


Dangerously Cheesy? Cheetos Pop-Up Restaurant Opens in NYC

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A garnished beverage made with Cheetos is shown during a press preview for a three-day pop-up restaurant featuring an all-Cheetos menu, Tuesday Aug. 15, 2017, in New York. Celebrity chef Anne Burrell has been given the unenviable task of creating an entire menu for a pop-up restaurant based on Cheetos. (AP Photo/Bebeto Matthews) The Associated Press

AP

By KAREN MATTHEWS, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Gourmet fun or just plain cheesy?

A three-day pop-up restaurant devoted to Cheetos, yes Cheetos, opened in Manhattan on Tuesday, with every table already booked with diners ready to pay between \$8 and \$22 for such creations as Cheetos meatballs, Cheetos crusted fried pickles, Cheetos tacos, Mac n' Cheetos and even Cheetos cheesecake.

"I worked hard to incorporate Cheetos into every dish and not just say, 'Oh here's a dish with a sprinkle of Cheetos on top,'" said spiky-haired celebrity chef Anne Burrell, who was given the task of coming up with the menu for The

Spotted Cheetah. "I really tried to think about the flavor of each Cheeto and what would pair really well with it."

But the question seemingly on everyone's orange-coated lips is: Why?

Makers of the popular puffed cornmeal snack say the pop-up was the deliciously shrewd result of whimsy and marketing after executives noticed Cheetos fans posting their own recipes incorporating the crunchy treat on social media.

"So we thought it was a great trend to try to capitalize on and bring to life an idea, a concept like this really that spoke to how you could use Cheetos in such a variety of different ways," said Ryan Matiyow, a marketing manager for Frito-Lay, a unit of PepsiCo. He said the 300 reservations available for the eatery's three nights sold out within six hours.

Burrell, host of Food Network's "Worst Cooks in America" and other programs, showed off some of her dishes as her staff scrambled to prepare the food and set places in a dining room decorated with swaths of orange fabric and images of brand mascot Chester the Cheetah.

Crumbled Cheetos are part of the breading on chicken Milanese and fried green tomatoes. A garnished Cheetos beverage accompanies a grilled cheese, tomato and bacon sandwich that gets an extra crunch from Cheetos. Desserts feature the cinnamon sugar Cheetos variety known as Sweetos.

Melissa Abbott, a vice president of the Hartman Group, a consumer research firm, said the Cheetos restaurant is partly a reaction to the emphasis on health in today's food culture.

"All of the salad and juice bars and all that ... At some point you have to balance the scales a little bit and have some fun."

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Cheetos is opening a fancy restaurant for three days

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