

Where to Recharge During Art Basel Miami Beach

By Carla Torres | December 2, 2015 | [Food & Drink](#)

Whether you're an artist, connoisseur, collector, celebrity, local, or simply visiting during the busiest week of the year, Miami restaurants dish out something for everyone.



Local flavors on display: the arepa platter at 27 Restaurant & Bar.

There's no doubt that Miami is a place to wine, dine, party till sunrise, and get your suntan on, 365 days of the year. But if there's a week when the fun and sun simply don't stop, Art Basel in Miami Beach is it. Last year, 73,000 visitors traveled to our Magic City for the endless art fairs, invite-only soirées, and celebrity sightings that kept the rest of the world talking until the carnival comes back around. Of course that's in addition to the lucky ones who have the luxury to call our urban playground home, and thus see Basel as just another excuse to play.

"Art Basel gives Miami a chance to show off its ever-growing food scene because it brings aficionados from all over the world, who obviously are into art, but they are gourmands as well," says Brad Kilgore, a Jean-Georges Vongerichten protégé and chef/owner of Alter in Wynwood, where just a few months ago, the Roca brothers (owners and chefs of the world's numberone restaurant, El Celler de Can Roca) strolled in for a casual lunch. The brothers applauded Kilgore's technique to be "the future Miami food."

Here, a look at all the best places to sample some of today's culinary masterpieces.

Celebrity Destinations



Talde's kung pao chicken wings.

For the truly privileged, who jet down here on their private plane, the most important question after "Who's the artist?" is "Where do we eat?" With so little time (just five days) and so much to see (267 galleries from 31 different countries showed in 2014), it's impossible to sample everything that Miami's all-star culinary scene has to offer. Since last year's fair alone, the city has welcomed newcomers like *Top Chef* alums Dale Talde and Spike Mendelsohn—who opened [Talde](#) (you'll want to nosh on the twice-brined kimchee yogurt Korean fried chicken and award-winning wings) and [Sunny's](#)—as well as the show's formidable host, Tom Colicchio, who introduced his renowned Craft brand to 1 Hotel & Homes South Beach. While [Beachcraft](#) may be seafood-focused, it would be pure blasphemy to not try the newest addition to the robust menu: veal meatballs.

Celebrity chef and *Chopped* star Alex Guarnaschelli made her entry into the Miami dining circuit with the nautically and locally inspired [Driftwood Room](#) at the Nautilus, a Sixty Hotel (make sure you order the fried carrots). And restaurant magnate Stephen Starr brought Philadelphia's 20-year-old (and Starr's very first foray into the industry) [The Continental](#) to South Beach's Aloft. Bite into the famed cheesesteak rolls and wash them down with any one of Continental's many tiki-inspired cocktails (specifically the smoky, mezcal-heavy Bump n' Rind) concocted by [The Broken Shaker's](#) Gui Jaroschy.

Speaking of The Broken Shaker—Miami's first pop-up bar turned one of the World's 50 Best Bars—be sure to stop in for a drink and then make your way next door to the two-story 1930s Key West-style house in the Freehand's backyard. Besides oozing with cool, 27 Restaurant & Bar is an amalgamation of Miami's finest flavors, best savored through the local daily catch, swimming in coconut-curry broth with farro.

Finally acquire that dream Warhol? Celebrate with The Setai's \$100 gold martini. Or do as Warhol would have done and attempt to get a table at [The Forge's](#) famously celebrated wine cellar, where Tom Cruise, Frank Sinatra, and Michael Jackson have all enjoyed the grapes of someone else's labor. "Like the art of winemaking, the wine cellar is steeped in history and appreciated by art lovers of all kinds," says The Forge's owner, Shareef Malnik.

Those craving even more opulence should join the in crowd at the former Versace Mansion, which has been transformed into the three-story villa and restaurant [The Villa Casa Casuarina](#). Here, the pool is peppered with 24k gold, and made-from-scratch gnocchi is crowned with New Orleans blue crab and truffles. Or you can satisfy your Basel carb quotient with some of the best pastas in town at Macchialina or Scott Conant's famous spaghetti and basil at [Scarpetta](#).

Locally International



Bone-in sirloin at Quality Meats

A once desolate avenue and tourist trap, Collins Avenue is now an epicurean epicenter. Take a trip down the rabbit hole at José Andrés's culinary wonderland [The Bazaar](#), where a Cubano airbread sandwich defies the laws of physics and yucca churros grace the dinner menu. Or pay a visit to the Mediterranean at either Byblos or the Middle East with Cleo, where mezzes and spiked tea service are just the beginning. Carnivores can sate a craving at the Miami outpost of famed New York steakhouse [Quality Meats](#), which proudly touts its Pat LaFrieda cuts of beef and serves them alongside sweetly savory corn brûlée.

Trying to keep it on the light side? Chef John Iatrellis at [Lure Fishbar](#) will tickle your fancy with his deft hand at seafood. Without veering off the celebrated Art Deco boulevard, travel to the Far East via Bazí, where you can indulge in Peking duck, or south of the border by way of Taquiza for some authentic al pastor Mexican tacos with handmade tortillas. Then, close the night with a handcrafted bevvy—choose between nearby hot spots [The Regent Cocktail Club](#), [The Drawing Room](#), [Matador Room](#), [Repour Bar](#), or new kid on the South Beach block Sweet Liberty.



Zuma's sliced yellowtail with green chilli relish, ponzu, and pickled garlic.

Keeping the art party going past regular fair hours and in need of an edible nightcap? The covert Asian-style barbecue [Drunken Dragon](#) will feed your needs. Or if it's more of an early-morning situation, the French sandwiches at La Sandwicherie will bring you back to life and put a halt to an impending hangover. Should that not do the trick, the Marley açai bowl with peanut butter (or anything else, for that matter) at the all-organic hidden gem [Under the Mango Tree](#) will.

Those hoping to impress a crowd should make a reservation at Japanese destination izakaya [Zuma](#) or Peruvian paradise [La Mar](#), where Miami's crème de la crème of desserts can be found in the form of a quinoa, chocolate, and lucuma mousse. "The boat docks are full, and the tables are packed with gallery owners, financial investors, and the who's who of Miami," says Zuma general manager Miyeon Kim.

Close out the day's festivities by catching a different kind of performance art at cabaret club El Tucan, where a clown covers Lorde, and there are Manchego-stuffed churros.

Miami Menu



Jumbo stone crab claws from Joe's.

While there's no reason to even leave the beach— particularly when you've got two of the country's highest-grossing restaurants, [Joe's Stone Crab](#) and [Prime 112](#), within a couple of blocks from each other—if you want to regale your friends up north with tales of “eating like a local,” you'll want to journey over the bridge. But before steering toward Wynwood and the Design District—where Art Basel and the culinary offerings have concurrently blossomed—hit up Joe's Take Away for stone crabs, fried chicken, and the best Key lime pie in town, and in true Miami fashion, eat it on the actual sandy beach.

For any art aficionado, a visit to Wynwood is a must. As Jessica Goldman Srebnick, the daughter of Arts District visionary Tony Goldman, best puts it, “Art Basel has enabled Miami to push the creative barrier in not only our arts and cultural programming, but has inspired a culinary explosion. Let's not forget that food is a form of art.” While strolling the labyrinth of murals, pop into [Zak the Baker](#) for anything freshly baked, or the burgeoning neighborhood's first eatery, [Joey's](#), where Jay Z and Beyoncé noshed on what *Food & Wine* called the best pizza in the country. Another stellar slice is Proof's Neapolitan oxtail pie (if you're into wild toppings) or classic margherita. Follow it up with a Crack Pie—or any other of Fireman Derek's sweet and heavenly creations—down the street at his psychedelic bake shop. And for the best cocktails off the beach, newcomer GK Bistronomie has one of Latin America's top barkeeps mixing up one-of-a-kind potions to pair with modern Peruvian-inspired fare (think grouper Parmesan tiradito).

Balance decadence with some liquid sustenance from [Lucy Lu](#) or [JugoFresh](#) before and between exhibits, or at the end of a day's worth of art, by slurping over a dozen varieties of oysters at Edgewater's Mignonette. And just when you think you've had enough, brunch calls. Be it a kimchee bloody mary, breakfast pizza (with the standard egg on top, of course), or a Nutella and salted caramel sticky bun, Michael's Genuine Food & Drink in the Design District remains the place to be ever since chef Michael Schwartz started dishing out the Sunday spread. “Basel is all hands on deck,” says the James Beard Award-winning chef. “The clientele—cultured, international—appreciate good food and have high expectations of what a dining experience should be.”

That must be why for the first time—and just in time for Basel—the chef is introducing the breakfast-meets-lunch-and-booze mashup at his newly revamped Cypress Tavern on Saturday. “Basel is what we live for in this business,” says Schwartz. “It's a big party!” And in Miami, that party never stops.