

City Tacos brings its unique offerings to Encinitas



Gerald Torres (Brittany Woolsey)

By **Brittany Woolsey**

A 27-year restaurateur's unique taco concept, which has been popularized in San Diego cities for the last five years, is now making its way to the northern part of the county.

Gerald "Gerry" Torres will open his first North County location of City Tacos in Encinitas at the end of March.

The concept — which he started in North Park in 2014 before opening locations in La Mesa and Imperial Beach — offers atypical tacos, similar to what Torres and his chef grew up with in Mexico City.

“The mentality behind the taco is that it needs to be either carne asada or this or that,” Torres said in the empty nearly 2,000-square-foot space at the Lumberyard center which will soon house his fourth City Tacos restaurant. “When we grew up, everything was a taco to us because you used the tortillas to pair with beautiful guisados (stews).”

Upon opening the first location, Torres offered four taco variations, including pollo with arugula, toasted almonds and raisins; tamarind aioli; wild mushroom and lamb; and chorizo with caramelized pineapple.



Tacos from City Tacos Courtesy

Now, 18 types of tacos — including vegetarian, vegan, paleo and keto options — are offered on the core menu at each restaurant. Additionally, the Encinitas shop will offer six exclusive menu items, such as the vida bowl with flash-fried broccoli, Brussels sprouts, grilled watermelon and lime cilantro rice.

All locations also feature five different types of housemade tortillas including corn, jicama, flour, au jus-dipped and cheese.

The Encinitas spot will boast eight local craft brews on tap, along with alcoholic kombucha and bottled Mexican beer. For non-boozy options, the restaurant makes fresh aguas frescas with seasonal fruits and vegetables, including horchata and water infused with bananas, cucumbers, watermelon and bananas.

Patrons may choose from eight homemade salsas like mango habanero, salsa roja, salsa verde, chipotle, green tomatillo and fig honey oil.

While Torres noted his offerings may not be seen as traditional Mexican food, he said that's beside the point.

“In Mexico, we enjoy all types of food, especially in Mexico City,” he said. “As our cuisine has progressed, it has incorporated a lot of the global ingredients.”

Torres, who has opened about a half dozen other concepts around San Diego County, also said it's important that each of his restaurants provides a fun atmosphere. As customers walk into the Encinitas shop, they'll be greeted with a neon sign reading “Make Salsa, Not War” and classic rock and 1980s songs playing over the speakers. The bathrooms' bubblegum-colored walls are decorated with playful Spanish slang.

The customer service is also expected to be top notch, Torres said.

“We say this is food made with love,” the owner said. “Love has to be present in all parts of my operation, whether its kindness to our guests or the love that our cooks put into our food.”

While an opening date is not yet set, Torres said he's aiming for the end of March. Interested customers should keep an eye on the restaurant's Facebook

page, www.facebook.com/CityTacosEncinitas, for updates on the opening. The Encinitas location plans to give out free tacos to its first 200 guests.

City Tacos will be located at The Lumberyard, 1031 South Coast Highway in suite 101.

For more information, visit www.citytacossd.com