-your-mouth whole muscle meats, like La Quercia Prosciutto, Coppa and Speck!

To really go the extra mile for your guests (and to make it look super-spectacular), pre-cut your cheeses so they are easily accessible and easy to eat! No cubes, please! Cut harder wedges into triangles leaving the rind on, crumble blues and really hard cheeses into shards and small, bite-sized pieces. Keep the soft and

creamy cheese whole, and have a small knife in the cheese.

Make sure you have all the fun accoutrements (olives, figs, honey, chutney, mustard, nuts) to add color and flavor. Provide a sliced Field & Fire baguette and crunchy crackers.

Wow your guests and impress your friends!

■ Kate Leeder, Aperitivo



ART OF THE TABLE

606 Wealthy Street SE, Grand Rapids | 616.301.1885
www.artofthetable.com

This specialty retail shop combines the best of gourmet food, craft beer, wine & liquor along with beautiful kitchen tools, tabletop and serving pieces for the home. Anything Art of the Table procures can be made into a stunning package for your next gift giving moment. With their wide knowledge of international and locally made gourmet foods, there's a wide array of items from chocolate to mustard, oils, salts and ice cream. Their impressive beverage department runs the gamut from "Tuesday night" selections to grand bottles fit for the finest connoisseur. A local favorite for 15 years, Art of the Table's staff has all the ideas and ingredients for your next gathering.



HARVEST HEALTH FOODS

1944 Eastern Ave, Grand Rapids | 616.245.6268
6807 Cascade Road, Grand Rapids | 616.975.7555
4150 32nd Ave, Hudsonville | 616.896.6630
www.harvesthealthfoods.com
info@harvesthealthfoods.com

Harvest Health Foods is your local, family-owned health food store. Established in 1952 we are solely focused on sourcing the highest quality food, the cleanest ingredients, organic produce, quality vitamins, healthy home and body care for your healthy lifestyle. If you are looking for healthier options for your evening meal, snacks for the kids, or your superfood protein shake, we've got you covered. Stop by for a cup of coffee or tea and enjoy shopping our large selection of bulk grains, herbs, spices, and teas. Our knowledgeable staff is trained and is ready to encourage you on your health journey. Check out our calendar online for free health seminars and sampling events.



GRAND RAPIDS DOWNTOWN MARKET

435 Ionia Ave SW, Grand Rapids | 616.805.5308
www.downtownmarketgr.com | info@downtownmarketgr.com

The Market Hall hosts a culinary collective of butchers, bakers, fishmongers, cheesemongers and more. You'll see (and it's pretty obvious) that we're huge fans of all things fresh, which is pretty much all you'll find. So fresh, in fact, that tasty morsel was likely made that morning—or even that hour. Don't just shop. Don't just grab a cup of coffee. Have a seat. Kick back. Stay a while. And enjoy all 138,000 square feet of our food lover's heaven. Before you know it, you'll be comin' back for seconds (and thirds).
Sunday - Thursday, 10am - 7pm; Friday, 10am - 8pm; Saturday, 9am - 8pm



SPICE & TEA MERCHANTS

Downtown Market – 435 Ionia Ave SW, Grand Rapids
103 Butler St, Saugatuck | 407 N. Fifth Ave, Ann Arbor
269.532.2066 | www.spicemerchants.biz
spicemerchants@msn.com

Spices look good, taste good, and are good for you. With its extensive selection of single spices, spice blends and teas, Spice & Tea Merchants is an experience, not just another shopping destination. The moment you walk in, your nose tingles in anticipation of continents of culinary opportunities. Your eyes are drawn to the bright array of chiles and paprika; the texture of fennel, coriander and star anise; the allure of row upon row or premium quality teas. The novice is reassured by the islands of spice blends offering ease and exotic all at once. For those who can't travel to one of these locations, their web site allows them to join the experience at home. We hope that you, too, will enjoy your journey into the world of Spice & Tea Merchants. Smell, taste and anticipate the world that lies within your reach.



APERITIVO

Downtown Market - 435 Ionia Ave SW, Grand Rapids
616.259.7045 | www.aperitivogr.com

Join us at Aperitivo - the best combination of a cheese and charcuterie shop and bar! Our menu features a rotating selection of cheese and meat for you to enjoy at our bar with a glass of wine or beer. No time to linger? Let our cheesemongers help you craft your own party platter with our world class selections! We have everything you need to create your platter, from boards and knives to all the accoutrements you need!
Cheese Counter: Monday - Saturday, 9am - 7pm; Sunday, 10am - 7pm
Bar Service: Monday - Friday, 11am - 9pm; Saturday, 9am - 9pm; Sunday, 10am - 7pm

SNAPSHOTS OF THE DOWNTOWN MARKET



Match Made in Beer Heaven

ALE

Pair with: burgers, buffalo wings, spicy foods, fried foods, pizza, or steaks.

LAGER

Pair with: shellfish, light seafood, grilled pork and chicken, pasta dishes (without cream or meat sauces), or spicy foods.

PILSNER

Pair with: light seafood, salmon, tuna, trout, or spicy foods.

STOUT

Pair with: roasted, smoked, or grilled foods, oysters, braised dishes, chocolate, or desserts.

BOCK BEER

Pair with: jerk chicken, beef, sausage, or seared foods.

LAMBIC (FRUIT BEER)

Pair with: light white meat, duck and pork dishes with sweet components, pickled dishes, salads with sweet dressings, or fruity desserts.

PORTER

Pair with: smoked foods, barbecue, sausage, rich stews, bacon, chili, or braised dishes.

WHEAT BEER/HEFEWEIZEN

Pair with: light soups and salads, vegetarian dishes, citrus-flavored dishes, or desserts.



FUSTINI'S OILS & VINEGARS

24 East 8th Street, Holland | 616.392.1111
www.fustinis.com

Join one of our cooking classes to inspire you on ways to use our oils & vinegars. We also are a tasting room for Extra Virgin Olive Oils and Aged Balsamic Vinegars.



LEYEN & SON MEATS

844 Leonard NW, Grand Rapids | 616.454.3057
www.leyenandson.com | leyenandson@gmail.com

Leyen and Son Meats has been family owned and operated since 1939 and offers quality, local beef and pork, all raised and processed right here in West Michigan. We offer a variety of brats and sausages, all made from local meats, hand crafted at our shop. You'll love our beef jerky, smoked in our old-fashioned smokehouse (available soon). Stock up and save with our freezer bundles or a custom cut side of beef or pork. At Leyen and Son Meats, we're passionate about local farms, local businesses and the Westside! Come check us out - you'll taste the difference!



HEFFRON FARMS

7724 Ashley Avenue NE, Belding | 616.794.2527
www.heffronfarms.com

Heffron Farms is a local family farm since 1921 where you will find the animals pampered in every way. They take great pride in the fact that their meats are raised naturally with no growth hormones, daily antibiotics, dyes or preservatives. They even still dry age their beef. Heffron Farms takes no short cuts and, as a result, provides a product that is not commonly found in the marketplace. They have 4 retail locations in the Grand Rapids area.

“To our family, farming is not a job but a passion. When you love what you do you want to share it with others.” — The Heffron Family



GRIST MILL

8000 Cannonsburg Road NE, Rockford | 616.874.6200
www.cannonsburgvillage.com/grist-mill

The motto at the Grist Mill is “everything but the kitchen sink” and we are not kidding. From a distance it may seem like just another gas station/convenience store but looks can be deceiving. In addition to what you see from the outside, the Grist Mill is kind of a foodies dream. They have a full deli with fresh salads and a variety of panini sandwiches, a butcher shop with meat that rivals anything you can find in west Michigan, daily smoked meats including their famous smoked chicken wings, fresh bakery items made daily by their two staffed bakers, and to top it off, they have one of the best sit down breakfast restaurants around! It is truly something you have to see to believe. More than that, though, the Grist Mill is a place where you’ll be greeted with a smile and you’ll leave with one, as well.

The Building Blocks of Cooking: Oils, Vinegars, and Spices



Is your pantry stocked well so that you are set up for success in the kitchen? Or do you find yourself running to the store for last-minute ingredients all the time? Whether you’re newer to home-cooking or consider yourself a pro in the kitchen, including a variety of unique spices, oils, and vinegars in your pantry will help with adding something extra to many of your dishes.

OILS

People have been eating olive oil for thousands of years and it is now more popular than ever, thanks to its many proven health benefits and its culinary usefulness. Studies have shown that olive oil can reduce inflammation, stop cancer-causing free radicals from forming, and lower the chance of heart disease.

After olives are picked and washed, they’re crushed. The resulting paste is stirred to release the oil droplets in a process called maceration, before being spun in a centrifuge to pull out the oil and water. After the water is removed, the result is olive oil.

Extra virgin olive oils offer even more: a world of fruity-bitter tastes that many use to help elevate their

foods. With the addition of infused flavorings like Tuscan Herb, Blood Orange, Basil, Mushroom and Sage, etc., the cooking possibilities are endless!

VINEGARS

Balsamic vinegar is produced from the juice of white grapes, which are boiled down to 30% of their original volume, then fermented slowly and stored for years in wooden casks.

Balsamics have rich, sweet flavors and can bring new character to food, awakening flavors and adding depth. Traditional balsamic is not necessarily a cooking ingredient as heating it will kill its distinctive bouquet. Instead, use it where it can shine - in marinades, sauces, glazes,

desserts, even cocktails. With flavors such as Cinnamon pear, Espresso, and Lavender, you and your guests will appreciate the added touch.

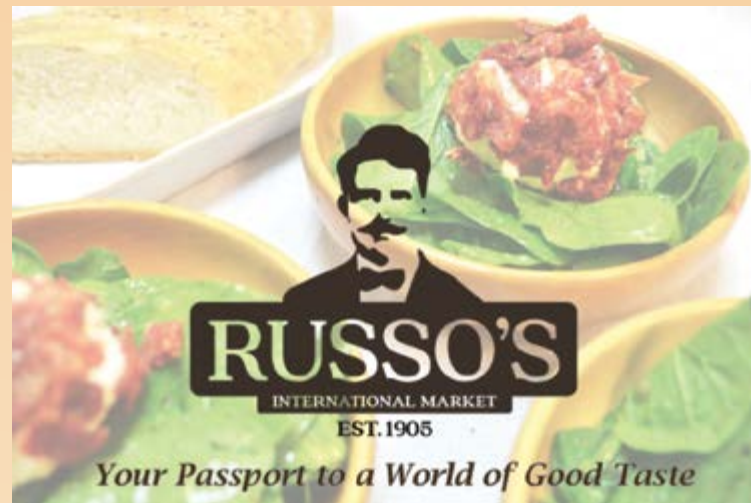
SPICES

Spices add a whole new dimension to cooking and contain an impressive list of plant-derived chemical compounds that are known to have disease-preventing and health-promoting properties (such as digestion and inflammation).

Spices can be aromatic or pungent in flavor and peppery or slightly bitter in taste. In order to keep their fragrances and flavor intact, they are generally added at the final moment of cooking since prolonged cooking results in evaporation of much

of their essential oils. Here are a few spices to incorporate into your dishes that are both flavorful and healthy:

- Chile peppers (may help boost metabolism)
- Cinnamon (may help stabilize blood sugar)
- Ginger (may help soothe an upset stomach, fight arthritis pain)
- Rosemary (may help enhance mental focus, fight foodborne bacteria)
- Sage (may help preserve memory, soothe sore throats)
- Turmeric (may help quell inflammation, inhibit tumors)



RUSSO'S INTERNATIONAL MARKET

MARKET; 2770 29th St SE, Grand Rapids | 616.942.2980
MARKET & BISTRO;
241 Fulton St West, Grand Rapids | 616.965.1420
www.RussosGR.com | info@RussosGR.com

Now 2 locations to better serve you! Russo's International Market has a vast selection of value-priced gourmet foods, thousands of wines, imported & domestic beers, delicatessen, liquor, homemade gourmet entrees, gift baskets, catering, cookware & more from around the world and around the corner. Come enjoy a unique shopping experience, where every aisle is an adventure! Our Fulton Street location features a bistro, bar, produce and staple grocery items, in addition to items you've come to love from our 29th St store! Stop in today and let our family serve yours!



DOKL'S MEAT MARKET

4615 West River Dr, Suite D, Comstock Park | 616.419.3926
www.doklsmeats.com | Like us on Facebook

Visit Dokl's Meat Market and experience the amazing combination of a local butcher and a chef with a culinary arts degree. Dokl's offers the very best in “USDA Choice Beef” which they cut in full view of their customers which insures you will always know you are getting quality meats, sausages and cheeses for your dinner table. Once you've visited Dokl's, you are almost certain to return on a weekly basis because of the outstanding products and selection. Dokl's offers bulk purchases to stock up at a discounted rate or pre-orders for that special event. Dokl's specializes in House Made Brats, Kielbasa, Sausage Sticks and Jerky.

Wine & Cheese Pairings

When it comes to wine and cheese, it's a whole new territory of gourmet and connoisseurship - for good reason! Both are delicious, complex in taste, and quite the delicacy in many world cuisines. While pairing wine and cheese is up to personal preferences and taste, pairing the two correctly and experimenting with new combinations can be a lot of fun.

Here's a few tips to coming up with your own pairings:

White wine is reputedly better paired with cheeses than red wine. This is due to the greater levels of tannin within reds. Whites also have higher levels of acidity and lighter body. When pairing wine and cheese, the flavors should equally complement or contrast.

Harder cheeses can handle more tannin. In other words. Firmer cheeses such as Cheddar and Muenster are more likely to stand up to the hardy taste of red wines, as opposed to some "softer" cheeses like Brie and Camembert. The stronger reds can complement firm cheeses without overwhelming them.

Try pairing wines and cheeses from

the same region as a reliable starting point, as those combinations are almost always guaranteed to work well together.

Merlot (Red): Gouda, Cheddar, Gorgonzola, Gruyere, Jarlsberg, Parmesan

Pinot Noir (Red): Feta, Gruyere, Monterey Jack, Muenster, Swiss

Chardonnay (White): Brie, Camembert, Chèvre (goat cheese), Gouda, Provolone

Champagne (White, Sparkling): Brie, Cheddar, Chèvre, Colby, Edam

Dessert Wine (Sweet): Marscapone, blue cheese



NANTUCKET BAKING COMPANY

615 Lyon St NE, Grand Rapids | 616.350.9292
www.nantucketbakingco.com

Make Nantucket Baking Co part of your daily or weekly shopping routine. Each time you walk into our bakery, you will be greeted as if you just returned from a long vacation. We make you feel at home again with our abundance of warm freshly baked bread, bagels, croissants, muffins, scones, and an ever-growing list of cookies and European-style desserts. Nantucket Baking Co core values are to provide freshly baked quality ingredient products, and to offer superb customer service. If you are looking for more personalized specialty items, let us know! We can customize any pre-order. Come on in, say hello, and enjoy freshly baked breads, pastries, and custom cakes!



MARTHA'S VINEYARD

200 Union Ave NW, Grand Rapids | 616.459.0911
www.mvwines.com | mvwines@mvwines.com

Let Martha's Vineyard help you prepare for your next gathering! From meats and cheeses, specialty groceries and fresh produce, to imported wines and microbrew beers, we have you covered! Our team can assist you to assemble a fabulous cheese board, advise how to pair your wines with your food selection, or suggest new recipes for cooking with our unique groceries and fresh produce! Don't miss our from-scratch deli or our selection of Nantucket Baking Co desserts! Each day, our chefs create an abundant selection of hearty and healthy ever-rotating fresh food options. Drop in on Fridays between noon and 8pm, or Saturdays between 10am and 6pm for our in store tastings! Please come, learn, and taste your way through our store!