



Rabbit in the Classroom: VictorsFood

by JessicaRabbit on [April 27, 2010](#)

by **Jess Rabbit**



“Would you like to join us for a corporate cooking class famil [trial]?” read the e-mail from personal cooking experience company, VictorsFood.

I was initially struck by visions of stodgy businessmen in crooked ties with truly abhorrent knife skills. I read on through the e-mail that this was to be a trial of the VictorsFood corporate team building events and would involve other media and industry participants.

By the time I read to end of the invitation I was intrigued and accepted the invitation with interest.

Victor’s Food is an initiative by chef Victor Pisapia (of Cheeky Food Group fame) and a core team of dedicated chefs and staff. The idea behind VictorsFood’s corporate cooking classes in particular is to use cooking to bring together the office-bound masses.

The class was held at the headquarters of Victor’s Food, a stunning home-style office high above Dank St in Waterloo. What a location – city views, stainless steel kitchen and some of Sydney’s premiere fresh food providores at your doorstep.

Tonight’s corporate cooking class was actually a “Mini Masterchef” with participants split into two equal teams, “Green” and “Red”. Our menu of 4 dishes were to be judged at the end for taste, presentation and efficiency. I was pretty excited, time to kick some corporate cooking boo-tay!

Swathed in aprons and a rather uncomfortable paper chefs hats denoting whether we were Green or Red team members we were introduced to basic knife skills, how to chop an onion and de-seed a capsicum. For the beginner cook the way these skills were shown and the assistance provided by Victor and Greg, both were patient and instructional.

Ingredients for Tequila Prawns, Quinoa Salad, Babaganouj and a Yellow Capsicum sauce were laid out in baskets across the table cutting down on confusion between participants of “what ingredient goes with which dish”.

Greg’s band of little chefs (us) began to zoom around the kitchen island and long table dressed as the “Green Team Kitchen Bench”.



Time passed quickly and, armed with a glass of silky chardonnay the Green team began to, somewhat, work as a team. Three of our members gelled as a team with Greg enjoying our enthusiasm (and frequent tasting).

I think my favourite part of the night (aside from the eating, of course) was learning how truly simple it is to smoke your own eggplant. As you know the awesome aubergine is my favourite of all vegetables and underrated to the point of disrespect. I was thrilled we were learning to make the VictorsFood recipe of "Babaganouj". On Greg's advice I warily plopped our perfect purple specimen onto the open flame of a Coleman camping stove in order to "smoke" them for my most favourite of dips. Turning the eggplant twice to ensure both sides were smoked equally when the outsides of the enticing eggfruit blackened and became crispy I moved them from the flame to a glass bowl to cool. When the veggie stopped smoking and the juices began to drip from the inside we were told to cover the bowl with tin foil and wait until the eggplant had cooled and we could remove the charred skins with our hands.

To my utter joy this babaganouj recipe is truly scrumptious! I like a dash of extra salt, the juice of half a lemon and a pinch of extra paprika.

I also hadn't yet had the pleasure of cooking quinoa, a healthy alternative to rice. Greg suggested I dry roast the seeds before adding water to plump them to fruition. The quinoa should be the colour of a paper bag before you add in the appropriate amount of water. Make sure you taste it once the water seems absorbed to see whether it has lost its "crunch" or if you need to add more water. I was pleasantly surprised with this lovely grain, it's even better with diced onions, tomatoes and avocado – definitely have to try it again!

With the Tequila Prawns prepped and ready to go, a creamy and layered Yellow Capsicum Sauce blended and warming on the stove, the Babaganouj was whipped and the Quinoa was happily resting in its bowl and now it was time for our "challenge". A basket of asparagus, garlic and almonds lay waiting on the table to see what we could concoct with it. Almost out of time and trying to do justice to the delicious asparagus my teammate Kate and I whipped up pan-fried asparagus with crushed almonds and burnt garlic butter. Yummy but in retrospect a nice creamy asparagus soup would have been a better option.

Flambeing the prawns was a task placed on my tiny shoulders and I happily accepted, relishing in the whoosh of flame and aromas of burnt tequila.

The experience was actually a great way to spend an evening. I can think of about 30 people who, when split into teams and armed with ingredients such as prawns, eggplant and capsicum could create a whole lotta' heavenly havoc (of the edible variety) and I would eagerly organise our own little "Mini Masterchef" with them.

For the corporate market VictorsFood does a full debrief on personality traits exposed in the event, interpersonal relationship statuses and how to use food to build your in house work team. What an interesting idea!

A huge thank you to Victor for the following recipes for Tequila Prawns and Babaganouj – enjoy!

RECIPE

BABAGANOUJ



Recipe testing and styling by Dario Milano (Food Pixels)

Serves 8-10

Ingredients

- 2-3 medium eggplant
- 1 1/2 tbsp tahini
- 1-2 tbsp lemon juice
- 1-2 cloves garlic
- 4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp paprika
- 1/4 bunch parsley
- 1 roma tomato (finely chopped)

Method

1. Roast whole eggplant over open flame, turning till skins are evenly toasted and eggplant is soft. Set aside and cool.
2. Peel the eggplant and drain for 15 minutes.
3. Place eggplant in a food processor with tahini, lemon, garlic, 3 tablespoons of the oil and salt and process until well combined and creamy. Adjust salt, lemon and oil as necessary.
4. Place mixture in a serving bowl, making a well in the centre just deep enough for the oil to be poured in. Then pour in the oil.
5. Sprinkle paprika, parsley and tomato on top.

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