



Lebron James-Backed Pizza Chain Set for Southeast Louisiana Expansion

Blaze Pizza will Open Five more Locations between New Orleans and Baton Rouge

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Los Angeles-based chain Blaze Pizza announced a development deal this week that will see a group of New Orleans-based partners open five new locations of the restaurant between New Orleans and Baton Rouge.

There are two local outposts already of the LeBron James-backed brand, which launched its first location on O'Keefe Avenue in the CBD in 2015 and opened on Freret Street two years

later. The "fast-fir'd" pizza chain is known for personal sized, build-your-own pies priced affordably (Blaze says an average pie costs about \$8). Founded in California in 2012, it was an early part of the massive growth of fast-casual pizza chains a few years back.

Blaze made the multi-unit deal for the new locations with brothers Kaleb and Khai Duong and partner Jacob Strider, who together opened the first New Orleans Mooyah Burgers, Fries and Shakes five years ago. The New Orleans natives got their start franchising in 2010 with two frozen yogurt shops, and signed a five-location deal with Mooyah a few years later.

Blaze Pizza, which also counts Maria Shriver and Boston Red Sox chairman Tom Werner as celebrity investors, currently has 340 restaurants into 41 states and six countries. Check back for details on the forthcoming New Orleans locations.