

Cocina Verify Fact Sheet

New Resource Empowers Travel Industry to Adopt Much Needed Food and Water Safety Standards

- Millions of people worldwide get sick each year from improperly handled food and contaminated water.
 - Cocina Verify (cocinaverify.com), provides travel suppliers and tour operators with reliable information about which restaurants in Latin America meet leading food safety training and inspection standards. Online booking, reservation, and travel review websites do not provide travelers with standards-based information in order for travelers to make informed choices about which restaurants and hotels follow standards and which do not.
 - **Cocina Verify's mission is to connect travel suppliers and tour operators with restaurants and hotels in Latin America which regularly meet verified food safety standards providing business and customer satisfaction benefits to all parties.**
 - Participating restaurants that have voluntarily chosen to have their water tested, all their employees trained in food safety, and their restaurants inspected, guided by U.S. FDA food safety code standards, working in concert with local regulations. **This information is provided to travel suppliers and tour operators to help them make informed decisions about which hotels and restaurants are actively engaged in a leading food and water safety risk reduction program for the benefit of their travelers.**
 - Cocina Verify is unique in the food safety marketplace in that it's food safety experts are in the restaurants and hotels monthly, conducting training and auditing to ensure the food service facilities pass leading food safety standards based on US FDA and State of California standards.
- Cocina Verify's certified food safety experts follow a three-step process to ensure the restaurants are following US food safety standards. They:
- Test the restaurant's water to determine whether it's safe to drink
 - Train the restaurant's employees about proper food safety protocols using the world renowned ServSafe® food safety training program
 - Inspect the restaurant, using local and US-based inspectors, to ensure the restaurant is following US food safety standards.
- Once the restaurant passes the water testing and inspection, and their staff completes ServSafe® food safety training, their certification will be disseminated to travel suppliers and tour operators.

- The company, which launched in early 2016, is initially focusing on Latin American restaurants and hotels, and will expand to other geographies in the near future.

- Allan Daly, the CEO and Founder of Cocina Verify, frequently travels internationally, and repeatedly got sick from the food and water he consumed in Peru. His quest to make food safer for travelers has revealed the nearly complete void of standards-based travel information available to the public. The more restaurant and hotel kitchens his team visits, the less valid restaurant and hotel information that's available online or in print seems to appear. It's time for the travel industry to embrace standards to provide travelers with actual information that may be of value in preventing them from contracting a dangerous foodborne illness while visiting Latin America. For example, if travelers know a restaurant or hotel does not have a hand washing sink in the kitchen (only one example of a vital food safety standard), they should not eat there. This is the type of information travelers need to help prevent foodborne illness.

- **The difficulties the Cocina Verify team have had in trying to get restaurants and hotels in Latin America to take food safety seriously have been so numerous and amazing, that Daly is currently writing a book about these experiences. He states, “the traveling public would be shocked at what we encounter on a regular basis and it doesn't matter if you're spending \$60 per night for a budget hotel or \$600 per night for a beachfront boutique hotel. Sadly, the lack of caring toward food safety is often equally absent regardless of price point or accolades.”**

- In the United States, Canada, Western Europe, and Australia, governments have regulatory policies and strong restaurant enforcement programs in place to greatly reduce the risk of foodborne illness to the public. In many other countries, including in Latin America, these regulations (and adequate enforcement of the regulations) are not as vigorous. Due to a lack of governmental resources, some of the restaurants Cocina Verify has worked with in Costa Rica and other countries, have never been inspected by the government.

- Restaurants pay for the inspections, water testing and training, but aren't guaranteed to become certified simply by paying a fee. Each restaurant must pass monthly inspections in order for Cocina Verify to share their information with the travel suppliers.

- Cocina Verify's commitment to the communities in which they work extends to adopting schools and providing training for the cafeteria staff and free monthly inspections to ensure the students are receiving the safest food possible.

- For more information, visit www.cocinaverify.com.

Members of the media:

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