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Food trucks fuel Toronto's craving for street food

BY NEWS STAFF

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LIFE

When tickets went on sale earlier this month for the city's inaugural Street Food Block Party, all 2,500 were gone in a few hours. A second batch of 500 released 13 days later sold out in less than 10 minutes.

Since then frantic posts have flooded the event [Facebook page](#) ("Looking for tickets please!!!!") as well as an offer to pay a ticketholder double the \$20 face value, which doesn't include food.

This Saturday's collaboration between two nascent organizers — [Ontario Food Trucks](#) and [Toronto Underground Market](#) — is the latest in a series of food events celebrating diversity in a city where the hot dog rules.

The Evergreen Brick Works affair will host amateur chefs, beer and wine vendors and food trucks peddling everything from red velvet cupcakes to smoked meat.

It turns out even Toronto's restrictive bylaws couldn't stop food lovers from tackling the street-food vacuum two years ago, when the bulk of food trucks in the city sold fries and ice cream.

It was in July 2010 that Aussie expat Adam Hynam-Smith and his wife Tamara opened the first gourmet truck in the province. [El Gastronómo Vagabundo](#) first set up at Flat Rock Cellars, a winery in the Niagara region, and was soon a staple of events in Toronto.

Hynam-Smith had read about L.A.'s [Kogi BBQ](#) — a roving Korean taco truck — and came up with his concept while "mucking around" in the Ottawa restaurant where he worked at the time.

"I went home to [Tamara] and I said, 'Do you know what we're gonna do? We're gonna open a taco truck,'" he said.

"We thought, 'Let's get on this 'cause this is gonna be awesome.' So we bit the bullet and did it. And then the entire industry blew up."