

# Bloomberg

## *Star Chef Jose Andrés Unveils Mercado Little Spain at Hudson Yards*

The 35,000-square-foot space will open next spring and celebrate Spain with restaurants, retail, and a new product from Andrés.

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The Spanish chef and humanitarian leader José Andrés has released details of the highly anticipated Hudson Yards food hall, from his company ThinkFoodGroup.

Mercado Little Spain will open at 10 Hudson Yards in spring 2019. The 35,000-square-foot space will include three restaurants, each featuring a different style of Spanish dining. Surrounding them will be more than a dozen food stalls and kiosks, with many of the greatest hits of tapas, pintxos (snacks), and pastries, as well as drinks spots. The space hopes to do for the food of Spain what Eataly has done for Italian cuisine.

“The food will be everything you can imagine about Spain,” says Andrés. “Mercado will be a place

where you can go to one window for garlic shrimp, and then to another one for bocadillos [sandwiches]. It will be a place for your coffee, for your sangria, your sherry to eat with your tapas, as if you were at [Barcelona's famed market] La Boqueria.”

Seafood will be flown in daily, and there will be an assortment of cured meats and ham. (Andrés was instrumental in bringing coveted Iberico ham to the United States a decade ago.) Also on offer: salads, sausages, sweets such as churros, and beverages that include wine, cider, vermouth, and Spain's signature gin and tonics. Retail kiosks will offer Spanish oils, vinegars, spices, cookware, and gift baskets.

Mercado Little Spain is Andrés's first New York venture, and he has enlisted formidable assistance: Ferran and Albert Adrià, two of the world's best chefs, from restaurant el Bulli in Spain. This is also the Adriàs' first New York project.



Chefs Albert (left) and Ferran Adrià are coming to the U.S. for the first time, thanks to Andrés. Photographer: Robert Marquardt/Getty Images Europe

“Jose’s experience in America all these years makes us trust him,” says Ferran Adrià. “If it hadn’t been him, neither Albert nor I would have participated. We have full confidence in him.”

The chefs have not shared details about the restaurants, but they will feature assorted Spanish cuisines, and Andrés says he’s always wanted a Spanish-American diner. The chef will introduce his own new product to the market, a blue cheese called Rey Silo. “This was a dream of mine, of mak-

ing a blue cheese—something to offer people besides Cabrales. This is an astonishing cheese, buttery and soft, with beautiful intensity,” he says.

Andrés is working in partnership with Hudson Yard developers Related Companies and Oxford Properties Group: “I have a great partnership with Stephen Ross [Related’s founder] and Related. They gave me the opportunity to do a much bigger space. I’ve had chances to do a 12-seat restaurant here, other projects. But go big or go home.”

Still, Andrés admits that New York can be a tough market. “I’m 48, I’m risking a lot; I’m risking the last 25 years of my life. This is a big project for me and my company. But I think it’s a good gamble.”

The idea behind the Mercado is two-fold. In part, Andrés sees it as an homage to the European immigrant neighborhoods that sprang up around New York and helped forge the city’s identity. Even more important, he sees it as creating his own corner of Spain in Manhattan.

The market will arrive after a typically busy year for Andrés. He will have opened nine restaurants in 2018, on top of his extensive humanitarian efforts. He now has 30 places across the country, from the Michelin-starred minibar in his home base of Washington to the Bazaar by Jose Andrés in Los Angeles. Following his work bringing food and supplies to Puerto Rico in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria in 2017, Andres has traveled to Guatemala to help in the wake of a recent volcanic eruption.

Andrés has romantic memories of his first trip to Manhattan. “I still remember the first time I came to New York. I was in the Spanish Navy on a beautiful four-mast sailing ship. I remember coming under the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, seeing the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island on my left. I knew I would be back.”