

Executive Summary

This section should provide a concise snapshot of the business, highlighting the company's mission, vision, and growth goals. It should briefly explain what the company offers, what makes it unique, and touch on key financial highlights such as revenue growth or profitability targets. Keep this section high-level and engaging, as it sets the tone for the rest of the plan.

Meraki (may-rah-kee) is a Greek word meaning to do something with soul, creativity, and love—to leave a piece of yourself in everything you do. That spirit is the foundation of Meraki Collective, a Black woman-owned culinary brand based in Buffalo, NY, founded by Chef Erika Nicole.

Meraki Collective is not just about food—we are a culinary brand that brings together culture, art, and luxury in every experience. We craft scratch-made dishes using both fresh, locally sourced produce and globally inspired ingredients, ensuring flavor and authenticity with every bite. Our work honors diverse dietary needs, while blending sustainability, creativity, and storytelling into the heart of our brand.

What began as family roots—gardens on Buffalo's East Side and homegrown pear and apple trees—has grown into a thriving business that rebranded as an LLC in the last year after years of part-time catering. Following a career shift due to a mass layoff from corporate America of 11 years, Chef Erika Nicole transformed Meraki Collective into a full-time operation with a mission: to create culinary experiences that nourish the body, celebrate culture, and inspire connection.

Meraki Collective services include:

- Full-service catering for corporate events, weddings, and cultural celebrations
- Drop-off catering & meal prep services featuring sustainable, seasonal menus
- Immersive pop-up dining experiences where food and art intersect
- Future e-commerce offerings such as chef-prepared items, sauces, and branded culinary wear

What sets us apart:

- Made-from-scratch menus with unprocessed, high-quality ingredients
- Sourcing from local farmers markets and global imports for depth and authenticity
- A balance of luxury, culture, and creativity in presentation and service
- Commitment to sustainability, inclusivity, and artistry at every level

In our first year operating full time, we generated over \$30,000 in revenue with 45-55% profit margins, securing partnerships with fundraisers, corporate clients, and community events. With this momentum, Meraki Collective is scaling toward its long-term vision: an upscale, multicultural farm-to-table house—a creative hub where food, art, and culture collide, serving as a home for events, community, and connection.

Meraki Collective is more than catering—it's a movement. We create food with soul, tell stories through flavor, and bring people together through unforgettable culinary experiences that last long after the last bite.

Company History

A look at the company's beginnings and the key moments that set the stage for its current growth phase.

Founded by Chef E. Nicole, Meraki Collective began as a boutique catering business delivering multicultural dishes inspired by global flavors and local ingredients. The brand quickly gained traction through private events, corporate luncheons, and charitable fundraisers across Buffalo, including Roswell's cancer institute Lung Cancer Fundraiser.

What began as a solo passion project evolved into a thriving collective supported by a team of family and friends. The company now operates at a consistent booking rate and is laying the foundation for physical expansion through a dedicated kitchen and retail space.

Our Solution

Outlines the product or service offering and how it remains positioned to meet growing market demand.

Meraki Collective provides a premium food experience that bridges creativity, culture, and community. By offering flexible catering packages, corporate breakfast and lunch menus that are culturally diverse and fresh, halal-friendly poultry options, and inclusive gluten- and dairy-free meal prep selections, the company meets the growing demand for customized, conscious dining experiences with multi-cultural flavor.

Our approach combines the convenience of modern meal prep with the flavor and elegance of high-end catering, addressing a market gap for fresh soulful, chef-driven food that feels both personal and elevated.

Our Advantages

Highlights the competitive strengths that support continued growth and market expansion.

Distinct Brand Identity: A culinary brand that celebrates art, culture, and sustainability through food.

Chef-Driven Innovation: Menus that blend global flavors with local sourcing and nutritional balance.

Community Connection: Strong ties to local farmers markets and event organizers.

High-Quality Ingredients: 80% natural, unprocessed ingredients with an emphasis on halal and local sourcing.