



TEKUNA GACHECHILADZE

There's a mini revolution going on in the kitchens of the Caucasus. A nation's food is being radically transformed, and its culinary culture is undergoing a renaissance. The country is Georgia, and the chef that's shaking it all up is a petite blonde lady with an innocent smile like butter wouldn't melt.

Her name is Tekuna Gachechiladze and she's putting a new twist on one of the oldest and constantly evolving cuisines in the world. Fusion in Georgia is nothing new. Georgian food is a work in progress, and Gachechiladze is merely managing the latest shift.

Tekuna's stellar cooking career is the result of an adventitious chain of events that brought her to New York City, where she dropped out of her doctorate program in psychology and signed up for cooking school. She returned to Tbilisi in 2006, eager to do something "revolutionary" in a country where the menu in each and every restaurant was the same. She started at a French restaurant, moved on to American and then explored the possibilities of fusing Asian with Georgian, winning over former President Mikheil Saakashvili, who saw how her cooking complemented his vision of a modern country.

In 2013 she opened a 30-seat restaurant, Culinarium, the first exclusively chef-owned restaurant in Tbilisi, which is her laboratory for new ideas, and she also hosts a weekly cooking show on TV. In 2015 she opened her latest culinary venture, Cafe Littera, in the lush courtyard gardens of the Writer's House of Georgia.

Source: Fine Dining Lovers & Culinary Backstreets