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FOOD

84-year-old Original Joe's is expanding with Italian and Mexican restaurants in S.F. next year



Elena Kadwany

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The second Little Original Joe's location in the Marina will also serve pizza. Emma K. Wilson

The longtime Original Joe's family of restaurants is growing, with two San Francisco additions: an Italian spin-off in the Marina and a Mexican restaurant in West Portal.

Co-owners and siblings John and Elena Duggan are bringing Little Original Joe's to 2301 Chestnut St., a large, prominent corner space on the restaurant-filled Marina corridor. Elena's, their first-ever Mexican restaurant, is headed to 255 West Portal Ave. Both restaurants will open in late 2022.

The Marina restaurant will be what they originally planned for the first Little Original Joe's, which opened in West Portal last December. They had envisioned Little Joe's Pizza, Pasta, Parmigiana, a spin-off with Original Joe's hit dishes, plus pizza. But because of the pandemic, this morphed into an Italian market that served takeout food, with no dine-in service.

The 3,600-square-foot Chestnut Street spot will be a full-service restaurant with a bar, outdoor dining and takeout. It will serve familiar Little Original Joe's fare, like chicken parmesan, housemade ravioli and pizzas topped with spicy soppressata, plus new dishes that aren't on the West Portal menu. The owners envision the Marina restaurant as an all-day destination open for lunch, dinner and brunch on weekends.

While Original Joe's has been known for decades for its hearty Italian comfort food, Elena's will celebrate the Mexican heritage of Elena Duggan's two oldest daughters, who have been asking their mother to open a Mexican restaurant for years. The casual spot will serve "classic Mexican American fare," Elena Duggan said, like tacos, tostadas and enchiladas. The menu will take inspiration from the time her daughters have spent visiting their father's side of the family in San Bartolo Morelos, Mexico, just outside of Mexico City. There will also be an emphasis on seafood, with crudos and ceviche. Elena's will also have brunch on weekends and a bar serving Mexican twists on classic cocktails.



Patrons dine at Original Joe's of Westlake in Daly City in 2016. The owners are planning another spin-off of their North Beach restaurant as well as a Mexican restaurant called Elena's. John Storey/Special to The Chronicle 2016

The location is personal for the Duggans, who grew up in West Portal and still live there.

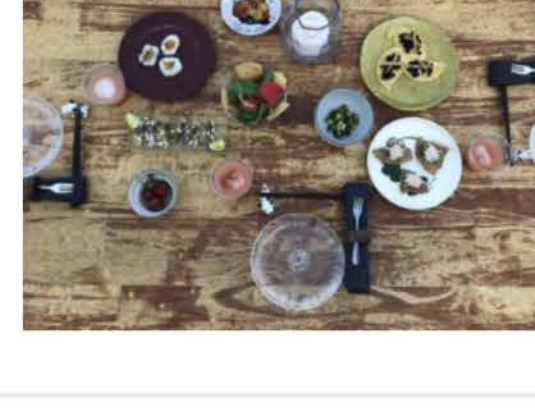
"There's a need for a full-service Mexican restaurant in that community, done with integrity and a strong dash of fun," John Duggan said. "Our goal is to provide that."

Original Joe's first opened in San Francisco in 1937. After a fire shuttered the flagship location in 2007, the restaurant moved to North Beach in 2012. John and Marie Duggan took it over in the 1980s and eventually passed the restaurant to their children, John and Elena. Both the Original Joe's in North Beach and a newer Daly City location are Bay Area staples, frequented by locals as much as people visiting San Francisco.

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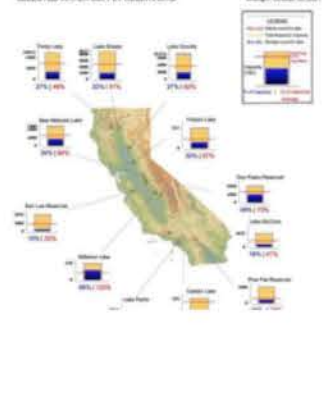
Elena Kadwany joined The San Francisco Chronicle as a food reporter in 2021. Previously, she was a staff writer at the Palo Alto Weekly and its sister publications, where she covered restaurants and education and also founded the Peninsula Foodist restaurants column and newsletter.

VIEW COMMENTS

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BY JANELLE BITKER



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