

SHOW NOTES

Season 3 | Episode 1

More Than Rice and Beans® Where Did Mo-fon-go? With Guest Manolo Lopez

Episode Description:

When you start culinary school at age 12, your life moves quickly. At least that was the case for Manolo Lopez, who by age 26 had launched a successful pop-up in Williamsburg, Brooklyn serving just one perfect dish: mofongo. In this episode of More Than Rice and Beans, Tania and Miguel are joined by chef, entrepreneur, producer, activist, and proud Nuyorican Manolo Lopez. The trio explores the unifying magic of mofongo, the success of Lopez's pop-up concept that took him to Japan, the impacts of Hurricane Maria, and more.

Highlights:

Tania and Miguel are joined by Manolo Lopez, founder of Mofon-GO, and Cosa Nueva Collective.

Highlights include:

- A look at the early days of Mofon-GO and how the combination of Puerto Rican culinary traditions and business sense plus an NYU design school education created the magic sauce that made the pop-up pure magic.
- Mofon-GO's journey to Japan and the reason it took nearly two years to plan a pop-up in Osaka.
- Manolo shares how his mother succeeded in enrolling him in a culinary school when he was just twelve years old, setting the stage for his success in life.
- Tracking the devastation of Hurricane Maria and how Manolo walked away from Mofon-GO to provide humanitarian relief for months in his homeland.
- How the hurricane changed Manolo's relationship with food, restaurants, and awareness.
- What Manolo is up to now with Cosa Nueva Collective, international storytelling, podcasting, and more.

About the guest:

Manolo Lopez spent his teenage years in a Puerto Rican culinary school, shuttled three hours each way by his devoted mother. After a lifetime of dreaming of opportunities in America, Manolo discovered a deeper connection to his culture in New York, fueled by the Puerto Rican pride of the diaspora. Inspired by how a simple dish could bring Latinx people together in a place like New York, Manolo launched Mofon-GO, a pop-up tent in Brooklyn's famous Smorgasborg marketplace. To say it was a success would be an understatement. His venture gained international attention with a pop-up

in Osaka, Japan. But at the height of success, Manolo walked away from it all to return to Puerto Rico following the devastation of Hurricane Maria. After months of experiencing the impact of food insecurity, Manolo found a new calling and now works to raise money and awareness for disaster relief through curated cuisine experiences and storytelling. He's also the producer and co-host of the Identity at Play podcast

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