



THE La Tuna EFFECT

-by Ardith Stephanson | photos courtesy of La Tuna-

A new restaurant in San José del Cabo honors the local “choyeros” and Baja seafood cuisine, but with variety and flavors that are sure to please all visitors, with mainland Mexican, Italian and Asian inspired dishes too.



There's a welcoming, family atmosphere from the moment you step into La Tuna Restaurant & Bar. Attentive staff are eager to help you find a table, and the bar manager greets you from the bright, open space just inside the entrance. Choose a table at the front where the breeze flows freely, and before you know it, you'll experience the "La Tuna Effect."

That's when time flies over delicious food, and post-meal visiting with family and friends, and before you know it, several hours have passed. In Mexico, this is known as *sobre mesa*, a "talking dessert"

in which gathering at the table is more than simply putting food in your stomach. It's an encounter to be enjoyed with those around you.

"When someone cooks for you with

love, it's not just food, it's an experience," explains owner Marco Sanchez. "We have large tables for people to gather to celebrate, have a business meeting, or simply to have a reunion with friends or family. It's not just taking food in, it's enhancing your spirit and making your visit an experience.

"The people you're sharing a table with are important," he concludes. "It's a form of intimacy."

La Tuna is indeed a family affair, reflecting a love of sharing delicious food together, and leaving the table feeling satisfied in body, mind and spirit. Marco has several other businesses, and decided to open La Tuna with his wife Jeovanna Mendoza, as a tribute to "choyeros," the nickname given to those born and raised in Baja California Sur, particularly in the Los Cabos area.





Jeovanna is a local, born and raised in the San José area, a member of one of the early families in Los Cabos. Her grandfather was an entrepreneur, establishing the first taxi company in San José. As a child, she used to visit Palmilla Beach with her father, where the fishermen shared fresh seafood and in particular clams, still a favorite of hers. In fact, seeing her dig, prepare and eat *almejas* in the local style is what encouraged Marco to fall in love with the area's diverse seafood dishes — and with her. Marco was raised in Jalisco, where his grandmother established his affection for meals cooked at home.

That passion for delicious food prepared with love is what ignited the desire of Marco

and Jeovanna to build what would become La Tuna.

“I have other businesses but this is my baby, that my wife and I love the most,” Marco says. “Our goal is to have a product of very good quality for choberos. Once we get their attention, we know the foreigners and others will love it too. This is not Mazatlan style, or Sinaloa style, it’s San José style. It’s a fusion of what the chefs who have come to Los Cabos have taught the locals, combined with the traditions of the locals. It’s Baja-style seafood cuisine.”

(FAR LEFT AND ABOVE) | OPPOSITE PAGE: Chef Judith Paz, the heart behind La Tuna’s kitchen. Mixed fajitas. Melted cheese with shrimp or chorizo (*queso fundido*), perfect for creating your own tacos. The heart of service, the La Tuna team. **THIS PAGE:** La Tuna, retro vibes and vintage rides. A coastal favorite, stuffed crab (*jaiba rellena*). A signature bite, passion fruit oysters.

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(ABOVE) | Bold and vibrant, black ceviche. The La Tuna seafood tower. A house signature, La Tuna oysters.

La Tuna is located on Blvd Forjadores, across from the former convention center built for the G20 Summit, and next to the popular Tienda 17. It's a large, open-air palapa-covered building, with ample parking in the lot beside the restaurant, and as a bonus, a car wash in the back.

The welcoming, family atmosphere is thanks to the attention to detail provided by Marco and Jeovanna, who looked after every detail of the design and build. That includes touches like the lamps over the bar, with inlaid jellyfish that cast designs on

the bartop. Part of the ceiling is made with local palo de arco wood, another nod to the history of Baja, where such wood was once used to build homes. The family atmosphere is also reflected in the separate playroom for children to enjoy their time at La Tuna.

Marco's background is in the hospitality industry, which brought him to Los Cabos in 2001 with the Hilton chain. He went on to work for Edward Steiner at One&Only Palmilla, whom he credits as changing his life through his approach to service and attention to detail.

The family has added Jeovanna's brother Miguel Mendoza Castro to the team. Miguel is in charge of the human side of the restaurant, looking after sales and public relations, and sharing his own years of expertise in the food and beverage industry. And that friendly face that greeted you from behind the bar? That's Jose Manuel, the cousin of Jeovanna and Miguel, another family member who brings his years of expertise and his ability to make incredible margaritas, mezcaltitas, palomas and more. La Tuna features two chefs: Judith Paz,

originally from Veracruz, who has more than 25 years of culinary experience; and Luca Cisca from Sicily, who opened his first restaurant in Mexico in 2010. The large menu reflects local favorites along with their individual touches, creating tastes from around Mexico, as well as Italian and Asian offerings.

Food is never pre-made, but prepared when ordered. Locally sourced products are

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(BELOW) | *Made to share, La Tuna's family-style dining. The La Tuna spicy margarita. A classic, the La Tuna Michelada.*





a priority, portions are hearty, and prices are reasonable, once again to ensure locals can gather for a meal together without breaking the bank. Not to mention that tourists and ex-pats also appreciate a reasonably priced, delicious restaurant!

So what's popular? Among starters, Ivanna's Tuna Tartare (named for Marco and Jeovanna's daughter) is a delicious tower of fresh tuna, avocado, cucumber, cilantro,

and caramelized onions in a ponzu-style dressing. There are multiple types of sashimi, including My Beloved San José sashimi, ceviche dishes, and Jeovanna's favorite clams served in two different ways. Tostadas include the La Choyera, the Especial featuring grilled watermelon, the Los Cabos, and the Baja Tostada, and there are also cocktails and aguachiles.

Tacos Gobernador is a mainstay, and

for something different, try the pork belly and octopus tacos, cooked together in a deliciously spiced stew and served with salsas and cabbage salad.

House specialities include a Cajun Shrimp that is favored with customers, and the Black Risotto, or "Ai Frutti de Mare," comes highly recommended, with its blend of shrimp, fish, octopus, calamari, scallops and cherry tomatoes in squid ink. For those





who prefer turf to surf, there are options for beef, including steaks and burgers, as well as salads and soups, a kids menu for the little ones, and Sundays feature a breakfast buffet.

Since opening in May of 2025, the team has analyzed its sales and will make replacements on the menu based on what's popular and what's not, which will include the addition of more vegetarian and vegan options too.

From the bar, order a local craft beer on tap, or try a specialty cocktail using Marco's own M.A.S. tequila, made from plant to bottle with 100% blue agave from his plantation in Jalisco. M.A.S. means more in Spanish but is also Marco's initials.

"What I like about La Tuna is not just

the food, it's the location," Marco concludes. "With the breeze blowing in, it's the setting inside, it's what the chefs have created with flavors that will make your meal unforgettable. It's not just for food. We create an experience here."

By the time you realize you've been hit by the "La Tuna Effect," you may have enjoyed an entire afternoon visiting, dining, and enjoying the ambiance, and *sobre mesa*, of La Tuna.

"Wherever I have been, the places I visit often are the places that made me feel the way I do here," Miguel adds. "You can lose time here. You can just sit and enjoy. You feel like you're home."

Find out more at latunacabo.com **El Fin!**

(FAR LEFT, ABOVE AND BELOW) | OPPOSITE PAGE: Fresh and earthy, beet salad. From the grill, shrimp fajitas. The best of land and sea, surf and turf. **THIS PAGE:** The La Tuna family and team. Comfort in a bowl, clam chowder. Crafted locally, Fat Tuna beer.

