

Front Burner

FLORENCE FABRICANT

So Much Food, It Fills a Hall

FOOD HALLS ARE ALL ABOUT gratification, both immediate (a chorizo and potato taco to eat on the spot) and delayed (a chunky jar of anchovies to take home). These bounteous markets are not new to the city; Macy's opened its Cellar nearly 40 years ago. In 1997, the former Nabisco factory was transformed into Chelsea Market on West 15th Street, setting off the modern proliferation of indoor markets.

The latest, to open in about two weeks, is Hudson Eats on the second floor of Brookfield Place, formerly the World Financial

Center. It will have views of the Hudson and 600 seats at 14 stations for Num Pang sandwiches, Umami Burger, Blue Ribbon's first sushi to go and Black Seed bagels.

Next up is Berg'n in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, a market spawned by Smorgasburg, with a beer hall and artisanal producers. Later this year, the ground floor at Brookfield Place will become Le District, a 24,000-square-foot French marketplace inspired by the expansive Eataly, with counters for meat, seafood, produce, cheeses and charcuterie, along with restaurants and an absinthe bar. Eataly plans a second



MICHAEL NAGLE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Hudson Eats, a 600-seat food hall, is to open this month at Brookfield Place in Manhattan. It will have 14 food stations.

market, perhaps in the World Trade Center area. And, in about a year, a food hall is to energize the gloomy street-level corridor in the Helmsley Building. Other markets are planned at Hudson Yards and the South Street Seaport, where New Amsterdam Market may go indoors.

Opening a food hall is like "putting together a dinner party," said Jeffrey Beers, the architect of the one at the Plaza hotel. "You first have to decide whom to invite, then hope they'll come, and then you have to figure out how to seat them all."

Here's a sampling of some of the best.

Chelsea Market

75 Ninth Avenue (West 15th Street)

Mokbar is the newest addition to a collection of shops that keeps evolving. Its twist on Japanese ramen is to pour a kimchi-fueled Korean soup over it. Better yet is the crispy ho cake, a turnover filled with pork belly (\$17 for both ramen and ho cake).

Dickson's Farmstand Meats is the butcher I want in my neighborhood for its fresh, expertly butchered meat and uncommon charcuterie like lamb pastrami. The latest is soy-sauce-infused "Chinese" bacon (\$18 a pound).

Lobster Place, the very finest fish market in the city, carries varieties like Norwegian skrei cod. It's a place to eat as well as shop, with a restaurant and several dining counters, including the lobster table in the rear, which may be the most fun (lobster rolls about \$17).

Chelsea Market Baskets is crammed with goodies — count the bottles of bitters! — notably its array of chocolate bars from around the world (\$2.50 and up).

Giovanni Rana, a big restaurant near the entrance to the market, has a counter selling fresh pastas, including ravioli. You'll find iterations of squid ink pasta: linguine, fusilli, pappardelle in mezzaluna (most \$7.50 a pound).



Tackling the ramen at Mokbar.



"Chinese" bacon from Dickson's Farmstand Meats.



A lunch-hour feast at Lobster Place.

Eataly

200 Fifth Avenue (West 23rd Street)

All things Italian are under one roof here. You'll find some of the finest produce in the city, at good prices, in the well-tended stands, like compact purple artichokes, sinuous radicchio tardo with maroon-tinged tendrils and succulent flat Romano beans.

The company's excellent fish market, which even sells cooked octopus, is flanked by a wall of tinned and jarred anchovies and fish like tuna. Take home a fat jar of Agostino Recca anchovies lashed with chile to put on an antipasto platter (\$9.80).

A treasure from the cheese counter is robiola Nostrana, with a satiny center and a bloomy rind, aged and peppered with bits of lavender (\$6.50).

In the olive oil department is a rarity from Liguria, Frantoio di Sant'Agata d'Oneglia. It's just what you need to dress linguine with the fresh pesto you'll be able to make any day now (\$21.80).

La Piazza, the only restaurant here without long lines, is in the center of the bustling market, which supplies its menu. Snack on cheeses, charcuterie, seafood and vegetables like a fava bean salad, with wine, at stand-up tables (\$12 to \$14).



Romano beans, radicchio and purple artichokes.



Peppery anchovies from Agostino Recca.



Olive oil from Frantoio di Sant'Agata d'Oneglia.

Robiola Nostrana cheese with bits of lavender.

Plaza Food Hall

Central Park South near Fifth Avenue

Tartinery, a stand with seating, serves a dish exclusive to this food hall, the Tartine Périgourdine. It's a satisfying plate of smoked duck, goat cheese and salad layered on a slice of the company's signature sourdough bread (\$20). Enjoy it with a glass of wine or a sophisticated smoothie.

Three Tarts features marshmallows, but the best are tucked within its compact version of the classic Mallomar (\$2.50).

The Todd English Food Hall, the first section to open, offers a vast menu of foods from various stations. Because Chinese is a rarity in the city's food halls, I opted for the handmade dumplings, sesame-pork and chicken-ginger, both nicely done (\$12 to \$18 for a serving of five or six).

Olma Caviar Boutique and Bar is a luxury niche where salmon, bowfin, paddlefish and hackleback caviar, at the low end of the spectrum, share the menu with pricey imported farmed osetra. Sold by the portion or the tin, and also served on blini. There are foie gras sandwiches and a full bar for an indulgent pick-me-up (\$5 and up).



The Tartine Périgourdine at Tartinery.



Three Tarts offers chocolate-covered marshmallow cookies.



The wares at Olma Caviar Boutique and Bar.

Essex Street Market

120 Essex Street (Delancey Street)

Saxelby Cheesemongers is where you'll find a superbly curated selection of American cheeses along with real buttermilk, eggs and grilled cheese sandwiches. It's worth a trip for the high-butterfat cultured butter from Animal Farm in Orwell, Vt., the same spread that Thomas Keller serves (\$39 a pound).

Formaggio Essex, the New York branch of the Cambridge, Mass., cheese, charcuterie and fancy grocery emporium, sells tiny sunflower-yellow boxes of exquisite chocolate-covered coffee beans from Sant'Eustachio, one of the best coffee houses in Rome (\$2.95).

Peasant Stock, a newcomer to the market that ladles out several hot soups, is also the headquarters for moist, mahogany-edged slabs of homemade maple-bacon corn bread. And I thought I was over bacon! (\$3.25).

Heritage Meat Shop's only retail outlet is in this market, and it features fine pork, lamb, beef and cured meats, including first-rate classics like Tuscan fennel salami made by Salumi Artisan Cured Meats, which is owned by Mario Batali's family (\$36 a pound). **Brooklyn Taco's** chipotle chicken taco and another with chorizo and potatoes are the winners here, though not every filling is available every day (\$4 and up). Wash them down with agua fresca.



Saxelby Cheesemongers also sells butter and eggs.



A selection at Heritage Meat Shop.

Italian chocolate-covered coffee beans at Formaggio Essex.



Brooklyn Taco offers a range of fillings.

Gotham West Market

600 11th Avenue (West 44th Street)

Brooklyn Kitchen's entrance display spills over with a small selection of produce, groceries, baking needs and cookware, barely hinting at the treasures within. You'll find several kinds of organic Daisy flour from Annville, Pa., including pastry and whole wheat varieties, or the company's all-purpose flour for cloudlike biscuits (\$6.49 for two pounds).

El Colmado's seasoned almonds, fried and dusted with preserved lemon and Turkish Urfa pepper, at Seamus Mullen's Spanish outpost, will make you forswear marconas forever. Nibble with a drink at the bar or take them home (\$5).

Cannibal offers hearty house-made charcuterie: head cheese, pork neck rillettes with kimchi, assorted hams. You can sup here on bone marrow with soft scrambled eggs or a salt-roasted Japanese sweet potato. And with them, beers from a daunting inventory in a giant fridge (\$3 to \$50).



Daisy organic flour at Brooklyn Kitchen.

Seasoned almonds from El Colmado.



The selection of beers at Cannibal.

Grand Central Market

East 43rd Street at Lexington Avenue

Eli's Farm to Table carries greens, tomatoes, strawberries and other produce just picked from the roof of Eli Zabar's Vinegar Factory uptown. His fraises des bois are a sweet rarity (\$7.99 a half-pint).

Murray's Cheese has expanded its real estate and now has a bin of pre-cut cheeses. Among the highlights in the whole cheese case are those that the company ages in its new caves in Long Island City. C-Local, a sheep's milk cheese, is washed with Brooklyn Brewery's Local 2 ale until the rind acquires a tawny-gray tint and the interior becomes pure satin, mild with overtones of herbs (\$27.99).

Pescatore's Asian spring rolls wrapped in rice crepes (summer rolls, really) are among the best items to eat as you browse this market, which has no seats (for that, there is Grand Central's food court). This fish market has about six kinds of spring rolls at any time, including tuna with Asian sesame sauce and black cod with miso (\$3).



New York City-grown produce at Eli's Farm to Table.



C-Local, washed in ale, at Murray's Cheese.



Asian spring rolls at Pescatore's.