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tucson MEET OUR *makers*

This month, our Meet Our Makers newsletter highlights Erika and Jake Muñoz, the owners of Seis, a beloved Tucson Mexican food institution. Over the last 13 years, they've enriched Tucson's culinary scene by introducing dishes from six diverse regions of Mexico, including Sonora, Mexico City, Baja, and beyond. Keep reading to discover more about Jake and Erika, or click on the What's New link below for the latest media updates from Tucson.

[What's New in Tucson](#)



Meet Erika and Jake Muñoz

Though Tucson is a border town, its Mexican cuisine is not limited to the flavors of the Sonora region. Erika and Jake Muñoz are among the key figures responsible for

broadening the city's culinary landscape.

When Jake and Erika launched Seis Kitchen as a food truck in 2011, their goal was to introduce Tucson to a broader spectrum of Mexican cuisine by showcasing six distinct regions of Mexico. The menu features beloved dishes from across the country, including the Yucatán classic cochinita pibil, Baja-style fish tacos, and tortas with origins from Guadalajara. The decision to offer such a geographically diverse menu was deeply personal for the couple.

“My dad's brother lived in Baja Mexico and in Puerto Rico and his wife in Mexico City, and all over the United States,” Erika said. “So being open to food and realizing the beauty of different cultures... through food was and still is very important to us and our family. At the heart of any family, I think, is food.”

Today, Seis Kitchen has become a beloved staple in Tucson, earning its place as a local favorite in the UNESCO City of Gastronomy. What started as a humble food truck has now grown into three brick-and-mortar locations. Each location offers a unique experience, from the traditional courtyard ambiance at the Mercado San Agustín, to the vibrant energy of their River Road spot, to the expansive outdoor patio at their Oro Valley restaurant.

A key factor in their success lies in the recipes that have been passed down through generations. Among their culinary secrets is their signature chili base, which plays a starring role in many of their dishes, from the enchilada sauce poured over burritos to the rich, flavorful pozole. Jake describes the process of making the chili base – which blends three distinct types of chili – as exceptionally laborious, but one he believes is well worth the effort.

“Our chili base is what we call ‘liquid gold’ in the kitchen,” Jake explains. “It’s a complex process that takes all day to make, but it’s used in so many of our dishes, and it’s what gives them that deep, rich flavor.”



Another standout feature at Seis Kitchen is their array of salsas, which Jake and Erika describe as a medley of whole, fresh vegetables, packed with vibrant flavors.

The Munoz couple's passion for cooking – and for each other – dates back to their childhoods. High school sweethearts who grew up in Tucson, Erika and Jake have deep roots in borderlands cuisine. As mentioned, Erika's family lived in Mexico for a time, while Jake's family, primarily from Sonora, brought their ranching traditions to Tucson, where they continued raising their own chickens, pigs, and cows.

For both, family and food were central to holidays and special occasions like weddings and milestone birthdays, and this sense of community and tradition is

something they've worked hard to recreate in their restaurants. Jake has especially fond memories of the preparation of birria (also found on Seis' menu), a traditional dish made with goat or beef. The meat is marinated in an adobo sauce of vinegar, dried chiles, garlic, and a mix of herbs and spices and cooked at low temperatures for a prolonged period. In Jake's childhood home, beef was always the meat of choice for birria.

"We'd put cow heads in burlap bags, season them up, lower them into these pits, and cook them for 24 hours," Jake recalls with a smile. "Then, we'd pull them out, and all the aunts, grandmas, and moms would shred the meat and make homemade tortillas. It was a real family event."



Al Pastor Tacos at Seis, photographed by Cassy Rowland

Jake and Erika Munoz have worked to recreate the intimacy and warmth of family meals at Seis Kitchen. Since the early days as a food truck, their two children have been deeply involved in the business, contributing to the family's vision and growth. Erika fondly recalls their daughter, now a University of Arizona student, sitting on the steps of the food truck at various locations where they used to stage.

Starting as a food truck was pivotal to Seis' success in Tucson. In those early years, Seis partnered with local breweries, farmers markets, and event producers, allowing Jake and Erika to build meaningful connections with Tucson residents while serving

up their favorite family recipes. These relationships – with both the community and their customers – have been key to Seis' resilience over the past 13 years, helping them navigate even the most challenging times.

Grateful for the support they've received, Jake and Erika decided to give back to the community this past summer. In a show of appreciation, they lowered prices on all menu items by 15-35%.

"As much as we've had to raise prices in the past year and a half to keep up with costs, we started seeing prices come down this summer," Jake explained. "We thought, 'It's time to follow those prices down.' People have really responded, and we've seen a big influx of customers. We felt it was our turn to help out."

Despite Seis Kitchen's growing popularity, Jake and Erika have been deliberate and cautious in their expansion, prioritizing quality over rapid growth to ensure that each new location upholds the same high standards of food, drink, and customer service that made the original location so successful. Their fourth location is set to open in Spring 2025 on Tucson's far east side, and their first priority is to connect with the local community around it.

"We're successful because others have helped us, right? We feel like without the community, without the schools, without the other businesses, and everything that makes this community great, Seis wouldn't be here," Jake said. "So, the first thing we do when we enter a new community is get out there and get to know the people. And honestly, we're both really looking forward to it."



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