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In Los Angeles: Rivera, a modern Latin restaurant, offers premium tequilas and seasonal tequilas on tap.

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10 great places for margaritas and more

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Enlarge Mayahuel

In New York: A margarita at Mayahuel, which opens officially tonight.

By [Rebecca Heslin](#), USA TODAY

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What's this?

Cinco de Mayo will be more somber this year, in light of the swine flu epidemic and shutdowns of public places across Mexico. But Mexican independence day celebrations are planned in many places elsewhere. **Kate Krader**, editor of FOOD & WINE Cocktails 2009 (on sale today), and **Jim Meehan**, deputy editor and master mixologist, share the best places to have a margarita.

GOOGLE MAP: [Zoom in on these margarita-makers](#)
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Tommy's

San Francisco

For the best margaritas in the country, Krader and Meehan suggest a stop at this West Coast bar, where bartender Julio Bermejo makes a classic concoction with tequila, lime juice and agave nectar. "The bar is nothing fancy, but their tequila selection is incredible," Krader says. "Not surprising, since Bermejo is one of the country's most respected experts on the subject." Bermejo also guides legendary trips down to Jalisco, Mexico, to tour the home of Tequila. tommystequila.com, 415-387-4747

Jimmy's Bar

Aspen, Colo.

"Colorado consumes more tequila than any other state besides Texas and California," Meehan says. "Jimmy's, hidden in a fancy mall in the middle of glitzy Aspen, has a huge selection of tequilas and agave spirits (105 in all), and they make terrific margaritas." Our experts suggest either order the Jimmy's margarita made with Herradura Anejo, Grand Marnier and lime juice or adding a splash of cranberry and mescal to add smokiness to the drink. jimmysaspen.com, 970-925-6020

Oyamel

Washington, D.C.

You've seen him on *Top Chef*, so it's time to turn the tables and judge the gastronomical genius of Jose Andrés. His D.C. eatery serves up a traditional margarita, but "it comes with an Andrés avant-garde twist: a topping of salt-air foam," Krader says. "If you are hungry, try some of Andrés' Mexican street food, including his handmade corn tortillas stuffed with baby-pig confit, tender braised oxtail or, for the adventurous, sautéed grasshoppers on a bed of guacamole." oyamel.com, 202-628-1005

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Rivera

Los Angeles

"In the late 1980s, John Sedlar put haute Mexican food on the map in the United States," Meehan says. "Now he's back with a new Los Angeles pan-Latin restaurant, where they have a mix of premium and seasonal tequilas on tap." For some serious royal treatment, take a turn in the bronze and leather chairs dedicated to tequila tastings — the chairs have special holders for tequila flights. riverarestaurant.com, 213-749-1460

Petrossian Bar at the Bellagio

Las Vegas

Sin City is rarely referred to as the home to anything purist, but Vegas bartenders know their stuff. "The best margaritas around the country are often found at purist cocktail establishments," Krader says. "Petrossian Bar, the swank cocktail bar at Las Vegas' Bellagio, is one of those establishments." Meehan suggests doing like the cocktail experts do and ordering the classic margarita at this spot. bellagio.com, 888-987-6667

Nacional 27

Chicago

"Drink master Adam Seger makes super-fresh cocktails (both frozen and otherwise) at this Latin-inspired salsa club and restaurant," Krader says. "Like all the drinks here, the margaritas are hyper-seasonal and fresh-ingredient driven." The seemingly endless menu here can confuse a novice, so Meehan suggests trying one of their regular margaritas, like the breakfast margarita or luxe margarita, or picking a seasonal creation such as smoky passion-fruit margarita. n27chicago.com, 312-664-2727

Mayahuel

New York City

"Star mixologist Philip Ward just opened his mezcal and tequila bar a few weeks ago," Krader says. "Since he's considered one of the most creative drink makers in the country, everyone is looking for him to set a new standard for margaritas." The bar has been in a soft opening for the past few weeks; the official opening takes place tonight. mayahuelny.com

Tequila's

Philadelphia

With a name like Tequila's, there's no doubt the duo behind this elegant hacienda-style restaurant knows their stuff. "Restaurateur David Suro, who grew up near agave fields in the Mexican state of Jalisco, serves drinks by mixologist Junior Merino, making this hot spot a staple for 25 years," Meehan says. There's no shortage of tequilas behind the bar here which serves up around 100 variations. tequilasphilly.com, 215-546-0181

Lonesome Dove

Fort Worth

You know what they say: "Don't mess with Texas." Apparently, that applies to their margaritas as well. Chef Tim Love evokes American West with his inventive menu of big food like Texas elk sausage and wild boar ribs," Krader says. "The rustic Fort Worth favorite, located in the historic Stockyards District, is also creative with their signature cocktails such as the jalapeño cucumber margarita." lonesomedovebistro.com, 817-740-8810

Mercadito Cantina

New York City

"This excellent East Village Mexican restaurant has become a mini empire with three New York locations and one launching in Chicago," Meehan says. "The exceptional margaritas range from traditional to Tres Citricos, made with orange and habanero chile." Or try a mentirosa, featuring "tric-quila," a sake-based blend that imparts a crisper taste and smoother finish than regular tequila. mercaditorestaurants.com, 212-388-1750

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JTK65 (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 12m ago

kwigibocity (5 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 18h 37m ago

Try my own recipe which I've spread to awed audiences everywhere;

55ml of your favorite tequila

55ml of your favorite margarita mix,

55ml of just-squeezed lime juice (~1 healthy lime's worth).

Shake the crap out of all with ice in a metal container, and serve over the rocks in a rocks glass or

str8 up in a frozen martini glass.

You won't need or want salt.

Margarita mix is garbage. A little simple syrup with a bit of water and fresh lime and lemon juice is much better.

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Biker Santa (33 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 2h 2m ago

Daily Llama (1 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 13h 2m ago

ccjoey wrote 15m ago: Don't forget to eat crunchy tacos, flour tortillas, mucho nachos and hang up your pinatas. Get to the celebration by mule.

=====

Hey, sounds good to me! Now if I can only get some "cabeza buena" from one of the Lopez sisters .

Oh mi amigo, usted puede conseguir dado una palmada en la cabeza para decir que, pero la buena suerte de todos modos.

Sayin' justo

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joanip08 (8 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 14h 32m ago

Since I am unemployed right now it is highly unlikely I will be having one at any of the above places.

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lizwerner (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 14h 32m ago

Seriously people, relax. This is America. We celebrate a lot of different 'holidays' here that aren't celebrated in it's country of origin--or at least not celebrated as much as we do here. So lighten up about Cinco de Mayo -- it just sounds cool to say and gives everyone a reason to eat gringo Mexican food and drink Ritas!!!!

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joanip08 (8 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 14h 33m ago

OMG...I love me some margaritas!

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Daily Llama (1 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 15h 8m ago

ccjoey wrote 15m ago: Don't forget to eat crunchy tacos, flour tortillas, mucho nachos and hang up your pinatas. Get to the celebration by mule.

=====

Hey, sounds good to me! Now if I can only get some "cabeza buena" from one of the Lopez sisters

....

=:)

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ccjoey (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 15h 27m ago

Don't forget to eat crunchy tacos, flour tortillas, mucho nachos and hang up your pinatas. Get to the celebration by mule.

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ccjoey (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 15h 29m ago

Cinco de Mayo has almost NO SIGNIFICANCE in Mexico. Ugh. Just another 'Americanized' holiday to make more bar money. (and of course generalize Mexican culture, while making jabs about swine flu)

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homeportsd (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 15h 59m ago

5 De Mayo is NOT Mexican Independence day. Please do your research!

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Duckydoodoo (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 17h 44m ago

Want a margarita in Vegas that will knock your socks off? Try them at Dona Maria's. Dang! Three to four sips and I could hear my heart beat in my ears. Lasted all night.

Just PLEASE make sure you don't drive after just one of these!

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