

Curios and epicurean delights at the Bay Harbour Market in Hout Bay

By  Cari Coetzee

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If you live in Cape Town and you haven't paid the Bay Harbour Market in Hout Bay a visit, you really should get going. If you're visiting the Mother City, I highly recommend you make the market one of your stops. Located in the Hangberg Harbour Precinct - a bit scruffy at first sight but packed with visitors none the less - this happy hubbub of food, craft and music makes for a great day out.



Image Supplied

Crafty craftsman

The entrance of the market looks like a glorified gift shop, this is where you'll find that perfect curio serving as a memento of your visit. Boasting a substantial display of Africana, visitors are provided with creative depictions of our wildlife, quirky t-shirts that offer a perspective on South African humour; bangles, clutches and all manner of accessories; intricate beadwork and quality leather products by local artists and artisans.

Venture further inside and you'll find stall upon stall of handmade clothing, beautifully decorated ceramics, dazzling crystals and more.













When you're done browsing and buying, step through the invisible border between retail and epicurean delight. Once the divine smell hits you, you'll know you've made it to the food section and this is what we came for.

Persuasive foods

You won't be cajoled by overeager salesmen, here the food speaks for itself and the marketeers are only too happy if the food catches your attention. There is not a thing in this market that you'll pass by that won't make you at least stop and take a second look. The snacking area, as I call it, is filled with freshly squeezed juices, hot-from-the-oven breads, freshly-carved biltong and treats and desserts sweet enough to rot a tooth.

Sorry for the dip at 0.38 seconds, I was being fed biltong by the generous gentleman at Stokkies Draai...

We stopped at Doctor Juice for some of that freshly squeezed juice – one orange juice and one beetroot – before we moved on to the main event (the snacking area merely serves to wet your appetite and stretch your stomach for what is to come.)

The *bon viveur's* playground

I'm a big supporter of equitable dining i.e. that there should be something on the menu for everyone. In this, the market excels with options to meet every kind of diet and diner – from vegans to the more carnivorous in nature. For the omnivores, this will be a veritable buffet of temptation – necessitating a walk through the entire food section before you can safely and surely decide on your meal. (I highly suggest you do the walkthrough first, every stall has something special and delicious to offer, so don't be too hasty.)













I'm also a big supporter of messy eating (when the environment is right). The harbour market vibe is a special one – due to limited seating, diners are encouraged to share tables and everyone is there to simply enjoy the food. There's no judgement if the sauce is running down your chin (but do keep a napkin handy).

The food section, inside and outside, was packed full of people happily munching away in between sips of beer and Sauvignon Blanc while appreciating the abstract lighting hanging above them and listening to live music with equal amounts of beat and chill to accompany any meal.

Your walkthrough will also take you past the “watering holes”- beer on tap, fine wine (red and white) and a few adventurous cocktails will tempt you in between all the food stalls. There were no thirsty visitors.





After doing the rounds and coming dangerously close to not getting much further than the first stall we encountered, I opted for Vagabond Kitchen's pork belly burger with rocket, apple pickle, mustard mayo and five-spice sauce, while my husband chose Bon Ami's fresh vegetarian salad. The chefs and servers were friendly and accommodating throughout and eager to share their food.



This isn't fine dining, and small portions are not what you'll get - your plate will look more like your mother dished up for you. The salad was hearty, with enough animal-friendly protein included so that it doesn't feel like you're missing something meaty. I had a bite of my husband's salad and, while delicious, I happily declare my burger as the winner.



The apple added just the right amount of fresh crispness to balance the sweet and sticky sauce covering the perfectly slow-cooked pork belly "patty", while the rocket added a bitterness to temper the intense, almost smoky flavours. The buns were freshly baked for sure and the hand cut chips were crunchy and soft all at the same time.

Not to risk turning from gourmands to gluttons, we called it quits as the familiar lethargy crept up on my husband and we made our way home. If you're looking for a finger-licking good lunch or brunch, and a vibe that will bring you back every time (this was not our first visit), this is the place.

Visit [Bay Harbour Market](#), [Hout Bay](#) for more.

ABOUT CARI COETZEE

Cari Coetzee is a contributor to Bizcommunity Tourism, Agriculture and Lifestyle.

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