

https://www.nola.com/entertainment_life/eat-drink/one-of-the-first-modern-food-trucks-in-new-orleans-will-open-new-uptown-restaurant/article_24b02e44-83d6-11ee-a910-aba3515adffa.html

One of the first modern food trucks in New Orleans will open new Uptown restaurant

BY IAN MCNULTY | Staff writer

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Customers line up at lunch time in front of La Cocinita food truck in downtown New Orleans. (Photo by Kathleen Flynn, Nola.com / The Time)

Food trucks were still a new idea back in 2011 when Rachel and Benoit Angulo started theirs, a truck for Venezuelan street food dubbed La Cocinita. One of the first of the modern iteration of food trucks, the

bright red rig always stood out, even when it was parked outside of the couple's apartment Uptown on Prytania Street.

Now, many changes for their business later, the two are set to open a brick and mortar restaurant just a few blocks away from that old apartment.

The restaurant version of La Cocinita is now planned for 4920 Prytania St., with a menu of dishes from Benoit's native Venezuela.



Staff from the La Cocinita food truck check out the future home of its first brick and mortar location in New Orleans at 4920 Prytania St. (Contributed photo from Rachel Angulo)

That address was previously location of Parran's Po-Boys, though many will remember it for as long run as the Japanese restaurant Kyoto.

La Cocinita is now slated to open here in May.

La Cocinita means “little kitchen” in Spanish, though this iteration will give much more room for an expanded menu. That will include a broader range of arepas, the griddle-cooked corncakes filled with cheese, sauces and meats, like pollo estofado (braised chicken) and lechon (roasted pork).



Arepas stuffed with meats and cheese and sauce are a staple from La Cocinita in New Orleans. (Staff photo by Ian McNulty, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune)

“We’ll always have tacos, but we really want to expand the options and emphasize the Venezuelan roots that started this,” said Rachel Angulo.

“We’ve had a strong emphasis on accommodating different diets, and one of the nice things about having a newer, bigger space is that we can do more with that too,” she said.

The restaurant will use counter service and have a full bar.

Street food inspiration



Rachel and Benoit Angulo started La Cocinita as a food truck for Venezuelan street food in 2011. (Contributed photo from La Cocinita)

Raised on Caracas, Benoit Angulo started cooking at an early age and moved to the U.S. to pursue a culinary career. He and Rachel met while working at Commander's Palace. The idea for a food truck came up one night while they were having after-shift drinks and bemoaning the dearth of late-night food options.

Benoit started pining for the street vendors he knew back home along a strip known as "Calle De Hambre" (Hunger Street), and introduced Rachel to arepas. Their food truck first hit the road in 2011.

The Angulos also operate a food truck and restaurant version of La Cocinita in Chicago. For the New Orleans restaurant they are partnering with their long time manager, Joe Sturtz.

La Cocinita was part of the first class of vendors at the Pythian Market food hall in downtown New Orleans, but lost that location when the food hall closed in 2022.



Tommy Christie chomps down on a chorizo taco from La Cocinita, a food truck in New Orleans.

Advocate staff photo by ELIOT KAMENITZ

Meanwhile, the big red truck is still in circulation in New Orleans, mostly doing the catering events that La Cocinita fields here.

The new location is part of a cluster of Uptown businesses, with the Creole Creamery ice cream parlor right next door. Angulo said she's already envisioning a collaboration with the neighbors for Latin American inspired desserts at the restaurant.

There is also a fine Honduran restaurant in Kenner called La Cocinita; the two are not related.



Preparing carne asada tacos at La Cocinita food truck in New Orleans. (Photo by Kathleen Flynn, Nola.com / The Times-Picayune)



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Rachel Angulo hands out a dish from La Cocinita food truck in New Orleans. (Photo by Kathleen Flynn, Nola.com / The Times-Picayune archive)

La Cocinita

4920 Prytania St., projected opening May 2024

For food truck information, see lacocinita.com.

Email Ian McNulty at imcnulty@theadvocate.com.