

Sophie's Cuban Cuisine Awards First Franchise in New York

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Sophie's Cuban Cuisine Franchising, Inc. announced today that they have signed their first franchise agreement with Patricia and Tom Mahabir from Woodhaven New York.

Patricia has been working as the manager of the Madison Avenue Sophie's since December of 2004 and Tom is the owner and head pharmacist of the Sanford Pharmacy in Newark New Jersey. Patricia will be responsible for day to day operations of the restaurant. They are seeking a suitable location in Manhattan.

Patricia said: 'I started out to be a school teacher while working part time in the restaurants and discovered my love for the business and making our guests happy. Tom and I are very excited about this chapter in our lives. There is great responsibility with being the first Sophie's franchisee and I am confident that I will measure up to Sophie's high standards.'

Sofia Luna, co-founder and President, said that the first franchises would be granted to qualified candidates in New York City so that their restaurants would have the benefit of the strong brand equity in New York as well as close hands-on guidance. She is confident that the Sophie's concept will soon appeal to people in high traffic locations across the country. Sofia says that franchisees will be selected carefully so that the chain will always retain its family feel.

Sophie's Cuban Cuisine restaurants have been delighting hungry lunchtime crowds since 1998 when the Luna family opened their first restaurant in Lower Manhattan near the World Trade Center.

Sophie's features the best of the leading current restaurant trends in one restaurant - tasty 'comfort food' with a Cuban neighborhood feel; freshly made, healthy foods; a fast cafeteria-style line where guests see what they will be eating; and superior customer service where everyone is treated like a friend or neighbor. Take out and delivery orders represent a large portion of overall sales.

The restaurants offer freshly made, savory, authentic Cuban specialties such as Ropa Vieja (Shredded Beef Stew), Camarón al Ajillo (Shrimps In Garlic Sauce), Maduros (Fried Sweet Plantains), Papa Rellena (Mashed Potatoes Stuffed With Ground Beef Stew), Ox Tail Stew, plenty of Arroz con frijoles (Rice and beans), and of course, traditional Cuban Sandwiches.

Luna estimates that initial development costs for a Sophie's in New York City range from \$365,000 to \$ 611,000 (including the Initial Franchise Fee and excluding real property) depending on factors such as the size and shape of the space and whether it had previously been used as a restaurant.

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