

July - September 2010

Personal Chef

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE UNITED STATES PERSONAL CHEF ASSOCIATION



Debbie Spangler
Yummy-issimo!

Personal Chef

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The purpose of this publication is to bring Personal Chefs the most useful and timely information and ideas from experts, working professionals, and industry leaders.

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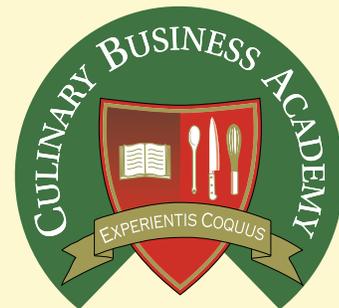
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pceditor@uspca.com
610 Quantum Road NE
Rio Rancho, NM 87124
1.800.995.2138

Production Director: Gail Kenagy
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Advertising: Wendy Gauthier

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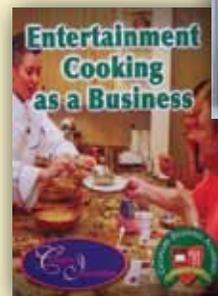
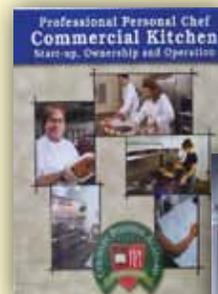


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Membership Milestones

3 year

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5 year

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10 year

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Hello Chefs,

It has been an exciting spring and summer and its not over yet! Below is an update on what has been happening.

National Restaurant Association:

In January, we started helping the National Restaurant Association (NRA) promote Asian foods. The first show where USPCA chefs participated was held in San Francisco. The most recent show was in Chicago and the NRA voted our chefs the “best” crew they have worked with! Congratulations to Barb Lance, Dawn Buchholz, Jeannie Heitz, Rosemary Martin, Roger Greene and Wanda Smith for an exceptional job – thank you!

Silver Planet:

The USPCA has developed a new partnership with Silver Planet® (www.silverplanet.com). Silver Planet® empowers boomers and seniors to make informed decisions about “aging in place” and housing options. Silver Planet’s team provides the latest information on scams, housing, financial planning, caregiving, spirituality, elder law, health, and new tech tools for staying at home, thus providing the information needed to make aging with choice a reality.

They have been featuring our Chefs in their Silver Planet News section. The chefs provide articles, bios and recipes for those who subscribe to this publication. So far, Chefs Laura MacDougall, Maria Sakellariou and Mary Jane Curry have been featured. To see their articles, go to www.silverplanet.com.

If you would like to contribute and be a featured chef of the month, please email us at pceditor@uspc.com.

USPCA National Conference in Denver:

I am looking forward to this year’s conference. We have an amazing group of instructors and there is something magical about being in Denver. The Rocky Mountains are beautiful to look at and in just an hour or so from downtown you can immerse yourself in the beauty of the great outdoors. For city lovers, Denver has the most delicious restaurants and many sights and sounds to enjoy. **Altitude and Attitude** will make for a fantastic merging of our minds and senses!



Feeling Spammy?? Friday night at 5:15 in the vendor area will be the first ever Spam Carving Contest. Imagine the creativity that will be showncome on, grab a cocktail, schmooze with the vendors and carve your way into USPCA history!

All the creations of art will be judged by secret ballot and prizes given. Competitors will be provided a can of Spam, a knife, toothpicks, crackers, various condiments and a paper plate. What ever shall you make?

This year’s conference will also feature the fierce “Chefs Knockout” competition. This event is a must see! This year the chefs will be in the center of the room with seating all around for maximum exposure and great views for everyone. Watch as they create the most delectable creations with the secret ingredient. The sound, smells and anticipation as the clock winds down will delight your senses and entertain you! Learn trivia and facts from the announcers and judges. Ponder the thought of being a contender next year.....

Here is the schedule – don’t miss out on these events:

Thursday 5:00 til ???: Meet in the lobby bar. Say hi to your new and old chef buddies and meet the vendors....give them your business card to enter a drawing for a free cocktail on Friday and Saturday evenings.

Friday 5:15 – 6:45: Cocktail reception with the vendors. Door prizes will be awarded by drawing names out of a big pot during the Spam carving. You must be present to win!

Saturday 3:45 – 5:00: Chefs Knockout – Don’t miss it !!!

Saturday 5:00 – 6:30: Cocktails in the vendor area while you meet the team members of the Chefs Knockout. More prizes and a special “Top Chef of Spam” will be awarded.

First Lady Michelle Obama and the White House:

In early May, Share Our Strength asked me to participate on a phone call with White House Assistant Chef Sam Kass, regarding the First Lady's Let's Move! campaign. Let's Move! is the First Lady's campaign to end childhood obesity within a generation.

The purpose of the phone call was to ask for our participation in the "Chefs Move to Schools". This is a great opportunity and I am excited about engaging chefs in this program and hope that you will consider committing to adopting a school.

For more information about the program and to sign up, go to www.letsmove.gov. Any chef may adopt a school by clicking on "Chefs Move to School". Select the "Chef Sign-up Form" link and complete the form if you wish to be a part of the project.

The formal launch of the "Chefs Move to Schools" program was held on June 4th, 2010, on the South Lawn of the White House. The USPCA was proud to have 35 of our chefs attend. We enjoyed listening to Michelle Obama along with others, including the Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, White House Assistant Chef Sam Kass, Share Our Strength Foundation Executive Director Billy Shore, author of "Free for All: Fixing School Food in America" Janet Poppendieck, and a panel with chefs and school officials already successfully working together to ensure schools are a healthy food environment for kids.



This program has already been getting a lot of publicity via CNN, MSNBC, Google, Yahoo and network television news. In addition, many local newspapers have been profiling USPCA chefs as they sign up to adopt a school.

Sears:

In late April, Sears contacted me about an opportunity for USPCA chefs. They were developing their "Sears Chef Challenge" and they asked us to help them get the word out to our members. The "Sears Chef Challenge" is a four-city nationwide competition to be broadcast via the web.

The challenge offers an opportunity for local and national exposure. Local events will be broadcast via the web and advertised by Sears. There are prizes for winners of the challenges, including a grand prize of a complete kitchen makeover. The winner of each city competition will win a kitchen appliance of their choice. There is also the potential do future demonstrations and videos for Sears. In addition, Sears will donate up to \$20,000.00 to a food charity selected by the winning chef.

For season one, we ended up with nine USPCA chefs competing out of a total of twelve competitors. Congratulations and "Good Luck" to:

Los Angeles: Sally Cameron and Palak Patel

Chicago: Christine Campbell

New York City: Matthew West, Theo Petron and Rickey Glispy.

Washington DC: Pam Oldes, Stephanie Krzywanski and Ed Groark.

Voting for our nine chefs in Season One starts June 26 and will continue through July 10, 2010. Please go to www.searschefchallenge.com and vote for one of our USPCA chefs! Let's make sure our chefs are in the semi-final round on July 31, 2010 in Chicago, Illinois. Read more about our competing chefs later in this issue!

There has been a lot of press about these events. There are many online advertisements on relevant and very visible websites (Yahoo, MSNBC, Martha Stewart, Food Network, Big Oven, Cooking.com, Ivillage Food, etc.etc.)

The dates for Season Two are August 14, 2010, August 21, 2010, September 4, 2010 and September 11, 2010. Visit www.searschefchallenge.com and click on "Schedule" at the bottom to see the store listings. Sears is currently in the process of selecting chefs for season two. I will let you know who has been selected and when the voting will begin.

The semi-finals for season two will be held on October 31, 2010 in Chicago and the championship final will be in Chicago on November 6, 2010. In closing, again, I thank you. The industry thanks you and most importantly, your clients thank you for changing their lives. You continue to inspire me and the nation as a whole. Your work does not go unnoticed and I am looking forward to working with you in the coming weeks, months and years.

Until next time, happy cooking!

CHEF GAIL

Chef Gail

USPCA Chefs Take The Sears Chef Challenge!

The USPCA is proud to profile the nine United States Personal Chef Association members selected to compete in season one of the Sears Chef Challenge!

During the months of May and June, USPCA chefs have competed in Los Angeles, Chicago, New York City and Washington DC in a serious, but fun, head-to-head competition.

Congratulations and best of luck to the following USPCA members:
Los Angeles: Sally Cameron and Palak Patel.
Chicago: Christine Campbell.
New York City: Matthew West, Theo Petron and Rickey Glispy.
Washington DC: Pam Oldes, Stephanie Krzywanski and Ed Groark.

Season One Dates

The dates for Season One of the Sears Chef Challenge were May 8, May 15, June 5 and June 12, 2010.

Voting started June 26 and continues through July 10 for season one. If you have not already done so, please go online and vote for your favorite USPCA chef.

To find out more and to vote, visit www.searschefchallenge.com

Click on "SCHEDULE" at the bottom of the page to see the all of the participating Sears stores, chefs and dates for seasons one and two.

Sears Chef Challenge Information

The Sears Chef Challenge was divided into two seasons, May/June and August/September.

The Sears Chef Challenge is a four-city nationwide chef challenge event to be broadcast via the web. For season one, they were searching for 12 chefs and asked that we reach out to all of the USPCA chefs within a 100-mile radius of the cities where the events took place. For season two, we sent out emails again asking all USPCA chefs to consider filling out the application. We will continue to keep you updated on the participating chefs and the events.

Local events will be broadcast via the web and advertised by Sears. Sears gets millions of visitors a day to their website. They are giving large donations to a charity of the chefs choice and prizes for winners of the challenges. The winner of each city competition will win a kitchen appliance of their choice. The grand prize is a complete kitchen makeover.

Season Two Dates

The dates for Season Two of the Sears Chef Challenge are August 14, August 21, September 4, and September 11, 2010.

The Sears event will take place in the same cities as season one, Los Angeles, Chicago, New York City and Washington DC.

Vote ~ If a USPCA Chef wins – We all Win

Remember, if you are in the area of a Sears store where one of the challenge demonstrations will be taking place, please stop by and support our Chefs!

If you are not near a Sears store on the above dates, please log onto www.searschefchallenge.com to vote and learn more about this incredible event.

Please support your fellow chefs! Let's make one of our own a winner and make us all proud.



Fresh Eggs Don't Always Come From Farms

By: *Chef Ash Sengson*

*Please Enjoy Personal Chef and Catering Services
ChefAsh@PleaseEnjoy.net*



When I told my family and friends that I was going to spend my Saturday touring chicken coops around downtown Dallas with my local Slow Food chapter, they thought I was a little cuckoo. I have a few friends that had actually grown up around chickens and they really didn't have anything positive to say about them - even when pressed. So I prepared myself to spend a beautiful day in smelly dirty coops. At this point, I should also mention the fact that I have a slight fear (all right - a phobia) of birds in general. So needless to say, the only thing driving me to go on this tour is the fact that I am absolutely obsessed with learning everything I can regarding food, and that includes where it comes from.

I learned that fresh eggs don't always have to come from farms. I had the distinct pleasure of meeting six couples that have been getting "farm fresh" eggs from their very own residential backyards. On arriving at the first coop, I was pleasantly surprised to find no odor and on top of that, the chickens weren't dirty. All the coops I visited had four to eight chickens, which supplied enough eggs for the family and sometimes their neighbors.

Throughout the day, I was introduced to a variety of different coops. Some were bare bones, using just two by fours and chicken wire and others were very elaborate. We even visited a coop that had framed portraits of the birds and a small chandelier hanging from the ceiling, just for fun (yes, you read that right). I think the idea is to have some kind of structure for the chickens to roost in and for them to do the very important business of laying their eggs. The structure also acts as security for the birds from predators such as coyotes, possums, and even hawks. Two very clever pieces of advice regarding the coop itself: put an egg collection door on the side of the coop so that you don't always have to enter to collect the eggs (less poopy shoes) and install an electronic door for the chickens with a timer. That way you don't always have to be there to let them in or out at the beginning and end of the day. This works because their bedtime is like clock work - literally. As soon as the sun starts to go down, they all line up to head back to the coop.



It is really up to the individual regarding how much money you choose to spend on chickens and a coop. You have the upfront cost of building the structure and getting started with chickens. Then you will have the monthly cost of food and wood shavings for the coops. But with that said, even the ground cover varied in the coops I saw. Some did have the shavings like I mentioned, but one owner had an ingenious idea to just build the coop right over their compost pile. The floor is made of wire so the poop just falls right through. Talk about easy, right? As far as vet bills go, it's up to the owner to decide whether or not they will even have any. Most of the coop owners said their chickens had never seen a vet. This was due to one of two reasons: 1) they had never been sick or 2) remember how much you paid for the chick and how much it would cost you in the vet's office. If your chicken ever gets sick, you can humanely kill the bird and purchase another.

In an attempt to answer the age old question, "Which came first, the chicken or the egg?" the answer is simple. You can start with either, just keep in mind that if you decide to start with the egg you will need an incubator. No matter what you start with, please remember that you may get a few roosters. It's easy to tell the difference between the hens and the roosters: roosters crow! This is not a good thing. Not only will your neighbors seek revenge, but it can be illegal to own them depending on where you live. If you decide to start with the chicken you may always do the egg thing later. Hens will get broody and want to have baby chicks. One of the coop owners had a broody hen during the tour and I thought it was interesting that they had her on wooden eggs to comfort her. You may ask "If I already have chickens, then why on earth would I want fertilized eggs?" That would be because chickens usually only lay eggs for about five years. After that, you will need to incorporate new ones.

Finding out that bit of information brought me to my next question: "What do you do with the chicken after it is no longer laying eggs?" Well, there are as many ways to answer that question as there are ways to crack an egg. Some owners do not feel comfortable eating one of their chickens. Others don't feel comfortable in doing "the deed". But on the other hand, some owners took comfort in knowing that the chickens were well cared for. The circle of life can be a beautiful thing.

In taking the tour, I definitely got an education and was introduced to phrases like "egg-bound". Let's just say if you don't already know what this means you really don't want to, but yes it is basically what it sounds like. I also learned some very beautiful egg facts. Like, eggs aren't just white and brown. I saw eggs with pink hues and blue tones that were absolutely stunning. My favorite moment was when I got to hold a newly laid egg that was still warm - pretty cool!

I wouldn't go as far as saying that I was cured of my ornithophobia, but I will say that raising chickens is not completely out of the question in my future. It was not near as difficult, dirty, or smelly as I thought it would be. I met a lot of great "chicken people," and overall, it was a very neat way to spend my Saturday.



A Failure in Corporate America – A Success in Kitchens

By Carol Anderson, contributing writer

After receiving BA and MA degrees in Communication and Marketing from Miami University (Oxford, OH), Debbie Spangler worked in Corporate America for quite a few years. She was anticipating a successful career. Instead she discovered that she didn't work well with others. She could not tolerate people hanging over her shoulder telling her in minute detail what to do, when to do it and how long it should take to finish. It drove her crazy! Add to that that her lack of desire to make decisions by committee and it's quite obvious why she was fired three times from very good corporate jobs.

By 1992, fed up with attempts to fit into the corporate world, she started Deborah Spangler Communications: a marketing, public relations and graphic design firm. In the following years, clients included Fortune 500 companies, small mom-and-pop businesses and entrepreneurs. So far, so good.

From 2000 to 2006, Debbie and her husband Tim owned an independent fine jewelry store. Debbie says "this is how I was able to fill my jewelry box with tons of stuff that I can't wear while I'm cooking."

For their jewelry store, Debbie was responsible for the marketing, buying, sales and closing the high-end prospects. In her marketing role, she started hosting quarterly networking events in the store for several Chambers of Commerce and, at first, brought in a caterer for the food. That soon changed. Debbie explained, "I was really disappointed in the price, quality and presentation of the food so I started doing it myself. The networking events quickly grew to over 125 guests who were going through the appetizers like they'd never seen food before. And when leaving the event, they asked when the next one was scheduled."

Debbie was a personal chef – but didn't know it

"I realized I had a 'gift' for feeding large groups of people," Debbie says, "At my networking events I was constantly asked for recipes and it didn't really click until the husband of a prominent restaurant chef asked for a couple of my recipes... then I knew I was doing something right."

She had been cooking for several years on a part-time basis – mostly in-home events and dinner parties – but didn't know the term for what she was doing was 'personal chef.' Then in 2005 Debbie found the USPCA online. She called and was told that the next Culinary Business Academy (about two weeks in the future) was completely full. "I badgered Phil until he finally let me in, drove down to Atlanta for the two-day CBA," Debbie said, "and then I stayed for the Hot-lanta 2005 USPCA Conference. I was hooked and have never looked back!"

Debbie finished the online testing a week or so later and called upon her marketing and communication skills for her new career. She chose the name Yummy-issimo! (See sidebar for details.)

Full time work right away!

Debbie was fully booked with clients immediately, focusing her marketing efforts to the many movers-and-shakers she had come to know over the years. At that time, she was looking for event catering – heavy appetizer functions for large groups. Check out how she did this in the "How Debbie Got Her First Clients" sidebar.



*Personal Chef Debbie Spangler
Yummy-issimo Personal Chef Service
Cincinnati, Ohio*

Debbie describes her personal chef business

On average Debbie serves clients five to six days a week. On cooking days, she's up at 6 a.m., packs her car, has breakfast and is on the road by 7:15. Depending on the weather, traffic and stops at the grocery store, butcher shop and seafood shop, Debbie arrives at the client's home between 8:30 and 9. Depending on the number of entrees, she's usually done by 1 p.m., ready to pack up and repeat the process if it is a two-service day.

Clients include a local super rock star, professional athletes from the Cincinnati Bengals football team, the owners of the Cincinnati Reds baseball team and busy executives. There are times when they are all in town at once, and Debbie says that makes for chaos and madness in Yummy~world!

Weekly clients choose 5x2, 5x4 or 5x6 services. But with the Bengals, Debbie says, "it's all over the place. Most of them are single so it's a 3 or 4 by... These football players typically eat at least one pound of protein per 'meal' but others have strict guidelines of how many calories, carbs, fat grams, protein, etc. they must have for every snack and meal."

If the Bengals are in town – roughly April through January except for three weeks of training camp in July – Debbie's weeks are challenging. She says, "When they're in town I can count on a tough week with a double cook (sometimes a triple) on Monday and Tuesday, a long cook day (and occasionally a double) on Wednesday and usually a normal cook day on Thursday and Friday."

During the holiday season, November 1 through January 31, she books two to three events each weekend in addition to the weekly clients. From February to the end of October, she tries to limit weekend events to about one a month.

Catering events, too

Debbie's favorite event to cook for is a Black Tie heavy appetizer party – she can handle up to about 150 guests; buffet or passed-trays. She's also cooked Thanksgiving dinner for 30 hungry professional athletes and a plated beef tenderloin dinner for 50. She admits, "I do not enjoy cooking for events like a romantic dinner for two, children-teen parties or small dinner parties of less than 12 so I pass those event onto a couple of other personal chefs in Cincinnati. They, in turn pass on the larger events to me that they can't or don't want to handle."

And even some freelance marketing

While she still occasionally does some web or graphic design and marketing work, it's mostly for small culinary establishments such as small, independent restaurants, gourmet grocers and small farmers markets. Debbie says, "If I come across a project that is challenging, interesting and something that can fit into my crazy personal chef schedule, I'll take it on."

Is that all?

This gal is a dynamo. Here's what Debbie is up to these days: "Currently I have a couple of spice blends for sale with a local retailer and I'm working on a line of marinades, salad dressings and flavored mayonnaises. I'm also working on a cookbook – but not your "typical" cookbook. I've discussed the concept with non-cooks, home cooks and professional chefs and the response has been fabulous. I also hope to write the copy and shoot the food photos for the book.

"I've had a weekly radio segment on a Cumulus radio station for four years, and for the last 18 months my segment has been sponsored by Meijer. Besides the radio segments and on-site cooking demos and remotes by Meijer, I'm discussing a weekly segment with a local TV station. In the back of my mind, I'm working on a marketing program for chefs – restaurant chefs, personal chefs and caterers." Whew!

Early culinary influences

Mother and great-grandmother were major influences in Debbie's opinions about foods.

She wrote, "My mother is certainly not going to be happy when she reads this, but my mother shaped my thinking about food. I grew up in a household of a woman who hates to cook! Vegetables, fruits and tomatoes were out of a can, mac and cheese out of a box, meats and potatoes were fried, and the microwave was the newest kitchen gadget.

"When I moved out of the house, I found an entirely new food group – fresh food! I discovered seafood that wasn't a frozen fish stick, fruit that wasn't fruit cocktail out of the can and real Parmesan."

Her culinary training started early with 18 years of intense, hands-on cooking at the 'University of Elizabeth Funderberg.' Debbie explained, "She was my great grandmother and a woman who could stretch one ear of corn to feed 12 people for two weeks. She taught me that every meal should, and can, be a gourmet one made with whatever is in the pantry or refrigerator. She was a strong believer that a family sits down together for dinner every night."

Debbie tells about a lesson learned – one of many

"Very shortly after I started Yummy~issimo! I received a phone call from a young man who was asking if I could prepare weekly dinners for him and his brother. It just didn't 'feel' right so I kept putting him off. He kept calling and finally after six weeks, I agreed to meet him. He couldn't meet until mid-evening and he didn't live in the best area of town so I took Tim with me to the meeting. We walked in the door and Tim just about fell over – standing there was one of the biggest Bengals on the team (he was new to the team and I didn't know his name). He turned into a weekly client until he was traded."

Debbie says she felt like a fool and promised she'd NEVER put someone off again! Until the next time she put someone off...

"I took a phone call late one night from a potential client who was looking for a weekly 5x4. I was hedging about meeting with him because he lives (on a good weather day with no traffic) 50 minutes from my house. Add in shopping and it would easily be 2½ to 3 hours before I even got to his house to start unloading. And his kitchen is on the second floor of the house, so that's 16 steps up and back down with each load! I finally agreed to drive out there. I met him and his darling wife, fell in love with their dogs, home and location and started cooking the next week. Turns out, he's a ghost writer for Dr. Memhet Oz and it was Dr. Oz who suggested he call me..."

Bottom line: you NEVER know where your next best new client will come from.

Old Career vs. New Career

When asked to compare her old corporate career to being a personal chef, Debbie beamed. "There is absolutely no comparison! I'm having more fun, making more money and enjoying life and work more now than ever before. What other career could you have where clients love when you show up, love the fruits of your labor and you get paid to indulge in your passion! I fulfill my creative side, am totally responsible for my own success or failure, I'm always right and my boss never tells me 'no'."

Debbie's tips for other personal chefs

- Believe in yourself and your abilities – this is your passion!
- Find your specialty – teaching children's classes, cooking for seniors, romantic dinners for two, 5x4 or whatever – hone this skill, make it your niche and market it every day, all day.

- Always have several 30-second ‘elevator speeches’ ready and practice them until they’re natural and roll off the tongue without thinking about it.
- Look for opportunities in non-traditional places; you never know who can introduce you to your next new big client.
- Personalize everything. Lots of chefs wear their chef coats everywhere but that is too cumbersome and hot for me. I have T-shirts in tons of colors, a fleece vest, two fleece coats, a large tote bag I carry everywhere and a fabulous photographer’s jacket with millions of pockets – all of these items have been silk-screened or embroidered with my logo on them and I wear them everywhere. One time, Tim and I were at a concert and I had a Yummy~top on. A very bigwig national politician’s wife saw my name, came right over to me and introduced herself. Shortly thereafter I cooked for a dinner party for them, their guests and their secret service agents.

Debbie keeps life in balance

She’s a firm believer in vacation – lots of vacation! Since she can easily work for 15-20-30 days straight without a day off during the holidays, vacations with her husband are planned several times a year. They typically go away for at least a week at the end of January (the end of her busy season), early May (the end of Tim’s busy season), and a week in September.

Why September? Debbie explains, “Because it’s my birthday and I’m a spoiled brat who expects to go away every year on my birthday.”

She does admit that the week before those vacations is crazy because she stocks up clients’ refrigerators so that they don’t have to ‘starve’ without her!

Debbie also explains that since she and Tim don’t have children, they can work around each other’s schedules. It also helps that they don’t have the same busy season, allowing them to take up the slack for each when it comes to household chores and errands.

The Story Behind the Name Yummy~issimo!

Curious about the name Debbie chose for her business? She wrote: “I don’t tell people this, but I have a slight auditory processing issue and cannot hear and process certain sounds. As long as you’re speaking English, it’s not a problem because I can intuitively understand. I tried all throughout college to learn a foreign language, but finally had to be tested out of the language requirement.

“Whenever Tim and I travel internationally he’s my translator. A person can be speaking very slowly and distinctly but I still can’t understand him or her. Reading a menu though is usually no problem, so go figure!

“In 2004 we were in Italy and after another fabulous dinner under an amazingly clear sky with a bottle of delicious nectar-of-the-gods wine, I had finally run out of adjectives to describe how wonderful the dinner had been. As I was making up words in my pidgin Italian (beauty-issimo, tall-issimo, hotel-issimo), I raised my wine glass of liquid honey and remarked that dinner was ‘Yummy~issimo!’

“I’d forgotten all about the incident, but when it was time to come up with a name for my personal chef service, Tim quickly reminded me of Yummy~issimo! Once the name caught on and business started to build, as a joke I started using Yummy! as a noun, verb and adjective. Everything was Yummy~this and Yummy~that.

“As a result my clients, friends and neighbors are now using some of my Yummy~isms:

Yummy~mobile = my car

Yummy~ville = what’s going on today

Yummy~world = what’s going on this week

Yummy~ness = delicious

Yummy~bark = Rusty”

The Personal Side of Debbie

Sweet Husband Tim

We recently celebrated our 22nd anniversary. He’s a huge help during the holidays because he’s my lifter, toter and unpaid server (Well, I charge for him, but I don’t pay him.)

Pets

We have a 10-year-old rescue Sheltie named Rusty. He’s amazingly smart, sweet and full of himself. He even has his own Twitter account and has hundreds of followers - @WonderDogRusty. Rusty has the difficult job of being the official “floor licker” in the Spangler household, which is a job that he applies himself to quite well.

Sports?

Look at me – I didn’t get this body by playing sports! I love to read, averaging about four books a week.

Gardening

I grow prize-winning Beefsteak tomatoes that my clients beg me to share with them. A couple of years ago, the plants were over seven feet tall and I was picking over 20 tomatoes (some more than two pounds each) a day from just 8 plants. I love to plant flowers and have tons of flowers and plants on the back deck and all around the yard.

My favorite thing of all

I enjoy sitting outside on the back deck with a book, my flowers, the hummingbirds, Rusty and a glass of wine – enjoying life.

Travel

Tim and I travel several times a year and this year our trips planned are Aruba, Scottsdale and somewhere fun in Canada like Montreal or Quebec.

Newest hobby

One of my clients recently gave me a professional digital camera when she was upgrading. I’m learning all about the aperture, shutter speeds, ISO, etc. Last June, I attended Denise Vivaldo’s class on Food Styling and Photography and now I’m getting serious about food photography.

Favorite cookbook

The Silver Palate Cookbook; Julee Rosso and Sheila Lukins; 1984

Magazine

Saveur

Most indispensable tool or piece of equipment

Corkscrew (oh wait, that’s for me personally!) In the kitchen, I couldn’t function without my iPhone with the iPhone app ‘ChefTimer’ which allows me to have four different timers going at the same time. There are different ringtones for each timer and each one can be named to the specific food that is being timed.

If you could hang out for one day with a famous chef, who would you choose?

Mario Batali. I love his recipes. He uses regional ingredients, is passionate about everything he prepares and everything is as beautiful as it is delicious.

What was one of the most important lessons you learned while growing up; who did you learn it from?

My great-grandmother marched for women’s rights in the 1920s, had (and kept) a baby out of wedlock and held a full-time job when it wasn’t ‘appropriate’ for a woman to do. She was the strongest and most honorable woman I’ve ever known and what I learned from her (besides how to cook) was that as long as I can sleep well every night, get up every morning and look at myself in the mirror with a clear conscience, I need to do what is right for me and the people I love. I am a very honest person, sometimes to my detriment, but I won’t lie or mislead anyone. As a result, the people who “get”

me have turned out to be life-long friends for whom I'd do anything.

PC-mobile

The Yummy~mobile is a 1999 Ford Expedition with 120,000 miles on it and this thing is a tank! During the last three winters when we've had such terrible snow and ice storms, there was only one day that I couldn't get to the client's home. This is also a very effective marketing tool for me; it's been mentioned in the Cincinnati Enquirer, and you can see it from blocks away. Like me, it's anything but subtle.



How Debbie Got Her First Clients

By Personal Chef Debbie Spangler

In trying to find and book clients, many beginning personal chefs tend to think along the same marketing lines – leave brochures and business cards the doctor's office, at the hair salon and at the gym. While I was one of the first personal chefs in the Cincinnati area, I didn't want to do anything else that other personal chefs had already done. And I certainly was not going to spend any money for marketing!

That meant I needed to be creative, cost- and time-effective, and make the most of the contacts I'd made over the years.

As a long time entrepreneur, I've been attending networking events for the last 25 years. In the mid-1980s, a friend and I started a women's networking group in Cincinnati that quickly grew to one of the area's largest women's groups. Between being on that organization's board of directors, belonging to several Chambers of Commerce and attending other area-wide networking events that sounded 'noteworthy' (noteworthy to me is a particular person who was either presenting, attending or a part of the organization that I wanted to meet), I had met thousands of executives, business owners and 'important' people over the years.

Once I decided to change careers yet again, I pulled out the business card of every person I'd met through networking events over the years. Using Excel, I created a detailed database that allowed me to sort by industry, where I'd met the person, area of town, etc. Then I developed my 'Client Wish List' of the top 100 people that I'd met and could either be potential clients or potential influencers (people other people listen to).

I spent a couple of days tailoring emails to each person, explaining the concept of personal cheffing and how Yummy~issimo! was going to be a trailblazer in the Cincinnati area (pretty sure of myself, huh). At the end of every email I asked either for a chance to cook for them if they needed help

with an event or to please refer me if the opportunity ever arose. At that time I was going after more of the party/corporate event and heavy appetizer party client rather than the standard 5x4.

One influencer referral led to another to another and to another... While the referrals were mostly for standard meal services, it was only a matter of months before I starting booking my favorite type of service: the heavy appy party for up to 150.

My networking advice

Speaking of networking – I'm a firm believer that when you attend an event, you don't sit with people you know. Even though it's easier and more comfortable to sit with friends, force yourself to sit at a table where you don't know anyone – or at most, just one person (but make sure he/she's on the other side of the table). You don't need to always wear a chef's coat (in fact, some people who don't cook may find it intimidating), but always have your business cards as well as some recipes (with your name, logo, website and phone number printed in a prominent location) to hand out. Everyone collects recipes, even if they don't cook. Or they'll share the recipe with a friend. Or make copies and give it to everyone at the office. Either way, your name is out there.

With my crazy cook schedule, I haven't attended a networking event (unless I'm catering it) in over four years. But if business were to get slow, I could pick up the phone and call any of several thousand people I've met over the years and hang up with a face-to-face meeting.

And more advice

Something else I've always done is to meet the friends and family of my clients. For instance, one weekly client loves to have her friends over for lunch when I'm there. That's fine with me, I always tell her that I'm more than happy to cook for a couple of extra people once a month or so. I just pick an entrée that I'm already preparing, make several extra portions of it, add a big green salad and a quick vinaigrette and some super easy dessert. This practice of encouraging 'ladies who lunch' resulted in a large catering event for over 200 ladies in October 2009 and they've already booked October 2010 for the same event.

Basic Info

Debbie Spangler
Yummy~issimo! Personal Chef Service, LLC
Cincinnati, Ohio

Email:
yummyissimo@yahoo.com

Website:
www.yummyissimo.com

Blog:
www.yummyissimo.blogspot.com

Twitter: @ChefDebbieCPC
Facebook: Chef Debbie Spangler

2009 Sharonville Small Business of the Year
2007 USPCA Marketer of the Year
USPCA Chapter: Unfortunately there isn't a Chapter in Ohio – yet! Between Alison Chapman and me, we WILL get one started.





Debbie's Dinner On The Back Deck

Appetizer:	Zucchini Blossoms
Soup:	Spiced Peach Soup
Salad:	Grapefruit & Scallop Salad
Meat:	Marinated Pork Tenderloin with Mango-Papaya Salsa
Dessert:	Grilled Sesame Pineapple Skewers

Zucchini Blossoms

Servings: 4

16 zucchini blossoms
2/3c all-purpose flour
3/4c beer
canola oil, for frying
1T sea salt
1/4c Parmesan cheese, grated

Sift flour into bowl, add beer and whisk until smooth. Refrigerate 30 minutes.

Pour oil into large skillet and heat to very hot. Dip zucchini blossoms into batter, let drip and fry in hot oil until golden brown – approximately 2-3 minutes.

Remove from oil, drain on paper towels and sprinkle with sea salt and grated Parmesan while still hot.

Spiced Peach Soup

Serves 6

Modified from: Inspire Magazine, July 2007

3 cardamom seeds
3 whole cloves
1 cinnamon stick
2 1/2 pounds peaches, peeled, pitted, chopped
2 c fresh orange juice
1/4 c fresh lime juice
1T lime zest
1/2 c honey
2 t cinnamon
8 oz vanilla yogurt
1 t ground ginger
6 peach slices, for garnish
6 mint sprigs, for garnish
ground ginger, for garnish

Place cardamom, cloves and cinnamon into cheesecloth and tie with string.

Place cheesecloth, peaches, orange juice, lime juice, lime zest, honey and cinnamon in large saucepan and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, simmer for 10 minutes or until peaches are tender.

Remove from heat and discard spice bag. Let cool.

Using immersion blender, blend until almost smooth. Stir in yogurt and ginger. Cover and chill completely.

When ready to serve, garnish soup with peach slice, mint sprig and a sprinkle of ginger. Serve chilled.

Grapefruit & Scallop Salad

Serves: 4

Modified from: Anne Burrell, Food Network

2 ruby red grapefruit
1 /3 c sweet onion, thinly sliced
1t salt – divided use
1 pinch red pepper flakes
8 jumbo dry scallops
2 T olive oil
2 garlic cloves
2c salad greens
1/4 c pecan halves, toasted

Peel the grapefruit and tear into segments.

Combine the grapefruit segments and sliced onion with a large pinch of salt and the red pepper flakes in large bowl. Set aside.

Season scallops with remaining salt. In large skillet, heat olive oil until almost smoking. Add garlic and cook until golden but not browned. Remove garlic from skillet and discard. Add scallops to pan and cook 2-3 minutes per side until caramelized on both sides.

While scallops are cooking, place salad greens on plate, top with grapefruit and onion and drizzle with half of the reserved juices. Top with cooked scallops and drizzle with remaining reserved juice. Garnish with toasted pecan halves.

Marinated Pork Tenderloin with Mango-Papaya Salsa

Serves 4

Marinade modified from: Ming Tsai, 2000

Marinade Ingredients:

1/2 c soy sauce

1/2 c honey

1/2 c red wine

2 garlic cloves, finely minced

2 T ginger, freshly grated

4 green onions, thinly sliced

24 oz pork tenderloin, trimmed

Mango-Papaya Salsa Ingredients:

1 papaya, peeled, seeded, diced

2 large mango, peeled, diced

1 red onion, finely chopped

2 small jalapeno peppers, seeded, finely chopped

1 red bell pepper, seeded, diced

1/2 c cilantro, chopped

6 limes, juiced and zested

salt and pepper, to taste

Prepare marinade by mixing together all ingredients. Place pork tenderloin into large zip-lock bag and pour marinade over pork. Seal well and refrigerate at least 4 hours.

Mix together all salsa ingredients and adjust seasonings to taste. Cover and chill at least 2 hours.

Remove pork from marinade, reserving marinade. Preheat grill to 375 and grill tenderloin until internal temperature reaches 155. Remove from heat, cover loosely with foil and allow pork to rest 10 minutes before slicing.

While pork is cooking, strain marinade into small saucepan and discard solids. Bring to boil, reduce heat and simmer until marinade is reduced by half.

Slice pork into 1/2" thick medallions, top with salsa and drizzle with reduced marinade.

Grilled Sesame Pineapple Skewers

Serves 4

4 wooden skewers

1 pineapple

non-stick cooking spray

2 T soy sauce

Soak wooden skewers in water for at least 30 minutes. Preheat grill to medium-high heat and spray well with non-stick cooking spray.

Peel, core and slice pineapple into large pieces. Thread pineapple pieces onto wooden skewers. Spray pineapple with non-stick cooking spray.

Grill pineapple, turning frequently, until grill marks appear and pineapple starts to shrink.

Remove from heat and lightly brush with soy sauce.



BACKYARD BBQ!

What sort of back yard extravaganzas do you throw? Do your parties involve BBQ, Picnics, Water Works, Brunches, and Afternoon or Evening affairs?

Melissa Holt
chefmelissa@q.com

I throw three annual backyard events and have cheffed these parties for clients and friends, especially after they hear about the personal party I am throwing or are invited to one.

1) Interactive Kabob Party: I provide all the ingredients, and do all the preparations for each kabob recipe. I ask participants to pair up and choose their favorite bob to prepare from assembly to serving. Each kabob will be grilled or be fresh and served as made. The night consists of eating, cooking and drinking. I suggest the cocktails and beverages for the client to serve.

The appetizer kabob is caprice salad: cherry tomato, fresh basil, mozzarella ball, and salt. Drizzle with reduced balsamic vinegar. Also serve prosciutto wrapped melons and crusty bread.

Entrée variety:

- Zesty Barbequed chicken meat, par cooked small red potato and summer squash
- Curried Lamb with Cherry tomatoes and red onions
- Bacon wrapped scallop with beets.
- Herb and lemon marinated shrimp with lemon edges and green onions
- Teriyaki Beef cubes with Pineapple, ginger and green pepper
- Vegetable kabob with your choice of favorite vegetables. Marinate in pesto before assembly and grill

Dessert Kabob

Grill plums, apricots, pineapple, or peaches, and serve with vanilla ice cream and bourbon caramel sauce.

2) Sunset party: Set this party with small lights and candles. Guests should arrive 30 minutes before sunset for cocktails and appetizers. Dinner is served just as the sun sets.

Appetizer

Anti pasto tray - sugared walnuts, grapes, brie cheese, stilton cheese and parmesan slivers, crackers

Mojito

- Serves 6
- 66 mint leaves
 - 6 ounces sugar water
 - 3 limes -- juiced
 - 12 fluid ounces light rum
 - 3 fluid ounces orange liqueur
 - ice cubes
 - 12 fluid ounces club soda

Juice lime into the bottom of a glass or pitcher. Add the sugar water or 1 tablespoon sugar, mint leaves and muddle and crush well. Add ice, alcohol and soda. Garnish with mint and lime.

Entrée

Grilled Spiced Pork Tenderloin with Honey Jalapeno Sauce

Side

- Couscous with mint and snow peas
- Jicama salad with mint and jalapeno

Dessert

- Elegant strawberries with toffee sauce and cream fresh

3) Gnarly Crab Party - This party is finger food only and in Colorado without the beach. It is an 'end of summer' party to enjoy all the fresh produce. The fire pit is blazing, the tables are covered in throw away clothes and everyone is given large napkins. Small water bowls are set along a long table for finger washing. Sauces for shrimp, crab and vegetables are set also in the center of the table with hunks of bread in baskets. When the crab and Frogmore stew is ready, they are all placed in the center of the table along the guest line up. Everyone digs in with fingers. Clean up is a snap. Roll it all into the cloth and throw it away.

Cocktail:

- Beeritas - 4 corona beers with 12 oz lemonade and 1 cup tequila
- White wine
- Beer

Appetizers:

- Fresh vegetable and fruit trays with dips

Entrée:

- Grilled Crab Legs with lemon butter sauce
- Frogmore Stew - shrimp, parsley buttered potato, kielbasa and corn on the cob

Dessert:

- Smores around the fire pit or Lemon Sherbert with chocolate dipped mango slices

Karry Cumberland
kcumberland@columbus.rr.com

My friends and I usually get together every Sunday and I often cook. This past Sunday I tried out a new Guacamole Salad recipe that I turned into a dinner salad for the gang.

Guacamole Salad

- Chiffonade a head of iceberg lettuce
 3 avocodos
 tomatoes, onion, green peppers (shortcut: use pico de gallo)
 blue corn tortillas and chili lime tortillas
 1/2 cup olive oil
 1/4 cup lime juice
 1/4 cup lemon juice
 1 cup turkey sausage(petite diced)
 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
 salt, adobe (or white pepper)

Make guacamole salad by chopping avocados and mixing in pico de gallo, a couple of teaspoons of lemon juice, salt and pepper to taste, then refrigerate.

Chiffonade your iceberg lettuce and chill. Petite dice. Saute turkey sausage adding in cayenne pepper, remove from heat and let stand till cooled. Arrange tortillas on a platter and pat dry lettuce. Toss 3/4 of guacamole salad with lettuce and olive oil, lime juice and rest of lemon juice, then place generously on tortillas leaving the edges free to be seen. Sprinkle sausage over lettuce, then top with the rest of guacamole salad and enjoy.

It's a light, fresh, casual salad that went over with a BANG! I served it as a starter, followed with a rack of bone-in loin chops I marinated and grilled.

Laura Finnerty hpadvantage@yahoo.com

Typically it is a BBQ type party – marinated meals, grilled veggies, fruit salads for dessert. I do not entertain as often as I would like, so hard to answer this question.

My favorites are: Lemon Coleslaw, BBQ ribs, and tuna stuffed with mesclun and grilled. Yum! Add a gin and tonic or a crisp Soave and life is good.

Fred Blackwell, Sr. f.blackwell@uniquecatering.net

I like to throw a 4th of July barbeque extravaganza and fish fry. I invite about 30 friends and family, who look forward to this event (they begin to inquire about this affair around April). I serve Coney Island hot dogs, hamburgers, BBQ ribs and chicken, my scrumptious hot wings, mixed greens, my infamous macaroni and cheese, BBQ baked beans, grilled BBQ potatoes, garden fresh pasta salad, fruit salad, frozen fruit drinks, assorted cookies, mixed berry cobbler and other desserts. My guests will arrive early in the afternoon and stay until the evening.

I also like to do small dinners on the beach along Lake Michigan. One of my favorite meals for this occasion is grilled steaks topped with a grilled portabello mushroom and wine sauce. These are served with a Dijon-dill potato salad, fresh sliced tomatoes and crusty artisan bread purchased from a local bakery.

My favorite activity is to set up my portable outdoor kitchen at any location that a client chooses and cook whatever they like. One meal that receives a lot of requests consists of BBQ pulled pork, served on a bun with the grilled BBQ potatoes and assorted salads, and desserts.

I have done corporate picnics, outdoor wedding receptions, and family reunions. I want my clients to enjoy their affair and not worry about the food. Grilled Vietnamese Chicken is an often requested and favorite recipe of mine. It is also easy to prepare.

Grilled Vietnamese Chicken

4 servings

3 garlic cloves, shredded
2 tbs. Molasses
2 tbs. Fish sauce
2 tbs. Lemon juice
1 tbs. Sesame oil
2 tsp. Pepper
4 chicken breasts



Placed shredded garlic in glass container. Add all remaining ingredients except chicken. Stir. Place 1/8 inch to 1/4 inch parallel cuts into chicken breasts. Repeat these cuts at an angle to the original for a diamond pattern. Place chicken breasts into mixture and cover. Let stand for 30-45 minutes. Heat grill. Grill chicken til done.

Smoked chicken breast, grilled salmon with cucumber-dill-sour cream dressing, Cajun fried tilapia, roasted corn with jerk seasoning

Brian Ramirez diningin@ryan.org

For business I do a lot of back yard "BBQ's" (really grilling). The most popular is grilled pizzas. 20% is a traditional Personal Chef-type party and 80% is non-traditional where the client buys the food and does most of the work, while I show up and grill the meat/vegetables. I charge an hourly rate with a minimum of 3 hours plus a 6 pack!

Beef Brisket and Texas Style Beef Brisket with Basic Texas Beef Rub.

Combine equal parts:

Salt
Ground Black pepper
Sugar
Garlic powder
Paprika
Chili powder

Coat 5-6 pound beef brisket liberally with beef rub 2-12 hours before cooking. Pre-heat grill to medium heat. Brown meat on all sides then place into baking/roasting pan just large enough to fit. Add red wine, beef broth or beer till it reaches 1/3 to 1/2 way up the side of roast. Cover tightly with foil. Place on grill using indirect heat method and braise 3 hours at 300 degrees or until very tender. Allow to rest 40-60 minutes before slicing thinly across the grain. Serve with pan juices or barbeque sauce.

You can braise in oven 3 hours at 300 degrees at this point.

Donna Barrow thehappycooker2006@yahoo.com

After 23 years of working as a teacher and administrator at a very large school district, I decided to change careers and become a Personal Chef. I wanted to say goodbye to my long-time co-workers and friends by having a fun get-together outside of the office. My boss and her husband offered their beautiful home – with a fantastic, roomy kitchen and gorgeous backyard with a poolside grill – and because it was June in the very sunny San Fernando Valley area of Los Angeles, a backyard barbeque would be perfect. One of my co-workers was from Hawaii and talked about her days and nights working as a sous chef in four and five-star restaurants on the Island and in Los Angeles and she inspired me to go with a Hawaiian-themed menu. She even offered to be my sous chef for the day!

The guests were treated to the following Hawaiian Backyard Barbeque Menu:

- Arugula Salad with Pears and Candied Pecans
- Kona-Spiced Grilled Chicken with Pineapple Salsa
- Kahlua Pork served on Sweet Hawaiian Rolls
- Hawaiian Curry Fried Rice
- Homemade Coconut Ice Cream

The entire menu was a huge success but the fan faves were the Kona Chicken and the Hawaiian Curry Rice, which I prepared using the spice blends of a popular Hawaiian chef whose amazing dishes I tasted at a cooking demonstration. Here are my adaptations of her recipes:



Kona-Spiced Grilled Chicken

Serves 4

- 1 – 1 ½ pounds of chicken breast strips
- 1 – 1 ½ tablespoons of your favorite coffee and seasoning blend (I used Kaiulani's Coffee Rub and Seasonings) plus extra for dipping sauce
- 2 teaspoons seasoned salt (optional)
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 1 bunch green onion (optional)
- 1 tablespoon water, plus extra for dipping sauce
- 3 tablespoons of brown sugar

Mix together coffee and seasoning blend with salt to taste (if using), oil and water to form a paste. Rub over rinsed and dried chicken strips and let marinate for 30 minutes or more.

While chicken is marinating, make a dipping sauce by mixing coffee and seasoning blend, sugar, and as much water as needed to dissolve in a small pot on the stove over medium-high heat. Bring to boil, lower heat, and cook until begins to thicken. Add more water (or other liquid such as orange or pineapple juice) until desired consistency is reached.

Grill chicken strips on hot grill with green onions until cooked through. Be careful not to overcook!

Hawaiian Curry Fried Rice

Serves 4-6

- 1/3 cup of olive oil
- 2 tablespoons (or more to taste) of your favorite curry seasoning blend (I used Kaiulani's Exotic Curry Medium)
- 2 tablespoons of minced garlic
- 1/3 cup of chopped cilantro leaves and stems
- 4 cups of cooked and cooled long grain rice (basmati or jasmine works well)
- A handful of sweetened, dried cranberries
- 1/3 bunch of green onions, sliced (green and white parts)
- 1/3 cup of diced fresh pineapple (optional)
- ½ cups of toasted sliced almonds or pine nuts (optional)



Heat olive oil in a large sauté pan. When heated add spices, garlic, cilantro, cranberries and onions to the pan and cook until spices all

completely dissolved and garlic is fragrant.

Add rice and stir gently until coated well with seasonings (rice should be golden yellow). Add pineapples and turn off heat. Top with nuts.

Kaiulani Spices and Recipes can be found at <http://kaiulanispices.com/default.asp>

Ken Hulme thekiltedcook@mindspring.com

In the Venice/Gulf Coast part of Florida, it's all about Pool Parties or Lanai Parties with tropical themes and cuisine. Both brunch and evening affairs are popular. My Basil-Mango Shrimp Cocktails are always in demand. Appetizers like Jicama con Limon (cubes of jicama marinated in lime juice and dusted with chile powder), and grilled or raw tropical fruit kebabs are popular. So is Poke, the Hawaii' an version of French Polynesian Poisson Cru (fine diced raw tuna with green onion and jicama or water chestnut dice, soy sauce and minced ginger). Yogurt or lemon-lime soda based fruit soups are popular as are a variety of fish dishes like Pescado Cubano (Sea bass or other white fish cooked in white wine with green olives, cilantro, tomatoes, onion and a pinch of red pepper flakes.

Anytime of year, my go-to party recipe is a Mixed Seafood & Andouille Paella with bell peppers, artichoke hearts, onion and tomato for the vegetables. I can feed a lot of people for not much money, and do it in style. See attached photo.

Seafood & Andouille Paella

With garlic baguette and a side salad it serves 8 or more. Preparation time: 60 minutes

- 1/4 cup Olive Oil
- 1 lb Frozen Mixed Seafood (not thawed)
- 1/2 lb Shrimp, 21-30 size or larger, peeled
- 1/2 lb Scallops
- 1/2 lb Andouille Sausage cut into 1/4" coins, then quartered
- 1 large Onion, chopped
- 1 can Whole Tomatoes, large, with liquid
- 1 can Artichoke Hearts, 14-ounce, with liquid
- 1 Green Bell Pepper, chopped
- 1 Red Bell Pepper, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1-1/2 cups rice
- 1 can Chicken broth
- 1/4 teaspoon saffron
- Salt and pepper to taste



Heat a splash of olive oil in a paella pan or wide deep skillet, to medium high. Add the andouille and sauté until lightly browned. Remove.

Add a bit more oil, if necessary, and cook the onion and garlic until transparent. Add the rice, toss with the onion, and cook for 5 minutes until lightly browned. Return the andouille, and add tomatoes, broth, saffron, salt, and peppers. Reduce heat to medium. Cover and cook for 10 minutes. Cut up the tomatoes in the pan.

Add the artichoke hearts and seafood and cook, covered, 15-20 minutes, scraping the bottom to prevent sticking, until the liquids are mostly absorbed and the rice is tender.

Jacqui Bushee
jbushee@comcast.net

I have done BBQ's and do one every 4th of July. I am not fond of these events. I prefer upscale dinner parties with plating. Thinking of contracting out for things like steaming lobsters, clams. I can handle grilling meats, but prefer not to. Love doing salads and grilled veggies.

Andrea Flores
andrea@thedreamgourmet.com

Along with working as a personal chef under the name of the Dream Gourmet, I also work as an artist. My medium is acrylic and pastels on multi-surfaces. In the past year, I have put together a group that was named Artistic Culinary Infusions. The purpose of this group is to bring together chefs, artists and musicians as well as any business owner that is a patron of such arts. Our main goal is to raise funds to help the creative school programs in our community. We accomplish this by developing shows that create an environment outside of the norm. We create a theme and the show revolves around that theme. Each participant is to create art in their medium; chef's make an appetizer that uses the ingredients found in the theme which is visually appealing as well as appetizing. The idea is to take the audience outside of their comfort zone by tantalizing each one of our senses and thus experience all that life has to offer without overtaking one particular sense.

Our last show was May 1, 2010. We call it: 'creoletivity ~ a highly seasoned expression of southern Louisiana.

Quinoa Stuffed Bell Peppers

Large Green Bell Peppers filled with a Quinoa-Spinach Mixture containing Onions, Mushrooms, Sun-dried Tomatoes and Parmesan Cheese topped with a mild Tomato Sauce

Servings: 4

4 large green bell peppers
1 tablespoon(s) butter
1/2 cup(s) green onion, minced
1 garlic clove, minced
1/4 pound(s) mushroom, diced
1/2 pound(s) spinach, frozen
1 cup(s) quinoa
8 sun-dried tomatoes
1 large egg, slightly beaten
1/8 dash(es) parsley, fresh
1/4 cup(s) Parmesan cheese, grated
salt and pepper, to taste
2 cup(s) tomato sauce
1/2 cup(s) chicken stock

Directions:

Prepare Peppers: Cut off stems and hollow out seeds and membranes; discard.

Parboil peppers for 5 minutes in a large saucepan of boiling water. Remove and cool.

In a large skillet, over medium heat, saute onions, mushrooms and garlic in the butter for 10 minutes. Reduce heat if onions threaten to brown too much. Heat 2 cups of broth to a boil in a medium sized sauce pan. Once broth has reached a boil dump in the Quinoa and sundried tomatoes. Cover and bring flame down to simmer for 12 minutes. Mix vegetable mixture with quinoa, beaten eggs, parsley, and Parmesan cheese, and season to taste

with salt and pepper. Stuff peppers with mixture. Place in containers. Mix the tomato sauce or puree with the chicken broth and pour over peppers.

Wrap and store in the freezer.

Reheating instructions:

Cover and bake in preheated 350 oven for 30 minutes. Remove from oven and let cool. Serve, enjoy.

Thom Bobick
thom@simpletosuperb.com

I did a wedding reception that involved three themes. Western, which featured brisket, baked beans, cole slaw and corn bread Chinese which featured two types of stir fry, egg rolls Italian which featured pasta, two sauces, chicken or sausage and a salad bar

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Mary Jane Curry
maryjanecurry@gmail.com

Shrimp Spring Rolls with Peanut Satay

- 1 package rice paper wrappers
- 1 1/2 cups shredded carrots
- 1 1/2 cups shredded napa cabbage
- 1 cup bean sprouts
- 1 bunch of green onions diced
- 1/2 lb cooked cleaned shrimp diced, tails off

Prep all vegetables and organize the ingredients for easy access for making the spring rolls.

Place a handi wipe or some paper towels on the counter where you will be rolling the spring rolls. Put 1/2" of water in the bottom of a bowl or pan that is large enough for the rice paper wrapper to lay completely flat. Soak the rice paper wrappers 1 at a time for approximately 1 1/2 - 2 minutes until soft. Place the wrapper on the paper towel and pat it dry. Add about 1/3 cup of the above combined ingredients onto the lower third of the rice paper wrapper. Fold and roll burrito style. Use caution to keep a tight roll initially and as you continue in order to get a tight wrap. The wrapper will self seal.

Cut on the diagonal at the mid point of the spring roll if desired to make adding the delicious peanut dressing easier.

Peanut Dressing

- 1 cup creamy peanut butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 1/2 cups water
- 6 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 cup rice wine vinegar
- 1 1/2 teaspoons cayenne pepper

Mix all ingredients together in a blender until smooth. Serve on the side with the spring rolls.

Mud Cake

300 degrees 1 - 1 1/2 hours

- 1 cup unsalted butter
- 7 ounces dark chocolate
- 1 tablespoon instant coffee
- 1 1/3 cups water
- 1 1/2 cups self rising flour
- 1 cups fine caster sugar
- 1/4 cup dutch cocoa
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Place butter, dark chocolate, instant coffee and water in a saucepan. Cook over medium heat until chocolate melts. Take off heat and cool for 15 minutes then place mixture into a stand mixer.

Add sugar and combine until sugar is dissolved. Add the other ingredients in the order listed, until all ingredients combined.

Pour mixture into pan sprayed with cooking spray and lined with

parchment paper on the bottom. Place in the center rack of the oven. Bake until knife inserted in the middle comes out clean. Cool the cake completely in the pan. This cake is dense and able to be carved for specialty cakes, like the Super Bowl cake pictured below.

Italian Meringue Buttercream

- 1 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup water
- 5 egg whites (I use Trader Joe's pasteurized)
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 2 cups (4 sticks) unsalted butter
- 1 teaspoon flavoring

Boil 1 cup sugar with 1/4 cup water over medium heat to 245 degrees. While the sugar is coming up to temperature, place the egg whites in a stand mixer and start the mixer on low until foamy then increase to high until soft peaks form.

Add the 1/4 cup sugar (not added to the saucepan), beat in gradually. When egg whites form stiff peaks, turn off mixer until the boiled sugar mixture has reached the 245 degrees.

Add the hot sugar mixture in a stream into the egg whites while mixer is on and beat until the outside of the mixing bowl is room temperature, approximately 7-10 minutes. Beat in unsalted butter a tablespoon at a time.

Frosting will deflate some and may get a cottage cheese-like consistency... just keep beating until it comes back together. Add flavoring. Frost cake as desired.

Note: Make sure that the bowl, mixer, beaters, spatula etc. are all grease free prior to starting the meringue. If questionable, rinse your items with vodka after washing in soap and water.





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We had a great time at last year's event and are looking forward to bringing our soaps to you in person again this year! We will also be presenting an interactive demonstration on Creating Lotions using items typically found in your pantry! Be sure to check the conference website for details and to sign up!



A Look into the Future!



Personal Chef Magazine asked you:

Where do you see your business in two, five, or 10 years?

What changes do you see coming down the road?

Do you believe you will restructure to offer more or less different types of services?

Will you offer: Small event catering? Cooking lessons? Dinner parties? Shopping lessons? Core dinner service?

Melissa Holt **chefmelissa@q.com**

Business is going really well for me. I followed all of the marketing techniques the Culinary Business Academy and the USPCA teaches us and they really do work! And, the support on the message board is great. Thank you.

Since officially starting in October of 2009, I have four regular clients and one sitting on the fence. I have had dinner parties and taught cooking classes. People do want more cooking classes. I have had one article written about me free of cost due to paper hearing about me. And now I was offered a part time job at a high end restaurant preparing desserts and pastries for Sunday Brunch.

Looking into the future, I would suggest to any chefs struggling, that they have to feel the fear and get out there everyday with your chef coat on and promote yourself. That is the hardest part - promoting yourself. You are a personal chef and you have to act like a professional and talk, talk, talk about it. I love the PC work and my clients. I am making more money than working for a restaurant, but the restaurant business is giving me great experience by working with two amazing chefs and learning plating and recipes.

Where do I see my business in two years? Thriving - I will have a client for four days out of the week and a dinner party every weekend. Personal cheffing will be my only income. Currently, with my hours of work at the restaurant, I work 24 hours a week. In five to 10 years I will have enough business to share the success with PCs just starting out and help them get their personal business going. I will write a cook book and teach many more classes. I will have gained long term relationships with my clients and can hire help to prep and wash the dishes!!

Karry Cumberland **kcumberland@columbus.rr.com**

I see my business getting off the ground in two yrs and in five, I'd like to be showing positive growth into having a small store front where my clients can pick up quality prepared foods. My catering obligations sometimes prevent me from cooking in their homes and missing a cook day.

Briana Nervig **thechef@mygreencuisine.com**

Two years, five years, and ten years: To be honest, I am pleased with where my business is today. I am bringing in a nice income, but still have time to focus on my home and family, which is really important to me. But if I were to change anything it would be to expand my less-frequent (think 1x/month or every six weeks) client-base and have at least 6-8 of these types of clients.

I believe an increasing amount of people will begin to truly care about the types of food they put in their bodies, where it came from, and how it got on their plate.

I enjoy small event catering. I enjoy the variety and usually make great money. I'd like to do about eight events this year and have made that a 2010 goal.

I don't know if I'll restructure, necessarily, to obtain more cooking classes, but I would enjoy doing a few more than I currently do. I don't do a lot of in-home classes, but I definitely prefer them to the classes I provide in the commercial setting: I used to teach classes about once a month at our local Whole Foods, until they changed their structure. They have recently made some more changes and have brought the cooking school back. So, since I got the word, I have been weighing the pros and cons of going back to teach regularly.

I'd like to do more Dinner Parties. I love plating food and bringing the restaurant into a client's home. I'm striving to do a dinner party about once every two months or so.

Laura Finnerty **hpadvantage@yahoo.com**

I do see things starting to pick up. In two years I truly hope to be cooking 3-4 times a week consistently. If not, I will be in another business. In five years, I hope to be turning business away or booking months out. Ten years? I really don't know....successful and still cooking I hope.

I see more home entertaining, more special diet needs and more savvy customers. People are doing a little more cooking than they used to, and learning more about foods that are available, interested in new flavors and ingredients. I also see more need in the senior markets as independent seniors grow in numbers.

Diversity allows me to cook for more customers and meet needs that I can fulfill. I am very open and flexible to the types of services I offer - my message is always ask me - if I can do it, I will. If not I am happy to help you find someone who can do that. I also see the potential for more kids cooking - teaching them.

Fred Blackwell, Sr.
f.blackwell@uniquecatering.net

In two years I plan to take my business on the road in a catering truck. In five years I would like to specialize in personal cheffing for senior citizens. In ten years I would like to be doing dinner shows.

As the senior citizen population increases with the retirement of the baby boomers, I see my business growing among this group. Meeting the dietary needs of this group will require gaining knowledge in their diet needs and developing tastefully satisfying meals.

I am restructuring my business to include a catering truck to be used to provide food service for small manufacturing sites and office parks. This truck will have a full kitchen. The facilities in the truck also allow for the offering of services for the events mentioned above.

Brian Ramirez
diningin@wyan.org

More teaching and writing. Ten years: retire!

Lots of changes are coming down the road - Don't get me started ;)

Based on the economy, I see small event catering, cooking lessons and dinner parties increasing.

Ken Holms, The Kilted Cook
thekiltedcook@mindspring.com

Offshore where my money will go farther!

More of all of the above listed variety, plus anything else I can think of. It's a mercenary thing. The more I offer, the more things I can get paid for!

Jacqui Bushee
jbushee@comcast.net

Dinner parties are not coming in right now.....stability with weekly clients is my mainstay. I would like to do more instructional cooking and nutrition classes to show people who prefer or have to cook and can't afford a PC, how to make the right choices in the grocery store, and put together nutritional meals with money saving tips.

Andrea Flores
andrea@thedreamgourmet.com

The possibilities are unlimited. I see exploring and developing new frontiers. My main intention is to bring good food, good health and good times to people. I do this not only in the food I prepare, but also in the art I create. I see my business expanding in directions where the two meld and it inspires people.

As for expansion, so far, I have been alone in my business. I am starting to bring one more person in to make this happen. Shopping lessons are a good idea. I am open to all ideas. I am interested in making it easier for people to find a balance.

Catherine Amatangelo-Alfaro
catherine@personalchefcatherine.com

I see eventually working out of a commercial kitchen and continuing to do special dietary menus. In the coming years, I am going to become limited in how many clients I can service by only going to their house.

I have already done dinner parties and small events and I am getting into cooking lessons and have done a few. I see the interactive dinner party service growing, I did a trade show recently and cooking lessons and interactive dinner parties were services that were talked about a lot. I am also offering through my website now, a special that I will offer a shopping and a specializing ingredient(s) lesson. I see my business offering a variety of services, not just one exclusively for the near future.

Chef Annise Jackson
chefannise@ciaochow.net

I envision more cooking lessons and dinner parties. I prefer small and intimate dinner parties. I will continue the core service but I will use the client's cookware...or have them buy some. Schleppling too hard on the body especially with stairs

Thom Bobick
thom@simpletosuperb.com

I don't receive many inquires for traditional PC services, mostly one off services like dinner parties. I will offer more small event catering, cooking lessons as well as the dinner parties I currently cook.



Garbo's European Food Tour: Part II, Paris

by Chef Garbo

Paris is very seductive. How can one not fall in love with her at first sight? Its history is rich, the people are stylish, its architecture distinctive, artists are drawn to it and the cuisine is heaven on earth. There is an ethereal quality about Paris where beauty and elegance are preferred over purpose and practicality.

With this second installment of my European Food Tour I can assure you that there was nothing practical about my food experience in this alluring city. It was pure indulgence in the glorious culinary realm for which Paris is famous. I'm talking about the appreciation of food as a high art form better known as *haute cuisine*.

My friend Renée Coker knows Paris like the back of her hand and has traveled there many times in recent years. When we compared notes on where to dine, I found that her recommendations were right on the money... literally. As mentioned in my first report on Florence, we chose to make our lunch meals the main event of the day so we could indulge ourselves with rich and elaborate meals and walk it off during the afternoon... and all this without busting our budget!

Goumard Restaurant www.goumard.com

Our first stop was the Goumard Restaurant. This restaurant was founded in 1872 and is loaded with deep sea charm. It features original oak woodwork, with dazzling Lalique chandeliers and brilliant crystal fish floating in faux glass aquariums and other lighting designs that give this establishment its unique aquatic style. Goumard specializes in seafood prepared purely and simply and is flown in daily from Brittany. The purist philosophy held by the owner is that "everything comes from the sea" and is so entrenched that entrées other than fish are scarce on the menu. We started with deep-fried frog legs and escargot in garlic parsley butter sauce, two appetizers that I have never prepared and are not typical offerings on American menus. Both were simple and delicious. I finished the meal with grilled John Dory on a bed of ratatouille. Renée's entrée was served on a beautiful rectangular white plate featuring salt rock cod with poached white turnips in a white cream sauce and a sprinkling of black caviar. Goumard is considered one of the finest seafood restaurants in Paris so the next time you're craving Mediterranean influenced seafood dishes with subtle and delicate sauces, Goumard will surely be the catch of the day!



Le Soufflé www.lesouffle.fr

If you only have a few days in Paris like we did, a visit to Le Soufflé is a must! Le Soufflé, which is situated in the 1st arrondissement, is just a 10 minute walk from the Louvre and is nestled between Place Vendôme and Metro Concorde. According to a food blog I read, the famous French impressionist, Claude Monet, used to study the master painters on display at the Louvre then take his noon day meal at Le Soufflé. There is nothing more quintessentially French than the famed soufflé. This dish is frequently served as a dessert, but at this fine establishment, the savory soufflés are abundant. Renée ordered the wild mushroom soufflé with cheese sauce and I opted for the dessert soufflé. I started with the Margret de Canard (Roast Duck) with an orange reduction sauce. The plating was lovely featuring thinly sliced medallions of duck breast fanned out to resemble feathers with colorful orange peel swirls scattered about. There was even a mini cheese soufflé included. When the dessert soufflé was presented the waiter quickly plunged a spoon into the top and poured warm chocolate syrup in the center. The highly theatrical delivery and performance at table side was quite unexpected and grand.

Le Meurice Hotel - Le Pièce de Résistance for Haute Cuisine

www.lemeurice.com

And now for the pièce de résistance... I will venture into what I would describe as the most defining moment in my dining career which took place at Le Meurice Hotel in the heart of Paris. We all know the term haute cuisine but do we truly know what it means, or more importantly, have we ever had the opportunity to experience it in the cradle of its origins? Haute cuisine means "high cuisine" and began in the 17th century by a famous chef named La Varenne who wrote a book in which he defines the standards for pastries and desserts. During the latter part of the 18th to 19th century a major chef named Marie-Antoine Carême entered the scene and he is credited with creating the mother sauces which made the foundation for his style of cooking. These sauces included espagnole, velouté and béchamel. It was during this period that the soufflé was born too. During the late 19th century and early 20th century haute cuisine as we know it today was codified and modernized by none other than the major chef of the time, George Auguste Escoffier. He created what is popularly known today as the brigade system where a professional kitchen is divided into five stations. These stations include garde manger (prepared cold dishes), the entremetier (prepared soups, vegetables & other dishes not involving meat & fish), the rôtiisseur (prepared roasts, grilled and fried dishes), the saucier (prepared sauces) and the pâtissier (prepared pastry items).

George Auguste Escoffier's influence was so great that many Grand Hotels were opened around his style of cooking. Le Meurice Hotel is a product of this period dating back to 1835 and has long been considered the prized jewel among the French palace hotels. Located directly across from les Jardin des Tuileries, Le Meurice is a magical place with splendid architectural touches where one is treated like royalty. Famous guests include Queen Victoria, the King of Spain, Alphonse XIII, King George VI and the Grand Duchess of Russia. The most outrageous and loved guest among the hotel staff was Salvador Dali who stayed there one month every year. He's famous for his surreal requests like ordering flies from the Tuileries or asking that a horse be delivered to his room. He was even known to dangle fish off a fishing line from his hotel room balcony onto the passers by below.



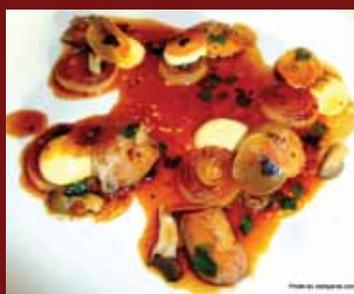
Dining at Le Maurice Restaurant is otherworldly. The décor is regal with a painted mural ceiling, shimmering crystal chandeliers, antique gold gilt beveled mirrors and gigantic canvases hung on the walls which are all reminiscent of the magnificent Napoleon Salon in the Louvre. The Chef de Cuisine, Yannik Alléno, fashioned the most memorable meal of my life. He helped Le Meurice to capture 2 Michelin stars starting from zero in one year which is a first in the history of the Red Michelin Guide. At age 38, he was inducted into the elite circle of the world's greatest chefs when he received his third star for his gastronomic genius. He is also a 1st place recipient of the Auguste Escoffier International Prize, Nice 2008.

The culinary creations of Yannik Alléno are poetic magic. As the leader of a brigade of 74, this visionary chef has ambitions of reinventing haute cuisine and dreams of taking the hotel's restaurant to new heights

in it's already world renown reputation. Judging from our lunch I can say he's near the summit. Our meal was breathtaking. It started with a selection of bread and a checker-board square of foie gras pate and butter that was very appealing. Then an amuse bouche of custard, green aspic and foam with a black wafer was served followed by another amuse bouche of filet of soul with a caramelized cream sauce. Both had ingenious presentations. There were two entrées as well. The first was an ensemble of chicken pate shaped like robin eggs atop of nest of puff pastry and when sliced open there were more chicken pieces inside with a rich cream sauce. The chicken had a wonderful farm fresh and mild gamey flavor that you don't get in the States. The second entrée was a plate of small kidney medallions with caramelized onions and slivered mushrooms in a reduction sauce. Both were visual masterpieces! Have you ever had a pre-dessert? Well we did and it was delightful. The first plate featured a chocolate pecan shell filled with chocolate ganache with a glazed pecan on top. There was a square pink marshmallow bon-bon with gold leaf on the sides, a chocolate macaroon and a variation on a profiterole gilded in gold leaf. The second dessert was a tiramisu-like jelly roll sponge cake encircled with a thin ring of sugar glass topped with espresso cream sauce. Oh, did I mention that there was a petite rum baba served in addition to the two desserts? And as if this wasn't enough, in came the traditional cheese plate. Make that a long gorgeous marble table with golden legs topped with an impressive array of French cheeses, dried fruits and grapes. A simply wonderful way to end an exceptional dining experience. Everything right down to the puff pastry is made fresh daily on the premises!



Le Meruice Restaurant
Left to Right: Chef Garbo, Chef Yannik Alléno & Renée Coker



Dinner at Le Meruice will set you back financially. But if you desire an opulent, extraordinary and reasonably priced eight course afternoon meal (\$100 excluding wine) then lunch is the way to go. Look no further than Le Meurice Restaurant as you will experience haute cuisine at its finest! And in the famous European tradition you will be personally welcomed by Chef Yannik Alléno himself!

What a perfect ending to a marvelous culinary tour de force of both Florence and Paris.

(Read Part I of Garbo's European Food Tour in the previous issue.)

Personal Chef Magazine asked you:
**Does Food-TV inspire your clients to ask for certain recipes or types of foods?
What do you think the 2011 food trend should be?**

Melissa Holt,
chefmelissa@q.com

My clients may ask if I watch a show, but I have never been asked to cook anything from the shows. My clients are interested in trying new foods and want fresh healthy foods. I am not sure if they know what trendy foods are. I introduce them to new foods and get their comments.

Karry Cumberland,
kcumberland@columbus.rr.com

I'm just starting so a few clients do watch food tv, but have not mentioned the expected trend in food.

Briana Nervig,
thechef@mygreencuisine.com

Leeks and Fennel would be my choice for the next food trend. They are highly under-rated in the US, so are always ridiculously over-priced. In addition, the stores expect me to pay for long fennel stalks and dark green leek tops that I can't use. I actually get the produce guys to cut my leeks and fennel down to edible size for me so I don't waste my client's money on compost. I'm thinking if they were the next big thing, then there would be more demand, and the cost would go down.

Laura Finnerty,
hpadvantage@yahoo.com

A lot of my clients like and watch Food Network, but I have not had specific requests or comments from this. Interesting offering though - If you saw a recipe on FN - I can make it for you....hmmmm.

Make organic produce the next food trend, it is showing up more and more - the whole farm to table movement....eating local. I could see more vegetarian requests as well. Add to that, South American food. It is clean, fresh, flavorful and relatively healthy. Lot's of grilled meats - great for summer. Plus fish, simple vegetables, and great red wine!

Fred Blackwell, Sr.,
f.blackwell@uniquecatering.net

Food trends for 2011 will focus on eating more fresh fruits and vegetables in a raw state. Food will be prepared using as little processing as possible. The consumption of fish and chicken will increase. The hottest new trend in foods would be grilling: meats, vegetables



Brian Ramirez,
diningin@wyan.org

What do you think the food trend of 2011 will be?
Increased cost. People learning to cook. Home grown foods would be my choice for 2011.

Ken Holms, The Kilted Cook,
thekiltedcook@mindspring.com

They do now, but not until my Spicy Shrimp & Pork Meatballs appeared on Ultimate Recipe Showdown

Less than half the time I get a request or comment about food tv, most are conservative older clients. Although, I have had several requests to make my Spicy Shrimp & Pork Meatballs from Ultimate Recipe Showdown!

I believe the next food movement may be Indonesian/Malaysian. I'd like to see Starfruit as the trendy food item. It's the most ignored America-grown fruit.

Jacqui Bushee, jbushee@comcast.net

My clients want "comfort food" ie. casseroles, pasta dishes, roasted dishes. Not into trendy foods and doubt if they watch Food Network, they are too busy working and taking care of family. There are few programs on the Food Network that really interest me. My favorites are Ina Garten, Ellie Krieger and Alton Brown.

Andrea Flores,
andrea@thedreamgourmet.com

Yes, my clients love food TV, but have not asked for anything out of the norm.

Healthy, wholesome and good food is my choice for 2011 trend. Healthy cuisine. Just because it is healthy and nutritious does not mean that it has to be bland, bad or a let-down.

Annise Jackson,
chefannise@ciaochow.net

My clients are completely affected by food TV. I get asked about my feelings on Rachel Ray frequently.



Culinary Tour, Anyone?

The USPCA is looking at several tours to various countries such as Mexico, China, Thailand and India. They would be offered to the members at a very low cost. All inclusive tours - air, transportation, hotel and some food along with the learning experience at a cooking school (may be tax deductible). Where would you like to go?

Melissa Holt
chefmelissa@q.com

Cooking Tours would be so cool. What a great idea to travel and cook with other personal chefs. USA destinations would be affordable and even if local Chapters could set one up a year for their state would be a good idea. Destination travel - Napa valley California, Mexico, Italy, France, England, Argentina

Karry Cumberland
kcumberland@columbus.rr.com

I would love to tour, I think it would be a great experience and the wealth of knowledge that could be taken away from the different cultures and the ability to give back. I would have to say I'd like to see: Italy, Australia, or England.

Laura Finnerty
hpadvantage@yahoo.com

Mexico, Italy, France maybe, Venezuela, Spain, Ireland and even California Sonoma area

Fred Blackwell, Sr.
f.blackwell@uniquecatering.net

France, Kenya

Brian Ramirez
diningin@wyan.org

Australia

Donna Barrow
thehappycooker2006@yahoo.com

I would definitely vote "Paris" for a culinary vacation. That is my dream trip.

Also, I would love to take a culinary tour through Italy!!!

Andrea Flores
andrea@thedreamgourmet.com

Italy is my first choice

Catherine Amatangelo-Alfaro
catherine@personalchefcatherine.com

Yes, I would love it! I would love a vacation/working tour of: Thailand, Italy, India, Mexico, Australia

Chef Annise Jackson
chefannise@ciaochow.net

Mexico - definitely, China - maybe, Italy - definitely, Spain, safer than Mexico, the Yucatan Peninsula, Brazil, Argentina, Chile (where all our out-of-season produce comes from), Greece

Dory Solomon
dsolomon002@san.rr.com

Mexico, China, Thailand, India, Italy, France

Thom Bobick
thom@simpletosuperb.com

Mexico, China, Italy

What is **FUSION COOKING** to YOU?

Melissa Holt
chefmelissa@q.com

FUSION - Crazy new word with old concept. America is always fusing cuisines together from all over the world and making it American. No favorites here - I like the traditional old world Italian, French and Mediterranean food.

Briana Nervig
thechef@mygreencuisine.com

To me Fusion Cuisine is melding seemingly different flavors into one harmonious result!

I'm all about chocolate with unique flavors right now. I recently had a chocolate bar with curry and coconut and it was outstanding!

But, if I'm fusing flavors at home, my favorite combos are: Any sort of Fruit (my favorite combo is strawberry, peach, and mango) with Vanilla-Black Pepper Cream and Basil. My all-time favorite: Chocolate-Covered Bacon! I've made it with both milk and dark. The milk chocolate was a little too sweet for me, but the dark is just right. I encourage anyone who loves bacon, and loves chocolate, to try it.

Grilled Salmon with Blackberry Butter Sauce

Nothing reminds me of home as much as blackberries. When I moved to Colorado I was blown away that I had to pay top-dollar for mediocre blackberries that seldom taste like the real thing. I was used to going out to my backyard and picking them, still warm from the sun. They grew wild, so abundantly that we actually would cut or burn the bushes to the ground on a regular basis, or else they would literally take over everything! If you can, try to get blackberries from the NW coast. You will not be sorry.



Serves 4

2 tbsp minced shallot
½ tsp ginger, minced
1 clove garlic, minced
2 tsp tamari
3 tbsp balsamic vinegar
1 tbsp rice vinegar, unseasoned
2/3 cup fresh or frozen blackberries
1/4 cup white wine

1 tbsp port
1/8 tsp sesame oil
13 tbsp cold butter; cut in pieces

4 – 7 oz salmon filets
Oil, for brushing salmon
Salt and pepper, to taste
Chopped chives and/or fresh blackberries, for garnish

Sauce:

Place shallots, ginger, garlic, tamari, balsamic vinegar, and blackberries in a saucepan. Bring to boil, then reduce heat and simmer until liquid in pot is reduced to about 1 tbsp, stirring frequently. Watch carefully so it doesn't burn or scorch.

Add the white wine and reduce again to approximately 1 tbsp liquid. Add port and sesame oil and cook until mixture is syrupy, about 2-3 minutes. Lower heat and gradually add the butter, whisking constantly. Once all butter has been incorporated, turn off heat and strain into a small bowl. Season sauce to taste with salt and pepper, cover sauce, and place in a warm area.

*To keep the butter from separating, the sauce must be kept warm, but not hot.

Salmon:

Brush salmon with oil. Season salmon filets with salt and pepper. Pre-heat the grill to high. Grill salmon until just cooked through, about 3-5 minutes per side, depending on thickness. Transfer to a plate to rest.

To serve:

Ladle sauce onto each of 4 plates. Place 1 salmon filet atop sauce on each plate. Knap with more sauce and garnish with chopped chives and fresh blackberries. Pass extra sauce in a boat.

*For an even greater NW flair, try planking the salmon on cedar. Delicious!

Chinese Duck Confit

This recipe was adapted from Ken Hom Travels with a Hot Wok. Duck confit may seem laborious but it's really just more about waiting patiently. The actual work itself is minimal.

Serves 6

6 fresh or frozen whole duck legs (thigh and drumstick), about 3 lbs total
4 oz sea salt
8 garlic cloves, left whole but lightly crushed
8 fresh ginger slices
6 star anise
3 cinnamon sticks
2 tbsp Sichuan peppercorns, roasted
9 c (approx) duck fat

Place the duck legs in a baking dish and sprinkle liberally on both sides with salt. Cover duck with a towel and refrigerate for 24-48 hrs. Remove from fridge and brush off salt from duck. Place pieces in a heavy, lidded pot, like a Dutch Oven.

Pre-heat the oven to 200F.

Heat duck fat with spices in a medium-sized pot, until completely melted. Pour duck fat and spices over duck until legs are completely submerged. Cook duck, submerged in fat, until meat is very tender and has pulled away from the bone, anywhere from 2-5 hrs, depending on the size of duck legs and the type of pot used.

Let duck cool slightly in the fat so the juices settle at the bottom of the pot. Transfer duck legs to a container (I prefer glass or porcelain). Spoon warm fat over the top of the legs to cover completely, leaving duck juices behind. Cool duck on a rack, adding more fat as it congeals and contracts, if necessary. Most important is to assure duck is completely sealed under fat. Duck confit will keep like this for at least 2 months.

To serve, shred meat and add to dishes, or sear legs in a hot frying pan until crisp.

Laura Finnerty hpadvantage@yahoo.com

Fusion to me is the combination of two cultures into one dish - i.e. Spanish and Asian, such as an Asian flavored ravioli, or something along this line. I am sure many of my dishes have some fusion elements but can not pick one right now to offer as a concrete example.

Donna Barrow thehappycooker2006@yahoo.com

California Creole Cuisine:
Where NOLA meets LS

My father's folks moved from New Orleans, Louisiana when he was a child and even though I was born and raised in Los Angeles, California, I grew up eating file gumbo with blue crabs, collard greens with spicy cha-cha relish, oyster dressing, shrimp balls, and cornmeal-cruste fried fish. But being a Cal Gal, I also loved eating tacos with guacamole made with avocados from our own tree, sweet, sticky figs straight from the backyard, homemade desserts and sauces from the fruits of the neighborhood peach, orange and lemon trees, and steamed artichokes from Castroville, the artichoke capital of the world. As I grew into adulthood, I learned to appreciate the numerous wine varietals of the Santa Barbara, Napa and Sonoma valleys and how to pair them with the fresh seafood off San Francisco coast.



When it was time to define a personal culinary point of view, it was very natural for me to marry my two childhood loves of Creole and California cuisines. My West Coast family did not have a problem with this concept, particularly because "California has been called the first fusion cuisine

with its melting-pot culture of Mexican to the south, Asian to the north and international influence in the rest of the state", according to Chef Sara Moulton. However, the Crescent City clan – ostensibly the owners of the Creole food concept – were at best, confused. A clear definition was needed.

To me, California Creole Cuisine takes the spices, love and pride of New Orleans food and fuses it with the natural goodness and freshness of California as well as the healthy lifestyles its residents. My signature dish is a California Jambalaya which uses a spicy Creole seasoning blend in tomato rice dish but trades chicken stock, chicken and andouille sausage for homemade vegetable broth and fresh seasonal veggies like mushrooms, eggplant, artichokes and squashes. I also prepare a Shrimp and Sausage Cheesecake made with reduced fat cream cheese and a specially-made chicken and bay shrimp sausage. The repertoire would not be complete without a good California red so I make a reduction with pinot noir, figs and red pepper flakes and drizzle it over a brie baked with a macadamia nut crust.

For me, this fusion is not confusing at all. It just tastes like home.

Chef Donna's California Jambalaya Recipe

Serves 10-12

½ cup olive oil, divided
Choice of 3-4 fresh seasonal vegetables, cut into large dices to total about 3 pounds such as mushrooms eggplant, zucchini, yellow squash, steamed artichoke hearts and/or bottoms (can use frozen)
4-5 tablespoons of your favorite Creole or Cajun seasoning, divided (I make my own blend with much less salt than retail blends)
3 cups diced onions
1 ½ cups diced celery
1 ½ cups diced green bell pepper
Kosher salt or sea salt to taste
1-2 tablespoons minced fresh garlic
2 heaping tablespoons tomato paste
5 cups vegetable broth
2 tablespoons low-salt onion dip mix (I use Penzey's)
4 cups long grain rice
1 bunch chopped green onions

In a large Dutch oven, heat half of the oil over medium heat. Add vegetables, starting with the densest, and sauté with half of the seasoning blend until completely coated and just heated through, about 3-4 minutes. Transfer vegetables to a plate and cover to keep warm.

In the same pot, heat remaining oil and then sauté onions, celery and green bell peppers with remaining seasoning blend until onions are translucent and soft, about 7 minutes. Add salt to taste if desired. Add garlic and sauté for one minute. Add tomato paste and stir until vegetables are completely coated. Add broth and onion dip mix and bring to a boil.

Once boiling, reduce heat and taste for seasoning, adding more Creole blend or salt as desired. Hint: You will want to over-season a bit to compensate for the rice. Add rice and return to boil. Once boiling, cover pot and reduce heat to simmer and cook for 15 minutes. You can also place in a 325 degree oven to cook.

After 15 minutes, remove lid and add sautéed vegetables and green onions and quickly mix into rice with minimal turning. Replace lid and continue cooking 10 additional minutes. Hint: If rice is still hard, turn off heat (or remove from oven) and keep lid on the pot so that the rice can continue to steam cook and check every 5 minutes.

Andrea Flores
andrea@thedreamgourmet.com

To me fusion is the world we are currently living in. What I particularly love about cooking is that you can give ten people ten of the same ingredients and you will get ten totally different recipes. The creative power that cooking has is truly wonderful to me. Fusion is the art of this medium. It is taking ingredients that seem common and making creations that are beyond the norm, that are wonderful and extraordinary. Asian (all regions) and central/south America - mainly because they have such fresh, flavorful spices and ingredients.

Catherine Amatangelo-Alfaro
catherine@personalchefcatherine.com

When I think of fusion in terms of my own style of cooking, I tell clients and perspective clients that my style comes from a healthy style with an international twist. I love all cuisines, but will prepare them with healthy ingredients using the flavors of Thai, Indian, etc and since I prepare special diets, those fresh herbs and spices pump up the flavors. I do not really do fusions of two cuisines necessarily, but styles of cooking.

Karry Cumberland
kcumberland@columbus.rr.com

I'm not sure of the new trends in food, but to me Fusion indicates an influence of a culture into the food whether it be flavors or types of prepping of the food.

Ken Holms, The Kilted Cook
thekiltedcook@mindspring.com

Fusion, to me, is using ingredients from one cuisine, prepared with a technique from another cuisine. General Tso's Tacos. Southwestern Succotash with Hominy and Black Beans and Latin spices, rather than Sweet Corn and Lima Beans with almost no spices.

Carnitas stuffed Steamed Buns. Marmalade Lake Perch. Or even Stir-fry Popovers - your favorite stir-fry goodies stuffed in an American Popover.



Thai Shrimp

Servings: 4
 Type: Entree

- 1 pound(s) shrimp, large, raw (peeled & deveined)
- 1 red bell pepper
- 1 yellow bell pepper
- 2 Serrano green chiles
- 3 tablespoon(s) peanut oil
- 1 cup(s) onion, minced
- 1 cup(s) pineapple juice
- 1/2 cup(s) coconut milk
- 1 teaspoon(s) cumin, ground
- 1 teaspoon(s) chili powder
- 1 teaspoon(s) turmeric
- 1/2 teaspoon(s) salt
- 2 tablespoon(s) cilantro, minced

Remove the seeds from the red & yellow peppers and cut into thin strips approximately 2 inches long.

Seed the Serrano pepper and slice into very thin strips lengthwise.

Heat the oil in a pan over medium heat. Add the peppers, chiles and onions and cook until the onions are soft and clear (approximately 5 minutes).

Add the pineapple juice, coconut milk, cumin, chili powder, turmeric and salt to the pan. Sauté the mixture for about 3 to 4 minutes.

Add the shrimp and cook, stirring, until pink and just cooked through, about 2 minutes.

Serve over your favorite rice.

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