

Taste of the Lower East Side: Mojitos, Meatballs and Men

by Kelly Dobkin

We learned a few things last night at the Grand Street Settlement's 11th annual [Taste of the Lower East Side](#): 1. Come with an empty stomach. 2. Balancing more than one sample plate is an art form. 3. [Michael Chernow](#) is the hottest man alive.

Dozens of restaurants from NYC's Lower East Side were represented at the massive event (held at SoHo's 82 Mercer), showcasing some of their most popular menu items. While there was an obvious meatball trend going on (we counted at least five from different restaurants), there was a pretty wide assortment of other goodies being offered as well. From pancakes, to pudding, to paella - we tried them all. Oh lord, did we ever.

Here are some highlights from the event, in case you missed it:

-[Clinton Street Baking Company](#)'s pancake with bacon and maple syrup. Word. Considering the wait for brunch there is often over two hours, we figured this was a must-try plate. Believe the hype. It was just that good.

-As previously mentioned, [Michael Chernow](#) of [The Meatball Shop](#). We were almost too blinded by his good looks to try his food. Almost. The meatball was pretty handsome too.

-We confirmed that [Porchetta](#) is trying to expand to the Upper West Side or Williamsburg in the near future. They will also be at both the Fr. Greene Brooklyn Flea and the new [Smorgasburg](#), all summer long.

-New [Clerkenwell](#) chef [Ryan Jordan](#) is completely re-doing the menu at the British eatery. As for last night's offerings, that bourbon/ginger/lime shot they were serving was the best drink of the night.

-Allegedly the cast of [Entourage](#) was there? Man, we miss everything.

Do you have a highlight from last night to share? Let us know in the comments.