

A Beginner's Guide to the Southeast Asian Market (and Recommendations for Your Next Trip, Too!)

by Pidor Yang on June 24, 2024

Philadelphia's Southeast Asian Market is open through October in FDR Park! This critically-acclaimed outdoor market is open on Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. With dozens of vendors selling food, clothing, drinks and toys, there is something for everyone. The Market is located in the southeast corner of FDR Park from May through June, and then will relocate to the south side of the park's Edgewood Lake from July through October.

If you've never been to the market before, Market Tours hosted by Fairmount Park Conservancy and Vendors Association of FDR Park are a great option. There are upcoming tours every month through October this year.

For park visitors who would prefer to schedule their own trip to the Market, we asked **Pidor Yang**, the president of the Board of Directors for the Vendors Association of FDR Park, to share some tips and recommendations. Whether you are planning your first trip or a weekly customer at the market, check out Pidor's suggestions for a great day at the market:

If you're new to the SEA Market, we would recommend that you walk around to see what piques your attention. Go up to the vendors and ask some questions about their food or product and how they take payments. Many of our vendors make similar items like beef sticks, chicken wings (stuffed or on a stick), sausages and papaya salads, mango with sticky rice. Because there are different representations there, each culture will have their own flavors, textures and delicious smells. I recommend going early because the lines can get very long. If you go in a group, split up then meet in the middle and have an epic picnic. Don't forget to bring your lawn chairs, mats and picnic baskets ready.

If this is your first time going, here is what I recommend trying:

1. King Coffee, get their Vietnamese Coffee
2. Sugar Cane Juice from any stall vendor that sells it.
3. Beef Sticks & Stuffed Chicken Wings. Try at least two from each vendor so you can have a taste comparison. The next time you go, you can go straight to your favorite spot.
4. Mango Sticky Rice. You can't go wrong, delicious at any stand you can get this from.
5. Pecel Nesdo, Indonesian Food. Anything you get there is great!

If you're returning back to the market, we would recommend seeing and trying out some new stalls such as:

1. Sahbyy Food's Cambodian Lemongrass Cheesesteak. They created it and are the only ones that sell it in the city.
2. Freshly fried sesame balls stuffed with sweet mung bean paste as well as Jac Cheul, a Cambodian mochi dessert that is poured and fried with crispy edges.

3. Freshly battered and fried bananas, fantastic hot.
4. Sweet sticky rice and beans stuffed into bamboo tubes then steamed or roasted.
5. Thai or Lao rice. They season the rice with red tangy curry, roll it into a ball, deep fry it, break it apart and then season it some more adding coconut, preserved pork and pork skin followed by fresh herbs and more spices. Served hot or cold, eat it as is or in a lettuce wrap. Oh man is it delicious.
6. I'd like to highlight the garment, trinket and toy stands too. They offer very unique and beautiful garments, belts, scarves, sarongs and ointments that we rely on to make us feel better. Most of these items are personally shopped for and brought back from their countries of origin. Many of the traditional outfits are handmade and can be tailored at home for a better fit. These are unique items that you can not find in the mainstream but if you did, it would probably cost a lot

When we move to the baseball side of FDR Park (starting in July), the Market will have more produce and plant vendors, too! Don't miss out on them because they also sell hard-to-find veggies that are mostly unique to Southeast Asia.

