

Hot Tamales Live!

No Rim Shot Required!



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Hollywood, CALIFORNIA — Step right up and get your red Hot Tamales! But wait a minute... In all fairness and, lest we forget in the name of being politically correct, which, of course, is always uppermost in my mind, this comedy show way exceeds the title of just *Hot Tamales Live*, and it also exceeds the comedy speed limit for laughs.

Hot Tamales Live, featuring female comedians, does indeed have “hot tamales,” but also includes other nationalities: Ukrainian/Jewish knishes, Korean bimpops, Persian boreks, African-American buttermilk biscuits, and that famous nationality “Male” featuring a hot dog bun. So what we got here, thanks to creator Kiki Melendez’s vision, could also be known as Hot Crossed Buns. A United Nations of comedy (isn’t that an oxymoron?) with a taste treat of humor for almost every nationality.

Hot Tamales Live! is a sisterhood (is that still politically correct?) of more than 100 incredibly talented female comedians from across the country; each with her own point of view on the foibles of her respective culture, race, and gender. This upcoming show on Sunday, January 18th here at the El Rey being filmed by Showtime, will showcase five of these top female comics from America’s multi-cultural society. There will be one token “hot dog bun” besides the Hot Tamales.



Before meeting with the creator Kiki Melendez and fellow comic and Hot Tamale Kira Soltanovich, I was ready for a bunch of griping, bad one-liners from aggressive broads. The only bad one-liners were my own. It couldn't have been a more relaxed, insightful, and interesting morning with them.

As Kiki, Kira, and I sat there chatting, we discussed the evolution of what are now termed as racial slurs and stereotypes — after all, these had to start somewhere. The humor available in these, when dealt with in the right way, was reinforced when Kira, who was born in the Ukraine and came to this country she was four, told me she's also Jewish and her husband is Irish Catholic. Race and religion — always grist for the mill when you're part of the grist. I waited a beat. Then she told me, because of their mixed marriage, she was converting...to alcoholism. No rim shot necessary. Perfect timing even while sitting at the dining room table in workout clothes. And this from the woman who started her career and got her first paycheck at the age of seven by appearing with the San Francisco Ballet's annual Christmas production of *The Nutcracker*. I guess she's another kind of nut

