

Forbes

Miami Spice 2019: Where To Eat From August 1 To September 30

While the months of August and September are regarded as “low season” in Miami, it is actually a great time to be in the city for anyone who loves food. [Miami Spice](#) is a two-month-long restaurant promotion organized by the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau (GMCVB). From August 1 through September 30, 2019, participating upscale and fine-dining establishments will offer three-course menus at reduced prices of \$23 for lunch/ brunch and \$39 for dinner (per person). These prices include an appetizer, entrée and dessert. (Tax, tip and service charges are additional, as well as libations, unless otherwise indicated.)

This is Miami Spice’s 18th year and its biggest to date with a total of 257 participating restaurants and 43 new additions, which include: Brad Kilgore’s Ember and Kaido; Michelle Bernstein and Julio Cabrera’s Café La Trova (Trivia: Cabrera was recently named American Bartender of the Year at the 2019 Tales of the Cocktail Spirited Awards); Jose Mendin’s La Placita; Fabio and Maria Trabocchi’s Fiola Miami; Hemant Mathur’s Maska Indian Kitchen & Bar; and Javier Plascencia’s Pez Miami.



James Beard-nominated Brad Kilgore's Alter has been part of Miami Spice over the years, and this year, his Japanese-inspired lounge Kaido and wood-fired American bistro Ember in the Design District are participating as well. "We are looking forward to Miami Spice at all the restaurants," he says. "It's a great opportunity for the restaurants to be able to show new local diners what we are all about." Diners can expect to see signatures on the menu like Kaido's yakitori chicken skewer. "When Daniel Boulud came to eat, he ordered a second one," shares Kilgore, "[For Miami Spice] we are updating it with the addition of chargrilled and glazed house made baby bok choy kimchi." Ember is offering its fried chicken (usually served with caviar butter) with Nashville hot style chicken fat and spicy chili dipping, especially for Miami Spice. "Chef Nick Graves worked in Nashville for years and has been waiting to bust this out." By mid-August, Ember will be debuting lunch for the first time. "We will be offering a Miami Spice style menu with a few a la carte options like an All-American Double Burger with Special Sauce."

Hemant Mathur—the first Indian chef to receive a Michelin star in the US via his (now-shuttered) Devi in New York—opened Maska in Midtown Miami last December 2018.

"Miami Spice is an event that locals look forward to in order to try the best restaurants in town and we couldn't miss the opportunity of sharing our concept given it is also our first year," shares Hindi-speaking Portuguese restaurant manager Cristiano Azevedo (who worked previously at Indian Accent in both London and New York). "We decided to portfolio dishes we're getting known for and [that are] representative of the various states of India so people could be exposed to the different regional cuisines within one menu." These include Maska chicken, the restaurant's version of a butter chicken (a must-order!), *khoya* mushroom (*paneer* stuffed portobello mushroom), crab *tadka* dumplings, and *kulcha* (get the one stuffed with mushroom and truffle). Maska's Miami Spice offering includes a complimentary cocktail—the Aam-Chi martini, a gin-based cocktail topped with mango lassi foam, "an aperitif inspired by modern and classic India," describes Azevedo.





The Maska Chicken-- the restaurant's take on the butter chicken-- is a main course option on its Miami Spice menu MASKA MIAMI

Also in its first year, Pez, developed by Baja culinary movement founder Javier Plascencia, "will take guests to Baja with flavor combinations you won't find anywhere else in Miami," says owner Frank Neri. Apart from a selection of *tostadas* and tacos for lunch, hearty mains like *pulpo en mole de aceitunas* and pork belly *al vesuvio* can be had for dinner.

As for Novikov, the first US outpost of the London and Moscow celeb favorite, this is their second year. "Our first year participating in Miami Spice could not have been more successful," discloses Philippine-born head chef Oliver Lustado.

"While Novikov Miami debuted at the end of the season, Miami Spice was a great vessel to help grow our awareness within the community. For our second year participating in Miami Spice, we are thrilled to announce we will be offering a three-course dinner menu in addition to lunch. It will be our first year unveiling a specially priced evening menu." Must-orders from the Japanese-Chinese outpost include chicken and morel *siu mai*, spicy prawn money bags, *robata* salmon and black bean chicken.

Speaking of the Philippines, while there aren't yet any dedicated Filipino restaurants that have emerged in Miami proper per se, diners who would like to experience Filipino flavors can visit Pao by Paul Qui at the Faena Hotel, where head chef Benjamin Murray is serving *cobia kinilaw* and fried chicken with banana ketchup. Sister restaurant Los Fuegos by Francis Mallmann is also in participation with mains like local snapper *a la plancha*, ribeye *churrasco* and cast-iron wild mushroom to look forward to.

Options are the name of the game at Santiago Gomez's Tacology at Brickell City Center, where the pioneer of modern Mexican cuisine in Miami has created a menu "where clients can choose from our different taco offerings," in addition to a starter and dessert. His fine-dining Cantina La Veinte is also participating.

Long-time participant Soho House South Beach's picturesque Cecconi's is mixing new seasonal items and local favorites like bucatini topped with bottarga and pappardelle with lamb ragu. "It's a great way to reach the local community and attract new foodies in the area," says executive chef Sergio Sigala.

"Ariete loves the Miami Spice time of the year," says chef-owner Mike Beltran, known for his progressive American cuisine influenced by his Cuban heritage, at his popular Coconut Grove location. "It really is an opportunity to introduce so many new guests to the restaurant. This year, we have actually changed the format completely. The first course and dessert course are completely family style so you get every dish!"

