



Project: Talent Profiles
Client: Cooking Channel
Date: 1/3/2012

Brigitte Nguyen

Brigitte Nguyen is making Bluegrass Burgers with Sweet Roasted Corn Chow-Chow and Country Ham Spread. I'm a California girl from a Vietnamese family but OH MY GOD I love Kentucky food!

"I don't think you need expensive ingredients – you just need to combine things you know already in an imaginative way."

BIO

- Grew up in California – the melting pot of international cuisines – in a Vietnamese household devoted to food. AND I MEAN DEVOTED.
- Degree in Econ/Accounting. Minor in Spanish. Hired by a Big Four accounting firm. Realized crunching numbers couldn't hold a candle to crunching cucumbers.
- Graduated from culinary school. Interned as pastry chef. Worked under one of Kentucky's most celebrated chefs. HAPPY AT LAST.
- Took home the \$50,000 grand prize in the National Chicken Council's cooking contest and placed runner up in two national cooking contests, including the Ultimate Recipe Showdown on Food network. WOOT WOOT!

FAVORITE QUOTE

"Good bread is the most fundamentally satisfying of all foods; good bread with fresh butter, the greatest of feasts!" ~James Beard

LIKES AND INTERESTS

Asian fish sauce, liver pate, Kentucky bourbon. I know that's an odd assortment of flavors. But that's what excites me about cooking – combining flavors to make something new, original and delicious!

From Julia's Kitchen. I love this cookbook – and how Julia Child reinvented herself from a civil servant into a legendary chef. I can relate, after leaving the business world to follow my heart in the kitchen.

Baking. I love to bake! I love to eat my baking! I love my guests to eat my baking, as long as they leave some for me!

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Grace Choi

Grace Choi is demonstrating the fine art of omelets this morning, teaching at NYU this afternoon, and showing friends what an Italian/Korean feast is all about tonight!

BIO

- Started cooking in college (anything was better than the dining hall!)
- Graduated from Notre Dame with a degree in Economics (Thanks Mom & Dad) but then realized all I really wanted to do was cook (Sorry Mom & Dad).
- Received Grand Diplome from French Culinary School in NYC. (I'm like, "Bobby Flay went there? That's where I'm going!")
- Doctoral student at NYU in Food Studies.

"What makes me a good teacher? I'm not a born-talent in the kitchen. I've had to work really hard to do it well, and that makes it easier to explain it to others.

FAVORITE QUOTE

- "The only real stumbling block is fear of failure. In cooking you've got to have a what-the-hell attitude." — Julia Child

LIKES AND INTERESTS

Cuisines. What cuisine don't I like? Korean feels like home, French is my training, Italian, my not so-secret passion.

How to spend an afternoon in the kitchen. Cooking with others. I love the teamwork of cooking, and how food connects people. Even when you're cooking alone, you're thinking about who you're cooking for and what will delight them.

Favorite meal. FEASTS! I LOVE feasts, when people you like – or even people who kind of bug you – all get together to make and eat a meal. For me, that's what life is all about.

3 RANDOM THINGS ABOUT ME

- Helped write the Italian cookbook, *Vegeterrear*, with the owners of *Country House in Montali*, the award-winning vegetarian restaurant in Italy where I apprenticed.
- High school drum majorette. Yep, I was a band geek!
- I actually made a video once on how to boil water.