

## Guaco Taco's Story

Guaco Taco is the culmination of 25 years' experience, the immersion of many different cuisines & techniques, and dedication to the love of food and wine. Guaco Taco's owner and chef, Manuel, gives homage to his family and especially to his mother through his restaurant's dishes. The guacamole we all enjoy is her recipe among many others.

Manuel was born in Mexico City and immediately moved to the Bay Area in California with his family. At 12 years old, he began washing dishes for his family's restaurant. This is where his brother began to teach him to cook. Thus, his journey into the food and wine industry began—an industry fueled with passion, intense creativity, long hours, and hard work.

In addition to growing and learning in his family's restaurants, Manuel decided to accept an apprenticeship opportunity to expand his knowledge at the age of 14. He went on to work for the French Restaurant Barbarossa in the San Francisco Bay Area. Starting at the souffle station, his eyes were opened to classic French Cuisine. From ages 14-16, he worked at Barbarossa, where he absorbed a great deal of information and experience. He brought this knowledge back to his family's restaurants in time for the opening of the families third restaurant Alfredo's, an Italian dining destination where Manuel Jr. and his brother ran the kitchen.

At 18 yrs. old, Manuel attended the California culinary academy: eight hours a day, five days a week, for sixteen months. He came away with immense gratitude for the creativity and the passion for the art of food.

From ages 20-35, Manuel worked in various fine dining establishments that carry the DiRoNA designation and many times under James Beard nominated and awarded chefs. Expanding his culinary background and experience to include Japanese, American cuisine, and also French and Italian.

Manuel established Guaco Taco in 2023. His belief is to use the best, freshest locally sourced products available as often as possible. He crafts exceptional dishes through techniques such as smoking and marinating meat in house, hand picking herbs, produce, and spices, and creating fresh sauces daily. Manuel sources USDA Choice Premium Angus beef, USDA Grade-A Poultry, and Prairie Fresh pork, which is free of additives and minimally processed. Manuel also proudly embraces nourishing traditions, such as using 100% beef tallow for in-house cooking and producing his own bone-broth from chicken bones.

Manuel's vision is simple. He wishes to draw upon his rich food heritage to bring new culinary experiences to the Twin Cities: Valparaiso and Niceville.