



## Vendor Spotlight: Lima Fusion

Wednesday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2018

*What is Latin American fusion? We asked Jack M Egoavil, owner of Lima Fusion at New Hope Ferry Market about this new culinary trend. Read on to learn how Lima Fusion is reinvigorating Mexican and Peruvian cuisine by integrating ancient cooking traditions with his own modern twist.*

### **How long has Lima Fusion been in business?**

I believe we opened in the Ferry Market the first week of October 2017. My family owns two other restaurants in the area, El Tule in Lambertville and Quinoa in Doylestown. This is a venture I started for myself as a spin off. When I heard about Ferry Market I

contacted them because I was interested in joining the team of restaurants working there.

### **What was the inspiration behind Lima Fusion?**

It is basically my culture. Some people ask why I moved away from my background in biology and nutrition. I used to do lab research for GlaxoSmithKline. I worked as a Health inspector for the Bucks County Department of Health and I completed my MBA. In my wildest dreams I never thought I would open a restaurant. My family opened El Tule in Lambertville seven years ago, and I was interested in being my own boss. Moreso I wanted to showcase our culture, there was not anything to eat in the area when it came to Peruvian cuisine. Around that time people were talking a lot about Peruvian food and saying it was the next big thing. The timing was perfect. I am proud of where I came from, I go to Peru two to three times a year. Eating was always the best part of the trip. Bringing my own experiences to the table got me into the whole business.

### **What is the most rewarding part of owning your own business?**

With the other two restaurants it was rewarding to be able to work as a family. At first it was difficult, we all have big personalities. Most people see their family for gatherings or holidays, but we're on top of each other all the time. It is wonderful to be successful as a family. Showcasing our culture is the coolest thing. It's great as a new venture to be able to take everything I learned from our family businesses and apply it to Lima.

### **Where is your family from originally?**

My family was all born and raised in Lima, the capital of Peru. We moved here in 1992, which was a challenge because we didn't

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speak any English. We moved when I was 16, my sister Michele was 15, and my other sister Sylvia was 5. I went to high school and college, then our family opened the restaurants in Lambertville and Doylestown. After, I went to Peru for a year of chef's training. When I came back, I found an opportunity to open my own business and introduce influences from Mexico, Peru, Latin America and Spanish cuisine.

### **Is cooking a family tradition?**

For Latins, everything revolves around food. On snow days we are thinking about which house we will go to and what we are doing together, not just basics like milk, water, and bread to ride out the storm. My whole family is in the area, and food is a big thing in my family. If there is a gathering, my mom will make a six course meal. I have always been around food, ever since I was a little boy my mom has been an amazing chef. She has no professional training, but she is going back to Peru for her culinary education. Food is what gets me moving.

### **What is your culinary background?**

Before going to culinary training I spent minimal time in the kitchen. I would always opt to do dishes, I didn't know how to cut meat or vegetables. On my first day of culinary school, it was summertime in Peru. After I picked up my books, I went to the culinary institute five minutes from the beach. I showed up in sandals, shorts and a tank top because I thought it was just an introduction. Everyone else was in a chef uniform, I didn't know I needed one, but found the situation extremely funny. Training was hard because I wasn't good with my hands. It was kind of like boot camp, we were there from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. every day. Most people there already had knowledge of cooking or experience in the kitchen, but I had to learn everything. Towards the end it was amazing, I fell back

in love with food and my culture. It wasn't a good start, but everyone was very knowledgeable, and overall it was great experience.

### **How would you describe your brand?**

Definitely a cultural experience, everything we do is made fresh and on premises. Every time you see us, we are cooking something. It would have been so much easier if we brought food from our other restaurants, but the concept was to have people watch what we do. They can see us make empanadas and everything. Everything is made fresh.

### **Why do you think Lima Fusion has been so successful?**

We have already made a name for ourselves with our location in Lambertville, but we also put a lot into every dish that comes out. I was a rookie when I started out because Lima Fusion was supposed to be a joint venture with me and my cousin. He decided not to do it and I wondered if I should stop or keep going. I pushed through and my friends supported me. I think we're also successful because we're very friendly and open to answer questions. Everyone here is knowledgeable about what they do. We try to be accommodating in the business, some guests are vegetarians or gluten free. We tailor our dishes to different tastes.

### **How did you design your menu?**

My focus at the beginning was empanadas and ceviche, but I knew at the same time it was just a starting menu. Everyone knows ceviche, it is one of most traditional dishes in Peru. I wanted to do more. Peruvian cuisine has a lot to offer, but I decided to pick different elements from other cultures. Arepas were something I wanted to learn how to make for awhile, I found a good friend from Venezuela who taught me how to do it. Our arepas have Peruvian fillings. We want to offer traditional items with a

different flair. Tacos are something I mastered from our other two restaurants. Usually places make tacos that are Tex Mex, ours are simple and amazing with onions, cilantro, and jalapenos. People come in and ask for hard shell tacos, and we can make them, but we tell them they are not traditional. We're accommodating, but will tell customers the right way to do things.

**What is your favorite dish?**

There are many different things I love to make. With empanadas the sky is the limit, we are doing sweet empanadas now. They are a lot of work, but everyone loves them, they're a best seller. Less people have been asking for ceviche now because of the weather, but later in the spring that will change. I enjoy making every dish, even vegetarian food. We have a steak sauté can be done with tofu, Peruvian people love it. If you try it, it's so good. I actually love tofu.

**What is a typical day like for you?**

I try to keep balance, I am at Ferry Market all the time. First I wake up early and take the dogs for a run. At 9:30 a.m. we start prep, see what we're missing, and continue cooking until closing. On the weekends I go from Ferry Market to the restaurant in Doylestown, I'll get home at 11:00 p.m. During the week I go straight home after Ferry Market closes. I work long hours, but in the future they will pay off.

**How do you hope to see Lima Fusion grow within the next year?**

We will see how crazy summer will be, but I want to add more to our menu. Not just more food from my culture, but take more of the Latin American culture and bring that flair to this area. Some Latin restaurants are opening, but I'm surprised more don't offer this concept.

**What other types of cuisine would you like to learn how to make?**

I'm in love with Mediterranean, Peruvian and Thai food. When I went to Morocco, Israel, and Jordan, the food was quite amazing. I want to learn this type of food. I went to Spain and now I want to learn how to do real Spanish tapas. I was in Mexico City for the first time last September and blown away by the food. I want to travel more, learn how to cook different foods from my travels, and find a way to bring those cuisines together.

**Anything else you would like to add?**

We are so happy to be part of the Ferry Market family. It's great here, everyone has been so nice. We're ready for a busy season, let's bring it!

*Special thanks go out to Jack for giving us an exclusive look behind the scenes of Lima Fusion and teaching us about Latin American culture. For flaky empanadas, spicy ceviche, bite-sized tapas, and other Peruvian favorites with an innovative flair, go to Lima Fusion. Visit them in the Ferry Market at 32 South Main Street in New Hope, Pennsylvania.*