

7th Street Public Market

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One of the best things about living and working in Charlotte's center city is the access to an incredible variety of food. From regional farmers and producers to talented chefs and owners, our downtown is full of unique flavors. Perhaps no place exemplifies that more than the 7th Street Public Market.

Markets have played an important historical role—one that has not changed over centuries. They are places to trade goods, conversation and experiences. The 7th Street market is no exception. It is a gathering place for people from our region and beyond. There's a universal appeal to the market that connects with people from all walks of life—families, hipsters, tourists, you name it. That energy is palpable when you walk through the doors. There's a buzz that's contagious as people catch up with old friends, children play and chefs prepare delicious food.

And then there are the smells—bread baking at Local Loaf, the best coffee in Charlotte from Not Just Coffee, hot crepes from Hazelnuts. Every day brings something new to stimulate the senses. It's almost overwhelming.

Eating is experiential. Sharing a meal with friends—or with the stranger on the stool next to you in a crowded public market—helps us connect with a place. Every time I walk into the 7th Street Public Market, I am captivated by the way the market deepens and enriches my connection to Charlotte, and to center city in particular. The market expresses the uniqueness of our community. People who want to understand Charlotte can do so by enjoying a meal here.

Urban planners often talk about the importance of public markets as gathering spaces for the community. In just the last few months, the 7th Street Public Market has hosted political forums, poetry readings and health fairs. On top of that, the market hosts dozens of business meetings every day as members of our community break bread, solve problems and create opportunities together.

The market itself is a nonprofit, and a business incubator that makes it possible for chefs and small business owners to succeed. Their passion translates to praise for the quality of food, whether it's fresh cheese from Orrman's, sushi from Bonsai Fusion or local

North Carolina products from Greenman Farms.

If you haven't been to the market, I encourage you to hop on the Lynx Blue Line and ride over to 7th

Street. Come explore, enjoy a glass of wine or a local craft beer, sample some cheese and deepen your connection to this wonderful city.

