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## March festivals offer wine and food lovers a getaway



Wine-tasting at Ritz-Carlton Cancun at last year's Cancun-Riviera Maya Wine and Food Festival (Jerome Levine, For Tribune Newspapers)

By Irene S. Levine  
For Tribune Newspapers

### SHARELINES

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If you're seeking an excuse for a mini-vacation, two popular wine and food festivals in March may whet your appetite. The fourth annual Cancun-Riviera Maya Wine & Food Festival will be March 12-15. This year's event honors Spain's top chefs and the top female chefs from Mexico. Now in its 10th year, the BB&T Charleston Wine + Food Festival from March 4-8 celebrates the Lowcountry food culture of this vibrant South Carolina city.

At the Cancun-Riviera Maya festival, the Fiesta Americana Grand Coral Beach Resort & Spa will host a Star Chefs Dinner with a menu prepared by 25 chefs from Mexico and international locales. A five-course Divas of Mexican Cuisine dinner showcasing the skills of female chefs from Mexico will be at Secrets The Vine. A tribute to French cuisine will take place at the Ritz-Carlton Cancun. Two important winemakers will be honored: Hugo D'Acosta of Mexico and Alvaro Palacios of Spain.

Participants can sign up for cooking classes and demonstrations; wine and spirit tastings; talks by celebrity avant-garde Spanish chefs Juan Mari Arzak and Joan Roca; and visits to the Gourmet Tasting Village at Moon Palace Golf & Spa Resort.

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The BB&T Charleston festival celebrates Charleston's culinary excellence, bringing together top chefs, winemakers, authors, storytellers and food enthusiasts. The festival features more than 200 local and guest chefs, plus 48 winemakers, mixologists and beer experts at more than 100 events.

An opening-night gala will be at the Art Institute of Charleston. Participants also can attend various lunches; signature dinners at top restaurants; food-related excursions; classes and seminars; and

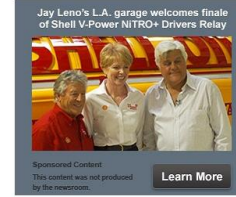
food and wine tastings. The popular Culinary Village takes place under tents at historic Marion Square. Beverage events will be at the Culinary Institute of Charleston.

Both festivals benefit their communities. A portion of funds from the Cancun-Riviera Maya festival will be used to provide computers for a nonprofit housing program, for educational and social

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