

“In the Kitchen with Ina Garten”



Welcome!

Ina Garten’s culinary journey began well into her early life. Her mother refused to allow her to help in the kitchen. She believed Ina’s concentration should be on education. After high school,

Ina attended Syracuse University for a short while before putting that on hold to marry her sweetheart, Jeffery Garten and relocated to N.C. She began to dabble in cooking and entertaining in an effort to occupy her time while her husband served his four-year military tour during the Vietnam War; she also acquired her pilot’s license.

After her husband had completed his military service, the couple journeyed to Paris, France, for a four-month camping vacation that Garten has described as the birth of her love for French cuisine. During this trip, she experienced open-air markets, produce stands, and fresh cooking ingredients for the first time. On returning to the U.S., she began to cultivate her culinary abilities by studying the volumes of Julia Child’s seminal cookbook, *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*. Her weekly dinner party tradition began taking shape during this time, and she refined her home entertaining skills when she and her husband moved to Washington, D.C., in 1972.

From roughly 1972-1978 Ina worked as a budget analyst in the White House under Presidents Ford and Carter writing nuclear policy and budget papers. This work was growing monotonous to Ina and she wanted to do something else with her life. She spotted an ad in a local paper for a retail space for a specialty food store in The Hamptons in New York. Her and Jeffrey drove up and practically bought the store on the spot. It was named “Barefoot Contessa” by the original owners after the famous movie. Within a year, Garten had moved Barefoot Contessa across Main Street from its original location to a larger property. However, it soon outgrew this new location, and in 1985 she relocated the store to the newly vacated premises of gourmet shop Dean & DeLuca in the prosperous Long Island village of East Hampton. In contrast to Westhampton’s

beach season atmosphere, East Hampton is a year-round community and provided a larger, wealthier demographic as a customer base. At East Hampton, Garten expanded the store from its original 400 square feet (37 m²) to more than 3,000 square feet (280 m²), over seven times its original size. In this new, larger space, the store specialized in delicacies such as lobster Cobb salad, caviar, imported cheeses, and locally grown produce.

In 1996 after almost two decades of owning and running the store, she desired another change and sold the store to two of her employees whilst retaining ownership of the building. She re-emerged in 1999 with the launch of her first cookbook, "The Barefoot Contessa Cookbook". It received a great reception and was soon followed by her next book, "Barefoot Contessa Parties" in 2001.

After the success of The Barefoot Contessa Cookbook and Barefoot Contessa Parties!, Garten was approached by Food Network with an offer to host her own television cooking show. She rejected this proposal several times, until the London-based production company responsible for the popular Nigella Bites was assigned to the deal. She acquiesced to a 13-show season, and Barefoot Contessa premiered in 2002 to a positive reception. The program focuses on hearty, guest-oriented food, and Food Network found a popular hostess in the "calm, Rubenesque" Garten. The press began comparing her television presence to that of her mentor, Martha Stewart, but with a softer edge and more nurturing, comforting manner. Her show features her husband and their actual friends and generally only hosts celebrities that are her friends. Barefoot Contessa has approximately 1 million viewers tuned in per episode, and has posted some of Food Network's highest ratings.

Ina's success has thereafter spanned a range of Barefoot Contessa pantry products, a Frozen Food Line, and 7 more cookbooks. In 2009, Ina won her first ever Emmy for her cooking show which remains popular even today with more episodes coming out all the time.

Books by Ina Garten:

The Barefoot Contessa Cookbook (1999)

Barefoot Contessa Parties! Ideas and Recipes For Easy Parties That Are Really Fun (2001)

Barefoot Contessa Family Style: Easy Ideas and Recipes That Make Everyone Feel Like Family (2002)

Barefoot in Paris: Easy French Food You Can Make at Home (2004)

Barefoot Contessa at Home: Everyday Recipes You'll Make Over and Over Again (2006)

Barefoot Contessa Back to Basics: Fabulous Flavor from Simple Ingredients (2008)

Barefoot Contessa: How Easy Is That? (2010)

Barefoot Contessa: Foolproof: Recipes You Can Trust. Random House. 2012

Make It Ahead: A Barefoot Contessa Cookbook. Clarkson Potter. 2014

