



## Thoughts from the Founder & CEO



### What is Health Supportive?

by Annemarie Colbin, Ph.D.

When I was working on the basic concept for my school in the early 1970's, I knew I wanted it to relate to health – specifically to how food relates to health. How to express that without ideology or judgment?? There were already a lot of expressions that did that – “healthy, eating for your health, good for you” – and the like. I didn't want to call my cuisine “Natural” either, as I felt that was too vague. “Vegetarian” was too specific, and also not what I wanted. Because, who knows? After a considerable amount of soul searching, I

finally came up with what seemed to be the right concept. This was about the food that could keep you healthy – whatever it was. So how to express it with no value judgments? What was the goal? The goal was good health and proper function – a result, not a method – although the method was via food. And

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that's how I came up with "health-supportive eating." Any food that supports your health qualifies – either meat, or vegetables, or cookies and milk.

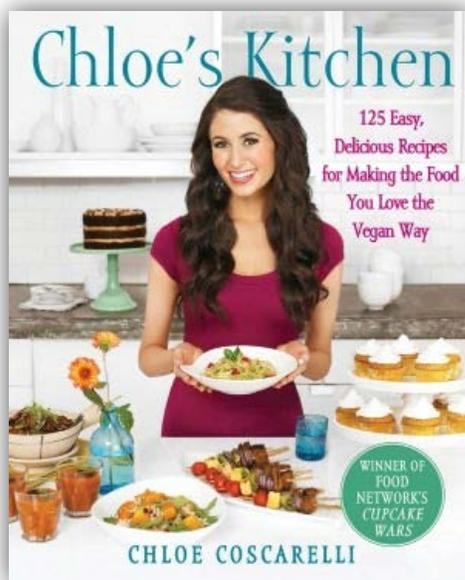
I liked this concept. It removed food from an ideology and made the goal focused and practical. Telling people they should eat certain types of food because it will be healthier for them is so 19<sup>th</sup> century. Who wants to hear this? Nobody, I am sure. Sounds like your mother – and that is where we are today. Eat your Veggies! It's getting boring.

I think we should remember the goal – good health and proper function, or being in good

working order. The food we eat should support our being and function, and so, be health supportive. My point was the goal, the function. To illustrate, I once had a client who did not do well with veggies, nor with grains or beans for that matter. We tried a variation of foods, and she was happiest and healthiest when she consumed steak, ice cream and beer. Go figure! Not what I would consider the healthiest of diets, but it worked for her. Ergo, for this person, that was a health-supportive diet – and for me, a lesson. No matter how reasonable and apparently "right," we don't always know what we're doing. A lesson for all of life.

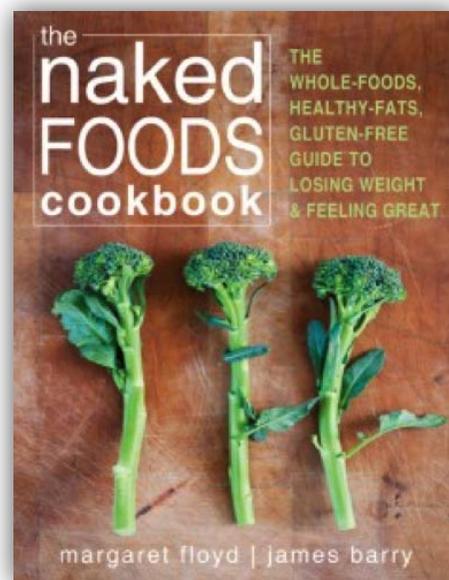
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## New Books by CTP Grads



*Chloe's Kitchen: 125 Easy, Delicious Recipes for Making the Food You Love the Vegan Way*

by Chloe Coscarelli, CTP 177



*The Naked Foods Cookbook: The Whole Foods, Healthy Fats, Gluten-Free Guide to Losing Weight & Feeling Great*

by James Barry, CTP 123  
and Margaret Floyd

## On the President's Mind



by Jenny Matthau

Late winter and spring are always very busy times for us at the Natural Gourmet Institute (NGI). There are so many wonderful NYC conferences, talks, galas and festivals, all focusing on food. I love attending them because they afford me the opportunity to learn, network, eat, drink and support my colleagues, students and graduates of the NGI.

The second annual NYC Vegetarian Food Festival was held in early March at the Metropolitan Pavilion. NGI had its own demo area, and Chef Instructors Elliott Prag, Barbara Rich, Jay

executed superb, health-supportive cooking demos. The one aspect of this event that bothered me was the abundance of fake, heavily processed, imitation foods like vegan marshmallows and "cheese-like" goop in a plastic tube.



Weinstein, Rich LaMarita and Fran Costigan, along with CTP grad Olivia Roszkowski

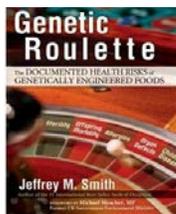
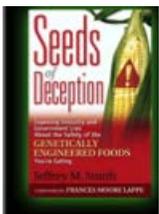


The International Association of Cooking Professionals (IACP) annual conference took place at the end of March and first two days of April. This five-day event offered hundreds of classes at numerous venues, covering everything food-related, including culinary history and technique, nutrition, cookbook writing and publishing (both print and digital), social media, culinary tours and dinners and so much more!

Annemarie, Elliott, Merle, Judith Friedman and I had great fun at Dr. Mehmet and Lisa Oz's annual HealthCorps



Gala, held at the Waldorf Astoria. This wonderful event raises money and awareness about HealthCorps, which Drs. Oz and Roizen started many years ago to teach high school students about the importance of health-supportive food and lifestyle. Chef Instructor Barbara Rich and the CTP students who assisted her did a wonderful job making food for our table at the Gala.



We were thrilled to host a lecture about the dangers of genetically modified food, given by the world's most well-respected researcher on GMO's, Jeffrey Smith. He has written two terrific books, *Seeds of Deception* and *Genetic Roulette: The Documented Health Risks of Genetically Engineered Foods*, and his third book will be released this spring. What I love about this man is his indefatigable spirit and the way he empowers his audience, explaining to them how they can make a difference.

Equally thrilling was the first NYC Green Festival held at the Javits Center during the third weekend in April. The NGI had an information table, womanned by Mollie

Berliss. There were so many inspirational speakers, including the legendary Frances Moore Lappe, John Perkins, former corporate exploiter turned expert on Shamanism (he gave me goose bumps!) and Amy Goodman, intrepid reporter and Co-founder of *Democracy Now*. There were vendors of all types: food, beverages, soaps, jewelry and clothes. There was even a hemp fashion show, showcasing student fashion designers -- all very talented. What I loved about all the speakers was the message of hope they transmitted to their audience, offering concrete solutions to the world's corporation-created problems.

This past weekend I was so fortunate to attend the annual Brooklyn Food Conference. Our table was womanned by Olivia, and we were situated opposite my favorite chocolate company, *RESCUE CHOCOLATE*. The president, Sarah Gross, is a true angel of mercy, donating 100% of the company's profits to animal rescue groups. I was so proud of our three CTP grads -- Restaurateur and Chef Jacques Gautier, Chef Madea Allen, and Eco-chef, Author and Food Justice Activist Bryant Terry -- who all gave great cooking demos and talks, as did Rich LaMarita and Jay Weinstein.



Ever since I attended the first NYC Vegetarian Food Festival last spring, I have dreamt of a Natural Gourmet Institute *Health-Supportive Food Festival*. We are hoping to put this together within the next one to two years. Please contact me if you would like to participate in this sure-to-be Historic Event!

Wishing you all a wonderful summer,

Jenny



## Adventures in Cooking

### Sparky Town

by Sue Baldassano

Sent via e-mail September 11<sup>th</sup> 2011...

*Dear Natural Gourmet,*

*I can't believe it has been ten years since I came to the Natural Gourmet Institute for the Chef Training Program. I was one of the members of CTP 88. We were there when the towers got hit. Many of us saw it happen on the way to the school.*

*Most of us actually made it to class and even tried to sit through some actual presentation. But as the towers fell one by one, no one could focus on learning. We were concerned for the people in the city. We worried about those who hadn't made it in. Teachers tried to get information but there were no functioning phones. The city and our school shut down.*

*Many of us couldn't get anywhere. We went outside to look and see all the rescue vehicles. We gazed on stunned faces, saw many heading to midtown covered in white chalky soot. They had been near there.*

*We saw big strong men weeping. We saw people praying. We witnessed groups drinking and toasting life....fearful this was the end.*

*We went back to the second floor. We talked. We speculated. Some started to try to get to home. Others stayed for as long as we could.*

*Many moments stood out that day. Sue B. took a bottle of Mezcal out of her desk and shared it. Hope let me sleep on her couch until I could travel. Annemarie led us in a meditation. We cooked food to send to the Fire Fighters. The quiet of the city that was deafening. The parade of rescue vehicles. The photos of those missing that were plastered all over all the walls. The community spirit of New Yorkers all in it together. The after threats and fear of war. The prayers and intention. The moving on and continuation of life. More learning. More cooking together.*

*Never forget ....forever changed....forever grateful for The Natural Gourmet.*

*Love,  
Linda "Sparky" Mortimer*

Dear Sparky,

Been meaning to get back to you. Thanks for your e-mail about your remembrance of 9/11 and how we all helped each other cope during that strange and difficult time.

In spite of the horror show unfolding in front of us, we still managed to have a good time when you were a student here - class trips to Chinatown, including the walk over the Brooklyn Bridge, Coney Island and Totono's famous thin-crust pizza, the Halloween party here at the school where you were dressed up as Julia Child (I think I was Frida Kahlo), the Italian restaurant in the East Village we went to with a bunch of students in your class for pasta and red wine, your Friday Night Dinner -- it was all good in spite of the sadness in the city.

One of the healing factors for me at that time was getting to know you - Linda Mortimer, aka "Sparky."

Whoever gave you that nickname nailed it completely. You had those sparkling blue eyes and the big, wide smile, powerful body and jovial personality. Your presence just made everything a little easier to handle.

I remember some of your stories as well. One of the funniest was the time you ran into one of the nuns who had cared for you at the Angel Guardian Orphanage where you spent the first 4 years of your life. You were at Bonnie and Clyde, a lesbian bar in New York City. It was the first time you timidly ventured into a gay bar only to hear the former Sister Mary Margaret call out "Linda Mortimer" from across the room. Later, over a drink she told you that even at 4 years old she suspected you might be gay.

I was so sad to see you leave the Natural Gourmet but so happy when you decided to come to Mexico in 2002 on one of my *To*

*Grandmother's House We Go Cooking Tours.*

Funds were low for you at that time but your partner told me, "Sparky, you know, has ATMA" (Afraid to Miss Anything). Somehow you found a way to make the trip happen.

In Mexico we had a lot of laughs and adventures. I remember going to the red pottery village, out in the middle of nowhere, with you and the group. Some people light up a room when they enter but you, my friend, lit up an entire dusty town! The village was without men, and the many women there were bone thin and weary. When you got out of the car so hearty looking, they literally couldn't keep their hands off you.

Thoroughly delighted, you looked at me and announced, "I know an Amazon village when I'm in one!"

Another high point on the trip was our cooking class at Susana Trilling's school, *Seasons of My Heart*. I had been there many times before, and I was expecting a warm greeting, a cold beer and a packet of recipes to go over in a leisurely fashion before we began to spend the afternoon with spicy moles and paper-thin corn tortillas.

Instead, when we entered the school Susana informed us that there was a fire encircling the property, and we had to all run up the hill with brooms and help put it out before the joint burned down.

Some of the people in the group were like, "F#! that." I'm not moving from my comfortable seat, but you and I plus a couple of others rushed up that hill with the homemade brooms and stomped the fire out way before the bomberos (fire fighters) arrived four hours later!

After that we went back to the school and completed the cooking class as if it were the most natural thing in the world -- putting out

a fire quite literally before beginning to cook.

After Mexico you returned to Syracuse. Alex, Elliott, Lisa, and my husband Jeff and I always planned to visit you someday, especially after we heard about your restaurant -- *Sparky Town* -- that opened in 2008. It was on the list of things to do.

It was described as the "funky place to meet and eat," had lots of healthy comfort foods on the menu and featured local food, artists and musicians. Your goal was to have a place where a rabbi, a drag queen, an activist (and maybe a former nun from Angel Guardian) could all feel comfortable together over a bowl of vegan chili and a good cup of coffee.

I also knew without anyone having to tell me that you were out there greeting everyone and making them feel special. I knew that the restaurant had been a dream of yours and was so happy to hear that you had finally been able to attain your dream.

I just want you to know that if I had the opportunity to cook one more meal for you I would prepare Pasta Alla Norma -- Spaghetti with a Garlicky Red Sauce, Eggplant and Ricotta Salata. I would then toast you with a nice glass of Nero d'Avola -- a strong Sicilian red wine.



## Pasta Alla Norma

Yield: 7-8 servings

### Ingredients:

2 small eggplants (about 1 ½ pounds)  
 2 teaspoons sea salt for salting one of the eggplants  
 ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil  
 4 cloves garlic, peeled and thinly sliced  
 2 cans (28 ounces each) good quality whole tomatoes, drained (juices reserved)  
 1 tablespoon sea salt  
 1 tablespoon sugar **or** sweetener of choice  
 Pinch red pepper flakes  
 1 pound bucatini pasta  
 1 tablespoon sea salt for salting the pasta water  
 ¼-½ cup grated ricotta salata  
 1 small bunch basil, chiffonade chop (about ¼ cup)

### Procedure:

1. Peel one of the eggplants and cut into medium dice pieces (1/2 inch). Place cut eggplant into a colander and place colander over a bowl. Sprinkle 2 teaspoons of the salt over the eggplant. Place a weight on top of the eggplant and let sit for at least 30 minutes. Rinse eggplant, squeeze dry and set aside.
2. Place other eggplant over open flame on medium high heat and char on all sides until eggplant is fork tender. Place eggplant in bowl with cover and allow to steam for 15 minutes. When cool enough to handle, scoop out the flesh from the eggplant. Set aside.
3. In a large sauté pan, heat oil. On medium-low heat, sweat the squeezed eggplant until eggplant is tender. Remove from pan and let sit on paper towel to blot out some of the oil. Add garlic to same pan and sweat until

garlic begins to soften.

4. With your hands, squish the drained whole tomatoes **or** blend the whole tomatoes into a course paste in a food processor. Add pulpy tomatoes to pan with salt, sugar **or** sweetener and red pepper flakes.
5. Increase heat to medium/high and cook until tomatoes just start to stick to the bottom of the pan. (Do not burn.)
6. Add reserved tomato juice, blended roasted eggplant and sweated eggplant cubes. Lower heat to medium and cook until sauce thickens. Season to taste.
7. Bring pot of water to a boil (about 4 cups). Add 1 tablespoon salt and boil pasta until al dente. Drain and sauce immediately. Garnish with basil and salata ricotta. Enjoy with a glass of red Sicilian Nero d'Avola wine.

**Linda "Sparky" Mortimer**  
**September 23, 1954 - November 21, 2011**

**Trailblazer, Gay Activist, Community Organizer, Partner, Parent, Grandparent, Music Lover, Chef**

**Friend**

**Graduate, Natural Gourmet Institute 2001**  
**Owner, Sparky Town. Est. 2008**

