

# 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."

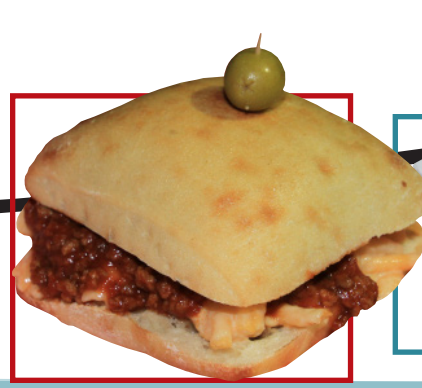
Depending on the night and location, owner of Stuffed food truck Carlos Vela said the trucks can make anywhere from \$100 to \$400 each night.

"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."

## tickling the taste buds



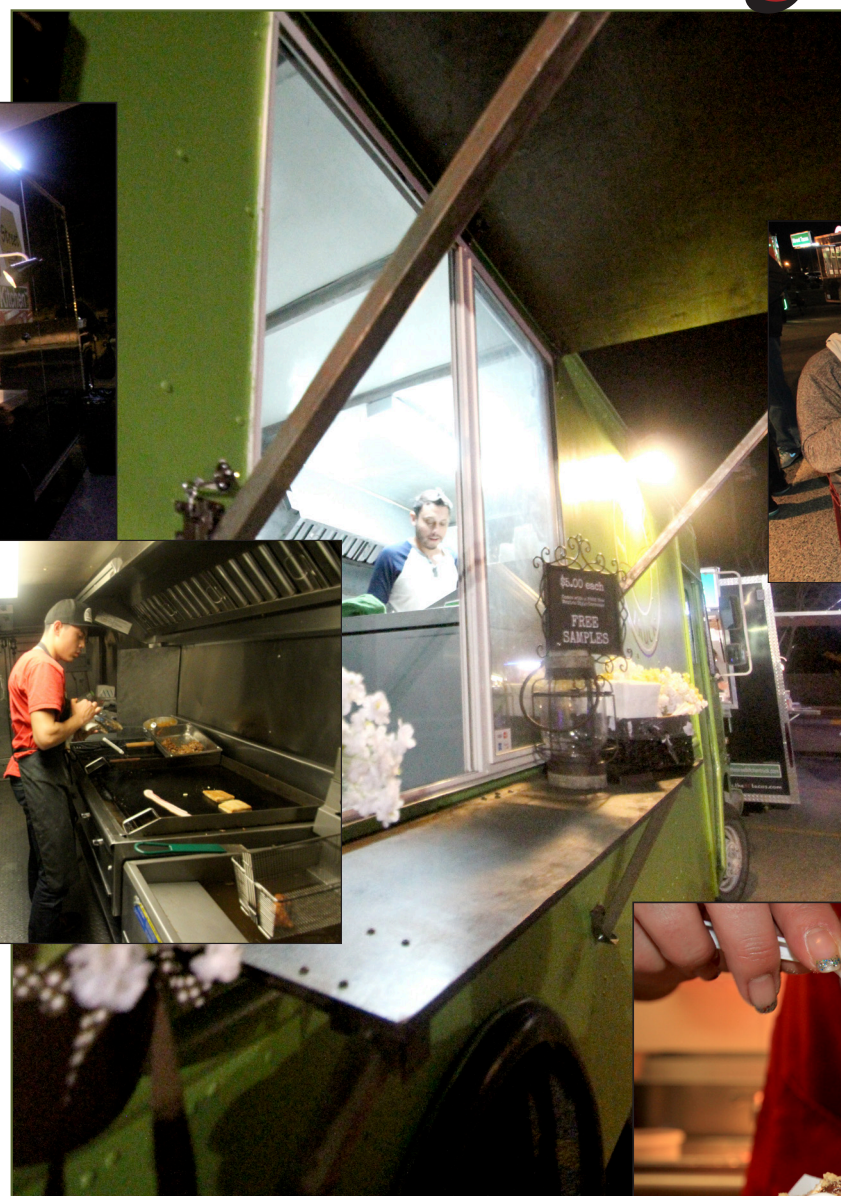
jonathan castro | stampede

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

Cristopher 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.



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## 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



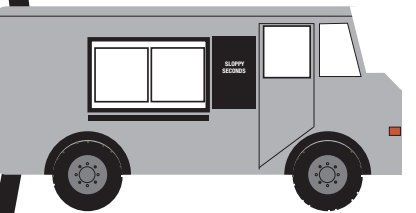
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Comfort Co. Tasty Eats: Fried Chicken sandwich



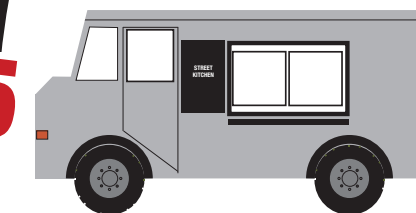
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Sloppy Seconds: Original Joe



5

Street Kitchen: Loaded Fries



6

Pacific Asian Food Co.: Chicken Dumpling

