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Mouthwatering Mangoes to Star in Key West Festival June 22-25

KEY WEST, Florida Keys — One of Key West’s most notable indigenous delicacies, the mango, is to take center stage Thursday through Sunday, June 22-25, when the island city’s seventh annual Mango Fest salutes the flavorful fruit and its heritage.

The summer festival honors the sweet tropical treat, sometimes called the “king of fruit,” that has been a staple in Florida Keys recipes for generations. Mango trees are abundant in the Keys and mangoes, generally available from late May through October, are typically used in dishes ranging from salads to seafood sauces and desserts.

The festival is presented by the Key West Police Athletic League, an organization that creates positive relationships between the community’s young people and police officers through education, recreation and athletics that strengthen teamwork and self-esteem. Proceeds are to benefit PAL’s local youth programs.

Highlighting the schedule is the free-admission Mango Mania Vendor Village with booths featuring mango-related artisans’ wares, exhibits, books, gift items and enticing edibles incorporating the refreshing fruit.

Festival-goers can explore the village and enjoy its offerings from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, June 24, at Key West’s Bayview Park, located at 1320 Truman Ave. Attendees also can learn more about mangoes and observe intriguing demonstrations.

In addition, the winners of the festival’s mango-themed photo contest are to be announced at the village. The contest is open to everyone and pieces must depict the mango in some form. Accepted through June 22, entries are to be posted at mangofestkeywest.com/photo-contest, where fans can vote for their favorites.

Other scheduled activities include a kick-off party at the Garden Café presented by Chef Eniko Bancs, 1105 Simonton St., set for 5-7 p.m. Thursday, June 22. Subsequent days are to feature restaurants’ mango menu offerings and a gala dinner in the Lower Keys.

Festivities conclude following the “Everything Mango Brunch” set for midday Sunday, June 25, at the Lost Kitchen Supper Club at 6810 Front St. on Stock Island. The menu created by Chef Martin Liz features delicacies including mango-fennel chicken sausage, mango-bourbon French toast casserole and lobster Benedict with mango hollandaise sauce. Tickets are available at mangofestkeywest.com/mango-brunch-sunday-25-1.

According to Mango Fest organizers, registration at mangofestkeywest.com is required for all events and prizes await some lucky registrants.

Event and schedule information: mangofestkeywest.com

Key West visitor information: fla-keys.com/key-west/ or 1-800-LAST-KEY

Lower Keys visitor information: fla-keys.com/lowerkeys or 305-872-2411

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