



TASTE TEST

SANTIAGO'S

With an elevated update and a fresh new take on their menu, this beachside resort restaurant has a recipe for delicious success.

By Molly Wilson | Photography by Brian Miller



It can be difficult for a resort restaurant to escape the tourist market. With the hotel necessarily catering only to visitors, locals will often pass by without a thought of the dining scene inside. But despite its location inside Guy Harvey Resort, **Santiago's** is about to become St. Augustine's favorite new heightened dining destination. The restaurant is the fresh and flavorful update of the former Guy Harvey's Grille & Grog, a laid-back beach-food spot. The Guy Harvey team has revamped the menu and the space and created a beautiful scene for classy casual fare that focuses on local culture and ingredients.

Paying homage to Guy Harvey's first artistic series and wishing to keep their ties to the ocean atmosphere, Santiago's was named after the title character in Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*. The name change is indicative of the elevated alteration of the restaurant as a whole – more purposeful and intentional in all it does.

The new menu is a fusion of Spanish, Southern, and Latin American that draws upon the local culture for inspiration, so the first dish brought to our table was the area's

ever-popular Conch Fritters. This appetizer has been a favorite since the resort first opened, so the team knew that it was a dish that had to stay after the update. They've been told by guests time and again that these fritters are "the best on the beach." After a sampling of our own, we might just have to join the cries of the throng. The recipe itself is fairly traditional, but the obviously fresh ingredients and the fried-to-perfection crispness take these Conch Fritters up a few notches. And the honey citrus sauce that comes with them could be a meal all its own.

We were then served the Tuna Poke Bowl, overflowing with bright veggies and the unmistakable hue of fresh tuna. The bowl starts with teriyaki grilled vegetables – cucumbers, carrots, and squash – and some pineapple (that adds an always welcome tarty sweetness) served over sticky rice with avocado, pickled onions, and a beautifully seared rare tuna. The Poke Bowl offers a ton of flavors that work in perfect harmony to appeal to all of your tastes – from sweet to salty to sour.

Last on our plates (or not really "plates" but a live edge wood board) was the totally-shareable-but-you-won't-want-to-share-it

Cheese Board. The gorgeous cheese board is one of those dishes where you don't really want to mess up the presentation but you're definitely going to because it tastes so delicious. On the board are a variety of Spanish cheeses, – like Manchego and Cabrales – sopressata, a house-made guava datil jam, marcona almonds, and a honeycomb. Despite being totally separate elements of the cheese board, the flavors of each ingredient are so complementary. Like we said, you won't be judged if you don't feel like sharing.

Last but not least, the cocktails at Santiago's have taken on a life of their own. In the middle of the restaurant is a beautifully-designed bar where bartenders mix up supremely fresh drinks from the traditional to the unusual. The flavors of these libations don't hide behind sugary sweetness – they don't need to. The fruit juices are squeezed fresh and the recipes are curated with calculated deliberation. The intentionality behind the menu at Santiago's is immediately apparent. Chef Joe and his team have designed a St. Augustine culinary experience that locals aren't soon to forget.

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