

FIBER : FARMERS MARKET



DISCOVER MORE

FIBERS AND A FARMERS MARKET In the Craft in America episode INSPIRATION, Hmong Village, a local farmers market, is featured in several scenes. Farmers markets can often provide a glimpse of different cultures present in a community. Because these markets typically have a lower fee for a selling space (compared to renting a stand-alone store) they are an accessible place for a small business to get started. The market in the video features Hmong cultural foods and traditional Hmong needlework, as well as fresh produce and other items. You may have a farmers market in your community. If you've never been there, put it on your list to visit. You might find some new foods you have never tried before. You might find interesting crafts made by local people.



<https://youtu.be/hzR5OrWepDQ>

Watch the episode on Suzanne Thao, an expert Paj Ntaub (needlework) artist and instructor. Within the 10-minute segment you will also see Mai Vang Huizel, the founder and executive director of the Hmong Museum in St. Paul, Minnesota, and Chef Yia Vang both featured within scenes at the Hmong Village market:

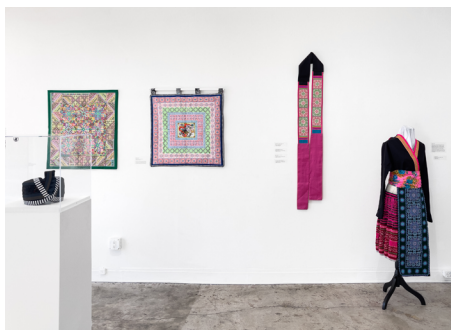
WHAT DO YOU THINK?



Farmers produce stalls at the Hmong Village Shopping Center

- If you were at the market shown in the video, what would you want to look at more closely?
- Are you adventurous, or not so adventurous, about trying new foods, whether a prepared dish (as Chef Yia Vang orders in the video) or trying a new produce item and looking up a recipe? What questions would you want to ask before trying a new food?
- If you've already visited a market near you, have you seen hand-crafted items? Or crafted items that reference a culture that is a little unfamiliar to you? If not, do you think there is another place nearby where you might be able to explore and find some?

BE A TOURIST IN YOUR OWN TOWN



Installation view of *Home & Inspiration* at the Craft in America Center. Photo by Madison Metro, courtesy of Craft in America.

You may already have a local farmers market that you visit. Or you might be able to find one nearby to explore. If not, widen your search. For new foods to try that are different from your own cultural heritage, look for individual grocery stores and restaurants that serve different cultural foods and cuisines. Food trucks can be a great source of new flavors discoveries. To see new-to-you crafts or different kinds of needlework, you might tour some downtown shopping areas, local galleries, and museums that just might have collections. Different places of worship may have handwork and décor that is culturally influenced as well. Watch for special festivals that may happen nearby.

THE NEXT BEST THING



Chef Yia Vang. Eliesa Johnson photo.

Once you decide to choose an adventure by exploring new kinds of needlework, crafts, and foods of a culture you are not familiar with, if you can't find any close to home, the internet is another option. Examine and try out Hmong needlework by looking at examples and then for YouTube videos that demonstrate the techniques. (The section on Suzanne Thao in this collection offers some instructions.) You can find chef Yia Vang online and get a closer look at his cooking and then look up some traditional Hmong recipes.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Exploring your town in these ways can be like taking a mini vacation without going very far at all. The discoveries you make may inspire you to rediscover your own traditions. Some things to think about:

- Does anyone in your family practice a craft or needlework? Maybe there is a woodworker, a gardener, a knitter, or a decorative painter. Ask them about their craft, and who taught them, or what drew them to that practice.
- Do you know the story of your family's favorite recipes? Relatives may enjoy sharing the recipes with you and sharing their stories.
- In short, your own family (and maybe neighbors) may be an untapped source of cultural knowledge, history, and talents that you can enjoy and learn from. As Mai Vang Huizel says, "The Elder generation has the stories and the knowledge and the history all in their minds and if we don't connect with them, and if we don't begin asking for it, then it's going to be lost."



Courtesy of Craft in America.