

Mt. Washington Alpine Food Festival Cooking Seminars Showcase Global Tastes using Local Ingredients

Among the most popular highlights of the Annual Mt. Washington Alpine Food Festival are the sumptuous cooking seminars taught by local and guest chefs. This year, fourteen exclusive seminars will take place on Saturday, Sept. 4, and they promise to be the most ambitious – and delicious – seminars yet.

Using ingredients from the farms, fields and waters of Vancouver Island, seminar chefs will take attendees on a global journey exploring favourite dishes from around the world, but with a local twist. These special cooking classes will serve menus that showcase each chef's culinary passion as well as the bounty of the Comox Valley. In addition to enjoying a gourmet meal, seminar attendees will learn kitchen secrets, tips and stories from some of BC's most famous chefs and are sure to leave with new culinary inspirations.

Headlining the festival is celebrity chef Anthony Sedlak, host of the Food Network cooking series *The Main* and winner of the Food Network's Superstar Chef Challenge. Sedlak, who is known for preparing rustic food with readily available ingredients and recipes that are straight forward, will offer three cooking seminars featuring standout dishes from his best-selling cookbook *The Main*.

Sedlak's first alpine-to-ocean cooking seminar, *Divine Scallops*, will show attendees how to bring out the best and sweetest flavours of tender Qualicum Bay scallops using crispy pork belly and butternut squash. Sedlak's second class, *Wicked Paella*, will take attendees to Spain as he prepares an authentic Valencian paella using traditional ingredients like spicy chorizo as well as local seafood and organic chicken. Sedlak's final class is guaranteed to impress with his "world-famous burgers served with double smoked bacon, aged cheddar, the best homemade BBQ sauce ever, and backyard slaw." Attendees will learn the secrets to making the best burger ever.

The remainder of the seminars are taught by local guest chefs who are all-time favourite teachers of the popular cooking classes offered by festival sponsor *'Beyond' the Kitchen Door*.

The Valley's own Prontissima Pasta owner Sarah Walsh and Chef Ronald St. Pierre, owner of Locals Restaurant, will also team up for a fabulous pasta seminar. Sarah will show attendees how fun and easy it is to make homemade hand-cut pastas as Chef Ronald prepares them in delicious dishes paired with his signature sauces.

Chef Tahera Rawji offers two seminars on Indian cuisine that will include family-inspired recipes from her cookbooks *Simply Indian* and *Simply More Indian*. An entertaining teacher and author, Tahera will turn exotic ingredients into everyday delicacies while sharing the simple methods for creating authentic Indian flavours at home. Beyond practical kitchen tips, attendees will learn the fascinating histories of some classic regional dishes.

The next two seminars head south of the border with Maria Elena, who will also share family recipes from her cookbook *Mexican Culinary Treasures*. In her first seminar, Maria Elena will prepare an authentic "pozolada" feast with an assortment of classic dishes traditionally served for special celebrations. Her

second seminar, *A Taqueada Party*, will be a taco extravaganza featuring an assortment of regional tacos using local meats and seafood. The soft tortillas will be fresh from Abuelo, Courtenay's own tortilla-making facility.

Chef David Larsen offers two diverse seminars from opposite sides of the world. The first will explore traditional Thai cuisine and the creative process of balancing rich aromatic herbs and spices in some of Thailand's most popular dishes. For his Cajun and Creole seminar, Larsen will give attendees a taste of legendary New Orleans cookery and soul-satisfying dishes from the Deep South. Attendees will learn about the diversity of cultures that influenced these cuisines and enjoy classics like jambalaya, crab cakes and Bananas Foster.

Award-winning Custom Gourmet chef Dawn McRae will teach an appetizer seminar featuring an array of her favourite finger foods. As a caterer Dawn knows exactly what tips and tricks make perfect one-bite wonders for any occasion. Dawn will also teach a seminar showcasing selected recipes from *Island Inspirations*, the popular cookbook produced by the North Vancouver Island Chefs' Association.

The Valley's sushi master, Chef Ky Taniguchi, will teach two hands-on seminars on the fine art of sushi and sushi rolling. From cooking the perfect rice to finding the freshest local seafood, Taniguchi will show attendees how to throw a sushi party. He'll also share the ancient story of sushi and impart some Japanese culinary vocabulary. Attendees will have the unique opportunity to try their hand at making popular rolls like tuna, salmon and California rolls.

Cooking seminars for the 3rd Annual Mt. Washington Alpine Food Festival run for approximately 1.5 hours and start at 10 am, 12:30 pm and 3 pm on Saturday, Sept. 4. For schedule and ticket information, as well as complete details on the cooking seminar menus, chef biographies, and other delicious event including the Alpine Gala Dinner and Marketplace visit www.mountwashington.ca/foodfestival or please call (250) 338-1386.