

PRESS RELEASE

Mexico's crispy chilli oil comes to Berlin, and this one has cranberries in it

Karla Carral makes salsa macha by hand in Rijswijk. Her Salsa Macha took Bronze at the 2026 European Hot Sauce Awards, and the jar in this year's press tasting boxes is the sweeter one

Berlin, 12 August 2026

Crispy chilli oil has become a fixture on European shelves, almost always in the Chinese chilli crisp style. Mexico has its own, and it is called salsa macha. At Berlin Chili Fest, from 4 to 6 September at Berliner Berg Brauerei in Neukölln, it arrives in the hands of a Northern-Mexican cook who makes it in the Netherlands.

Salsa macha is built on dried Mexican chillies, seeds and oil. There is no vinegar in it and it is thick enough to need a spoon, which makes texture count for as much as heat. Karla Carral grew up with it in Northern Mexico and now produces it by hand in Rijswijk under the name Don Cabrón. Her version departs from the traditional recipe in one respect: there are cranberries in it. The result, Macha Ahumada Dulce, labelled Smoky-Sweet Chili Oil, is deeply smoky from the Mexican peppers, sweetened by the berries, and rated 6 out of 10 for heat.

The producer's Salsa Macha took Bronze in the Chili Oil category at the 2026 European Hot Sauce Awards. Carral eats the Smoky-Sweet a few drops at a time over scrambled eggs, drizzled over pasta, and spooned onto tacos.

"This smoky and sweet salsa is a traditional Mexican chili oil, with a deep smoky flavour from Mexican peppers," said Karla Carral, founder of Don Cabrón. "We added cranberries for a sweet touch and some seeds for a crunch. It reminds Mexicans of home, and shows the rest of the world what Mexico has to offer."

Don Cabrón is one of more than 50 artisan producers from across Europe at this year's Harvest Event. Accredited journalists can claim a press pass and a tasting set of the makers' sauces at <https://europeanheatcouncil.eu/chilifest>

Berlin Chili Fest runs from 4 to 6 September 2026 at Berliner Berg Brauerei, Treptower Straße 39, 12059 Berlin. Friday 18:00 to 22:00, Saturday and Sunday 12:00 to 22:00. Tickets are 7 euro per day or 12 euro for the weekend.

ABOUT BERLIN CHILI FEST

Established in 2020, Berlin Chili Fest has grown into one of Europe's premier hot sauce celebrations. The festival combines professional competitions with grassroots community spirit, proving that you don't need corporate backing to build something meaningful. It attracts thousands of attendees, partners with industry leaders like Clifton Chili Club, and maintains its commitment to supporting independent, artisan hot sauce makers.

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