# El Pollo Loco Holdings, Inc.

**LOCO**

Nasdaq; shops; SIC 5812, Retail-Eating Places; CIK 0001606366

**D**

## fourth fifth of 254 graded peers in shops

rank 188 of 254; percentile 73.9; sampling error 3.0 points; lower is stronger

A B C D E

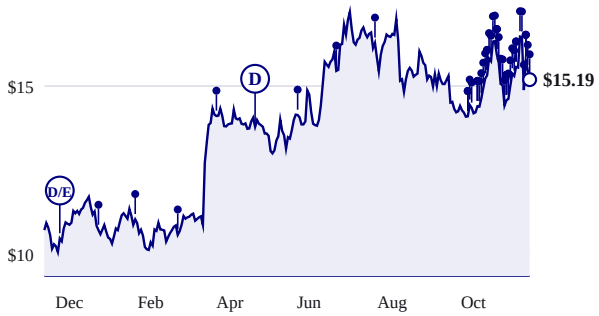
**D, the sloth**



### Scoreboard

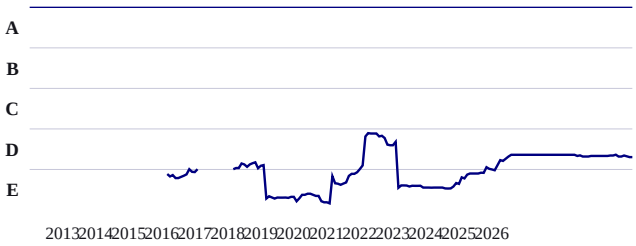
| | |
|---|---|
| **Profitability** | D<br>percentile 63.9 |
| **Solvency** | C/D<br>percentile 62.5 |
| **Growth and financing** | C<br>percentile 52.7 |
| **Reliability** | 0.91 AUC<br>filers with $591M to $2.67B assets; 95% interval 0.88 to 0.94; 160 events, 2020 to 2025 |
| **Peer failure rate** | 1.01% a year<br>Item 1.03 bankruptcies, same asset band, 2012 to 2025 |
| **Size band** | $591M to $2.67B assets<br>total assets $606.6M |
| **Standard universe** | inside<br>revenue above $1M and assets above $10M |
| **Warnings** | none triggered<br>not computable: distress |
| **Inputs computable** | 10 of 14 |
| **Graded from** | filings received through Mar 13, 2026<br>244 days before the rescan; latest periodic filing 10-Q received Nov 6, 2026 |
| **Last close** | $15.21<br>2026-11-11; market equity $459.5M; no price enters the letter |

### Share price, twelve months to the rescan




*Split-adjusted close. Each lollipop is a rescan and carries the letter held then.*

### Letter at every rescan, 2012 to 2026




*Sector percentile at each rescan, stronger toward the top; facts filed by each date only.*

## Business, in the company's words

*opening of Item 1 of the 10-K received Mar 13, 2026*

We opened our first location on Alvarado Street in Los Angeles, California, in 1980, and have grown our restaurant system to 503 domestic restaurants, comprised of 175 company-operated and 328 franchised restaurants as of December 31, 2025. Our restaurants are located principally in California, but also in Arizona, Nevada, Texas, Utah, Colorado, Washington and Louisiana. Additionally, as of December 31, 2025, we had 8 licensed restaurants in the Philippines. Our typical restaurant is a free-standing building with drive-thru service that ranges in size from 2,200 to 3,000 square feet with seating for approximately 50 to 70 people.

## The fourteen inputs

*lower percentile is stronger; sleeves and inputs within a sleeve carry equal weight*

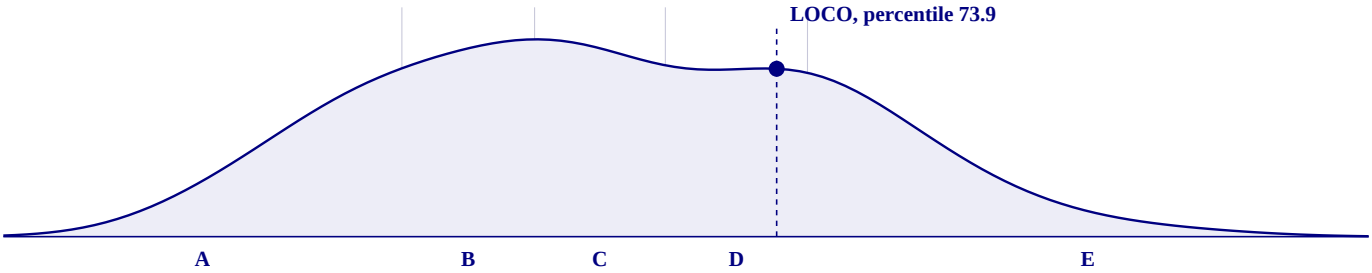
| Input | Value | Peer median | Percentile, 0 to 100 | Pct | Peers | Period end |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Profitability, sleeve percentile 63.9** | | | | | | |
| Gross profitability | not computable | 42.0% | | | | |
| *one or more required annual facts are missing* | | | | | | |
| Return on invested capital | 8.9% | 10.9% | | 62.2 | 83 | 2025-12-31 |

Not investment advice. Informational and educational only. Data from SEC EDGAR, may contain errors, is not warranted. The grade ranks reported financial condition and is not a return forecast.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Accruals ratio | (3.6%) | (4.9%) | 65.6 | 283 | 2025-12-31 |
| Gross margin stability, five years | not computable | 1.3 pts | | | |
| *five annual gross margins are required; found 0* | | | | | |
| **Solvency, sleeve percentile 62.5** | | | | | |
| Twelve-month failure probability | not computable | 0.03% | | | |
| *latest liabilities, cash plus short-term investments, book equity, and shares are required* | | | | | |
| Altman Z double-prime | 1.09 | 1.93 | 57.6 | 204 | 2025-12-31 |
| Net debt to EBITDA | 0.77x | 1.38x | 35.1 | 98 | 2025-12-31 |
| Interest coverage | not computable | 2.71x | | | |
| *latest aligned inputs end 2023-12-27; latest annual assets end 2025-12-31* | | | | | |
| Current ratio | 0.32x | 1.37x | 94.9 | 295 | 2025-12-31 |
| **Growth and financing, sleeve percentile 52.7** | | | | | |
| Revenue growth, three-year compound | 1.4% | 1.6% | 50.0 | 265 | 2025-12-31 |
| Free cash flow growth, three-year compound | 10.9% | 4.6% | 38.7 | 151 | 2025-12-31 |
| Reinvestment rate | 30.3% | 17.6% | 43.3 | 151 | 2025-12-31 |
| Asset growth, three years | 0.5% | 3.1% | 61.7 | 267 | 2025-12-31 |
| Net share issuance, one year | 0.6% | (0.6%) | 69.7 | 209 | 2026-03-06 |

## Among 254 peers

*shops; letters are fifths of this list*




*Composite score of every graded peer, smoothed; vertical rules are the letter band edges; stronger to the left.*

| Rank | Company | Percentile | Letter | Warnings |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 183 | Target Corp. (TGT) | 71.9 | D | |
| 184 | Willis Lease Finance Corp. (WLFC) | 72.3 | D | |
| 185 | Sherwin Williams Co. (SHW) | 72.7 | D | |
| 186 | Ingram Micro Holding Corp. (INGM) | 73.1 | D | |
| 187 | Lands' END, Inc. (LE) | 73.5 | D | short runway |
| 188 | El Pollo Loco Holdings, Inc. (LOCO) | 73.9 | D | |
| 189 | Aramark (ARMK) | 74.3 | D | |
| 190 | Cracker Barrel OLD Country Store, Inc. (CBRL) | 74.7 | D | |
| 191 | Dave & Buster's Entertainment, Inc. (PLAY) | 75.1 | D | |
| 192 | 1 800 Flowers COM Inc. (FLWS) | 75.5 | D | |
| 193 | Advance Auto Parts Inc. (AAP) | 75.9 | D | |

## What the price implies

*at the 2026-11-11 close; none of these enters the grade*

| Measure | Value | Peer median | Percentile |
|---|---|---|---|
| Twelve-month price change, skipping the latest month | 40.4% | (0.8%) | 82 |
| Distance from 52-week high | (11.7%) | (18.8%) | 68 |
| EBIT to enterprise value | 8.8% | 5.1% | 83 |
| Free cash flow yield | 5.5% | 3.7% | 66 |
| Book value to price | 0.70 | 0.34 | 71 |
| Sales to price | 1.07 | 1.53 | 37 |

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| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Composite equity issuance, five years | (33.2%) | (16.9%) | 19 |
| Relative strength against the sector, log excess return | 0.43 | 0.08 | 82 |

## Diagnostics

*shown on every report; none enters the grade*

| Measure | Value |
|---|---|
| **Piotroski F-score None of 9, period end 2025-12-31** | |
| Return on assets above zero | pass |
| Operating cash flow above zero | pass |
| Return on assets improved | pass |
| Operating cash flow exceeds net income | pass |
| Long-term leverage fell | pass |
| Current ratio improved | pass |
| No new shares issued | fail |
| Gross margin improved | fail |
| Asset turnover improved | pass |
| **Cash, filings, liquidity** | |
| Cash and equivalents | $3.4M |
| Operating cash flow, four quarters | $66.5M |
| Months of runway | not finite |
| Days since last periodic filing | 6 (10-Q received Nov 6, 2026) |
| Median daily dollar volume, 63 sessions | $3.4M |

## Sources

*every fact behind the inputs; each row links to its filing index on sec.gov*

| # | Concept | XBRL tag | Value | Period end | Received | Form | Accession |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | operating income | us-gaap:OperatingIncomeLoss | $42.0M | 2025-12-31 | 2026-03-13 | 10-K | 26-000017 |
| 2 | pretax income | us-gaap:IncomeLossFromContinuingOperationsBeforeInc... | $37.6M | 2025-12-31 | 2026-03-13 | 10-K | 26-000017 |
| 3 | income tax | us-gaap:IncomeTaxExpenseBenefit | $11.1M | 2025-12-31 | 2026-03-13 | 10-K | 26-000017 |
| 4 | total debt | us-gaap:LongTermDebt | $51.0M | 2025-12-31 | 2026-03-13 | 10-K | 26-000017 |
| 5 | book equity | us-gaap:StockholdersEquity | $291.1M | 2025-12-31 | 2026-03-13 | 10-K | 26-000017 |
| 6 | cash | us-gaap:CashAndCashEquivalentsAtCarryingValue | $6.2M | 2025-12-31 | 2026-03-13 | 10-K | 26-000017 |
| 7 | total debt | us-gaap:LongTermDebt | $71.0M | 2024-12-25 | 2025-03-07 | 10-K | 25-000008 |
| 8 | book equity | us-gaap:StockholdersEquity | $260.7M | 2024-12-25 | 2026-03-13 | 10-K | 26-000017 |
| 9 | cash | us-gaap:CashAndCashEquivalentsAtCarryingValue | $2.5M | 2024-12-25 | 2026-03-13 | 10-K | 26-000017 |
| 10 | net income | us-gaap:NetIncomeLoss | $26.5M | 2025-12-31 | 2026-03-13 | 10-K | 26-000017 |
| 11 | operating cash flow | us-gaap:NetCashProvidedByUsedInOperatingActivities | $48.1M | 2025-12-31 | 2026-03-13 | 10-K | 26-000017 |
| 12 | assets | us-gaap:Assets | $606.6M | 2025-12-31 | 2026-03-13 | 10-K | 26-000017 |
| 13 | assets | us-gaap:Assets | $592.0M | 2024-12-25 | 2026-03-13 | 10-K | 26-000017 |
| 14 | current assets | us-gaap:AssetsCurrent | $25.6M | 2025-12-31 | 2026-03-13 | 10-K | 26-000017 |
| 15 | current liabilities | us-gaap:LiabilitiesCurrent | $79.1M | 2025-12-31 | 2026-03-13 | 10-K | 26-000017 |
| 16 | retained earnings | us-gaap:RetainedEarningsAccumulatedDeficit | $43.6M | 2025-12-31 | 2026-03-13 | 10-K | 26-000017 |
| 17 | liabilities | us-gaap:Liabilities | $315.6M | 2025-12-31 | 2026-03-13 | 10-K | 26-000017 |
| 18 | depreciation amortization | us-gaap:DepreciationDepletionAndAmortization | $16.0M | 2025-12-31 | 2026-03-13 | 10-K | 26-000017 |
| 19 | operating income | us-gaap:OperatingIncomeLoss | $39.8M | 2023-12-27 | 2026-03-13 | 10-K | 26-000017 |
| 20 | interest expense | us-gaap:InterestExpense | $4.8M | 2023-12-27 | 2024-03-08 | 10-K | 24-000013 |
| 21 | revenue | us-gaap:RevenueFromContractWithCustomerIncludingAs... | $490.0M | 2025-12-31 | 2026-03-13 | 10-K | 26-000017 |
| 22 | revenue | us-gaap:RevenueFromContractWithCustomerIncludingAs... | $473.0M | 2024-12-25 | 2026-03-13 | 10-K | 26-000017 |
| 23 | revenue | us-gaap:RevenueFromContractWithCustomerIncludingAs... | $468.7M | 2023-12-27 | 2026-03-13 | 10-K | 26-000017 |
| 24 | revenue | us-gaap:RevenueFromContractWithCustomerIncludingAs... | $470.0M | 2022-12-28 | 2025-03-07 | 10-K | 25-000008 |
| 25 | capital expenditure | us-gaap:PaymentsToAcquirePropertyPlantAndEquipment | $22.6M | 2025-12-31 | 2026-03-13 | 10-K | 26-000017 |
| 26 | operating cash flow | us-gaap:NetCashProvidedByUsedInOperatingActivities | $46.8M | 2024-12-25 | 2026-03-13 | 10-K | 26-000017 |
| 27 | capital expenditure | us-gaap:PaymentsToAcquirePropertyPlantAndEquipment | $19.1M | 2024-12-25 | 2026-03-13 | 10-K | 26-000017 |
| 28 | operating cash flow | us-gaap:NetCashProvidedByUsedInOperatingActivities | $40.7M | 2023-12-27 | 2026-03-13 | 10-K | 26-000017 |
| 29 | capital expenditure | us-gaap:PaymentsToAcquirePropertyPlantAndEquipment | $21.3M | 2023-12-27 | 2026-03-13 | 10-K | 26-000017 |

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| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 30 | operating cash flow | us-gaap:NetCashProvidedByUsedInOperatingActivities | $38.5M | 2022-12-28 | 2025-03-07 | 10-K | 25-000008 |
| 31 | capital expenditure | us-gaap:PaymentsToAcquirePropertyPlantAndEquipment | $19.9M | 2022-12-28 | 2025-03-07 | 10-K | 25-000008 |
| 32 | current assets | us-gaap:AssetsCurrent | $19.9M | 2024-12-25 | 2026-03-13 | 10-K | 26-000017 |
| 33 | current liabilities | us-gaap:LiabilitiesCurrent | $75.7M | 2024-12-25 | 2026-03-13 | 10-K | 26-000017 |
| 34 | assets | us-gaap:Assets | $592.3M | 2023-12-27 | 2025-03-07 | 10-K | 25-000008 |
| 35 | assets | us-gaap:Assets | $597.2M | 2022-12-28 | 2024-03-08 | 10-K | 24-000013 |
| 36 | shares outstanding | dei:EntityCommonStockSharesOutstanding | 29,956,259 | 2026-03-06 | 2026-03-13 | 10-K | 26-000017 |
| 37 | shares outstanding | dei:EntityCommonStockSharesOutstanding | 29,777,207 | 2025-02-28 | 2025-03-07 | 10-K | 25-000008 |

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