

Sugar high

Gourmet Safari's Sweet Indulgence Tour would definitely give Willy Wonka a run for his money

Written by Karina May

Be warned, this tour is not for the faint-hearted — even the sickly sweetest of sweet teeth will find themselves struggling to down that last bite of gelato. And who could blame them? After a whole day of nothing but chocolate, Turkish delight, Portuguese tarts and more chocolate, my hat goes off to anyone who can even look at another custard cannolis!

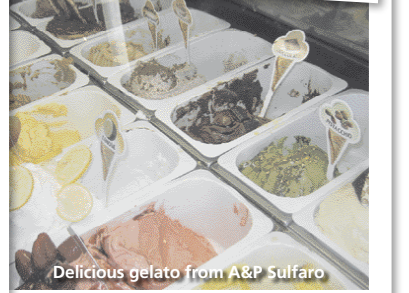
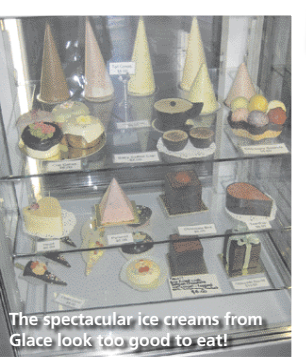
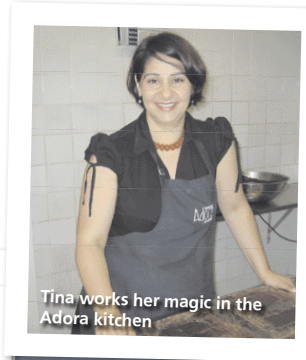
Established eight years ago by respected food author, broadcaster and television food presenter Maeve O'Meara, Gourmet Safaris takes food enthusiasts behind the closed doors of small businesses and gives them an insight into the incredible food and culture right on their doorstep. Given the passion and authenticity involved and the direct access to local food experts, it's easy to see why the company picked up the Best Tour Operator award at the recent Australian Travel and Tourism Awards.

Departing from Central Station, the Sweet Indulgence Safari took us on a wonderful adventure in search of the most delicious, not to mention filling, treats in Sydney. Led by our knowledgeable tour guide Susie, we boarded a comfortable, airconditioned bus and embarked on our journey around the streets of Earlwood, in south-west Sydney.

First stop was Adora Handmade Chocolates, owned and run by two Greek sisters Tina and Katerina. Not only were we able to sample some of the many gorgeous handmade chocolates on offer, but we were given exclusive access to the small kitchen out the back, which we were astounded to discover produces up to 100kg of chocolate

per week! Here we were lucky to test a new product, dark chocolate with orange rind. If only all experiments were that tasty!

Next we headed to Petersham to engage in some serious taste testing, which involved comparing the different varieties of Portuguese tarts available. First we met Fernando at the humble-looking La Patisserie, who claimed to be the first person to bring Portuguese tarts to Sydney around 25 years ago. Although others might dispute this, there was certainly no denying the deliciousness



of his tarts. As they say practice makes perfect so when, like Fernando, you're making up to 1500 tarts per day there's really no excuse for them not to be flawless!

We ventured a couple of shops up the street to another patisserie, Sweet Belem, where we marvelled at their signature rose cakes and sampled some not-so-traditional Portuguese tarts. Topped with cinnamon and served warm, these desserts were simply divine.

No sweet tour would be complete without Turkish delight and there's nowhere better to pick up some of the authentic stuff than Auburn, where

a large proportion of Sydney's Turkish community resides. We visited Real Turkish Delight and were treated to a variety of different flavours including my favourite, pineapple.

Craving something savoury, thankfully the next stop was lunch down the road at Mado Café. And just when we thought we couldn't possibly loosen our belts any further, out came a feast of fresh Turkish bread, hummus and a selection of salads. Luckily, after the meal, we were given a chance to digest while wandering the aisles of a large Turkish supermarket, Gima Emporium. Offering loads of rare cooking products, all

of us shopaholics were given the chance to stock up on Persian fairy floss and exotic Turkish pastes and spices.

Last but certainly not least was a visit to the Inner West for some Italian treats. Custard cannolis from A&P Sulfaro and sour cherry and passionfruit sorbet from Glace capped off a truly indulgent day!

This tour is not to be missed — but on the off chance you're not much of a sweet fiend, check out some of the other gourmet safaris on offer at www.gourmetsafaris.com.au