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## Tasting the Tropics events start next week

Tropical North Queensland's inaugural month-long celebration of local food and drink begins on Wednesday (April 1) with Tasting the Tropics.

Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ) is bringing the destination's unique food story to life in April with the launch of 17 foodie events and 28 month-long activations to enjoy throughout the region.

TTNQ Chief Executive Officer Mark Olsen said restaurants and cafes were offering diners the opportunity to sample the best seasonal produce with special dishes on offer during April and one-off events showcasing local producers.

"Tasting the Tropics has inspired the region's food and drink producers to develop new menus and offer activities that celebrate the produce grown on the Atherton Tablelands and along the coastal strip which is very much a part of our tropical lifestyle," he said.

Local produce advocate Oliver James has his three cafes participating in Taste of the Tropics with Caffiend, Newell Street Café and Guyala leaning into tropical fruit grown by local farmers.

"Building relationships with farmers is important and Tasting the Tropics gives cafes and restaurants the opportunity to showcase that strong connection we have with the local people who work hard to supply quality produce," Mr James said.

"I have been working with the MacLaughin family at Skybury for seven years and incorporating their coffee and papaya into our menus.

"For Tasting the Tropics, we have come up with smoked green papaya as a substitute for smoked salmon and will be offering that as a toastie at Newell Street Café throughout April to give a savoury twist to Skybury papaya.

"Davidson Plum Eggs Benedict will be the Tasting the Tropics dish at Caffiend and Guyala will have a papaya bowl with vegan coconut chia and mango pudding, coconut mousse, and coco caramel sauce topped with seasonal fruits and tropical dukkah."

KOI Bar and Restaurant Managing Director Sam Davies said Chef Guy Staniland would be showcasing Queensland scallops on April 23 with a special Sake and Scallops immersive dining journey at the contemporary Japanese-inspired Asian-fusion restaurant.

"Guests will be guided through a selection of distinct sake styles, each paired with scallop-focused and seasonal seafood dishes to gain an insight into the craftsmanship behind the seafood and the sake," Mr Davies said.

"Dishes include kaffir lime-infused scallops served with sake beurre blanc, quick pickled zucchini and cucumber, finished with citrus and black tobiko.

"KOI was built around the idea of bringing people together over exceptional food and drink using quality produce and distinctive flavours in a vibrant setting."

Discover many more Tasting the Tropics events at: [tropicalnorthqueensland.org.au/tasting-the-tropics/](https://tropicalnorthqueensland.org.au/tasting-the-tropics/)

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