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Berlin Chili Fest puts a female-owned zero-waste maker at the centre of the hot sauce story

Roots Radicals turns overlooked produce and its own kitchen byproducts into fermented sauces, vinegar and spices, and brings that circular approach to Berlin Chili Fest from 4 to 6 September.

Berlin, 4 August 2026

At Berlin Chili Fest this September, one Berlin maker will show how a hot sauce can begin with imperfect produce and leave almost nothing behind. Roots Radicals, founded by Peruvian scientist and chef Mónica Kisic Aguirre, uses fermentation and circular cooking to turn overlooked ingredients into bold sauces, then gives the remaining stems, fibres and peels a second life.

Its Fermented Jalapeño Hot Sauce starts with chillies fermented for six weeks. They are blended with roasted garlic and apple cider vinegar into a green sauce with a moderate 3/10 heat, made for eggs, beans and Bloody Marys. The fermented chilli stems do not go into the bin. Roots Radicals infuses them in vinegar to make a second product, a bright chilli vinegar.

The same approach runs through its Harissa Hot Sauce. Inspired by a Moroccan family recipe shared by a friend, it combines fresh chillies and North African flavours with at least 40 per cent rescued ingredients. The vegetable fibres left from production become Harissa Spice. Roots Radicals recommends the sauce with shakshuka, hummus toasties and meatball sandwiches.

“Judging a hot sauce by its heat is like judging a wine by only its alcohol content,” said Neil Numb, founder of Berlin Chili Fest. “Heat is one number. The fruit, the slow ferment, the balance a maker spent years getting right, that is what Berlin Chili Fest offers.”

Roots Radicals is one of more than 50 artisan hot sauce producers from across Europe appearing at the Harvest Event 2026. Together they will bring hundreds of sauces to taste and buy, ranging from virtually no heat to the deliberately dangerous. More than 13,000 visitors are expected across the weekend.

Berlin Chili Fest runs Friday 4 September from 6pm to 10pm and Saturday 5 and Sunday 6 September from noon to 10pm at the Berliner Berg Brauerei in Neukölln. Day tickets cost 7 euros and a weekend pass costs 12 euros, available from chilifest.eu.

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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