

Updated: 2:17 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 29, 2016 | Posted: 6:00 a.m. Wednesday, Sept. 28, 2016



Jungle Jim's event to set mouths on fire this weekend

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By Alexis Larsen
Contributing Writer

FAIRFIELD — Jungle Jim's Weekend of Fire event is turning 10, and organizers say it's going to be spicier than ever.

Favorite fiery foods from the last 10 years will be set up throughout the festival, as vendors from all over come to set up shop for guests to sample their wickedly hot wares. All the heat you can handle will be available to enjoy in the form of everything from rubs to candy to hot sauce and everything in between with spice levels ranging from mild to wild.

"The show itself is one of the best just in terms of the fans and the vendors. These are people who love extreme food, so the show definitely speaks to that. And we recognize how fun it is get so many likeminded people together in one space, so the vibe is constantly, well, fun," said Jared Bowers, social media and content coordinator for Jungle Jim's International Market. "We love that "fiery" foods aren't just hot sauces anymore. The variety of spicy foodstuffs available is kind of staggering, so more and more there's basically something for every heat tolerance, every palate. All around, it's one of our favorite weekend's every year, and I think that's evident in the show itself."

Bowers said he is anticipating 2,000 to 3,000 guests for this year's event.

New this year is the "Weekend Warm-Up." Tickets are \$65 and include a Weekend Pass for both days of the event, a commemorative T-shirt, and a bottle of Jungle Jim's 10-year hot sauce collaboration with CaJohn's Fiery Foods — the only vendor that has been at all 10 Weekend of Fire events.

"Anyone who's been over the years can see the size of the show now and how it's evolved. What started relatively small — as things do here — has grown to fill the entirety of Oscar Event Center with over 50 booths of hot sauces, spices, rubs, BBQ sauces, confections and more," Bowers said. "It's the variety of items now available that marks the biggest change. Chocolates, syrups (for your ice cream) and, of course, the new species of hot peppers that didn't exist even a couple of years ago keep things fresh and exciting. So we're always on the lookout for things like that."

Beer, wine, soda, water and milk will be available for purchase to help cool things down when needed. There will also be a totally wild Bloody Mary bar if you are looking to up the ante on spice. A DJ will spin music on Saturday, and the Arena of Fire food competitions will offer onlookers plenty of entertainment.

HOW TO GO

WHAT: Jungle Jim's Weekend of Fire X — The Midwest's Largest Fiery Foods Show

WHERE: The Oscar Event Center at Jungle Jim's International Market, 5440 Dixie Highway, Fairfield

WHEN: Friday, Sept. 30 from 6 to 10 p.m.; Saturday, Oct. 1 from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.; and Sunday, Oct. 2 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

COST: Friday (Weekend Warm-Up) — \$65; Saturday and Sunday — \$10 for adults, \$1 for children 10 and younger. Children 5 and younger are admitted free.

MORE INFO: www.junglejims.com/weekendoffire

5 SAMPLES NOT TO MISS

Little Bird Chocolates — Their candied jalapenos are awesome, and who doesn't like chocolate?

Scotty O'Hotty's Bacon Chipotle hot sauce — Rich, flavorful and spicy

High River Sauces' Tears of the Sun — Fruity, tropical, slightly sweet and mild heat

Angry Irishman Hot Sauce — Made with jalapeño and habanero with a wicked hot, great flavor

CaJohn's Fiery Foods X Hot Sauce — This is a special collaboration between Jungle Jim's and CaJohn's in honor of the event's 10th anniversary.

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