



Emily Luchetti

Pastry Q and A's

I have interviewed many pastry chefs over the years and these are my go-to questions. Here I have turned the tables and answered them myself.

1. How did you get into cooking?

It was a bit through process of elimination. I always liked to cook but back in 1980 it wasn't something I, or many people, thought about as a way to make a living. I had moved to NYC after college and saw an ad in the New York Times with the headline "No Typing Required". My interest piqued, I applied and got a job at an Executive Dining Room near Wall Street. I quickly discovered you could make a living working in kitchens and have a blast doing it. Cooking school soon followed. I cooked on the savory side for 7 years and then switched to the sweet side, never looking back.

2. What brought you to San Francisco?

My husband is originally from the San Francisco Bay Area. Early in our careers he wanted to move back and I was fine with that! My family was scattered around the country. Coming to California with all its amazing produce is a chef's dream.

3. What flavors/ingredients do you like best?

Working with in season delicious fruits. Especially berries. When working with great produce the trick is to not mess it up. The blueberry (or whatever) is amazing on it's own. Some how you have to coax even more out of it by paring it with other ingredients. You can't mask the inherent flavors or it's a waste.

Caramel- Its so versatile. It goes with everything and can play a leading or supportive role.

4. What flavors/ingredients do you like least?

Probably Kiwi. Nothing wrong it just doesn't excite me. Also licorice.

5. What dessert first comes to mind when I mention the following ingredients:

Lemon: Ginger Cookie Meyer Lemon Ice Cream Sandwiches

Coffee: S'Mores Ice Cream Cake- coffee chocolate chunk ice cream and gooey marshmallow topping

Berries: Summer Pudding

Chocolate: Double Chocolate Layer Cake

6. What dessert has someone else created that you loved?

Gail Monaghan's Fane. According to her she didn't invent it but the origin is unknown and is recreated from her memory so I am giving her credit. It's in her book *Lost Desserts*. It's a luscious ice cream, meringue, nougat and chocolate sculpture/concoction. Simple ingredients yet so sophisticated in taste.

7. Who have you worked with who influenced your dessert style?

Jeremiah Tower. His palate is extraordinary.

8. What would you like to see used more in the pastry kitchen or appreciated by diners?

Smaller portion sizes

9. What kitchen tool would you be lost without?

An ice cream scoop. You can use it for so much more than scooping ice cream.

10. What's your least favorite pastry trend?

"Healthy" desserts. Fruit is not dessert. It can taste delicious but dessert should be decadent and sinful in a good way.

11. What do you do to get recharged creatively?

Watch movies, walk on a beach or go for a hike.

12. What flavor birthday cake did you have growing up?

Spice Cake with white frosting. I have a twin brother and my mom made him a chocolate cake. I got two kinds every year.

13. What was the last thing you made outside of work?

A fried egg served over brown rice and leftover roasted veggies with a drizzle of good olive oil and a sprinkling of Maldon salt.

14. What tip would you offer beginner bakers?

Put your head down and start baking. Don't underestimate the technical skills required to be a good baker. What you aren't learning on the job teach yourself. Go out and try different pastry chefs' dessert to expose your palate and see their creativity.