

THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Freebies tied to new fast-food meals

By NANCY LUNA
2011-03-29 16:01:53



Two big Mexican chains, Chipotle Mexican Grill and El Pollo Loco, are offering freebies to promote their latest menu upgrades.

Here's the lowdown:

- Costa Mesa-based El Pollo Loco added this week three new premium side dishes to its menu: flame-grilled corn, sweet corn cake and sweet potato fries. A small side costs \$1.79, while a large side costs \$3.99. Freebie alert: To entice customers to try the new sides, El Pollo Loco is offering a free large side with any family meal purchase starting April 4. The offer is valid until June 24.

- After testing a kids menu in its core Colorado market, Chipotle Mexican Grill is now offering a children's menu at locations in Orange and Los Angeles counties. (See menu items below) To promote the menu launch, Chipotle is giving away a free kids meal every Saturday and Sunday in April when parents purchase an entree meal (burrito, salad, burrito bowl or tacos). The kids freebie starts April 2 and lasts until May 1.

Here are the Chipotle menu items for kids: Small Cheese Quesadilla: served with a side of rice, choice of beans, a small bag of chips and a choice of organic plain milk, organic chocolate milk, apple juice or a soda. Cost: \$2.95; Small Meat & Cheese Quesadilla: served with a side of rice, small bag of chips and a choice of organic plain milk, organic chocolate milk, apple juice or a soda. Cost: \$3.50; Single Taco: a crispy or soft taco filled with three items – a meat choice or guacamole, and two other ingredients such as salsa, sour cream or cheese. The taco is served with a small bag of chips and a choice of organic plain milk, organic chocolate milk, apple juice or a soda. Cost: \$3.50; and a Taco Kit: Same deal as Single Taco, but you get two tacos instead of one. Cost: \$3.95.

- Burger King also added a new menu item this week: Chicken Tenders. The nuggets come in three sizes: \$1 for four pieces; \$1.99 for eight pieces; and \$4.99 for a 20-piece serving. The meal comes with your choice of six dipping sauces: buffalo, barbecue, zesty, sweet and sour, honey mustard or ranch.

- Casey's Cupcakes in Laguna Beach is offering a commemorative Elizabeth Taylor cupcake. The \$4 cupcake is made with dark chocolate cake, chili and cayenne powder, ganache frosting, 24-karat gold, edible glitter and sugar diamonds.

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