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Ravioli Secrets by Martinez

BLOG | AUGUST 17, 2011 - 12:00AM | BY BONNIE SCHULTZ

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If you ever wondered how [Teresa Caffe](#) has managed to stay one of Princeton's most popular restaurants since opening in 1991, Teresa's chef Luis Martinez showed off his culinary techniques Tuesday at the [Princeton Public Library](#).



In this session of the popular "Princeton Eats" series, Martinez demonstrated how to make ravioli using seasonal ingredients. He started by announcing "I was born in Venezuela twenty-five years ago (my mother says so) and speak Italian, Spanish, French and English, all with an accent," immediately warming up the crowd with his humorous and engaging style.

As he cooked, Martinez continued with his thoughts about how to cook successfully. He told the audience to read through every recipe before making it and to have all your vegetables chopped and ready beforehand. His ravioli dish made use of both Jersey corn and tomatoes, two crops he said were "phenomenal" this summer.

He also said that it was best to make pasta with all-purpose flour, saying that in his opinion, semolina makes for pasta that is too tough.

Martinez recommended that if you make your pasta dough ahead of time, you should leave it out for at least an hour allowing the dough to soften and be workable. He sent the dough through a "green" or manual pasta maker to make his ravioli sheets and let the audience feel the dough to see how thin it

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came. Thin it was, even thinner than lasagna sheets, but still elastic enough to seal in the corn and cream filling.

Martinez periodically encouraged questions from the audience. When someone asked why Martinez chose to make his basil puree with canola oil instead of olive oil, he said that olive oil tastes “beautiful” but he preferred to use a “neutral” oil for this particular



basil sauce so as to not overwhelm the flavor. He recommended blanching the basil for ten seconds in rapidly boiling water and then shocking it by placing it in an ice bath.

While he cooked, Martinez told stories of how he loves white balsamic vinegar (even more than olive oil), grilling, and cooking with his kids. He showed the audience some insider cooking tricks, such as shucking corn over a dish towel instead of into a bowl to prevent the kernels from bouncing out onto the floor.

Martinez also recommended grilling corn for the best flavor, a method by which he always cooks his corn. When an audience member asked what to do with the cobs, Martinez recommended using them for making broth.

Martinez sealed the ravioli by using a bit of water on the edges after stuffing. After cooking, he served samples of the ravioli to the appreciative audience with a dab of basil puree, tomato salad and a smattering of corn, sautéed shallots and fresh grated Parmigiano Reggiano.

Princeton Eats is a cooking program by [TerraMomo](#) chefs that takes its inspiration from locally-grown produce generally available in the [Princeton Farmers' Market](#). Former Princeton Eats sessions were presented by Chris Albrecht, chef of [Eno Terra](#), and Denis Granarolo, baker for [Witherspoon Bread](#).

The [next session of Princeton Eats](#) will be in November, a popular session where Chris Albrecht demonstrates new twists on traditional Thanksgiving dishes and how to brine a turkey. Registration begins September 1.

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About the Author »[View](#)[Edit](#)**Bonnie Schultz**

Bonnie Schultz has worked as a technology and marketing writer in the Boston area. She moved here in 1997 and is the mother of two boys. Since 2007, Bonnie has been blogging about food and community happenings in the Princeton area, through her blog "[The Blog That Ate New Jersey](#)".

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