CHIPOTLE CRACKS CODE ON ALL-NATURAL QUESO; AVAILABLE IN ALL U.S. RESTAURANTS ON SEPTEMBER 12

Making queso without industrial additives proves challenging, but popular with customers

DENVER--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Sep. 5, 2017-- Chipotle Mexican Grill (NYSE: CMG) is set to fulfill the wishes of queso lovers from coast to coast, with the announcement that it will be adding queso to its menu nationwide on Tuesday, September 12. The company has been testing queso in 350 restaurants in Southern California and the Colorado area and has decided to take it national.

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“Although queso was the number one requested menu item, we never added it to our menu before now because we wouldn’t use the industrial additives used in most quesos,” said Steve Ells, founder, chairman and CEO at Chipotle. “Additives make typical queso very consistent and predictable, but are not at all in keeping with our food culture. Our queso may vary slightly depending on the characteristics of the aged cheddar cheese used in each batch, but using only real ingredients is what makes our food so delicious.”

The complex and slightly spicy flavor of Chipotle’s queso comes from the combination of simple ingredients customers can recognize such as aged cheddar cheese, tomatillos, tomatoes and several varieties of peppers. Chipotle is the only national restaurant brand that uses no industrial additives, including so-called natural flavors, color or preservatives in its food (except lemon and lime juice which can be used as preservatives, though Chipotle uses them only for taste).

The national roll-out comes after several testing phases, beginning with initial tests in the Chipotle NEXT Kitchen in New York earlier this summer followed by expanded tests in Colorado and Southern California. Throughout the testing phase, Chipotle was able to gain customer feedback, tweak the recipe and ingredient proportions slightly, and arrive at the final recipe – a combination that has proved very popular with customers.

Customers can order queso on their entrée, or on the side in two sizes with chips. Prices vary slightly by city, but range from $1.25 to add it to an entrée to $5.25 for a large side order. Additional details are available at Chipotle.com/queso.

ABOUT CHIPOTLE

Steve Ells, Founder, Chairman and CEO, started Chipotle with the idea that food served fast did not have to be a typical fast food experience. Today, Chipotle continues to offer a focused menu of burritos, tacos, burrito bowls, and salads made from fresh, high-quality raw ingredients, prepared using classic cooking methods and served in an interactive style allowing people to get exactly what they want. Chipotle seeks out extraordinary ingredients that are not only fresh, but that are raised responsibly, with respect for the animals, land, and people who produce them. Chipotle prepares its food using real, whole ingredients, and is the only national restaurant brand that prepares its food using no added colors, flavors or other industrial additives typically found in fast food. Chipotle opened with a single restaurant in Denver in 1993 and now operates more than 2,300 restaurants. For more information, visit Chipotle.com.

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Source: Chipotle Mexican Grill

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