

# IBUKI 息吹

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## Spring Is Here!

FOOD | LIFESTYLE | TRAVEL | ENTERTAINMENT

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By Linda Lowry Photographer: Chance McLaren

looked like my mother! I immediately went to the newspaper stand at 1st and Pike, grabbed a postcard, and sent my mother a note that said something along the lines of, "I met someone today that reminded me of you. I don't know what business I'm going to do, but I know it will start right here in Pike Place Market". I was so inspired by the incredible bounty of fresh seafood, produce, delicious cheese, and wine that Pike Place Market was brimming with, I kept thinking, "Do Seattleites know how lucky they are to have all of this in their backyard?"

**IBUKI:** How did the idea for Savor Seattle Food Tours transpire?

**Angela Shen:** As I met new people in Seattle, they were excited to recommend restaurants that I simply had to try! As a

foodie, I wanted desperately to try them all, but I was unemployed and couldn't afford a minimum of \$100/person meal between Albert and me and also try each place that was recommended. So, I thought, "Wouldn't it be great to create a business where for the price of eating at one restaurant, I could try 5-7 different places instead?" You don't need to have a full meal at a place in order to know whether you like it or not. It would also be a good way for restaurants to gain exposure to potential customers that may not have otherwise walked in on their own.

**IBUKI:** How do you choose the right restaurants to be a part of your food tour?

**Angela Shen:** We strive to partner with food establishments that are the best at what

they do. For example, Gelatiamo offers the best gelato, Pike Place Chowder has the best chowder, as well as epitomizing the F.L.O.S.S. pillars: Fresh, Local, Organic, Seasonal, and Sustainable. These are distinct characteristics of the Pacific Northwest food scene, which we absolutely want to showcase to visitors and locals alike.

**IBUKI:** How have you built a successful customer base?

**Angela Shen:** We focus on delivering a world class experience that surprises and delights our customers. When you do that, customers are naturally compelled to write glowing reviews and tell their friends. It is how we've been able to be ranked the #1 Attraction in Seattle and one of the "Top 10 Tours in America" by TripAdvisor and have a 5-star

## Restless in Seattle

When you think of Seattle, what comes to mind? Of course, the film "Sleepless in Seattle". As a city we have been capitalizing on this popular and endearing film since its release on the silver screen in 1993. Heck, you can even find "Sleepless in Seattle" night shirts at the SeaTac airport. Ok, I must confess, I do own a "Sleepless in Seattle" night shirt, and I love it!

Whenever I have out of town family or friends visit me here in Seattle, the first tourist stop they want to visit is always the Public Market on Pike St, otherwise known as Pike Place Market. Let's not forget the scene in "Sleepless in Seattle" where Tom Hanks is walking down Pine St. and you can see the famous sign "Public Market" on his way to having breakfast at the Athenian

Inn. The Public Market is also the home of the first Starbucks Coffee Café and of the celebrated Pike Place Fish Market. The only fish market in the world that has a training video made for corporate training purposes called Fish! Philosophy. It's no wonder Angela Shen came up with her inspirational idea for Savor Seattle Food Tours on one of her visits to the renowned public market where she experienced an encounter that sparked an idea to combine her appreciation for food and her entrepreneurial nature.

**IBUKI:** What ignited the spark in you to start a new business venture?

**Angela Shen:** I've always had an entrepreneurial spirit, having grown up in a family business. As a first generation

Chinese kid, I grew up inside my parents' Chinese restaurants in Minnesota. From an early age, I developed a love for all things food. I am enamored by the power of food. It brings people together in such an intimate way! In the Fall of 2007, my husband Albert and I moved to Seattle to pursue his career as a Software Engineer for Microsoft. While we lived in temporary housing at Harbor Steps, just two blocks away from the Pike Place Market, I found myself attracted to the market each day. One morning in November 2007, I was making a purchase at a produce stand and the woman who rang me up said, "That will be \$3.00 my dear". I was instantly struck by that affectionate reference, as the only person in my life that has ever called me "my dear" is my mother. This woman even



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average on Yelp with over 1,100 reviews. People trust their peers and past guests to inform their purchase decisions. Once a guest has a great experience on one tour, they often come back again to experience one of our other offerings. We have a wide portfolio of options with 6 different walking tasting tours that explore Seattle with different themes, ranging from exploring Pike Place Market, to Capitol Hill, booze, chocolate, etc. We also offer a 3-day/2-night gourmet kayaking expedition in the San Juan Islands with several departures each summer, and a 9-day culinary tour to Italy.

**IBUKI:** Who has been your greatest inspiration?

**Angela Shen:** Tom Douglas. Great entrepreneur. He treats his people well, is

incredibly humble, philanthropic, and not afraid to speak his mind!

**IBUKI:** What three pieces of advice would you give to a friend who wants to become an entrepreneur?

**Angela Shen:** The best way to figure out whether an idea is right for you is to just give it a go. I liken it to shopping. The only way to know whether a dress is going to fit is to take it off the hanger and try it on. Don't get stuck in the state of perpetual window shopping. Take marketing 101. It contains the most important fundamentals of what makes for a successful business. The 5 P's: Product, Place, Promotion, Price and Profit. Don't let good be the enemy of great. Sometimes the quest for perfection overshadows the initiative to get out of the box and get after

your idea.

**IBUKI:** How do you define success?

**Angela Shen:** Business success to me is the freedom to wake up each morning and have the choice to do whatever moves me in the moment, be it getting dressed and going to work, or deciding to hit the slopes to take advantage of the fresh powder.

**IBUKI:** What has been your most satisfying moment in business?

**Angela Shen:** Hiring my first employee. Knowing that I can provide for someone else's livelihood is a responsibility and honor I find deeply moving.

The next time you feel restless in Seattle, schedule a food tour with Savor Seattle at [www.savorseattletours.com](http://www.savorseattletours.com)

