

RIO GRANDE

Mexican Restaurant

HISTORY OF THE RIO

Rio Grande Mexican Restaurant has been serving Colorado its own brand of from-scratch TexMex fare since 1986.

Founder and Owner, Pat McGaughran, grew up in Houston, Texas, a city known for its cultural diversity, including a strong Latino community, and TexMex cooking. Living in such a melting pot, McGaughran spent his youth eating plenty of fresh, Mexican food, both at his friends' homes and out at Houston's well-known TexMex restaurants.

As young men, McGaughran and his two best friends, twin brothers, Stephen and Andre Mouton, packed up a van and spent extensive time traveling through northern Mexico and the Yucatan, learning more about the culture, and, of course, the food. McGaughran discovered and fell in love with a whole new cuisine, asking for recipes along the way.



After McGaughran's travels, he settled in Fort Collins, Colorado, and while he loved his new home, he missed the food he enjoyed in Mexico, especially the chile rellenos and the black beans. He began cooking his favorite recipes for friends and even gave black beans to Lucy Stromquist, a nearby farmer, to grow this non-native crop locally. Shortly after, McGaughran and the Mouton brothers decided to take the leap and open a restaurant, the Rio Grande Mexican Restaurant, in Old Town, Fort Collins, where they could introduce their beloved TexMex food (and slow-cooked black beans!) to everyone. That long, simple, delicious journey through Mexico lives on in every dish "The Rio" will ever make.

The Rio quickly became not only an outlet for McGaughran to share his passion for Latin culture and food, but also a place for guests to have a laugh with friends over a good meal. When guests visit the Rio, they feel a positive, welcoming energy in an environment where they can feel at home, and even let loose a little.

The concept was so popular that over the next three decades, McGaughran opened six locations across Colorado. Now, as a 33-year-old Colorado icon, Rio Grande Mexican Restaurant is still the state's favorite spot for fresh TexMex and strong margaritas, and so much more.

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