

Exclusive Celebrity Interview with Reality TV Star Chef Richard Blais



By Meranda Yslas

With summer around the corner, people will be bringing out their barbecues and getting ready for cookouts. Lucky for us, reality TV chef Richard Blais shared some helpful tips for starting up our grills in our [exclusive celebrity interview](#). Read on for more!

Exclusive Celebrity Interview with

Reality TV's *Top Chef*

Blais first appeared on television in season 4 of Bravo's *Top Chef*, and nine years later, he is making his return to the small screen. "I'm returning again as a judge for *Top Chef* season 13, which we're getting ready to film in California," he explains. Since his premiere on the reality TV show, the New York native has made great strides in his career. He has already published one cookbook, and the second one will be out later this year. He shares that it's "going to be great," adding, "It'll be in the same vein as my first cookbook, focusing on creativity for the home cook. I'm really excited about it."

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Being a chef is a career where you're constantly honing your skills and even learning new techniques. There's no doubt that Blais has changed since the start of his career. "My cooking has become more for the people than it is for myself," he says. "I cook for everyone and hope to inspire home cooks to get creative in the kitchen because that's when it's really fun." The *Top Chef All-Stars* winner elaborates on his new approach to cooking: When in the kitchen, "it's not about me; it's about the guest. I cook for everyone else, whether it's at my restaurants or on TV – it's all about the people who enjoy your food."

Learning The Science of Food

Some people may think that cooking is just about throwing in ingredients and hoping for a tasty result, but there is actually a science and psychology behind food decisions. "Science is about asking questions, and as chefs, we often ask questions about how to make food taste good," Blais reveals. "Understanding where food comes from is understanding the

science of deliciousness.” Being aware of this science ultimately influences how the reality TV star cooks and what ingredients he uses. “I really like to look at flavor, and if it is delicious and makes people happy, then I’m very interested,” he adds.

One type of flavor that the Trail Blais owner has been paying attention to recently is the smoky flavor of barbecue. “There’s a nostalgia with smoked foods – everyone has a personal memory. Whether it is a family cookout, a favorite barbecue dish, or the summer holidays, who doesn’t love smoked foods?” he says.

If you’re interested in grilling out, consider this advice from the chef: “When smoking meat, the type of wood you use is key, as each wood creates a smoke with its own unique and distinct flavor. That’s why I’m excited to be working with Boar’s Head on their Black Forest Beechwood Smoked Ham,” he divulges. “It’s naturally smoked with imported beechwood from Germany and has a clean, balanced flavor. It’s a distinct braise that’s not bitter or ashy, and the texture and color is amazing.”

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Achieving this distinct and delicious flavor isn’t as hard as one might think. “The best thing to do is use things that already have smoked ingredients...and get creative in the kitchen,” he advises.

Of course, a great date idea for this summer is to fire up the grill with your significant other and try out some recipes with a smoky flavor. Blais offers three final tips to make your cookout successful: “First, wear Hollywood short shorts. Second, do most of the work ahead of time. *Mis en place*. And third, use a wood-burning grill and make sure you have a great playlist!”

You can keep up with Richard on Twitter @RichardBlais and www.facebook.com/richardblaisofficial/!

'Top Chef' Alum Richard Blais on Healthy Holiday Cooking with Benefiber



Interview by [Lori Bizzoco](#).

Viewers of *Top Chef* recognize Atlanta chef Richard Blais as the runner-up during the reality show's fourth season and the winner of season eight, *Top Chef: All-Stars*. What may surprise fans, though, is his new found passion for healthy cooking. It

even surprised the chef himself: “I would never have envisioned that I’d be standing here today talking to you about being a dedicated chef to health and wellness.” In our interview, he discusses the importance of fiber and makes raw oatmeal risotto using Benefiber.

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While the reality star handles most of the cooking duties at home, he knows a thing or two about sharing space in the kitchen. “My kids do cook. We’re getting them involved,” Blais shares of his daughters, ages five and almost three. “I think it’s really important to build a healthy relationship with food with your kids, whether that’s going to the farmer’s market, going to the grocery store, or getting them at the stove with you.”

He adds, “We just made one of these recipes at home – blue corn meal pancakes – with Benefiber.”

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Wolfgang Puck of ‘Top Chef: Seattle’ Says Taste Is the Most Important Part of

Cooking for Your Loved Ones



By Whitney Baker

Fans of reality television will recognize world-renowned chef and restaurateur Wolfgang Puck. Not only was he responsible for the food served at the infamous wedding of Kim Kardashian and Kris Humphries (filmed for 'Keeping Up with the Kardashians'), but he has also appeared as a guest judge on previous seasons of 'Top Chef: Las Vegas' and 'Top Chef: New York.' And now, Puck is excited to join the tenth season of the cooking-competition series in Seattle as a permanent judge alongside Tom Colicchio, Gail Simmons, Hugh Acheson and longtime friend Emeril Lagasse with Padma Lakshmi returning as host.

This season of 'Top Chef: Seattle,' which premieres on Wednesday, November 7th at 10 p.m. EST on Bravo, focuses on

the contestants going back to the basics, something that Puck considers incredibly important when cooking. “I really believe that cooking to learn the foundation is the most important part,” he shares.

As for this season’s 21 chef’testants, Puck says, “I saw that there were a lot of talented people who did great dishes, but a lot of them also lacked fundamentals.”

Having a strong foundation of cooking skills can also come in handy when preparing a dish for your significant other. When cooking a meal for your partner for the first time, Puck recommends preparing something you feel confident cooking, “not something completely new where you are unsure of how many minutes you have to cook it or if the seasoning tastes good or if the combinations of spices and herbs are just right.” Additionally, it’s important to buy the best quality ingredients and to keep it simple.

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Now that you’ve chosen the right ingredients and a simple recipe that you know how to cook, how do you know if what you’ve prepared is a hit or a miss? “I tell all of my young chefs – and everybody in the kitchen – that the most important thing for a chef is to taste,” Puck explains.

Another cooking lesson that ranks high in Puck’s opinion? Learning from your loved ones. After all, the chef began cooking professionally at age 14, and before that, he spent time in the kitchen with his mother, who was a chef in the Austrian town where Puck was born.

Growing up, Puck’s mother followed the farm-to-table ideology that is sweeping across America’s restaurants, and as the chef shares, it was totally logical at the time. “You know, we went outside into the garden, picked the vegetables and made a vegetable soup” – a statement that reiterates the high

importance that Puck places on knowing basic skills in the kitchen!

Related Link: [Date Idea: Turn Up the Heat in the Kitchen](#)

Of course, Puck has come a long way since then, having changed the way Americans approach the art of cooking by combining classic French and Asian techniques. Though he's sitting at the judges' table now, Puck can't help but look back and consider how a young Wolfgang would've done on 'Top Chef': "I think I would have done pretty well because I always had good instincts about food, and I was always very clear about using great ingredients."

Even so, the playing field was quite different when he first entered the scene. "At that time, you didn't have as many talented young chefs who worked really hard and were really good at it."

Considering the changing culinary landscape, none of this season's contestants reminded Puck of a younger version of himself; however, that's not to say that they didn't impress him. Offering a glimpse at the upcoming season, he shares, "There are a few contestants who actually had their own ways. You know, there are so many chefs who can execute great recipes, but there are very few who actually have their own ideas for those great recipes."

"When somebody is a 'Top Chef' winner, you almost expect them to have their own ways and their own ideas – and then execute them perfectly," he adds.

Be sure to tune in to this season of 'Top Chef: Seattle,' which premieres on Bravo on Wednesday, November 7th at 10 p.m. EST. For more information about Wolfgang Puck, you can visit his official site at www.WolfgangPuck.com.