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**Urban Oyster Announces Launch of Immigrant Foodways Tour**

**Brooklyn, NY, June 6, 2011** - Since the Moore Street Market's opening in July of 1941, it has always been an important community resource for the newest immigrant groups to the Bushwick and Williamsburg sections of Brooklyn. Once known for its pickles and kosher meat, the market today serves up herbal teas from Mexico, fresh fish, sounds of salsa, and traditional ingredients and ready-made foods from various Latin American countries. Inspired by the powerful story of the market and the cultural history of the neighborhood, [Urban Oyster](#), a Brooklyn-based tour company, is proud to announce the launch of its Immigrant Foodways Tour of the eastern part of Williamsburg.

After a full year of conducting archival research and oral history interviews in Spanish and English, [Urban Oyster's Immigrant Foodways Tour](#) explores the influences of Jewish and Latin American cultures on Williamsburg through the stories of mom and pop business owners at the Moore Street Market, and along Brooklyn's Graham Avenue, co-named "Avenue of Puerto Rico."

From farms to pushcarts to the market to the kitchen table, this tour traces the neighborhood's relationship to New York's food system from the 18th century through the present with an emphasis on 20th century immigrants and migrants. Stops of historical interest include a 19th century department store that held gigantic cooking classes, the former site of an open air street market, the Moore Street Market which was built to mark the end of the pushcart era, and a mural painted in 2006 by young women that reflects a coming-of-age story of a Latino family's immigration story and a quinceañera celebration that incorporates local community leaders.

Foodie folks will enjoy the tour's enthusiastic introduction to traditional recipes that hail from Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Ecuador based at "La Marqueta de Williamsburg" and at storefronts in the area. For example, one of the stops takes visitors to the Anibal Meats Market, a butcher shop on Moore Street, where co-owner Angelo Santiago serves up samples of succulent roasted pork and chicken, and shares his story of growing up in the neighborhood and becoming a butcher. When asked to reflect on why he's excited about the tour, he said: "I enjoy seeing people of different nationalities coming to the store and watching their reactions as they taste the roasted pork that we prepare with a Latin flavor. It's something different - something they've never tried before, and they like it!"

Tastings on the tour may change from week to week but currently include green bananas and onions, empanadas, sancocho (stew), alcapurrias (plantain fritters stuffed with meat), and various tropical juices. By the end, tour participants will be equipped with new knowledge about Latin American ingredients, know how to properly select and cook plantains and tubers, and will receive a booklet of recipes to help them recreate the tastes and smells from of the market in their own homes.

Even long-time New Yorkers will make new discoveries. Shirley Zafirau of Manhattan's Upper West Side joined Urban Oyster for a test run of the tour and shared her experience, "These people really have it together! Enthusiastic, local anecdotal stories, very well researched, good walking pace,



personalized contact with local merchants and sampling, local mural art. Chock full of memorable moments. Had a great time. Return is inevitable."

In preparation for this tour, Urban Oyster invested hundreds of hours in archival research and interviewed over 15 vendors at the market and established relationships with the Brooklyn Economic Development Corporation, the Graham Avenue BID, and the Groundswell Community Mural Project to develop a deeper understanding of local initiatives and connect with community leaders for additional interviews. With permission from interviewees, Urban Oyster is cataloguing some of these oral histories to be put into an archive at the Brooklyn Historical Society.

Urban Oyster invites you to join them and experience the stories, sounds, and smells of Williamsburg for yourself. Public tours kick off this month starting on Saturday, June 11th, and will continue on a weekly basis through the end of the year. Private group tours are available any day of the week by reservation. Please contact us if you would like to join us for a tour or would like to learn more information about our company and its tours.

#### **About Urban Oyster:**

Urban Oyster is a Brooklyn-based tour company founded in 2008 to lead multi-sensory, theme-based tours of New York City's neighborhoods. These experiences aim to reveal the stories behind the people and places that make the city's neighborhoods unique, vibrant, and sustainable. Urban Oyster offers a variety of regularly-scheduled and private tours on themes ranging from food carts to beer brewing to immigration history that are enjoyed by native New Yorkers and tourists alike and that aim to promote a deeper sense of appreciation for local business, history, diversity, and leadership in communities.

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#### **For additional information, visit:**

<http://www.urbanoyster.com/immigrant-foodways-tour.html>  
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/urbanoystertours/sets/72157626694478864/>

#### **Other Tours Offered by Urban Oyster:**

[Brewed in Brooklyn Tour](#)  
[Food Cart Tours of Midtown and the Financial District](#)  
[Fermented New York Craft Beer Crawls of Williamsburg and the East Village](#)  
[Brooklyn Navy Yard Tours by Bus or Bicycle](#)  
[Group and Private Tours](#)

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