

DAILY NEWS

NEW YORK'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

MAY 5, 2014

SPECIAL CINCO DE MAYO

Tacos, tequila and taquitos

Here are 5 ways to celebrate this Cinco de Mayo

BY DAISY MELAMED
Special to amNewYork

Cinco de Mayo celebrations can take many forms, from local cultural events that examine Mexican-American traditions to the more, err, inebriated sort. If excellent food and drink are your revelry of choice, though, look no further. Here are ways to find some of the most delicious bites and refreshing cocktails in NYC to honor the Fifth of May. Salud!



Celebrate Cinco de Mayo with tacos at Tommy Bahama.

Party at a proper fiesta at Los Americanos

This Cinco de Mayo, Chef Ryan Skeen will be serving up mole cabrito tacos, chorizo gorditas and grilled Mayan prawn gorditas from his on-site drum smoker and barbecue. To wash it all down, bartenders will mix up a special cocktail, dubbed the "Juanarita," made with lime, absinthe and egg white. Even better, Los Americanos will ensure a proper Cinco de Mayo fiesta atmosphere, with samba music and revelry galore. 305 Church St., 212-680-0101, losamericanos.com

Enjoy a toast-worthy menu at Toloache Thompson

At Julian Medina's Mexican res-



Meatballs for Cinco de Mayo? Why not?!

Bites include a chicken-tinge rolled taquitos, habanero-tomato caldillo, crema and queso fresco to satisfy your hunger. 205 Thompson St., 212-420-0600, toloachery.com

Attend a one-off pop-up at Louro

Chef David Santos is known for his pop-ups, and this Cinco de Mayo is no exception. The West Village restaurant will be turned into a pop-up taqueria, complete with pork belly, crispy pig's ear and cactus tacos, to name a few, available for three for \$5, as well as classic, pomegranate and jalapeño margari-

+ MORE Find additional Cinco de Mayo fiestas: amNY.com/eat

What May 5 really means in Mexico

Every year on May 5, revelers gather to celebrate Mexican-American culture by sipping margaritas and chowing down on tacos. But besides good food and drink, what are they really celebrating?

Many mistakenly believe May 5 marks Mexican independence from Spain, but that's celebrated on Sept. 16, which was the beginning of the Mexican War of Independence. Cinco de Mayo actually memorializes a Mexican victory at the famed Battle of Puebla in 1862 during the French intervention in Mexico, sparked when Mexico's president, Benito Juárez, suspended interest payments

on Mexico's debt to foreign countries.

Led by General Ignacio Zaragoza, Mexican forces pushed back French soldiers during an attack near the city of Puebla. While it took another five years for the intervention to end, the battle is considered a very important moral triumph for the Mexican troops. In fact, four days after the battle, President Juárez declared that May 5 would be a national holiday. And while it's not currently a federal holiday in Mexico, it is recognized as a day to celebrate Mexican heritage in places like the United States.

(DAISY MELAMED)

3 cocktails for your Cinco party



Looking for cocktails to make at your Cinco de Mayo fiesta? Check out these agave-based concoctions from three Manhattan establishments.

Hot Heather

The Blind Barber, 339 E. 10th St., 212-228-2123, blindbarber.com

2 oz. Milagro Silver Tequila
¾ oz. fresh lime juice
¼ oz. fresh pineapple juice
¼ oz. fresh grapefruit juice
¼ oz. ginger agave

Top with an expressed grapefruit peel.



Toloache Thompson's Cinco de Mayo Spicy Shot

tas, Mexican beers and more for imbibing. 142 W. 10th St., 212-206-0606, toloachery.com

Get your fill of tacos at Tommy Bahama

Don your best summertime attire and head over to the midtown flagship of the tropical-themed restaurant for some simple and understated Mexican classics. Celebrate Cinco de Mayo with \$5 tacos — your choice of blackened fish, carnitas and hangar steak — as well as classic margaritas and even some spiked guacamole. 551 Fifth Ave., 212-537-0960, tommybahama.com

Have a tequila meatball at the Meatball Shop

Meatballs for Cinco de Mayo? Make it a new tradition. The Meatball Shop is offering a variety of specialty meatballs to celebrate the day at each of its five locations around the city. These savory pork-based meatballs feature ancho chili, guajillo chili, cumin, cinnamon, cilantro, lime and — what else? — tequila.* For some added crunch, you'll even find some shreds of corn tortilla in the mix. Multiple locations, themeatballshop.com



The classic margarita

2 oz. Blanco tequila
1 oz. Cointreau
1 oz. lime juice

Combine all ingredients in a mixing glass and add ice. Shake and strain into a margarita glass. Garnish with a lime wheel and salt.

How to make a perfect marg

When it comes to making a great margarita this Cinco de Mayo, it really comes down to one thing.

"The cocktail is only going to be as good as the ingredients," said Kyle Ford of Ford Mixology Lab.

That means using a premium tequila and triple sec and, even in a lime shortage, fresh lime juice.

"Never compromise the integrity of your drink by not using the real deal," Ford said.

If the rising price of the citrus fruit still gives you second thoughts, you can always swap out lime juice for lemon juice and make

the margarita's cousin, the Picador, Ford suggested.

"It's not well-known, but you can make just as delicious a tipple with lemon juice," Ford said.

If you take yours with salt, skip the kosher stuff and try a smoke salt, which goes well with mezcal.

"Salt is the fourth ingredient nobody really talks about, but why settle for something plain?" Ford said.

To get shaking, Ford recommends a 2-1-1 ratio of tequila, Cointreau and lime juice for a classic margarita that's easy to concoct at home. (MEREDITH DELUSO)

Death in Oaxaca

La Bottega, 363 W. 16th St., 212-243-8400, thearmotel.com/labottega.php

1 oz. mezcal
½ oz. Aperol
½ oz. cherry herring
Splash of ginger beer

Add ingredients to cocktail shaker. Shake well. Serve over ice.



LA BOTTEGA

The Spicy Paloma

The Roof at Viceroy Hotel, 124 W. 57th St., 212-707-8008, therooftny.com

2 oz. Casamigos Blanco
¾ oz. Thai Chile Aperol
1 oz. grapefruit juice
½ oz. lime juice
½ oz. simple syrup

Shake and serve with a grapefruit slice.



SPIKY PALOMA

baltz & company