

flavor on wheels hits El Paso neighborhoods

maddie ramos | staff reporter

A romas escape from different trucks as the El Paso Food Truck Circus opens for business.

About 12 different trucks gather every Wednesday and Friday to form the El Paso Food Truck Circus, providing El Pasoans with a variety of cultures and options instead of the Tex-Mex that El Paso is known for.

"The scene is definitely growing and well accepted," Christopher Cabral, owner of The Soup Truck, said. "Week nights in the Northeast are amazing. There's nothing like it. People come out even when it's freezing outside. El Pasoans are tired of the same restaurant chains and love going to new places to try different foods. With new food truck parks like the Boardwalk at Ricky's Paintball, I only see the scene getting bigger and better."

Food truck parks like the Boardwalk, located on Zaragoza and Pali, across the street from Oasis Lanes provide trucks with a permanent place to set up.

"As the nice summer nights come, I can see it [the Boardwalk] getting busier," Cabral said. "Having a set location for three to four days a week is good. Since the Circus [Food Truck Circus] travels west, east, and north east, some of the regulars don't want to drive the 45 minutes to the Westside."

The Food Truck Circus runs on Wednesday in the Northeast in the parking lot of Title Max at 9501 Dyer, and on Friday on the East side in the parking lot of EP Fitness at 11705 Montwood.

"My experience was exciting," sophomore

Desirae Gomez said. "It was interesting because I had never been there before and never seen any of those types of foods. I was excited to be able to try them all in one place."

Edgar Ruiz, owner of the Street Kitchen food truck, said that his truck helped him find adventure in his life.

"I don't really do it for the money," Ruiz said. "I had been in the corporate world for about 12 years doing executive stuff, so I decided to go and do some work for myself, so I said, 'Let's give it a shot.'"

Apart from his truck, Ruiz runs a restaurant spin-off of his food truck called the Street Kitchen Place, which he said was helpful for his truck's operation.

"You really need a place for prep," Ruiz said. "With that being said, you need a kitchen to work in instead of just working out of the truck, and we've had that now for about two months."

Depending on the night and location, owner of Stuffed food truck Carlos Vela said the trucks can make anywhere from \$100 to \$400 each night.

"There are a lot of different factors," Vela said. "If it's cold out, less people show up, but then there are other nights where it's nice out and we clear \$400. I wanted to own and run my own business and I did, and it's a learning experience for the owners."

The trucks are not only a learning experience for vendors, but a family experience for El Pasoans.

"We try to come out every week," Michelle Estrada, a frequent customer, said. "We've tried a lot of different trucks. We come mostly for the food, but it is a family affair. The food has always been really good, and I don't think we've ever been disappointed."



jonathan castro | stampede

El Pasoan Cynthia Covington orders tacos from the Street Kitchen food truck while her children wait at a table set up next to the truck. Owner Edgar Ruiz also owns a restaurant spin-off of the truck called the Street Kitchen Place. Crowd favorites include Cochinita Pibil Street Style Tacos, Carne Asada Tacos, Mexico City Alambre with Cheese, Westside Taco, and Carne Asada Fries.

jonathan castro | stampede

Comfort Co. Tasty Eats owner Michael Diaz de Leon takes an order on a Friday night at the Food Truck Circus at EP Fitness on Saul Kleinfield. Among the dishes he offers are the Fried Chicken sandwich and Mac and Cheese.

jonathan castro | stampede

The Mini Donut Depot is known for its sweet concoctions such as s'mores donuts which include marshmallow topping and chocolate sauce, sprinkled with graham cracker crumbs.

El Pasoan Kim Zabala enjoys food from The Curb with friends at the Food Truck Circus' new location on 9501 Dyer in the parking lot of Title Max. Because of its increased popularity, the Circus had to move from its previous location on Hondo Pass to a larger parking lot.

annabeth burgess | stampede

Christopher Cabral, owner and chef of the Soup Truck, preps for a night at the eastside Food Truck Circus on Saul Kleinfield and Montwood. The circle of trucks opens from 7 to 10 p.m. Cabral offers four different soups nightly as well as corn cake with every cup of soup.

annabeth burgess | stampede

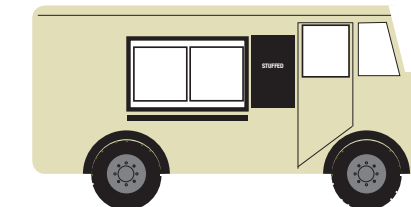
Ranks

Members of the journalism department tried all the food trucks at the Food Truck Circus at 11705 Montwood and here are their top choices

1
The Soup Truck:
Chicken
Tortilla soup.



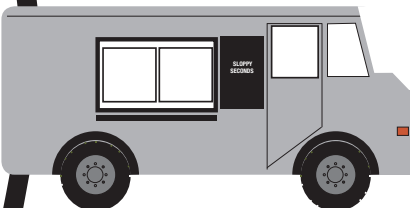
2
Stuffed:
Gourmet
Signature
Burger



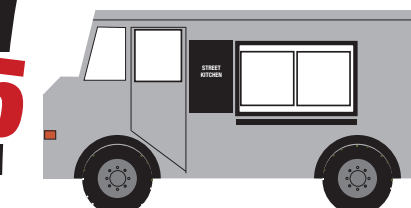
3
Comfort Co.
Tasty Eats:
Fried Chicken
sandwich



4
Sloppy
Seconds:
Original Joe



5
Street
Kitchen:
Loaded Fries



6
Pacific Asian
Food Co.:
Chicken
Dumpling



tickling the taste buds



cover and spread design jonathan castro

Fall fun at the maze

ari amezaga | staff reporter

Crisp hay crunches under the feet of La Union maze owners Lucy and Robert Sondgeroth as they prepare to open the gates to customers.

The maze, located in La Union, New Mexico, opened in 2000. The corn maze was the only activity offered, but in the past 15 years the Sondgeroths have expanded to include more than 13 activities to the fall event.

"In the beginning we had no idea if the corn maze would work out, but it did," Lucy Sondgeroth said. "We wanted to try something new and different, and almost 16 years later we are still here every fall. The maze has grown a lot in popularity so we try to improve it and add to it every year."

The 13-acre corn maze is open for seven to eight weekends from Sept. 19-Nov. 9. Carved into this year's maze are numerous honey combs, a beehive, a bee, and the words, "Bee amazed."

One of the more popular activities is pumpkin picking. It's a 20 minute hay ride to the 12 acre patch where customers can choose from 10 types of pumpkins and take home at 50 cents a pound.

"When I got here I didn't expect the pumpkins to be so huge," El Pasoan Jordan Hernandez said. "My family had such an amazing time picking which pumpkins to take home. Our favorites were the smaller and uglier ones because they have so much character and are so unique and different."

The corn maze is open until 10 p.m. were locals can attend the 'haunted maze.' It features different kinds of "monsters" and props.

"This was my family's first visit and



Walking out of the maze after 35 minutes, the Sanchez family is happy to have completed the last stop of their annual festivities. "This year was a bit more difficult but we pushed through and made it out," Edwardo Sanchez said. The maze takes on a bee theme this year.

we were a little skeptical about it," Jenn Crawford, mother of three, said. "But once we got here we loved the atmosphere. There is fun for the whole family and the food here is amazing. We're definitely coming back next year and hopefully make it an annual tradition."

La Union also features ribbon fries, kettle corn, and brisket sandwiches. The most popular food item is the roasted corn on the cob. It's roasted on a grill for 15 minutes before being buttered up and served in tin foil.

Maze-goers can watch pig races where spectators are asked to race against the pigs. The races take place three times on Saturdays and Sundays only. Junior Josh White said he enjoyed his visit and recommends it for those who like a

challenge.

"I wanted to try something that I had never done before," White said. "I was looking forward to the maze although I was expecting it to be difficult. My favorite activity was probably the pig races. This is definitely a good place to hang out with family or friends."

The last day to attend is Sunday, Nov. 8 when the maze will be celebrating its "Bring Your Pet to the Maze" day.

"Now that the corn maze is almost closing I feel that I should hurry up and go with my friends," freshman Amy Saucedo said. "This is a good place to make memories so that one day when I'm older I'll be able to look back and be happy that I didn't let an experience like this pass."



One of the more popular attractions is the pumpkin patch where people can pick their own pumpkins at 50 cents a pound. (photo by jasmine tabler)



Racing toward the finish line against five pigs, 8-year-old Evan finishes first after a close race. "I felt like I was cheating, but once I went in I saw that the pigs were pretty determined." (photo by genesis barraza)



The maze also includes a number of activities including a petting zoo with goats and donkeys. There's also a balloon jump, and handmade tube slides. Ages 6 and up pay \$11, and kids 2-5 years old get in for \$5. Active military pay \$9. The ticket includes access to all 13 activities. (photo by genesis barraza)



genesis barraza/stampede



genesis barraza/stampede



genesis barraza/stampede

ALSO...

THROUGH OCT. 31
-KLAQ HAUNTED HOUSE
-RICKY'S PAINTBALL
1772 PALI DR.
-7PM-1AM
-\$12-AT THE DOOR
-\$15-FAST PASS

NOV. 6-8
-"A CHRISTMAS FAIR" BY THE JR. LEAGUE OF EL PASO
-EL PASO CONVENTION CENTER
-\$10-ADULT
-\$9-MILITARY AND CHILDREN 6-12

NOV. 7
-LA PAZ DIA DE LOS MUERTOS CELEBRATION
-LA PAZ FAITH MEMORIAL AND SPIRITUAL CENTER
-9AM-5PM
-FREE

NOV. 12
-TASTE OF EL PASO
-CONVENTION CENTER PLAZA
-COCKTAIL HOUR AT 5PM, DINING STARTS AT 6PM
-\$45

NOV. 14
VEGETARIAN SOCIETY OF EL PASO COMPASSIONATE THANKSGIVING DINNER
SUMMIT BALLROOM AND CONFERENCE CENTER
6:30PM-8:30PM
\$25-NON-MEMBERS, \$22-MEMBERS, \$15-STUDENTS
RESERVATIONS REQUIRED BY NOV. 10

Tree art by maddie ramos



jonathan castro
jordan steyer

staff reporters

In a coffee crazed society, it's nice to know that there are still alternatives to frappes and double-shot espressos. Walk into Tippi Teas at one of two locations on the west side where jars of loose leaf tea line the walls. Seventy-five different kinds of teas, from the U.S. to Africa are just a cup away.

Co-owner Jose Murguia said that tea starts conversation.

"Both my wife and I enjoy tea quite a bit," Murguia said. "We were living in the south of Mexico, and we had a lot of herbal infusions. From there, we started getting more and more into it [infusing teas]. Then we did two years of traveling across the world, while we attended workshops. We don't have a certification; it's more of an experience for us. I think it's more valuable because you can get it [a certification] online. Finally, we

came home and opened up Tippi Teas. We both have marketing degrees. We felt disappointed with how the world

"A tippy tea plant is a plant that has a lot of tips, so it means it's a high quality plant. Tippi also makes reference to the Native Americans and so we changed the y for an i and that's it. Tippi Teas."

JOSE MURGIA
co-owner

worked. We wanted to sell something that we believed in, like fair trade, natural drinks and ecology."

Tippi Teas isn't just about tea. The menu also includes all natural smoothies, fresh juice, tea squares, pound cake and granola. Prices range from \$3 to \$5 per tea. Juices and smoothies run about \$5.

"There are so many herbal aromas," employee Kimberlee Taylor said. "We use almond milk and when people order it, we steam it. Then it starts to smell almondy, nutty, herbal and it just smells good. We make tea pop and I just think the teas are extraordinary. They all have health benefits. We don't use artificial sweeteners or syrups in any of our drinks, so everything is fresh. That really makes a difference."

The first Tippi Teas opened at 5034 Doniphan five years ago, but demand for a location closer to UTEP led to the opening of a second store four months ago at 2501 N. Stanton. Senior Diego Oropeza recently discovered Tippi Teas

near UTEP.

"My friend and I found it after searching for tea places in El Paso," Oropeza said. "The barista introduced me to all kinds of teas that I hadn't heard of. She said that a particular one helped with allergies. I ordered the hot orange chai tea. Tippi Teas has a cool atmosphere; it's a cool place to just hang out. The staff is helpful and friendly. I even liked the music they played."

Everything about Tippi Teas makes it unique from any other place in El Paso, according to Murguia.

"The atmosphere is inspiring," he said. "Since tea creates conversation, with conversation you can talk to somebody else. That somebody else will always give a little bit of their energy to you. When you have tea, it makes you stop and think. By doing that, you get somewhere. That is where you get inspired. A cup of tea can clear everything, if you are having a bad day, it can make it better. If you are having a good day, it can make it better."



Co-owner Jose Murguia prepares a white cherry tea for a customer at the Doniphan location. (all photos by jonathan castro)



Located on the city's westside, TI:ME at Montecillo offers a unique feel. Its artistic flair and variety of restaurants and shops make it a

SHOPPING CENTER LIKE NO OTHER

jordan steyer staff reporter

In a Walmart dominated society, it's nice to see a place for local businesses to flourish. TI:ME at Montecillo, located at 5001 N Mesa, gives young entrepreneurs a chance to be successful.

TI:ME, which opened in July 2014, fits 11 stores and three restaurants. Some of the businesses include Lucky Bean, a handmade jewelry shop, Mom's Fresh Juice, the newest addition, which sells unpasteurized, cold pressed juice, and Stonewood, an American steakhouse.

The trio behind the idea, Octavio Gomez, Nick Salgado, and Rudy Valdes, own the three restaurants, and oversee the developments.

"We saw a need in El Paso for smaller retail spaces," Gomez said. "TI:ME stands for The Independent Modern Entrepreneur. These spaces are a chance for young business people to test out their ideas. We pick them based on their ideas, which seemed like concepts that El Paso would embrace."

Senior Andrew Molina, who worked at Montecillo, has been to TI:ME and says that every time he goes, it is like a new experience.

"I was expecting a regular coffee and donut shop," Molina said, "but

when I walked in, it wasn't what I expected. I've been there three times, but sometimes my parents will bring me donuts. The shops and restaurants there do not disappoint. Everything is so unique. It really is like no other place in the city."

Located about 13 miles from campus, on the west side of town, it can be inconvenient for some to make it to the shopping center. This is the case for senior Juan Grimaldo.

"I've heard of the shops at TI:ME," Grimaldo said. "I really like going to different local places, but it is really far. My friends have told me about Mother of Pearl Vinyl, and I am really into buying records. I have a small collection. I would like to go eventually because I am interested in seeing if it is different from other record stores in town."

The architecture of TI:ME makes it unique. The developers used train cars for many of the buildings, and even bought the old El Paso Times sign to hang up in the front.

"Doing these things is a good way to take something that might be considered trash and put it to good use," Gomez said. "People have really liked TI:ME, they are spending their entire day there. First they get coffee, then shop and walk around, and then they finish the day off with a meal at one of the restaurants."

Clearly visible from Mesa St., the sign for TI:ME is made of recycled shipping containers and the former neon sign from the El Paso Times building. "No one in town had done anything with them," Octavio Gomez, one of three owners, said, "but we loved the way they looked." (photos by jonathan castro)



Located inside Hillside Coffee and Donuts, the hand illustrated calendar highlights events for the month.

The Backyard Patio sells terrarium kits, succulents, homemade soaps and bath salts, and accessories for home and gardens.



Located at TI:ME, Trendy Decor sells locally made gifts and decorations for the home.



PLACES AT
TI:ME
MONTECILLO

SHOP AT

Oath
Al Design
Lucky Bean
Modern Hookah
Mother of Pearl
Trendy Decor
Backyard Patio
High Point
Le Trendy
Tousled

EAT &
DRINK AT

Hillside Coffee
and Donuts
Stonewood
Malolam

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