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Food Trucks in Prague

Roaming the streets for good eats: food trucks have come to town

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Food Spot

Finally, the food truck has arrived in Prague. And introducing this latest fad of mobile cuisine into Prague's food scene is Food Spot's bright orange food truck that zooms around the city offering a taste of western inspired cuisine with fresh, quality ingredients.

The driving force behind the Food Spot truck is Pavel Con, who has also been a chef for 10 years and owns U Dašů restaurant in Prague-Klánovice. Inspired by the food truck craze in the US, many of which are run by first-class chefs, Con and his team studied their menus and services and eventually settled upon a Tex-Mex theme.

"The space and equipment in the food truck is limited. Therefore, we had to come up with a menu suitable for the conditions. We started with a Tex-Mex menu, but would like to broaden our offer in the future. At the moment, we add a weekly special, which isn't necessarily Tex-Mex," Con explains.

The chef believes that people in Prague are more open these days to trying new things, and the food truck gives customers a chance to do this and share their experiences with others on Twitter or Facebook.

"We would like to show that fast food, when prepared on the street, can be delicious and made from quality ingredients. We want to offer great food at locations where people were forced to accept lower quality food in the past. Our customers can see all of the ingredients and choose what they would like to have in their food," Con explains.

Food Spot is on a mission to prove that the food truck can be a successful concept in the Czech Republic and if so, Con would like to franchise the experience to others.

"We primarily focus on people working in office centers who welcome something different from what they are offered every day. But we hope that gradually we will start to visit other locations such as sport and cultural events, night clubs, etc."

These days, the Food Spot truck attracts about 100 customers per day, mostly locals and some expats as well. Con admits he was surprised by the positive response on the street and via social media, adding that "people help us to continuously improve our food and service."

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Food Spot's burrito

So far, Food Spot's burrito has been the most popular item, but maybe not for long. "It was more difficult in the beginning to perfect our burger, but now it looks like the burger, made of organic beef, is going to be our new star," Con says.

Although Food Spot tends to hang out at some of the same locations each week, the truck also tries new places, and all locations are listed on www.facebook.com/foodspotcz and twitter.com/foodspotcz.

Con does hope that food trucks will become more popular and offer a chance to organize a food truck festival, but he admits that the biggest barrier at this point are regulations about parking, hygiene, insurance, and security processes. Con and his team spent nearly a year gathering all of the correct permits and putting together the truck.

HotKarot

If you visited Code:Mode earlier this year or attended the recent Designblok party, you might have come across another entry into the food truck movement - the HotKarot and Open Sauce project.

Established by the organization Cancel, the idea for the HotKarot mobile kiosk was conceived during a New Media Studies workshop (run by Denisa Kera and Jan Rod) at Charles University in 2011.

If the project gets the go ahead from city hall, customers will be able to nibble on a freshly cooked carrot in a bun, complete with a custom-made sauce. But while the carrots might be prepared right on the spot, the sauce will have been simmering in cyberspace long before customers appear. OpenSauce.cz is a fully editable database of sauce recipes, where members add, rate and modify existing recipes, earning points along the way that can be used for discounts at the HotKarot stand. "The project creates a game which is played both in the city streets and in cyberspace," Markéta Dolejšová of Cancel says.



HotKarot

The core idea of HotKarot is a "radical openness" as Dolejšová puts it, and Cancel's aim is to break stereotypes in the field of gastronomy, showing that fast food can be healthy (watch out Euro Dog), entertaining, and affordable, and become a part of the "modern rational lifestyle."

Dolejšová says that Cancel would like to further experiment with OpenSauce and develop new ways of interaction with their customers or "followers". At the moment, Cancel is working on a visualization of data assembled during the cooking and selling of HotKarots and also on a "sonification" of the sauces.

"Generally, we wish to involve our fans in the whole process - we want to get their reactions in an entertaining way, through the means of a game. It would be really cool if they became keen on experimenting with carrots, shared their ideas and participated in the project on their own," Dolejšová adds.

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