



FOOD
STYLING

BY KATIE CHRIST



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WE CHATTED WITH FOOD STYLIST KATIE CHRIST ON THE ART OF CREATING THE MOST DELICIOUS LOOKING FOOD FROM A SURPRISING LIST OF ITEMS.

How did you get started in this industry?

I was doing marketing for a software company and developed a repetitive strain injury. As I was recovering from my injury, a myriad of specialists told me I needed to find a new career that didn't include sitting at a desk and working at a computer. That pretty much eliminated all of my formal education and professional work experience to-date. However, I'd been doing an unofficial apprenticeship for fun at a patisserie called Citizen Cake, owned by Elizabeth Falkner. I'd worked with Elizabeth and her crew on weekends and holidays for a couple of years. During that time, I'd also had the opportunity to work with Elizabeth and other amazing chefs on special projects. Elizabeth and I had dinner one night to talk about career possibilities in the culinary world and she thought food styling would be a great fit. She called a food photographer friend to see if I might assist the food stylist on an upcoming

photo shoot. I worked on a shoot the following week and fell in love with it the very first day. That was over 10 years ago.

We hate to expose the secrets behind the beauty, but, can you share a few that might surprise us?

People often ask me why the frozen lasagne they buy never looks like the photo on the package. The photo on the package is indeed the actual product cuz it has to be. But we've taken apart several separate slices and reassembled one out of it with the best looking pieces. You could do this at home, I suppose, but then that would defeat the purpose of buying pre-made lasagne. I guess it depends how hungry you are and how much you care how it looks versus how it tastes.



What's the craziest thing you've ever eaten?

That's a tough one. I've lived in Africa and traveled a great deal in developing countries where there are many unusual local "delicacies." I guess I'd say it's probably a toss up between fire roasted bat and crispy grasshopper. Hands down the most unusual beverage is Dogon beer in Mali. It's brewed with millet and drunk warm out of a communal calabash. Definitely an acquired taste.

Any other interesting or random things you can share?

On a personal level, I guess one of the things people may not know about me is that I still have a strong connection to my days in Africa. Along with the help of a great many people and partnerships with established NGOs, I endeavored to build a school in a remote rural area of Mali where I lived and worked as a Peace Corps volunteer. I'm happy to say that there are over 300 children in preschool through sixth grade that previously didn't have the opportunity to attend school.

