

QUEENS

LIC chef known for her cozy cafe helps survive pandemic with 'Filipino tacos'



DIANA MANALANG Little Chef Little Cafe **PIX11** 5:57 32°

by: **Andrew Ramos**

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LONG ISLAND CITY, Queens — Diana Manalang may be known as the “little chef,” but she has a big story.

For more than a year, Manalang has been at the helm of the cozy Long Island City eatery Little Chef Little Cafe. What first started as an offshoot of her catering business of the same name grew into a community hangout where customers could get their fix of coffee, smoothies and pastries.

But just months after opening, COVID-19 came knocking and changed the way she did business inside her 500 square foot shop.

“We flipped the inside and cleaned it all up and said, ‘We have this takeout window, we’re going to make the best of it,’” she explained.

After losing a bulk of her regular customers who fled the neighborhood, Manalang and her team reconfigured and expanded their entire menu, turning to her Filipino heritage to lead the way.

“There is not a lot of Filipino cuisine here in Long Island city and so to make IT a little bit more approachable, we decided to do it as Tacos,” Manalang explained.

Her Filipino taco stand was born.

With a variety of fillings like chicken and pork adobo, the comfort food proved to be a success. It was the community she credits with sticking by her, allowing her to stay above water in a time when many businesses have not.

“A lot of the times out of the bAd comes some of the best stuff you’ll ever see,” she said.

Little Chef Little Cafe is located at 5-43 48th Avenue, Long Island City, NY 11101.

Hours of operation: Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Sunday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

More at: <https://www.littlecheflittlecafe.com/>

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2-DAY FORECAST

Current	Tonight	Tomorrow
50°	36°	42°
Sunny	Partly Cloudy Precip: 6%	Partly Cloudy Precip: 5%

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- 4 Woman arrested after 12-year-old foster
- 5 Diana Manalang Little Chef Little Cafe
- 6 Diana Manalang Little Chef Little Cafe
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