



El Pollo Loco® Fires Up Culinary Innovation with Five New Menu Tests

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A bold lineup of entrées, beverages, and handhelds are being tested in approximately 60 restaurant locations

COSTA MESA, Calif., March 05, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- [El Pollo Loco](#), the nation's leading fire-grilled chicken restaurant chain, today announced it is testing five new menu innovations across approximately 60 restaurants, including locations in California and Utah. These market tests, running now through late April, reflect the brand's commitment to expanding flavor exploration, enhancing guest variety, and accelerating menu innovation in 2026.

"The 'Let's Get Loco'® rebrand last year wasn't just a call to action for consumers," said Jill Adams, CMO of El Pollo Loco. "It's also a mantra for our internal teams to push the boundaries, test the limits and deliver truly unique culinary innovation to our customers in a way that only El Pollo Loco can."

The market test products include a mix of bold entrées, handhelds, beverages, and potential future platforms designed to meet evolving customer cravings. The items currently in-market or entering the test phase this month include:

- **Honey Chipotle BBQ:** Our famous, citrus-marinated, fire-grilled chicken tossed in our new Honey Chipotle BBQ sauce for a sweet, smoky and slightly spicy kick. Served with our new BBQ Black Beans, Cole Slaw and King's Hawaiian® Original Sweet Rolls. Available in 2 pc or 10pc meals.
- **Loco Tenders™:** Crispy 100% all white meat chicken tenders fried to perfection and seasoned in bold Mexican spices. Served with a choice of dipping sauces: Baja Lime, Pollo Loco Sauce™ or House Ranch. Also available in Classic.
- **Loaded Quesadillas:** A warm flour tortilla loaded with citrus-marinated, fire-grilled chopped chicken breast, a generous portion of melted Jack cheese that is wrapped to seal in all the flavors and grilled until toasted for maximum portability. Available in two flavors: Queso with our delicious queso blanco, crunchy tortilla strips and our signature creamy cilantro sauce, or Street Corn with corn and red peppers, crumbled cotija cheese and our signature creamy chipotle sauce.
- **Crispy Grilled Chicken Sandwich:** A crispy, breaded chicken breast filet, grilled to crispy perfection and topped with our signature Pollo Loco Sauce™ and house slaw, served on a toasted bun.
- **Horchata Coffee Drinks:** Classic Horchata with an iced coffee twist. Made with iced coffee and our sweet & creamy Mexican-style Horchata, flavored with cinnamon and vanilla, choose from the classic ChataCoffee™ or ChataCoffee™ Cream, which is topped with a delicious layer of vanilla cold foam.

"Culinary innovation continues to be a major focus for us in 2026," said Chef Rene Piscioti, Sr. Director of Culinary Innovation at El Pollo Loco. "These market tests allow us to explore new flavor directions, bring more variety to our guests, and ensure every item we launch incorporates their feedback and reflects what our customers are craving most."

El Pollo Loco has also committed to eight additional new menu item tests in 2026. Specifics of these items will be announced later in the year.

To learn more about market test locations and dates, check with your local El Pollo Loco restaurant or follow El Pollo Loco on [Instagram](#) for updates.

About El Pollo Loco

El Pollo Loco (Nasdaq: LOCO) is the nation's leading fire-grilled chicken restaurant known for its craveable, flavorful, and better-for-you offerings. Named by USA Today 10 Best Reader's Choice Awards as a "Best Restaurant for Quick, Healthy Food" two years in a row, our menu features innovative meals with Mexican-inspired flavors made daily in our restaurants using quality ingredients. At [El Pollo Loco](#), inclusivity is at the heart of our culture. Our community of over 4,000 employees reflects our commitment to creating a workplace where everyone has a seat at our table. Since 1980, El Pollo Loco has successfully expanded its presence, operating more than 500 company-owned and franchised restaurants across nine U.S. states: Arizona, California, Colorado, Louisiana, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, Utah, and Washington. The company has also extended its footprint internationally, with licensed restaurant locations in the Philippines. For more information or to place an [order](#), visit the Loco Rewards [app](#) or [ElPolloLoco.com](#). Follow us on [Instagram](#), [TikTok](#), [Facebook](#), or [X](#).

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A photo accompanying this announcement is available at <https://www.globenewswire.com/NewsRoom/AttachmentNg/2fa7e670-1704-43d4-8afc-2f77b4c2cf36>



Source: El Pollo Loco Holdings, Inc.

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