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SAVOR THE MONTH OF JUNE WITH CALIFORNIA AVOCADO MONTH

California Avocado Commission is taking over San Diego's Little Italy Food Hall in partnership with Sam Zien of Not Not Tacos and a diverse array of restaurants for a month-long celebration of exclusive California avocado dishes

IRVINE, Calif. (May 28, 2019) – June has arrived and it's time to celebrate as California Avocado Month finally unfolds! The California Avocado Commission (CAC) has partnered with all of the unique restaurants found at the newly unveiled Little Italy Food Hall.

The San Diego eatery opened in 2018 in the bustling neighborhood it was proudly named after. Currently with six restaurants and full bar, the Little Italy Food Hall is steadily becoming a community cornerstone located at the famous Piazza della Famiglia. While the full roster of Little Italy Food Hall restaurants will participate in the celebration, CAC enlisted the well-known culinary talents of Sam Zien, of Not Not Tacos, to develop two recipes that authentically capture southern California cuisine for his restaurant Not Not Tacos.

Zien's creations respectfully bend the idea of what people have come to understand tacos to be. Zien prides himself on creating innovative and often unexpected dishes that honor the Golden State's flavors and distinct personality. Thanks to his commitment to fresh, California ingredients, newcomers and regulars won't be surprised to see California avocados embraced on Zien's June menu.

"What I really love about California avocados is the delicious versatility. Whether I'm enjoying a simple halved avocado with nothing but salt and pepper or preparing a sophisticated dish, they allow so much possibility thanks to their creamy texture and unmistakable flavor," said Zien.

Inspired by heart-healthy California-grown avocados, Zien developed two new recipes that complement his current creative menu offerings.

First, Zien's Pearl Couscous with California Avocado and Crispy Tofu offers as many flavors as it does textures. For example, the combination of the recipe's spicy chili coincides with the avocado's creamy quality to provide a layered complexity. "This dish is a great example of how something as subtle as the California avocado can really impact a single bite," said Zien.

For a new twist on an old classic, Zien specially prepared a California Avocado and Crab Flatbread with Garlic Aioli. Zien shared, "Some chefs don't like to experiment with tradition but for this flatbread concept, I found that California avocados pair perfectly with the garlic aioli

thanks to their similar nutty undertones. Not to mention this recipe is great to share around the table!”

In honor of California Avocado Month, Zien’s Not Not Tacos looks forward to offering his Pearl Couscous with California Avocado and Crispy Tofu and California Avocado and Crab Flatbread with Garlic Aioli on his menu for the month of June. Joining him at the Little Italy Food Hall are Ambrogio15, Bobboi Natural Gelato, Mein St. Asian Kitchen, Roast Meat & Sandwich Shop Wicked Maine Lobster and the Little Italy Food Hall Bar who all look forward to offering their own limited time California avocado fare.

Going beyond the delicious celebration, California avocados are a heart-healthy superfood that provide “good” fats to one’s diet. Furthermore, one-third of a medium avocado (50 g) has 80 calories and contributes nearly 20 vitamins and minerals, making it a nutrient-dense choice.

For Zien’s California avocado creations, other seasonal recipes and more, visit CaliforniaAvocado.com/recipes, and follow along on Facebook at [Facebook.com/CaliforniaAvocados](https://www.facebook.com/CaliforniaAvocados), and on Twitter and Instagram at [@ca_avocados](https://www.instagram.com/ca_avocados).

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PEARL COUSCOUS WITH CALIFORNIA AVOCADO AND CRISPY TOFU

Recipe created by Sam Zien of [Not Not Tacos](http://NotNotTacos.com) for the California Avocado Commission

Serves: 4

Prep time: 30 minutes

Cook time: 30 minutes

Total time: 60 minutes

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. extra firm tofu
- 2 1/2 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil, divided
- 1/2 tsp. sea salt
- 1 tsp. chili powder
- 1 1/2 cups water
- 1 cup pearl couscous
- 3 large shiitake mushrooms, stems removed and thinly sliced
- 2 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 2 tsp. soy sauce
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and minced
- 1 tsp. minced ginger
- 1/2 tsp. sugar
- 2 tsp. sriracha
- 3 radishes, thinly sliced
- 1/4 cup finely diced red onion
- 1/4 cup finely chopped green onion
- 1/3 cup diced tomato
- 3 Tbsp. finely chopped cilantro
- 1/8 tsp. coarse sea salt, or to taste

- 2 ripe, Fresh California Avocados, seeded, peeled and diced

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.
2. Drain the tofu by removing from the package, lay flat and slice in half horizontally. Place the slices in a single layer of 3-4 sheets of paper towels. Top tofu with additional paper towels and a heavy object (i.e. cast-iron pan) and let sit 15 minutes.
3. Uncover the tofu, cut into small cubes and place into a large mixing bowl.
4. Add about 1/2 Tbsp. olive oil and season with salt and chili powder.
5. Heat a large oven-safe pan over medium heat and add the seasoned tofu cubes.
6. Place the pan over medium heat, and cook, shaking the pan occasionally until tofu begins to brown on all sides, about 5 minutes.
7. Transfer the pan to the oven and cook tofu for 20-25 minutes or until crispy, remove and set aside
 - *Alternatively, after seasoning the tofu cubes you can place them in a single layer in an air fryer and cook at 375 degrees F for 15 minutes.*
8. While the tofu bakes, bring water to a boil in a medium saucepan and add couscous and shiitake mushrooms; stir then reduce heat to a simmer, cover and cook until the water is absorbed, about 10 – 15 minutes.
9. Remove from heat, put in a large bowl and allow to cool.
10. Combine lemon juice, soy sauce, garlic, ginger, sugar, sriracha and remaining olive oil in a small bowl and mix until sugar dissolves. Set aside until ready to serve.
11. Once cooled, add radishes, red onion, green onion, tomato, cilantro and sea salt.
12. Dress the couscous mixture evenly then spoon on plates, adding the crispy tofu and diced avocado.

CALIFORNIA AVOCADO AND CRAB FLATBREAD WITH GARLIC AIOLI

Recipe created by Sam Zien of [Not Not Tacos](#) for the California Avocado Commission

Serves: 8

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cook time: 10 minutes

Total time: 25 minutes

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 1/2 Tbsp. garlic, peeled and minced
- 1/2 Tbsp. avocado oil or extra virgin olive oil
- 1/2 Tbsp. lemon juice
- 1/2 Tbsp. parsley, finely chopped
- 1/2 tsp. sea salt
- 4 medium store-bought flatbreads
- 8 oz. crab meat
- 2 ripe, Fresh California Avocados, seeded, peeled and diced
- 6 Tbsp. shredded Monterey jack cheese
- 1 red chili, sliced thinly
- 1 tsp. ground black pepper

- 1 Tbsp. micro cilantro or fresh parsley, chopped

Instructions:

1. To make the aioli, combine mayonnaise, garlic, oil, lemon juice, parsley and salt. Mix well to combine, cover and chill.
2. In the meantime, heat oven to 350 degrees F to warm flatbreads for 5 minutes. Remove flatbreads from oven, set aside and turn oven to broil.
3. Spread the chilled aioli on the flatbreads then top with crab, avocado, cheese and red chile slices evenly on each flatbread.
4. Place the flatbreads on a baking sheet under the broiler until the cheese begins to melt and becomes golden, about 5-8 minutes.
5. Remove from oven, top with ground pepper and micro cilantro.

**Large avocados are recommended for these recipes. A large avocado averages about 8 ounces. If using smaller or larger size avocados adjust the quantity accordingly.

About the California Avocado Commission

Created in 1978, the California Avocado Commission strives to enhance the premium positioning of California avocados through advertising, promotion and public relations, and engages in related industry activities. California avocados are cultivated with uncompromising dedication to quality and freshness, by more than 3,000 growers in the Golden State. The California Avocado Commission serves as the official information source for California avocados and the California avocado industry. Visit CaliforniaAvocado.com, or join us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/CaliforniaAvocados) at [Facebook.com/CaliforniaAvocados](https://www.facebook.com/CaliforniaAvocados) and [@CA_Avocados](https://twitter.com/CA_Avocados) on [Twitter](https://www.twitter.com/CA_Avocados), [Pinterest](https://www.pinterest.com/CA_Avocados) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/CA_Avocados) for updates.

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