

San Francisco Chronicle

Datebook



Photos by John Sebastian Russo / The Chronicle 2

Roger Feely squeezes a lime onto a batch of bhelpuri, an Indian street food that he prepared during last year's Eat Real Festival.

RESTAURANTS

Celebrate at Eat Real

'Authentic and accessible' event offers street food, demonstrations

By Amanda Gold
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By late summer, we've circled the tasting tent at SF Chefs, rocked out to live music with food to match at Outside Lands, and snacked our way through lumpia and steamed buns at San Francisco's Street Food Festival.

In the Bay Area, it would be all too easy to get food fest fatigue.

Still, this weekend, more than 100,000 food truck fanatics, DIYers and eager students are expected to turn out for the third annual Eat Real Festival.

Beginning Friday and running through Sunday, 60 street food vendors, 30 craft food market vendors, artisan producers and culinary instructors will descend on Oakland's Jack London Square, ready to provide workshops and demonstrations — and plenty of good grub — to hungry visitors.

This year's lineup includes a few noteworthy additions, like



Eat Real Festival

1-8 p.m. Fri., 11 a.m.-8 p.m. Sat., 11 a.m.-7 p.m. Sun. Jack London Square, Oakland. Free. All transactions are cash only. eatrealfest.com.

Visitors spread out to enjoy the varied offerings at last year's Eat Real Festival. The event celebrating street food returns this weekend.

"pop-up pairings" and a communal bread oven that will blaze throughout the weekend. And getting in the door doesn't cost a dime.

"This event is such a great entry point for people who are curious about food but haven't been able to go to food events in the past because of cost," says festival director Susan Coss.

Founded by Anya Fernald in *Festival continues on E2*

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Eat Real Fest rolls into Oakland

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2008 as a way to connect visitors with chefs, farmers and producers in a hands-on way, the Eat Real Festival has successfully done just that, as evidenced by each year's growing crowds.

"We want it to be authentic and accessible without being too precious," Coss says.

In addition to the free admission, that means all street food items are \$5 or less. And while the market products may cost a little more, Coss says everyone is doing their best to keep prices down.

Demonstrations are also an attraction. The new community oven will provide continuous baking, some of it hands-on, she says. Visitors will have the opportunity to



Roslyn Bullas of Berkeley pedals a bike to power a blender making garden mint chutney at the Soul Cocina booth at last year's Eat Real Fest.

John Sebastian Russo / The Chronicle 2010

learn how to make basic doughs for pizza, pie and bread.

Saturday and Sunday will feature live music; workshops on making everything from mozzarella to bitters; butchery, jam making and sauerkraut contests; and "pop-

up pairings," which will bring together rotating teams of artisan producers at a single stand — think croissants from Starter Bakery with jam from Blue Chair Fruit. There's even a panel on food literature for those seeking armchair ad-

ventures.

Joining the ranks this year will be vendors like the Wow truck from 2007 Chronicle Rising Star chef Tim Luym, Little Green Cyclo's Vietnamese street food, and PieTisserie from Jaynelle St. Jean, who's thrilled to be on

board after a year and a half in business.

"I wanted to be involved last year," she admits, "but I just wasn't ready."

This year, she will be — ready, that is, to serve 2,000 hand-held treats from her stand built to resemble a thrown-open provincial window.

She makes classic pies from unusual ingredients. This weekend, for example, she plans to serve a pie made with Okinawa purple-fleshed potatoes and sweet potato; another has a beet filling. For the less daring, she'll also offer chocolate cream pie.

St. Jean says her philosophy melds naturally with that of the Eat Real fest.

"I'm really interested in how food and lifestyle intersect," she explains. "I think that homemade foods — foods that are made from scratch — are important not only to the

environment but to one's body and spirit."

St. Jean joins veteran vendors like Luis Abundis, whose Nieves Cinco de Mayo cart doles out scoops of hand-cranked ice cream. Abundis uses only milk — no cream — spun into flavors like sweet corn, rose petal and other seasonal fruits.

The Eat Real Festival has introduced his products, normally available from a stand near the Fruitvale BART station, to customers he wouldn't have otherwise reached.

There are dozens more vendors who have similar stories. At the end of the weekend, they'll fan out to their various lots, underground markets and tiny shops. But for the next three days, there's plenty to tide you over until the next food festival rolls through town.

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