

## DINING

# Starbucks on Michigan Avenue in east Dearborn shuttered to become Yemeni coffee cafe



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## Key Points

Moka & Co., a specialty Yemeni coffee cafe is replacing the Starbucks on Michigan Avenue in Dearborn.

The now-closed Starbucks in east Dearborn offered a unique drive-through service that was a tunnel lane of a car wash.

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A Starbucks location connected to a well-known car wash in a busy part of east Dearborn has closed, and a Yemeni coffee cafe will replace it.

"As a part of Starbucks' standard course of business, we continually evaluate our business to ensure a healthy store portfolio," a Starbucks spokeswoman told the Free Press on Monday, Aug. 25. "After careful consideration, we've determined it is best to close our store at 12921 Michigan Avenue, Dearborn. Our last day at this location was Aug. 24."

Employees have had the opportunity to transfer to nearby Starbucks locations at 22155 Michigan Ave. in Dearborn and 26615 Ford Road in Dearborn Heights, the spokeswoman said.

Coming to the location, the Free Press has learned, is a Moka & Co. Specialty Yemeni Coffee café.

Don Walker, Moka & Co. spokesman, confirmed that the café will use the drive-through tunnel at that location as well as its outdoor patio.

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On Michigan Avenue at the corner of Oakman in east Dearborn, this Starbucks location is next to the Fairlane Car Wash. Its unique drive-through is a big draw.

When it opened nearly 16 years ago, the Starbucks location used one of the two car wash lanes for its drive-through. Fairlane Car Wash still operates the other car wash lane.

The location at 12921 Michigan Ave. is also known to be a busy corner traffic-wise, as the Interstate 94 expressway is nearby. On the site, there is also a combined Auntie Anne's, Cinnabon and Carvel Ice Cream location.

A young brand, Moka & Co. is based in New York and got its start in 2024. Its core group of partners includes those who hail from Michigan, Walker said. Moka & Co. specializes in offering traditionally prepared Yemeni coffees, plus those blended with spices amid a socializing atmosphere and vibe.

Walker said Moka & Co. has a roastery in Michigan as well as in New York.

In Michigan, there are two Moka & Co. locations in Detroit and two in East Lansing. There's a location in Ann Arbor and one in Okemos. All the Michigan locations opened within the last year.

According to its website, Moka & Co. also has locations in Arizona and New York. Locations are forthcoming for California, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Texas.

Adding Starbucks and turning one of the car wash lanes into a drive-through lane for Starbucks was the idea of the building owners at that time, the Masouras family, back in 2005, according to a Free Press report.

It took a few years, the Free Press report said, for the owners to convince a national chain to take up the space. The then-owners, John and Pete Masouras, told the Free Press in a 2005 article that they “courted more than a dozen” chains to use the empty car wash tunnel as a drive-through.

The Moka & Co. at 12921 Michigan Ave. in Dearborn is expecting a fall opening.

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