

Dig In

Toronto's food truck scene is a must-eat destination

By Heather Hudson

When you're enjoying the vibe of a city, the last thing you want to do is desert the vibrant streetscape to refuel. In Toronto, you don't have to.

The food truck scene in the city has exploded in recent years, offering a mouthwatering selection of cuisines from traditional fare, like hot dogs and burgers, to the exceptionally creative (fawaffle, anyone?).

As you cruise around the city or hit the summer's festivals, chances are, you'll stumble upon a foodie experience just waiting to happen. Better yet, grab a map and consult torontofoodtrucks.ca (@foodtrucksTO on Twitter) to find out where your next gastronomical adventure will be. It's a great way to explore the city and experience some amazing food that you won't find at a sit-down diner.

Need some ideas to get started? Here's just a small selection of crowd favourites. Hunt them down and get eating!

ALIJANDRO'S KITCHEN

Billing their food experience as "culinary culture shock," owners Samer Khatib and Tarek Jaber blend Mexican and Mediterranean dishes, including tacos, salads and desserts. Their signature offering is the "fawaffle," a waffle cone made from falafel batter. It's the texture of a sweet waffle cone but with that savoury falafel flavour. Try it with standard fillings or dig into the more substantial avocado chicken fawaffle. Bonus for diners with dietary restrictions: The fawaffle is naturally gluten-free, high in protein and low in carbs. So indulge!



Right: A new taste sensation: the fawaffle, from Alijandro's Kitchen

FOOD TRUCKS



Courtesy of FeasTO

Hungry festivalgoers line up for some sustenance from FeasTO

BISTRO TOUR

If you're looking for an upscale meal, Bistro Tour is about as sophisticated as food-truck dining gets. A team led by Scott Yates, a highly experienced chef and caterer, serves up a rotating menu with an emphasis on local and seasonal ingredients. They're proud to serve civilians the same fare they've cooked up for a veritable who's who of Canadian diners, including three Canadian prime ministers. Look for influences from A-list chefs like Lynn Crawford, Mark McEwen, Giada de Laurentiis and Vikram Vij, each of whom this team has worked with. Tuck into sophisticated offerings like gnocchi poutine, maple tea crusted salmon and sous vide pork belly with apple bacon jam.

BUSTER'S SEA COVE TRUCK

This iconic truck may have been featured on Food Network's *Eat St.* (season four), but Buster's Sea Cove certainly doesn't need the publicity. Hordes of native Torontonians make regular pilgrimages to the truck's St. Lawrence Market location to chow down on an array of fresh, delicious delights from the sea. The food truck keeps it simple with Maine-style lobster and crab rolls, plus Ensenada-style fish and shrimp tacos. Hailed for their commitment to quality ingredients, the proof is in the tasting.

FEASTO

Take heart, dumpling lovers: Canada's first dumpling truck will be roaming around Toronto all summer long. Owners Cam Pounder and Ada Mok shot to fame after competing on Food Network's *Food Truck Face Off* in 2015. (Spoiler alert: They won.) Today they have more varieties of dumplings than you ever thought possible, including crispy shrimp; edamame and spinach; red curry sweet potato; duck and foie gras; pumpkin; lobster; and crab, in addition to the original pork. While you're at the truck's window, you might as well try the delectable banh mi sandwiches, baos and a selection of noodle dishes. You won't regret it.

FIDEL GASTRO'S

Side up to Priscilla, Toronto's self-proclaimed "loudest, most-extreme retro streetfood kitchen on wheels" for a gastronomic moment you won't soon forget. Voted Canada's number one food truck by Canadian Living magazine, her reputation precedes her. Get your hands around the *Gorgeous Jorge*, a peanut butter and pulled-pork sandwich with bacon



A tumultuous take on pulled pork:
Fidel Gastro's Porknado



Kayla Zanardi

jam. Or tuck into Kingzilla, rootbeer braised short ribs topped with kimchi. Pick up a fork for Cuban Mac Cheese or Beets by Dre, (pickled heirloom beets, creamy purple slaw and jalapeno aioli). Looking for a side? Pad thai, wasabi fries or banh mi slaw will complement just about anything on the menu.

LUCHADOR HIGH-FLYING TRAVELLING TAQUERO

With a name like that, the food should be authentic. And it is! Your server, wearing a Mexican wrestling mask, is your guide as you're transported to another realm, where Mexican fusion cuisine will give your palate a workout in the very best way possible. Think Korean taco on naan bread with crumbled tofu, jack cheese and broccoli slaw. Or shrimp madras. How about a

spicy Philly cheese steak? Or the ever-popular pork steam bun taco? This is one dining experience you will not want to miss.

RANCHO RELAXO

If you've ever spent time among Toronto hipsters, you've probably heard of Rancho Relaxo's College Street restaurant and music venue. A better-kept secret is Rancho Relaxo's side gig, Blazing Kitchen, which caters to film sets across the city. But you don't have to be roaming Little Italy or be a visiting movie star to enjoy this signature Mexican cuisine in a banging food truck. Check out the gourmet cornflake-crust ed fish tacos or the chicken or portobello mushroom quesadillas. They've also got chicken, beef or veggie burritos. And these are just the highlights of an extensive menu that may have you chin scratching in indecision for several moments before you order.

UNTAMED CHEF

The family that cooks together, stays together. That's the motto behind chef Michael Skan's family-operated food truck, which offers super high-quality street food for adventurous (and silly) palates. Approach with curiosity and courage, and you won't leave disappointed. From avocado fries and sweet tater tacos, to the Italian stallion sandwich, cheeseburger spring rolls and deep-fried pies, your taste buds will be shocked and delighted.

WAFEL BAR

Inspired by a decadent stop at a Belgian farmers' market, owners Marco and Elena Torres vowed to bring the delicious taste of Liege waffles back to Canada. Not your typical waffle, the dough is born from a Belgian family recipe that dates back to the 1950s. Served up fresh and fluffy, you can choose from toppings like Belgian chocolate fudge, dulce de leche, Nutella and berry compote. Savoury waffles, milkshakes, coffee and hot chocolate are also made to order. **It's**

The Untamed Chef's massive rig awaits customers at a downtown plaza

