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Irish pubs gearing up for St. Patrick's Day - South Floridians will have plenty of choices for where and how to celebrate St. Patrick's Day.

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Norma Shelow and husband Mike, owners of Mike's at Venetia near downtown Miami, advise partygoers not to go to their Irish pub on St. Patrick's Day without wearing green. That is, unless you don't mind being pinched.

The Shelows, like most owners of Irish pubs at this time of year, are prepping for the lucky day. Shelow said her pub and restaurant had its grand opening on St. Patrick's Day of 1986, and has been keeping the Irish tradition ever since.

"I guess it's just a day for family and friends to get together and hang out," Shelow said. "Our party will start from the minute our doors open, til the wee hours of the morning. Sometimes, we even have a bagpiper."

Corned beef hash, shepherd's pie, cabbage and Irish beer are essentials for any authentic Irish party, and Bill Richards, owner of Three and Out Irish Tavern and Grill in Kendall, said his bar will have all of the essentials. He wants to draw out the debauchery by having a pre-party on the Friday before St. Patrick's Day.

"We're going to start early," Richards said. "Friday night, we'll have shepherd's pie and Irish stew. Why not come? It's free to get in; all you have to do is buy your food and beer."

Richards said that his celebration is, "probably the biggest celebration for St. Patrick's Day in this part of town." With live bands starting at noon on Saturday, he also said that there is no set time for the end of the party.

"We're going to party until the cops shut us down," Richards said.

Other pubs will focus their parties around sports. Richard Carmichael, manager at Waxy O' Connor's in South Beach, said his bar will be screening the Ireland Rugby International championships the throughout the day in the spirit of the holiday.

"We'll probably be one of the busiest bars on the beach that day, since it's our fourth St. Patrick's Day here," Carmichael said.

For owners John Clarke and Martin Lynch, St. Patrick's Day celebrations help bring a bit of home. Both owners originally from Ireland, the two opened their Irish pub, John Martin's Irish Pub and Restaurant, in 1989. Though they don't serve green beer because according to Lynch "original Irish places don't serve green beer," the menu is comprised of Irish classics including corned beef and cabbage.

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"We try to keep it as close to Irish as possible," Lynch said.

Here's a rundown on some of the planned festivities.

Brickell

The Lucky Clover Irish Pub is taking their St. Patrick's Day celebration to the street. The pub, located at 1111 SW First Avenue will be closing down SW 11th Street between SW 1st Avenue and South Miami Avenue for the festivities. The party starts March 17 at 1 p.m. and goes on until 11 p.m. There will be plenty of flowing beer and live bands, including a U2 tribute band and the Mad World Orchestra as the main act. After the whole day of dancing in the street, the party will move inside the bar at 11 p.m. Admission is free. For more information call 786-691-2750.

Coral Gables

Self-proclaimed "the originals, the biggest and the best," John Martin's Irish Pub and Restaurant will host a street party on 253 Miracle Mile from 4 p.m. to midnight. This year, the party will feature live Irish music, including a U2 tribute band. "The U2 tribute band is phenomenal; if you saw the guy on the stage you'd think he's Bono, it looks exactly like him. It's excellent entertainment." Entry to the party is free. The bar will remain opened until 2 a.m. For more information, visit johnmartins.com or call 305-445-3777.

Downtown

Mike's at Venetia, 555 NE 15th Street will also be hosting an all day party. Food will include Irish favorites like corned beef hash, cabbage and surprise party favors will be given out. Green beer and authentic Irish music will also be part of the party. Admission is free. Hours: 11 a.m.- "wee hours" in the morning. For more information call 305-374-5731.

Kendall

Three and Out Irish Tavern and Grill in Kendall has been hosting a St. Patrick's Day celebration for over 20 years. This hole-in-the wall tavern, located at 13067 SW 112th Street, believes St. Patty's day should last more then one day and is starting their debauchery on Friday with a pre party consisting of Irish stew and shepherd's pie. After the pre-party on Friday, live bands, green beer, corned beef and cabbage will start promptly at noon on Saturday. For more information call 305-382-1516.

South Beach

Waxy O' Connors has several locations in South Florida, but the one in South Beach, at 1248 Washington Avenue expects a constant crowd, since the location gained popularity for the past four years. The doors open 8 a.m. Saturday and close at 5 a.m. Sunday. Irish drinks will be on special all day and live entertainment will begin at 3 p.m. There may be a cover charge based on how busy the bar is, and the cover charge will vary. For more information, call 305-534-7824.

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