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**HOUSTON: WE HAVE A POLLO**  
**EL POLLO LOCO SELECTS HOUSTON FOR MAJOR EXPANSION PLANS**  
*Nation's Leading Fire-Grilled Chicken Chain to Open in Sugar Land This Fall*



**Costa Mesa, Calif. (August 7, 2014)** – El Pollo Loco (Nasdaq: LOCO), renowned for its signature citrus-marinated firegrilled chicken and handcrafted entrees inspired by authentic Mexican recipes, will expand its presence in Texas with the arrival of its newest location at 4528 Hwy 6 & Austin Pkwy in Sugar Land this October. This marks the brand's first expansion into the Greater Houston market. The Sugar Land, Texas location will be the ninth El Pollo Loco restaurant in the Lone Star State, with eight others already located in the San Antonio and Rio Grande Valley areas.

El Pollo Loco has identified an initial 80 trade areas in Houston for potential restaurant development by the company and existing and new franchisees. There are currently more than 20 restaurant sites in various stages of negotiation for company operation.

"Greater Houston is among the country's fastest growing, most diverse metropolitan areas with residents who are passionate about ethnic cuisines, making it a natural fit for our brand's expansion," said Kay Bogeajis, chief operating officer, El Pollo Loco. "We offer guests something a little different than many other restaurants available in the market, we call it 'QSR-plus.' It's the place where the need for distinctive, authentic food meets today's need for speed; the 'plus' means better service, better food, and better environment. We can't wait to introduce Houstonians to El Pollo Loco this fall and demonstrate our points of differentiation."

According to the [US Census Bureau](#), the Bayou City is the most racially and ethnically diverse large metropolitan area in the U.S., and the second fastest growing city in the country, by number of residents, second only to New York City. Furthermore, a recent survey from [Zagat](#) found that Houstonians eat away from home more than any other U.S. city at 5.5 times per week, compared to the national average of 4.4 times per week.

El Pollo Loco or "The Crazy Chicken" opened its first US restaurant in 1980 in Los Angeles. Featuring an authentic recipe for citrus-marinated, fire-grilled chicken the restaurant quickly became a local favorite. Today, El Pollo Loco operates more than 400 company-owned and franchised restaurants in Arizona, California, Nevada, Texas and Utah.

(more)

## **El Pollo Loco: Crazy You Can Taste**

The centerpiece of El Pollo Loco's menu is its fresh whole chicken, which is marinated in special herbs, spices, garlic and fruit juices and then fire-grilled to perfection. A Grill Master, trained and certified on the art of preparing "Perfect Pollo", manages a four-stage slow-grilling process that takes nearly an hour and uses a cleaver to expertly chop the golden brown finished chicken to order for individual or family-size chicken meals. Each meal includes warm flour or corn tortillas and a choice of sides including Spanish rice, charro beans, fresh vegetables, coleslaw and mashed potatoes. Additionally, the same citrus-marinated, fire-grilled chicken is also hand cut for the brand's signature entrees including Pollo Bowls®, stuffed quesadillas, burritos, tacos, soups and salads.

"Our tagline, Crazy You Can Taste, underscores the extraordinary lengths to which the brand goes to prepare and serve really delicious food," said Heather Gardea, vice president of research and development, El Pollo Loco. "From handmade salsas to our fire-grilled chicken cooked by our specially trained Grill Masters, El Pollo Loco is dedicated to from-scratch preparation and use of fresh, high-quality ingredients. We cook it right, we present it right and it tastes right."

The brand features occasional limited time specialty offerings developed by Chef Gardea. Popular offerings have included Chef Gardea's interpretation on authentic recipes which feature traditional ingredients such as hand-sliced avocados, fresh mangos and savory mole.

## **El Pollo Loco – Sugar Land and More**

In addition to Sugar Land, over the next few months El Pollo Loco will open four additional Houston-area restaurants in the following locations:

- Copperfield – Highway 6 & West Rd.
- Humble – FM 1960 & Whitaker Rd
- Katy – S. Mason Rd. & Provincial Blvd.
- Spring – Kuykendahl & Springbrook Garden Lane

At approximately 2,970 square feet, each El Pollo Loco restaurant will feature a vibrant exterior, colorful, comfortable booths and large windows to allow natural sunlight into the dining area. An exhibition kitchen will showcase the preparation of El Pollo Loco's signature chicken which will be prepared on an open flame by the restaurant's Grill Masters. In addition to dine-in, drive-thru service will also be available.

## **Now Hiring: Dedicated Management and Crew Members**

El Pollo Loco is actively recruiting for new management and crew level positions to support the Houston-area restaurant locations. The company will be hiring hundreds of full- and part-time crew members over the next several months and each restaurant will employ approximately 40 people. El Pollo Loco offers a range of benefits to eligible crew members. Interested candidates are encouraged to apply at [ElPolloLoco.com/Houston](http://ElPolloLoco.com/Houston).

All crew members begin their on-the-job learning experience with an innovative training system designed to provide them with the tools and skills necessary to master the position. Crew members receive hands-on training for learning all facets of the restaurant: from delivering exceptional guest service and ringing-up orders to fire-grilling El Pollo Loco's citrus-marinated chicken or preparing fresh, authentic salsas.

## **About El Pollo Loco**

[El Pollo Loco](http://ElPolloLoco.com) (Nasdaq: LOCO) is the nation's leading fire-grilled chicken restaurant chain renowned for its masterfully citrus-marinated and fire-grilled chicken and handcrafted entrees using fresh ingredients inspired by authentic Mexican recipes. With more than 400 company-owned and franchised restaurants in Arizona, California, Nevada, Texas and Utah, El Pollo Loco will expand its presence in key markets targeting growth of eight to 10 percent per year through a combination of company and existing and new franchisee development. Some say the lengths we go to create fresh, delicious food are crazy. We say it's Crazy You Can Taste. Visit us on our website at [ElPolloLoco.com](http://ElPolloLoco.com). **Like:**

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