

# A Celebration of Good Taste

Ten years ago this month,  
**Food Network** discovered a recipe for success.

By doing for food what MTV did for music,  
the network became a destination  
for people passionate about food.  
More than just a collection of how-to shows,  
it was entertainment. It was also a lifestyle,  
and each day more and more viewers  
make it their own. This month,  
as we celebrate a holiday that has become  
synonymous with food, we invite you to cook  
Thanksgiving dinner along with us and  
be grateful for a decade of tasty TV.

By Tina Donvito





**TAKING THE CAKE:** From left: chefs Bobby Flay, Sara Moulton, Mario Batali and *Top 5* host Bobby Rivers. Food, from left: Miniature Jalapeño Soufflés, Traditional Neapolitan Pastry Horn: Sfogliatelle, Roasted Turkey with Pomegranate Sauce, Wild Rice and Goat Cheese Stuffing, and Sweet Potato Biscuits.

# An Appetizer

Food Network started out with just a few slices of humble pie. But there were hints of what lay ahead.



Molto Mario cooks up a taste of Italy.

"Bam!"-shouting, Louisiana-based chef named Emeril Lagasse. In Emeril, who hosted *How to Boil Water* and later *Emeril & Friends* and *Essence of Emeril*, the network found a breakout personality to connect with the public and represent all things food to all people. "Food isn't just for a certain group of people. He allows everyone to participate," says Eileen Opatut, senior vice president of programming and production. "With Emeril, we were able to make food something that was an important subject to living your life, whether it was to bring your family together, to have fun, to stay on top of what's new or to get back to your heritage."

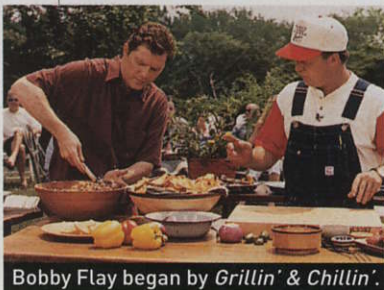
Food Network had stumbled onto something. Why do we love food? What does it mean to us? How does it reflect how we live our lives? "The whole awareness of food is fun and provocative, as opposed to just nourishing with vitamins and fiber," says chef Mario Batali, host of the long-running *Molto Mario*. "The more aware someone is about food, the more they will enjoy it."

**LIKE THE FINEST CUISINE**, Food Network began with the simplest and purest of ingredients: a passion for food and the desire to share it with others. Launching on November 23, 1993, the channel brought basic how-to shows into just 6.5 million homes. Included in the early mix was a little-known,



Two Fat Ladies took a shot at fame.

The network needed chefs who weren't just knowledgeable but also were passionate and exciting. Along with Batali, the motorcycle-riding *Two Fat Ladies*, Bobby Flay in *Grillin' & Chillin'* and Sara Moulton in *Cooking Live* were stirred into



Bobby Flay began by *Grillin' & Chillin'*.

the pot. Moulton jokes that her live cooking show was like "getting shot out of a cannon every night," but the craziness was the fun of it. "I'd knock something over or burn the pine nuts, but I never felt bad because that's what happens at home."

So just like that, bam! Food Network kicked it up a notch.

## MINIATURE JALAPEÑO SOUFFLÉS

Recipe courtesy Sara Moulton  
Sara Moulton Cooks at Home,  
Broadway Books, 2002

The beauty of these little soufflés is their resilience. You can make them a day ahead, toss them in the fridge, and then just reheat them when your guests arrive. People aren't usually served mini-soufflés, so they will be charmed. Indeed, you might find yourself reaching frequently for those mini-muffin tins. You can minimize just about any cake or muffin.

If your jalapeño lacks bite (as so many do these days), just reach for a pickled jalapeño, either your own homemade version or your favorite store-bought brand. I always keep a jar on the door of the fridge to toss into those dishes that need a little perking up.

- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter, plus extra for buttering the tins
- 2½ tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons very finely chopped pine nuts
- 1 small jalapeño, seeded and minced
- 6 tablespoons whole milk
- ¼ cup grated Gruyere cheese
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- ½ teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 large egg, separated

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. Butter a non-stick mini-muffin tin with 12 (¼-cup) wells that measure 1½ inches in diameter and ¾ inch deep. Mix 1 tablespoon of the flour with half the pine nuts in a small bowl. Dust the tins with the flour and nut mixture. Tap out the excess and reserve the mixture.

Melt the 1 tablespoon butter in a small saucepan over medium-high heat. Stir in the remaining 1½ tablespoons flour and the jalapeño. Cook, stirring, for about 2 minutes. Whisk in the milk, reserved flour-and-pine-nut mixture, cheese, salt, pepper, mustard and egg yolk. Cool to room temperature.

Beat the egg white until firm but not stiff. Stir ¼ of the white into the cheese sauce. Gently fold in the remaining white. Spoon into the prepared tins, sprinkle with the remaining pine nuts and bake until puffed and golden, 7 to 10 minutes. Cool in the tins on wire racks. When cool, run a small knife around the edge of each soufflé. (The soufflés will fall as they cool.)

They can be prepared up to a day in advance and refrigerated. Bake in the muffin tins in a preheated 400 degree F oven for 5 to 7 minutes before serving.

Note: One night on *Cooking Live* when I was removing the seeds and ribs from a jalapeño without the protection of surgical gloves, a viewer called in to say that at least I could make my job easier by using a grapefruit spoon. If you happen to have one kicking around the house, try it. It works nicely.

Yield: 12 hors d'oeuvres / Prep Time: 15 minutes / Cook Time: 10 minutes / Ease of preparation: Easy



Sara Moulton says, "Never do fortune cookies on live TV."

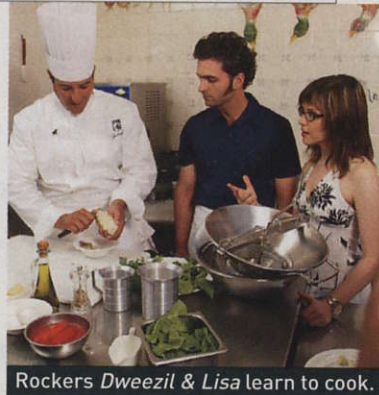
# For Dessert

The best is yet to come.

**AS DELICIOUS AS** a holiday dessert, Food Network has been eaten up by the public and currently reaches more than 80 million homes. The icing on the cake is the network's upcoming delicacies.

"We'll continue to tap into pop culture, trends and history," reveals Eileen Opatut. "We try to stay on top of style and approach, so we're there doing *vérité* and reality. [We have] great new talent and, in the cooking area, new shows that are practical, quick and easy."

*Dweezil & Lisa*, premiering early next year, follows musicians Dweezil Zappa and Lisa Loeb as they cook for friends, visit



Rockers *Dweezil & Lisa* learn to cook.

funky restaurants and go on tour. But what do these rock stars have to do with food? "They are obsessed with food but don't know anything about it," says Opatut. "We're on a road trip with them and their adventures. They're really curious, sincerely passionate about food and a lot of fun." Other future shows include *What America Eats*, a look at American food habits; *The Fearless Host*, a makeover show that tackles the fear of entertaining; and a special on wines with actor John Cleese.



*Sweet Dreams* serves holiday treats.

The network also continues to fatten up its "In the Kitchen" block with the recent premieres of *Semi-Homemade Cooking*, *Wolfgang Puck's Cooking Class* and *Good Food Fast*. And since the holidays are the time when food takes the greatest role in our lives, Food Network serves "Holidays In the Kitchen" throughout November and December. Special episodes of *Sweet Dreams*, *Paula's Home Cooking*, *Sara's Secrets*, *Barefoot Contessa* and more give viewers a helping hand during a season when many become anxious about cooking. Ina Garten offers, "Holidays are more stressful than any other time, so it's even more important to do things that are really simple."

At this time of year, we're also reminded that cooking and eating together is an essential element of family life and our overall culture. "Food is a story about people and a story of the way people live their lives," Opatut reflects. The most *taste*-ful thing Food Network does is bring back this joy to our modern world, to remember that with good food, comes the good life.

## TRADITIONAL NEAPOLITAN PASTRY HORN: SFOGLIATELLE

Recipe courtesy Mario Batali

### FOR THE DOUGH:

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup cold unsalted butter, cut into small pieces
- 2 large eggs, beaten with 1 tablespoon water

### FOR THE FILLING:

- ¾ cup fresh ricotta
- ½ cup candied citrus zest, recipe follows
- 2 large egg yolks
- ½ cup (scant) confectioners' sugar
- 3 tablespoons granulated sugar

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.

In a food processor pulse the flour, sugar and salt. Add the butter and pulse until it's the size of peas. Add the eggs mixed with water and pulse again until mixture resembles coarse sand and holds together when squeezed. Add more water if necessary. Turn the dough out onto a floured board and, using a lightly floured rolling pin, roll out the dough until you form a square about ¼-inch thick.

Using a sharp knife, cut the dough into 6 large even-sized rectangles, or 12 small rectangles. Cover the dough rectangles with a damp kitchen cloth and set aside.

In a mixing bowl, combine the ricotta, ¾ of the sugar and the candied citrus zest and mix, using a wooden spoon, until well combined. Using a tablespoon, divide the filling among 3 dough rectangles, placing the filling in the very center of each rectangle. Cover each topped rectangle with an unused piece of dough, using your thumb and forefinger to gently pinch together the 2 pieces of dough all around the border, leaving 1 side open. In small bowl, beat the remaining egg with a touch of water. Brush the egg wash lightly over the top of each dough pocket.

Place in the oven and bake for 20 minutes. Sprinkle the tops of the dough pockets with the granulated sugar and return to the oven to cook until the sugar caramelizes, about 10 minutes more.

Yield: 6 servings / Prep time: 15 minutes / Cook Time: 30 minutes / Ease of preparation: medium

### CANDIED CITRUS ZEST:

- 8 cups sugar
- 5 cups water
- 4 oranges or 3 grapefruits or 8 lemons, zested
- Superfine sugar, for sprinkling

In a 2-quart saucepan, combine the sugar and water and bring to a boil, making sure all the sugar is dissolved. Remove from heat.

In a large saucepan, combine the zest and enough cold water to cover and bring to a boil. Remove the zest, rinse with cold water and repeat the process 2 more times.

Place the blanched zest in a saucepan and pour the syrup over the zest, adding an extra inch to cover the zest. Bring to a boil, reduce to a simmer and cook until the zest is translucent and tender. Remove from heat and cool. Drain the syrup and lay the zest out on a cooling rack. Toss in sugar and store in an airtight container.