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TV'S GONZO JIMENZ HEADLINES CHOCOLATE FESTIVAL GALA FRIDAY CULINARY DEMOS, FARM SEMINARS ANNOUNCED

KOHALA COAST, HAWAI'I ISLAND—Chef Gonzo Jimenez, who appears on the Netflix TV series, *Bake Squad*, is preparing the signature dessert for the 2022 Big Island Chocolate Festival Gala. The ninth annual festival returns post-COVID on May 13-14 with a “reimagined” edition at the Waikoloa Beach Marriott & Spa Resort.

The specialty dessert, titled *Texturas de Maiz*, or “Textures of Corn,” is a tribute to South American cuisine. “It’s a dessert offering the many textures emblematic of the iconic ingredients found in Latin gastronomy—corn and cacao,” says the Argentinian-born Jimenez. And while the celebrity chef will be behind the scenes creating his sweet corn bread delicacy enhanced with the flavors of chocolate, vanilla and mango, he will make an appearance on stage during the 5-9 p.m. Saturday night gala.



Texturas de Maiz will join assorted bonbons and French macarons on the decadent dessert platter served during the BICF’s four-course, sit-down dinner where everyone is a VIP. The cocoa-inspired menu also includes a seared ahi appetizer with white chocolate breadfruit mousse, a greens salad with chocolate biscotti crouton and warm rolls, and grilled chicken breast with Hamakua mushroom dashi and mango relish. In addition to a towering chocolate fountain with pastries and fruit, guests can enjoy unlimited wine and beer, a chocolate spritzer by Ola Brew, iced tea and coffee. Gala festivities include live music, dancing, a showpiece

chocolate sculpture, fun photo booth, quickie chocolate portraits and a silent auction. Gala tickets are priced \$200 until noon May 14 or \$250 at the door.

Educational Activities Detailed

In addition to the \$25 cacao plantation tour May 11 at the Original Hawaiian Chocolate Factory in Kona, the festival offers farm seminars and culinary demos Friday, May 13 at the Waikoloa Marriott. Fee for the four educational activities is \$59, or \$79 with lunch.

Schedule:

- 1p.m.: “Growing Healthy Cacao: Controlling Cacao Diseases and Pests” by Joanna Bloese, PhD entomologist, assistant cooperative extension specialist UH-Manoa CTAHR

Dr. Bloese, who works at the Komohana Research and Extension Center at UH-Hilo, will discuss integrated pest management and common diseases and pests challenging cacao growers. She will also suggest resources for use by farmers.
- 2 p.m.: “Best Practices for Cacao Fermentation and Dry Bean Evaluation” by Dr. Nat Bletter, ethnobotanist and owner of Oahu’s Madre Chocolate

A Hawai’i bean-to-bar chocolate producer, Dr. Bletter has garnered multiple Hawai’i, US and international awards. Nat will present his insights on the cacao fermentation process and move into dry bean evaluation from the perspective of both a bean buyer and user.
- 3 p.m.: “How to Make Easy, Hand-Rolled Truffles” by Tiffanie Masutani, CWPC, Kapiolani Community College culinary arts/pastry lecturer

A native of Hawaii and culinary instructor at KCC since 2009, Chef Masutani has a Bachelor of Applied Science focusing on culinary management with an interest in hands-on classes. A Certified Wellness Program Coordinator (CWPC), Chef is interested in nutrition, food education, event planning and catering. She will show the home cook how easy it is to make your own hand-rolled truffles, using different flavor ganaches and finishing them off with a variety of toppings.
- 4 p.m.: “Creating an Artistic Chocolate Showpiece and Tempering Chocolate” by Chef Stéphane Tréand, MOF of The Pastry School

Chef Tréand’s prestigious Pastry School in California instructs students of all abilities in the pastry and baking arts. He will give a brief explanation on tempering chocolate and demonstrate how to complete a beautiful chocolate showpiece designed to stun party guests or serve as a stunning buffet centerpiece. The sculpture will be on display at the BICF Gala.

All event tickets are sold online and additional tax and ticketing fees apply. Also available is a one-night hotel package with two gala tickets for \$750.

Details: <https://bigislandchocolatefestival.com>.

Kona Cacao Association: The mission and goal of KCA is to promote the cacao industry on the Island of Hawai'i by presenting the Big Island Chocolate Festival as an educational and outreach opportunity for local cacao farmers, the hospitality industry and cacao enthusiasts. Visit <http://konacacaoassociation.com>. @BIChocoFest