

Cerritos Gets a Taste of the Philippines —Jeepney Style!

BY MIC DIAZ | PUBLISHER



Filipino food, culture and community took to the streets of Cerritos on August 22 with the **Cerritos Jeepney Tour — Taste of the Philippines**. Organized by the Filipino American Chamber of Commerce of Cerritos (FAC3), the sold-out experience invited passengers aboard a colorful Philippine jeepney for a tour of local Filipino businesses and Cerritos landmarks, beginning and ending at Island Pacific Supermarket, where Pilipino Workers Center staff welcomed participants.

The culinary journey included Salo-Salo Grill, a Filipino restaurant that has been a Cerritos establishment for 25 years; Mi Amore Culinary Innovations, a Saladmaster outlet; Teofilo Coffee; and Starbread Bakery. At each stop, passengers sampled food and discovered businesses that are part of the Filipino American community.

Adding to the experience, **Cerritos Mayor Lynda P. Johnson** served as tour guide, entertaining passengers with trivia and stories about Cerritos as the jeepney traveled past the Cerritos Library, Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts, Heritage Park, Los Cerritos Center and Cerritos Auto Square. Representatives from the Philippine Consulate General in

Los Angeles and members of Filipino nonprofit organizations also joined the experience.

With Ryan Sotto behind the wheel, the jeepney itself became part of the adventure. An avid Harley-Davidson enthusiast and tricycle owner, Sotto brought his love of distinctive vehicles to the experience as he drove passengers from stop to stop.

At each destination, passengers had the opportunity to meet local business owners and learn more about their products and services. The tour highlighted the entrepreneurial spirit and growing presence of Filipino-American businesses in Cerritos and surrounding communities.

The jeepney provided a fitting centerpiece for the day. More than transportation, it is one of the Philippines' most recognizable cultural symbols, creating a connection between Filipino heritage and the Southern California community many Filipino Americans now call home.

Throughout the journey, passengers shared food,

Continued on Page 2

COMMUNITY

Cerritos Gets a Taste of the Philippines—Jeepney Style! *(Continued from Page 1)*

conversation and plenty of photo opportunities. The combination of Filipino flavors, Cerritos landmarks and the distinctive jeepney created an experience that was both locally rooted and unmistakably Filipino.

More than a food crawl, the tour brought together local businesses, civic leaders, nonprofit organizations and community members while encouraging participants to explore, eat, shop and support local.

For a few hours, Cerritos offered passengers a little taste of the Philippines—one jeepney stop at a time.



COMMUNITY

Kamusta Kalusugan: A Filipino Kamayan Dinner at the Farm

BY MIC DIAZ | PUBLISHER



Photos by Mic Diaz

Food, culture and community came together on August 22 for **Kamusta Kalusugan**, a Filipino *kamayan* dinner held at Grow2Zero Farms in Long Beach. The event was organized by the Long Beach Filipino Festival, Long Beach Filipino American Network (LBFAN), Long Beach Fresh, and Long Beach Health and Human Services, and hosted by Jessica Gillette and Ralph P. Santos.

The dinner featured **Chef Remrick Clemente** of Darko's Street Food and **Chef Luzzie Cabacungan** of ChickPro Inasal, who created a Filipino-inspired spread served *kamayan*-style over banana leaves. Guests gathered around the communal table to share food and conversation.

Music and entertainment added to the atmosphere, with **Ysabella Loyola** and R&B singer **Romaliza** performing for guests. **Andre Echave aka Dre Magix** added excitement to the evening with magic and interactive entertainment.

Also in attendance were young Filipino-Americans representing the next generation of the Filipino-American food and restaurant community. Their presence reflected the continued evolution of Filipino cuisine and culture in Southern California.

The farm setting added another dimension to the experience, connecting the evening's celebration of Filipino food with conversations around health, fresh food and community wellness. It was a fitting backdrop for an event centered on nourishment in its many forms.

Around one long table, generations came together to share food, music and stories. Kamusta Kalusugan demonstrated how a communal meal can nourish not only the body, but also culture, community and connection.



FOOD

More Than a Recipe: Stories We Pass Down

BY KATHERINE INIBA

The aroma of garlic, onions, and ginger sizzling in a pan instantly transports me back to my childhood and reminds me of home. For my family, food is more than nourishment—it is a connection to our heritage. Through family recipes, we share memories, learn about our history, and keep our culture alive.

One of the first dishes I learned to make was chicken empanadas. It was a labor-intensive process that involved boiling and shredding chicken, preparing the filling, making the dough, and assembling each empanada. While many kids my age might have considered it a chore, I loved every minute of it. I enjoyed helping my mom prepare her famous empanadas, a dish so beloved that people often asked her to cater special occasions.

But the recipe was only part of what she was passing down. As we cooked, my mother shared stories about learning Filipino dishes from my grandmother. In those moments, I realized I was part of a tradition that stretched across generations.

Years later, after moving in with my grandparents, I had the opportunity to learn directly from my grandmother.

I watched her make crispy fried empanadas using simple ingredients and whatever filling she had on hand. Some of my favorite memories with her were spent in that kitchen, listening to stories about her childhood while we cooked together.

Like many Filipino families, our recipes were never written down. Whenever I asked for exact measurements or cooking times, the answer was always, “You just know.” At the time, it was frustrating. As an adult, I understand that these recipes were learned through observation, practice, and time spent together.

Today, my sisters and I feel a responsibility to preserve those recipes for future generations. We could easily find recipes online, but those recipes are not ours. Family recipes carry stories, memories, and traditions.

Through them, we remain connected to our heritage and the generations whose legacy lives on in every meal we share.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

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