

Chef Kathryn Yeomans Biography

Chef Kathryn Yeomans ventured west from New York City to Portland over a decade ago. Her formative culinary years were spent under the tutelage of renowned Manhattan chefs, including Lidia Bastianich of Felidia's Kitchen fame, Alan Tardi of Follonico and Wayne Nish of the Quilted Giraffe and March.

In Portland she assisted Cathy Whims in the opening of Nostrana and worked for several years as Chef de Cuisine at the restaurant. She was Chef de Cuisine at Claire Archibald's much beloved restaurant, Café Azul, and Sous Chef for the opening of Ciao Vito with Vito Dilullo. She has also worked with Philippe Boulot at the Heathman Restaurant, and Anthony Demes at Couvron.

Upon her arrival in Oregon, Kathryn was blown away by the bounty and diversity of the region's local agriculture, and she remains astonished at the level of cuisine that Portlanders can enjoy on a daily basis. She has a passion for preserving the local foodstuffs, both wild and cultivated, and, in her free time, can often be found camping on the coast or in the mountains where she hunts wild mushrooms and practices the craft of campfire cooking.

Through her food-intensive lifestyle, Kathryn has fostered a relationship with many Oregon farmers, fishermen and foragers. With her work at Farmers Markets she sees an opportunity to strengthen and enhance the connection between these local producers and consumers.

Kathryn holds a degree from the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York, and has completed local author Diane Morgan's course, The Art of Food Writing. She published her first article in the Portland Menu Guide, and is a contributor to the Good Stuff NW blog. Her own blog, The Farmer's Feast, showcases foods she encounters locally at Farmers Markets and what can be done with the bounty.

The Farmer's Feast Cultivating Domestic Culinary Arts

Through openly sharing culinary knowledge, we can transform peoples eating and cooking habits.

The Farmer's Feast is a Farmers' Market culinary education program that assists shoppers in making the most of their purchases, and helps farmers realize the culinary possibilities of their products. The goal is to have more individuals and families cooking and eating fresh, wholesome foods, purchased directly from the people who grow it. By teaching Farmers' Market shoppers basic cooking skills, those shoppers can cook fresh foods from scratch more often and with more confidence. They learn a skill set, then are able to apply it to what is seasonal and available. No longer are market goers bound to lists and recipes – shopping becomes a feast for the eyes, and one can select with ease, knowing that there are unlimited possibilities for their purchases.

"I'd love to use it, but I don't know where to start."

Guiding the shopper from the purchase to the plate, The Farmer's Feast helps support the region's farmers, ranchers and producers by providing education and assistance at local farmers markets. Shoppers who are savvy about local foods, possess a foundation of cooking skills, and can shop and cook in a market-responsive fashion will be more apt to make local eating decisions, leading to an ongoing enthusiasm for local bounty. There will be direct increased support for farmers, who will be able to diversify their crops, thus aiding in land sustainability.

In America, a "New Home Economics" is needed. Home cooks need to develop a basic skill set that gives them the flexibility essential to seasonally based cooking. It is unfortunate that many are at a loss – they want to cook farm-fresh, but they are overwhelmed and don't know how. Gone are required home-economics classes. For decades, working parents have been feeding their children convenience foods, and are often unable to teach them how to cook from scratch.

For the past three years we have conducted communications programs within several of Portland area Farmers' Markets that feature cooking demonstrations based on farmers' wares. We provide cost-free know-how in culinary basics, product storage, preparation, and preservation techniques. We also develop recipes for farmers, and directly help them sell their product through the distribution of culinary advice, demonstrations, and samples.

And it's working! Because we demonstrate at Farmers' Markets, and are in contact with shoppers throughout the market season, we receive feedback. Shoppers enthusiastically share what they are now making, that they were previously hesitant to try. They tell us of their successes, and how they've adapted recipes to suit their tastes.

One woman even took away an idea that she used as a starting point to construct a dish that won her a “Best in Show” blue ribbon at the county fair!

Join us at The Farmer’s Feast during the 2011 market season every first and third Sunday of the month at the Hillsdale Farmers’ Market from 11:00 – 1:00 for cooking demonstrations, and at other area Farmers’ Markets where we are working with vendors and markets to cultivate domestic culinary arts. For more information, visit The Farmer’s Feast: <http://thefarmersfeast.wordpress.com>