

Pilar Guzman Zavala

Pilar Guzman Zavala is the CEO of **Half Moon Empanadas**, a fast-casual food concept in Miami, offering over 16 flavors of Argentinian-style empanadas. Under Pilar's leadership, Half Moon Empanadas is embarking on a national expansion to create a new food category in America, the empanada.

Half Moon has been successfully in business for 12 years and over 13 locations, in the following venues: Florida International University, Miami International Airport, the University of Miami, The Miami Beach Convention Center and the main commissary in Miami.

Pilar's dream is to make Half Moon Empanadas a household name. Today, Half Moon Empanadas is the #1 best seller per sqft. In the Miami International Airport. Under Pilar's leadership, Half Moon Empanadas was awarded the highest recognition in the Miami International Airport as the "2016 Best Concession of the Year" and "Best Customer Service in 2016, the OYA award". Half Moon Empanadas has nearly tripled its revenue, and currently sells over 800,000 empanadas a year.

Before joining Half Moon Empanadas, Guzman-Zavala worked at The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation managing the National Programs grant process. Her responsibilities included the evaluation of grant ideas, the write-up and presentation of grant proposals to the board, and the management of special events.

Her previous work includes: Director of the Office of International Affairs for the state of Veracruz, Mexico; Consultant at the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, and Marketing Director at TIYM Publishing Company, publisher of the Anuario Hispano-Hispanic Yearbook.

Pilar graduated from Georgetown University in 2005 with a Master's Degree from the School of Foreign Service, where her studies concentrated in international economic development. She also graduated cum laude from the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (ITESM, Mexico) in 2001 with a bachelor's degree in business administration.

Pilar's passion is to empower women and minority-owned entrepreneurs; as a strong local community supporter, Pilar is determined to make a difference in Miami, and in the lives of the next generation of Hispanic entrepreneurs and women. She is a Ricardo Salinas Scholarship recipient for the Aspen Institute, and a Young American Leaders Program fellow from Harvard School of Business. She is a mentor for women and food entrepreneurs in Miami. She has been a mentor to the WIN Lab Miami from Babson College, and the FIU Startup Food Lab. Pilar is a Venture Café and Impac Fund board member, and she has recently been elected board member for the Master of Science in Foreign Service Program at Georgetown University. Pilar is also a past board member of Amigos For Kids. She is also a Miami Leadership and a Miami Fellow graduate.

For her commitment to her community, Pilar was awarded the top 25 most influential women in South Florida by the South Florida Business Journal.

Pilar lives with her husband, Juan and is the mother of Diego and Sofia. They live in Miami, FL.

<https://miamiherald.typepad.com/the-starting-gate/2017/10/pilar-guzman.html>

<https://lead.fiu.edu/resources/leadership-news/news/women-in-leadership-pilar-guzman-zavala-half-moon-empanadas.html>

<https://miamifoundation.org/women-entrepreneurs-own-your-success/>