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February 2026

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

2026 NIOSA Food & Entertainment Fact Sheet

“A Night In Old San Antonio®” (NIO SA®) is a four-night festival, which celebrates the city’s diverse cultural legacy, traditionally held during [Fiesta San Antonio®](#). NIOSA 2026 will run Tuesday to Friday, April 21 – 24, 2026 from 5:30 to 10:30 p.m. nightly. It is held in [La Villita Historic Arts Village](#) in the heart of downtown.

Celebrating its 78th anniversary in 2026, NIOSA is the top fundraiser for historic preservation in the United States—living up to its motto as a “Celebration for Preservation.” It is solely produced by NIOSA volunteers and benefits [The Conservation Society of San Antonio](#), one of the nation’s oldest and most active historic preservation organizations that celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2024.

Through the magic of 150+ food, drink and atmosphere booths and entertainment stages; continuous live musical acts; decorations; souvenirs; and many dedicated volunteers, NIOSA brings the city’s heritage alive in its 14 cultural areas. San Antonians have consistently voted NIOSA as their favorite event. NIOSA was recently listed as the #1 Fiesta event by [San Antonio Current](#), which called it an “essential experience.”

Three 2026 “A Night In Old San Antonio®” (NIO SA®) medals are on sale now: the premiere 2026 NIOSA windmill medal for \$15 each; the 2026 beer cup medal for \$5 each; and the NIOSA Rain Rock medal for \$10 each. Medals can be bought at:

- ❖ NIOSA [website](https://www.niosa.org/) Feb 1 through April 10 at <https://www.niosa.org/>
- ❖ NIOSA office, 227 S. Presa, weekdays between 9 am and 4 pm - through April 16
- ❖ Monarch Trophy Studio and its website at <https://mtsawards.com/pages/fiesta-medal-marketplace> (check Monarch website for prices)
- ❖ During NIOSA in its souvenir booths, while supplies last, from April 21–24
- ❖ Past NIOSA medals and other souvenirs will be sold during NIOSA at its new “Retro Relics” booth in Clown Alley area through April 24, while supplies last

TICKETS:

- [Online](#) discount entrance tickets for \$20 are available now through April 24 on NIOSA [website](#); handling fee will apply. These e-tickets can be loaded to phone or tablet, or printed. NIOSA leaders strongly recommend that buyers bring a printed e-ticket, as back-up.
- Discount entrance tickets for \$20 are also available February 17 through Thursday, April 16 at NIOSA headquarters at [227 S. Presa](#) (at Nueva St.) from 10-noon and 1-3 p.m. weekdays. No free parking available; cash, checks or credit cards accepted.
- Advance discount entrance tickets will be available March 9 through April 24 for \$20/pp at area H-E-B grocery stores; USAA; Ft. Sam Houston; Lackland AFB and Randolph AFB
- Entrance tickets can be purchased nightly during NIOSA at the gates for \$25 for adults; cash only. Children 12 and under are free when accompanied by an adult. Gates open at 5:30 p.m. and close at 10 p.m.; food sales and entertainment continue until 10:30 p.m.
- Members of the Conservation Society get NIOSA tickets for only \$15/pp. Join or renew your membership by March 31 at www.saconservation.org to buy member NIOSA tickets at the lowest ticket price available PLUS gain the satisfaction of supporting the preservation efforts of the Society.
- REMINDER: NIOSA occurs rain or shine; no refunds.

NEW ITEMS: **Chicken Gorditas** have been added in Haymarket area. Main Street area will have **Strawberry Lemonade** and **Decadent Pops & Strawberries**. **Retro Relics** booth in Clown Alley will sell past NIOSA medals, posters and souvenirs. **The Pub** booth in Irish Flat will feature international beers. The **Biergarten** in Sauerkraut Bend will include German-inspired beers. The complete list of prohibited items is listed at the end of this release, but a new prohibited item is collapsible wagon carts.

HISTORY: NIOSA began in 1936 as a harvest festival on the grounds of Mission San Jose. From 1936 to 1946 (with breaks in 1943 and 1945 because of the war), it was held in the fall—finally becoming the “River Festival” in 1944. In 1946, the City of San Antonio asked The Conservation Society to hold its event during Fiesta. In 1948 the one-street, one-night festival was called “A Night In Old San Antonio” for the first time. By 1958 it had expanded to four nights and in 1966, the name was registered and trademarked, reserving it exclusively for The Conservation Society.

NIOSA’S 14 CULTURAL AREAS

Arneson Theatre (added in 1951)

Entertainment is the focal point of the historic Arneson River Theatre, a venue for musical shows year-round on the **San Antonio River Walk**. The open-air theater was built as a Works Progress Administration project during the 1930s. Grab a bite to eat, have a seat on the grass covered steps of the theatre and sing along to the great tunes of **The Groove Doctors**. Enjoy **Banana Smoothies, Fried Jalapeños** and **Broadway Chicken** (fried chicken on a stick).

China Town (added in 1984)

The Asian mystique begins with traditional Chinese cuisine in Chinatown. Crowd pleasers are **Lemon Chicken, Egg Rolls, Potstickers, Crispy Shrimp Wraps** and **Yak-I-Tori** chicken-k-bob (2,300 servings sold annually). A First Aid station is located here. **NIOSA Tattoos** are found here.

Clown Alley (added in 1977)

Everyone loves clowns! This area features childhood food favorites such as **Hamburgers/Cheeseburgers, Corn Dogs, Curly Q Fries, Dutch Chocolate Freeze** (ice cream bar); and **Kiddies’ Kernels** (corn in a cup). Visitors can have fun in the **Clowning Around** photo booth. **New: Retro Relics** (past NIOSA medals, posters and souvenirs). A First Aid station is found here.

French Quarter (added in 1969)

French Quarter celebrates the tastes of France, New Orleans and south Texas French. **Crepes Suzette, Crayfish Etouffee**, 23,000 servings of **Beignets** annually, **French Sausage** (sausage blend made exclusively for NIOSA), **Shrimp Po’Boys** and the immensely popular **Escargot** are served by costumed mesdames and messieurs. Guests can take photos in front of the 15-foot lit Eiffel Tower as they listen to soft jazz by **E7 Band**.

Froggy Bottom (added in 2004)

Many of the city’s early African-American settlers migrated to San Antonio from the Froggy Bottom region of Louisiana in the mid-to-late 1800s. The Froggy Bottom name comes from a popular, local social club on the near East Side of downtown in the early 20th century. This NIOSA area pays tribute to the cultural contributions of African-Americans, celebrating their Southern hospitality and home cooking.

A variety of southern foods are offered, including NIOSA’s most popular dish: **Mr. Chicken** (skewered fried chicken topped with a jalapeño--22,000 of these sold annually). **Cajun Shrimp** (seasoned and grilled shrimp—formerly called Shrimp Parilla) and **Funnel Cake Fries** can also be found here. Visitors can dance to the rhythm and blues performed by the very popular **Celsius Band**.

Frontier Town (added in 1966; celebrating 60th Anniversary)

An early Texas settlement, including an official **U.S. Postal sub-station** which offers an official NIOSA cancellation stamp, is re-created in one of the largest areas of NIOSA. A windmill—the **artwork in the 2026 NIOSA medal**—marks this popular area, where there’s plenty of room for boot-scootin’ to country western

music from **Triple J Band**. **Horseshoe Sausage** (using NIOSA's exclusive blend), **Texas Bird Legs**,

Sopapillas, Ranch Steaks, Steer-on-a-Stick (6,800 servings sold annually), **Cowboy Klopse, Shypoke Eggs, Cowboy Cucumbers, Wrangler Ritas**, and non-alcoholic **Mangonadas** keep visitors' appetites satisfied along with an opportunity to have your photo taken in the local jail at the **Photo Bazaar**. A First Aid station is found here.

Haymarket (added in 1981; celebrating 45th Anniversary)

During the Spanish Colonial period, San Antonians used to gather near San Fernando Cathedral to sell produce and livestock. This area, known as the Haymarket, inspired the NIOSA version with its facades and colorful banners resembling those from the farmers' markets. NIOSA goers will enjoy constant Tejano music from **Mariachi Campanas de America** and **The Ronny Tee Band**.

One of NIOSA's most famous and beloved foods bears the name of the woman who prepared it so long ago. **Maria's Tortillas** (a hand-patted, grilled corn tortilla, buttered and filled with cheddar cheese and salsa) is named for Maria Luisa Ochoa, housekeeper to Ethel Harris, Conservation Society president from 1951-53. Ochoa was enlisted by Harris to make tortillas for the event. Introduced in the early 1950s, the booth today sells nearly 6,600 concoctions each year. Other popular Haymarket dishes include NIOSA favorites **Fried Mushrooms, Beef Fajitas, Gorditas, Puffy Tacos and Rose's Street Tacos**. **Gorditas** will change from Bean Gorditas to **Chicken Gorditas** this year.

Irish Flat (one of the oldest areas of NIOSA, added in 1955)

Irish Flat, one of the original NIOSA areas, features **Potato Skins and the addictive Blarney Bacon** to commemorate the Irish settlers of yesteryear. **DJ Fernando Hott Mix Hernandez** provides tunes and karaoke—which is back in 2026. "**The Pub**" booth will feature international beers.

Main Street USA (started in 1976; celebrating 50th Anniversary)

Main Street USA was established as a bicentennial project in 1976. American classics and NIOSA exclusives—including **Fat Bread** (an English muffin covered with sautéed mushrooms and Jack cheese)—appeal to hearty appetites. Other food booths include **Fried Green Tomatoes, Banana Splits, Fried Oreos, Fried Cheesecake and Cluckin' Wings** (chicken wings. **New this year: Strawberry Lemonade and Decadent Pops & Strawberries**, as well as the **Dirty River Jazz Band (new)** in the area's gazebo. Music lovers can also enjoy the music of **C Rock**.

Mexican Market (original area of NIOSA in 1948)

A Mexican market is re-created with colorful papel picado banners and paper flowers in this original area of NIOSA. Celebrating the city's cultural ties to Mexico, this is where visitors find a NIOSA exclusive: **Anticuchos**—a marinated steak kabob with origins from Peru. First introduced in 1955, hundreds of volunteers serve more than 10,000 of these each year.

Other favorites include **Chalupas, Quesadillas, Fajitas de Pollo, Bean Tacos** (with fresh corn tortillas made on the spot), **Burritos, Enchiladas, Corn in a Cup**, non-alcoholic **Pinacoconadas** and **Lemonade/Hibiscus Tea/Mexican Coffee**. Mexican sweets include **Churros** and **Buñuelos** (crisp fried Mexican pastry dusted with cinnamon and sugar).

Workers costumed in huipiles, Oaxacan dresses and peasant attire enhance the flavors of Mexico. The **Bolsas** booth originated here, selling hand-painted paper shopping bags decorated by area artists. **Cascarones** (confetti eggs) originated at NIOSA in the Mexican Market in 1959 and are now a Fiesta staple. Approximately 15 dedicated Conservation Society volunteers work year-round to make more than 50,000 of the popular confetti eggs. For only \$1, revelers may buy three cascarones to crack over the heads of fellow visitors, showering them with confetti. The sale of cascarones at NIOSA has contributed over \$700,000 for historic preservation projects since they were introduced in 1959.

Mission Trail (added in 1991; celebrating 35th Anniversary)

These sacred San Antonio landmarks are commemorated in this area, which symbolizes The Conservation Society's successful promotion of a parkway to connect San Antonio's historic missions in the 1990s. During

1993-94, The Society was integral in securing federal funding for the Mission Trails project. The Society was also integral in the Missions' nomination as an UNESCO World Heritage Site, initiating the nomination process in 2006 and continuing to support the nomination until the missions were awarded UNESCO World Heritage status in 2015. The Society's support of the Missions includes a substantial donation to Los Compadres operation of Mission San Juan Spanish Colonial Farm.

This area features popular NIOSA favorite **Bongo K Bobs** (11,000 sold annually), **Tacos de Espada**, **Armadillo Eggs** and **Chuleta de Puerco** (grilled Pork Chop on a stick). **Pan Dulce de Mission** (funnel cakes) and **Buñuelos a la Mode** (ice cream with cajeta sauce and buñuelo chips) satisfy those with sweet cravings.

Festive Fiesta hats are sold at **Sombrero Wagon**. An **Artista** (caricaturist) captures humorous renditions of visitors. A First Aid station is found here.

Sauerkraut Bend (added in 1971; celebrating 55th Anniversary)

German influence in San Antonio dates back to the early 1800s, when immigrants built their homes in the King William neighborhood along a bend in the San Antonio River. Called Sauerkraut Bend, it inspired the NIOSA version, which will move slightly on the NIOSA grounds to the Alamo Street NIOSA gate near Hilton Palacio del Rio Hotel. **DJ Isaiah Romanski** will provide continuous German classics like the Chicken Dance.

Visitors will enjoy **Sausage on a Stick** (sausage blend made exclusively for NIOSA), **Sausage Sampler** (with 4 different sausages in blends made exclusively for NIOSA), **Deutsche Nachtsiche** (Black Forest Cake and Gingerbread), **Bretzlyn** (pretzels), **Bavarian Kreme Horns**, **Bratwurst Broetchen**, and **Pigs in a Blanket**. The new **Biergarten** in Sauerkraut Bend will include German-inspired beers.

South of the Border (added in 1981; celebrating 45th Anniversary)

Imitating the roadside vendor stands in Northern Mexico, canopies of bright green, yellow, red and blue adorn booths here. Favorites include **Aguacates** (fresh avocado halves filled with a blend of salsa and sour cream), **Pollo Rancheros**, **Beef Tacos** and **Queso Flameado**. Fruit drink carts like those found in border towns serve **Jugos Frescas** with mango, strawberry and watermelon juices blended into a favorite for parched participants. A First Aid station is located here.

Villa España (added in 2004)

Villa España celebrates the city's Spanish and Canary Islanders heritage with colorful Spanish murals. Popular **Baja Fish Tacos** are sold here. Listen to the continuous entertainment of the popular R&B music of the **Dukes of Cool**.

More about NIOSA:

WHEN: Tuesday through Friday, April 21-24, 2026, from 5:30 to 10:30 p.m. Gates close and alcohol sales stop at 10 p.m.; food sales and entertainment continue until 10:30 p.m.

WHERE: Grounds of the La Villita National Historic District—the 18th century Spanish neighborhood, bounded by the San Antonio River and Alamo, Nueva and Presa streets (approximately five acres). Handicap access at all gates.

WHO: NIOSA is sponsored solely by The Conservation Society of San Antonio. Founded in 1924, The Conservation Society is one of the oldest and most active community preservation groups in the US—and celebrated its 100th Anniversary in 2024. NIOSA Chairman/Conservation Society's Fourth Vice President Julie Terrill is especially proud that NIOSA funds the Society's "Junior Associates" which Terrill chaired as a Society board member in 2025 and 2026. Formed in 1955 for kids 4 – 18 years of age, the Junior Associate membership was created to enable young members to study regional history, its traditions and its preservation. The Juniors have many fun, educational events during the year; it also offers a "Junior Associate Scholarship" for members who are graduating high school Seniors.

PROCEEDS: NIOSA is the top fundraiser for historic preservation in the nation and truly lives up to its motto as a “Celebration for Preservation.” The NIOSA committee presents The Conservation Society with NIOSA profits to fund the Society’s preservation of historic properties and parks throughout the city and neighboring counties, as well as education and advocacy programs such as the Heritage Education tours, seminars, scholarships, resource library and house museums.

NIOSA TEAM: NIOSA is put on by an army of volunteers, led by the NIOSA Chairman (Conservation Society’s Fourth Vice President) Julie Terrill. She is assisted by Vice Chairs Monica Reyes, Anita Gonzalez, Lisa Pierce and Abbi Power, and DeAnna Keesee as NIOSA Treasurer; 14 area chairmen; and chairmen of the hundreds of food and drink booths. Some food booths have been run by second or third generations of a family. **All are volunteers.**

Prohibited Items: The following are prohibited at NIOSA (NIOSA does NOT provide a place to check/store these items): **NEW: collapsible wagon carts**, weapons (including concealed weapons); baby strollers; outside food & beverages; recreational wheels (i.e., scooters, skateboards, roller blades, Heelys, etc.); drones and non-clear backpacks. NIOSA only allows clear bags on the grounds (not tinted plastic) and cannot exceed 12” x 6” x 12.” Exceptions are diaper bags held by guardian. All bags are subject to search. Prohibited bags will not be held nor checked-in at the gates.

Trademarks: Since 1948, The Conservation Society of San Antonio has trademarked NIOSA® and A NIGHT IN OLD SAN ANTONIO® to identify the festival and its associated merchandise. Any use of “NIOSA” or “A Night In Old San Antonio” on medals or other uses (such as t-shirts, caps, events, websites, Facebook and other social media outlets)—not explicitly authorized and/or created by the Conservation Society—is prohibited under U.S. trademark laws.

Sustainability: NIOSA has earned one of the highest certifications every year since the City of San Antonio began its Green Events Ordinance sustainable policies for medium and large-scale events.

INFO: Visit www.niosa.org, contact (210) 226-5188 or niosa@niosa.org or follow NIOSA on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/niosa.niosa) at www.facebook.com/niosa.niosa; Instagram at <https://www.instagram.com/anightinoldsa/>

AVERAGE SERVINGS SOLD OF MOST POPULAR FOODS

Anticuchos - Mexican Market area – 10,200 sold
Gorditas – Haymarket Area – 3,500 Sold
Maria’s Tortillas - Haymarket area 6,600 Sold
Beignets – French Quarter –23,000 Sold
Fried Mushrooms - Haymarket Area – 3,300 sold
Yak-I-Tori - Chinatown – 2,300 Sold
Bongo-K-Bobs – Mission Trail - 11,500 Sold
Mr. Chicken – Froggy Bottom –22,000 sold
Steer on a Stick – Frontier Town –6,800 sold
Fajitas de Pollo – Mexican Market – 3,400 sold
Eggrolls – Chinatown – 6,600 sold

NIOSA FOOD FACTS - AVERAGES FROM PAST YEARS

Beef - 13,500 lbs.
Chicken - 11,000 lbs.
Sausage - 4,200 lbs.
Turkey Legs - 3,800 legs
Buns, etc. - 23,000
Masa - 1,400 lbs.

Tortillas (Corn, Flour) - 23,000
Chalupa Shells, Taco Shells and Gorditas - 16,500
Cheese - 2,000
Fresh Fruits and Vegetables - 11,200 lbs.
Guacamole - 800 lbs.
Ice Cream - 3,400 lbs.
Seafood (Shrimp, Fish) - 1,300 lbs.

HEALTHY FOODS AT NIOSA:

Bongo K-Bobs – Mission Trail
Yak-I-Tori – Chinatown
Texas Bird Legs (turkey legs) – Frontier Town
Steer-on-a-Stick – Frontier Town
Cowboy Cucumbers – Frontier Town
Cajun Shrimp – Froggy Bottom
Rose’s Street Tacos - Haymarket
Anticuchos – Mexican Market
Hibiscus Tea – Mexican Market
Chuleta de Puerco (pork chop on a stick) – Mission Trail
Aguacates (fresh avocado halves filled with sour cream and spicy sauce) – South of the Border
Pollo Rancheros – South of the Border
Beef Fajitas (Haymarket) and Chicken Fajitas (Mexican Market)
Fish Tacos - Villa Espana
Iced tea is caffeine-free - all tea booths
Healthy canola/soy blend oil - used in all NIOSA dishes requiring oil

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MEDIA: *Media are very welcome to cover NIOSA before and during the event. More comprehensive media materials are available on the NIOSA website’s [Media Page](#). Media passes, high-resolution photos, videos, recipes, interviews with NIOSA spokespersons and more detailed staging schedules are available from Jeanne Albrecht at 210-392-9047 or jca@jeannebiz.com.*

NOTE: *NIOSA does NOT honor Fiesta Commission media passes.*