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First Bite: Cinco Tacos + Tequila set to open in Winter Park

Cinco Tacos + Tequila will open with Cali-Tex dishes and oversized drinks in Winter Park on July 20. The restaurant is located at 140 N. Orlando Ave.

I, along with other local media, got a chance to see the renovated space that formerly house **Carmel Kitchen** and taste a few of Cinco's new dishes. Here are a few things I learned:

1. A variety of cuisines influence Cinco's dishes

Cinco Tacos + Tequila describes itself as a Cali-Mex restaurant, but the menu features a few dishes are influenced by other cuisines. Those dishes include:

- Cali-Mex samosas filled with fajita chicken, cheeses and chiles, and paired with queso sauce, Mexican fried rice, black beans and salsa.
- Korean BBQ pork belly as a filling option for tacos.
- Avocado eggrolls as an appetizer.



The dining room of Cinco Tacos + Tequila in Winter Park. (Lauren Delgado / Orlando Sentinel)



The Cali-Mex samosas are filled with fajita chicken, cheese and chiles and paired with queso sauce, Mexican fried rice, black beans and salsa. (Lauren Delgado / Orlando Sentinel)

2. Presentation is big

The restaurant's appetizer menu features some old favorites served in more modern ways, from jalapeno poppers with individual cups of avocado-ranch dipping sauces (\$8) to shrimp ceviche crowning slices of cucumber (\$9).

For entrees, the house burger that's topped with raclette cheese scraped onto it tableside stood out.

Over on the drink side, several margaritas are poured at the table — and a few contain dry ice for a fun effect. A birthday milkshake is topped with cake as well as a sparkler.

3. There's more than one way to make a taco

Twelve taco fillings that range from carne asada (\$5) to not-too-spicy lava shrimp (\$4) can be paired with a variety of shells such as corn and flour tortillas, lettuce wraps, a cheese-crusted tortilla, or a bao bun.



Cinco Taco + Tequila serves its tacos using a variety of shells, from traditional corn tortillas (pictured with the lava shrimp) to bao buns. (Lauren Delgado / Orlando Sentinel)

4. Vegan and vegetarian options are available

Plant-based **Impossible Meat** is cooked up with onions and peppers as a taco filling. A rotating “Farm to Taco” vegan combination is another taco option. Vegetarian or cheese options can be opted for as an enchilada or a skillet dish.

5. Brunch is bottomless

For \$32, diners can order (and reorder) from a menu of about 13 small plates Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. That price includes bottomless nonalcoholic drinks as well as alcoholic drinks such as mimosas, select margaritas, bloody Marys, sangrias and spiked coffees.

If a party of two or more chooses to sip on a certain drink for brunch, the staff will leave a pitcher or bottle of the drink for the table to pour themselves (i.e. a pitcher of margaritas or a bottle of champagne).



Bottomless brunch at Cinco Tacos + Tequila includes small plates such as this barbacoa benedict. (Lauren Delgado / Orlando Sentinel)