



Top Taco: New Orleans Is Getting A Taco Festival

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The New Orleans food festival scene has grown rapidly over the past few months. First came the [Fried Chicken Festival](#), then came the [Beignet Festival](#). So what's up next?

You (might have) guessed it: a taco festival.

Top Taco NOLA will take over the Riverwalk's Spanish Plaza on Thursday, March 23. 40 chefs from throughout the New Orleans area will compete for the fest's Top Taco prize. Additionally, each restaurant will be paired with a tequila to see who can create the Top Cocktail. A panel of judges, as well as the festival crowd, will decide the winners in both categories.

The festival will kick off at 5:30pm and wrap up around 9:30pm. It will also feature performances from latin music-inspired groups like Otra, Los Poboycitos, Muevelo and Mariachi Jalisco.

The New Orleans Advocate reports that the New Orleans edition of Top Taco is an extension of Top Taco Denver, a festival that began in 2014 and has grown every year since then. The effort is organized by Shane Finkelstein, who runs Nacho Mama's in Elmwood.

In addition to bringing out a number of bars and restaurants, the Denver festival offers other activities like ice sculpture drink luges and beach bar setups. Costumed revelers are also a part of the equation, and attendees are known to adorn themselves in Day of the Dead-style face paint. Considering New Orleans' love for debauchery and costumes, it's not unreasonable to assume similar things will be involved when Top Taco comes to the downtown riverfront.

According to *The New Orleans Advocate*, a number of Latin American and not-so-Latin-American restaurants have already signed on for the festival. The list includes Araña Taqueria, Blue Oak BBQ, Canal Street Bistro, Cowbell, Del Fuego Taqueria, Felipe's, Horn's, Jacques Imo's, La Casita, Mizado, Nacho Mama's, Patois, the Rum House, Tacos and Beer and Velvet Cactus, Vincent's, with more to be added in the future.

A portion of the proceeds from Top Taco NOLA will go to [One Heart NOLA](#), a grassroots nonprofit that supports local foster children and families.