

The \$18 Margarita is coming — and tariff-happy Trump won't be picking up the tab

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Get ready for the \$18 margarita — and you can blame President Trump's tequila slamming tariffs.

The West Village restaurateur Luis Arce Mota says the signature south-of-the-border cocktail will skyrocket in price if Trump imposes a threatened tax on all imports from Mexico.

"Trump has screwed us with this," says Arce Mota at his La Contenta Oeste eatery on West 11th Street.

"So just on a typical margarita not only will the tequila cost rise but so will the cost per lime we use to make the margarita."

Trump is warning that he'll impose a 5% tax on all goods crossing the border from Mexico on June 10 if unspecified measures are not taken to "fix" the immigration situation.

The tariffs would rise every month to a head-spinning 25% by fall.

Arce Mota is counting on forking over much more for all the fresh-from-Mexico ingredients he uses every day. He ticked off a litany of sticker shock from \$2 avocados to pricier limes and habañero peppers.

And there is no easy way out.

"We absorb the cost — or raise our prices and lose customers," he said. Adding insult to injury, he is already struggling to keep staff hit hard by Trump's crackdown on immigration.

The tariffs wouldn't just boost the bill for an after-work Corona or guacamole and chips. New Yorkers would pay more for SUVs, electronics and machinery, much of which are produced or assembled down Acapulco way.

"This is like a 5% national sales tax on everything coming from Mexico," said Dan Ikenson, director of trade policy at the conservative CATO Institute. "That's going to be passed on to the American consumer.

Pointing at stacks of limes and avocados at Queens Fruit Market in Forest Hills, manager Melvin Figueroa said the tariffs will be 100% bad for business.

"I have to pay more money, and then my customers have to pay more," said Figueroa, 28. "It's bad because they won't pay more."

Queens retiree Victor Ruiz says he has no doubt the tariffs will end up costing him a couple of extra bucks a day — a burden he can ill afford on a fixed income.

“We have a president who’s doing things a certain way,” he said. “Until things change, it’s going to be that way and we gotta live with it.”

America imported \$346 billion worth of stuff from Mexico last year. So the Trump tariffs could punch a nearly \$20 billion hole in household budgets just for starters.

And Mexico buys \$250 billion of American products like cheese and pork and soybeans. Although that trade would not be directly affected, most observers believe Mexico will retaliate if Trump’s tariffs actually go into effect.

The tariff plan immediately ran into all sorts of fierce legal headwinds.

Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador denounced the plan, which he warned could endanger the “NAFTA 2.0” trade deal that Trump is pushing.

He did refrain from threatening to impose tit-for-tat tariffs on American goods.

“I don’t believe ... in an eye for an eye,” the Mexican leader said.

Business groups from Wall Street to Main Street lashed out at the plan as a job-killing, price-increasing disaster for American families.

“This is potentially devastating to American small businesses and all the people they employ,” Gary Shapiro of the Consumer Technology Association.

The auto industry would potentially take the heaviest blow from the plan because its supply chains are so deeply linked across the border. General Motors stock plunged 4.4% and Ford dipped nearly 2%.

Not everyone thinks tariffs are a bad idea. Laurence Celestin, 52, a carpenter from South Richmond Hill, said he’s willing to skip an occasional shot of tequila to make a point to Mexico.

“If they don’t abide by the rules,” Celestin said, “why support them?”