

You cannot miss the smell of the sizzling garlic and ginger as you walk up to the door of my Lola and Lolo's house. Lola and Lolo are traditional names for grandmother and grandfather in the Philippines. It might look like any other house from the outside, but from that legendary smell and knowing the special people inside, I know instantly that I am in the right place. I am at my favorite place.

As you let your nose continue to guide you to the kitchen, there's Lola. She works in her kitchen like the conductor of an orchestra. She has every burner going on the stove. There are small pots with cooking sauces, a large pot filled with pancit noodles, and a sizzling grill pan for cooking the marinated meat, each pitching in to make the perfect dish. In the corner, the rice cooker is bubbling away and doing its part. The rice must always be hot for maximum enjoyment. In Lola's house, the kitchen table is always set and ready for a meal.

Lola constantly asks me what I want her to cook, and the first thing that comes to mind remains the same, longanisa. Longanisa is a fatty sausage bursting with garlic with a sweet and spicy flavor. Lola always tells me that you need to burn it just a little bit to get the sausage's best taste. My other favorite is lumpia shanghai, a deep-fried eggroll made from ground pork and shrimp. Lola's cutting board has minced onions and carrots, ready to complete the dish. Lolo is always keeping the fryer warmed up outside, on standby if there is one more thing to fry. My

Lola's joy is to see her family together, enjoying her cooking.

I am always eager to wake up and experience another day of filling my belly with Lola's cooking and to spend time with my family. These special visits bring me happiness, and I am grateful to make new memories on each trip. To me, everything about Lola and Lolo's house brings us all closer.