



## The Tita behind Tita Flips

About Diona Joyce

Diona Joyce immigrated to Canada from the Philippines in 2001. Like many of the life-changing decisions that would ultimately shape her future, applying for her Canadian visa wasn't much more than a "Why not?" moment. However, arriving in Toronto with plans to live with her friend, from back home, didn't turn out quite the way they had both planned, when her friend was diagnosed with cancer and died within a year of her arrival.

Although alone and grieving, her survival instinct kicked in and she recognized that finding a job immediately was priority. Diona first took a job working at McDonald's, and within a few months, owing to her Degree in Commerce from the Philippines, she became an insurance agent and spent the next few years working hard to support herself. Although she was working long and hard hours to make ends meet, she always found comfort in concocting her favourite dishes from back home in her kitchen. Authentic Filipino cuisine was not easy to come by in the city and she filled that void by recreating her mom's recipes, dish by dish. Eventually this passion led to a small catering business called Tita Flips which has now become Toronto's premiere purveyor of fine Filipino cuisine.

As a visionary and innovative entrepreneur, Diona Joyce knows opportunity when it knocks on her door. Half a decade ago, while passing through the Dundas & Bathurst neighbourhood, Diona noticed all of the colourful new shipping containers set up outside of the Scadding Court Community Centre. Curious, she decided to call and inquire about this unique market. She was told that this was to be the first shipping container market (Market 707) in the city and that they already had a waiting list for new vendors, but she was welcome to send in her proposal. As always Diona thought to herself, "Why not?". She wasn't expecting anything to come from it but within a short time, they called her back to offer her one of the units because her business proposal to introduce Filipino Street Food to Toronto, was exactly what they were looking for! That was the beginning of "Kanto by Tita Flips".

Armed with a flourishing business at Market 707, a thriving catering company and her signature die-hard spirit, Diona is now at the helm of the latest foodie craze in the city, the Kamayan dining experience. By offering clients the opportunity to host this "Hands-on, No Utensils" meal, in the comfort of their own homes, Diona is once again establishing herself at the forefront of Filipino cuisine and fulfilling her dream of showcasing Pinoy food!

[www.titaflips.com](http://www.titaflips.com)



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