

# CHIPOTLE PARTNERS WITH VEBU TO TEST AUTOCADO PROTOTYPE, A ROBOTIC SOLUTION TO GUACAMOLE PREP

- Chipotle has unveiled a new avocado processing cobotic (collaborative robot) prototype called Autocado that cuts, cores, and peels avocados before they are hand mashed to create the restaurant's signature guacamole
- The company is collaborating with Vebu, a product development company that works with food industry leaders to co-create intelligent automation and technology solutions, to build the device
- Chipotle is also investing in Vebu through its Cultivate Next venture fund to help fuel additional innovation opportunities in the restaurant space

NEWPORT BEACH, Calif., July 12, 2023 /PRNEWswire/ -- Chipotle Mexican Grill (NYSE: CMG) today announced Autocado, an avocado processing cobotic prototype that cuts, cores, and peels avocados before they are hand mashed to create the restaurant's famous guacamole. The prototype, developed in collaboration with [VEBU](#), is currently being tested at the Chipotle Cultivate Center in Irvine, California.

## How It Works

1. A team member loads Autocado with a full case of ripe avocados and selects the size setting. Autocado can hold up to 25 lbs. of avocados at once.
2. One at a time, avocados are vertically oriented, then transferred to the processing device.
3. The avocados are sliced in half. Their cores and skin are automatically removed, and the waste is discarded.
4. The fruit is safely collected in a stainless-steel bowl in the bottom of the device.
5. A team member removes the bowl of avocado fruit and moves it to the counter where they add additional ingredients and hand mash the avocados to make Chipotle's signature guacamole.

## Autocado's Origin Story

Vebu worked closely with Certified Training Managers from Chipotle's restaurants to analyze the company's preparation process and identify tasks that are time consuming and less favorable among crew members. Chipotle currently has individuals dedicated to cutting, coring, and scooping avocados. On average, it takes approximately 50 minutes to make a batch of guacamole.

## Autocado's Potential Impact

The Vebu team is aiming to improve the device's processing speeds, which could ultimately reduce guacamole prep time by 50%, allowing Chipotle employees to focus on serving guests and providing great hospitality. In restaurants across the U.S., Canada, and Europe this year, the company is expected to use approximately 4.5 million cases of avocados, equivalent to more than 100 million pounds of fruit. In support of Chipotle's sustainability initiatives and waste reduction efforts, Autocado also aims to increase avocado fruit yield through precision processing, which could lead to millions of dollars in annual food cost savings if the cobot is successfully developed and deployed widely.

"We are committed to exploring collaborative robotics to drive efficiencies and ease pain points for our employees," said Curt Garner, Chief Customer and Technology Officer at Chipotle. "The intensive labor of cutting, coring, and scooping avocados could be relieved with Autocado, but we still maintain the essential culinary experience of hand mashing and hand preparing the guacamole to our exacting standards."

"Our purpose as a robotic company is to leverage automation technology to give workers more flexibility in their day-to-day work," said Buck Jordan, CEO of Vebu. "Autocado has the potential to work alongside Chipotle crew members to create the same, delicious guacamole that Chipotle fans love but more efficiently than ever before."

## Integration of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning

Vebu is developing an artificial intelligence and machine learning stack to be connected to all its robotic solutions, where applicable. The goal is for future iterations of Autocado to use machine

learning and sensor fusion to evaluate the quality of the avocados and quantify waste reduction as well as the efficiency of the cutting, coring, and peeling processes.

For broadcast B-roll video of Autocado, please visit here:

[HTTPS://WWW.DROPTBOX.COM/SH/WHUFZEHT515MI2G/AAAXNFEE59WP6LF4FRDA3AWWA?DL=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/WHUFZEHT515MI2G/AAAXNFEE59WP6LF4FRDA3AWWA?DL=0).

### **Cultivate Next**

Chipotle is investing in Vebu as part of **CULTIVATE NEXT**, the company's \$50 million venture fund that intends to make early-stage investments into strategically aligned companies that further its mission to Cultivate a Better World and help accelerate its aggressive growth plans. As a people-first company, Chipotle is seeking opportunities that will elevate the human experience for its teams as well as increase access and convenience for its guests. Investments may include innovations in farming and supply chain, advanced robotics, alternative proteins, and more.

Through Cultivate Next, Chipotle has previously invested in **HYPHEN**, a foodservice platform designed to help restaurant owners, operators, and budding chefs move their business forward by automating kitchen operations. Hyphen's first product, The Makeline, is being tested as a system that uses advanced software and robotics to automate meal production for all digital orders under the counter while allowing staff to assemble in-house orders from the top of the counter.

### **Chippy**

In addition to Autocado, Chipotle is currently testing **CHIPPY**, an autonomous kitchen assistant that integrates culinary traditions with artificial intelligence to make tortilla chips, in a Fountain Valley, CA restaurant.

### **ABOUT CHIPOTLE**

Chipotle Mexican Grill, Inc. (NYSE: CMG) is cultivating a better world by serving responsibly sourced, classically-cooked, real food with wholesome ingredients without artificial colors, flavors or preservatives. Chipotle had over 3,200 restaurants as of March 31, 2023, in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, France and Germany and is the only restaurant company of its size that owns and operates all its restaurants. Chipotle is ranked on the Fortune 500 and is recognized on the 2023 list for Fortune's Most Admired Companies and Time Magazine's Most Influential Companies. With over 100,000 employees passionate about providing a great guest experience, Chipotle is a longtime leader and innovator in the food industry. Chipotle is committed to making its food more accessible to everyone while continuing to be a brand with a demonstrated purpose as it leads the way in digital, technology and sustainable business practices. For more information or to place an order online, visit [WWW.CHIPOTLE.COM](http://WWW.CHIPOTLE.COM).

### **ABOUT VEBU**

Vebu is a full stack Automation, Robotics, and Intelligence company focused on building technology solutions for and with the broad food industry. With a partner driven team of experts spanning engineering, robotics, artificial intelligence, and product development, Vebu is building products to help humans do more.

SOURCE Chipotle Mexican Grill, Inc.

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Additional assets available online: [PHOTOS \(1\)](#) [VIDEO \(1\)](#)

**[HTTPS://NEWSROOM.CHIPOTLE.COM/2023-07-12-CHIPOTLE-PARTNERS-WITH-VEBU-TO-TEST-AUTOCADO-PROTOTYPE,-A-ROBOTIC-SOLUTION-TO-GUACAMOLE-PREP](https://newsroom.chipotle.com/2023-07-12-chipotle-partners-with-vebu-to-test-autocado-prototype,-a-robotic-solution-to-guacamole-prep)**