



Ask the Expert

Searching for the right restaurant or have a foodie question that needs solving? Samantha Wood is here to help! Feel free to send your questions to gourmet@itp.com



CHEF MAURIZIO'S TAGLIATA DI MANZO

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Q We do quite a bit of entertainment, and I am keen to sometimes host guests at home, rather than a restaurant. Can you recommend any chefs for hire, or small catering businesses that offer home-cooked food?

You wouldn't think so, but we have a growing number of small businesses that offer just that here in the U.A.E. I seem to come across a new one every month!

1. Let's start with chefs for hire. Basically you book a chef who will take care of everything from the menu creation (set menu or buffet) and shopping, to cooking and serving the dishes at your dinner party. We have three here I would recommend with very different cooking styles. Chef Andy (www.chefandycampbell.com) whose cuisine is British, but loves to incorporate local, Arabic ingredients. Chef Tom (www.cheftom.co) – even though he's Czech, his cuisine is very Asian influenced thanks to his experience in Japanese and Chinese restaurants. Maurizio Pelli (050-4282289) calls himself an Italian gourmand rather than a chef, and will pull together a multi-course Italian feast – either fish or meat.

2. We also have a number of small catering companies. Marta's Kitchen (www.martaskitchen.com) helmed by Spanish chef Marta Yanci provides bespoke catering from home-made dishes to innovative gastronomy, whether canapés or buffet menus. Casserole (www.casseroleonline.com) prepares traditional dishes like beef bourguignon and lasagna and delivers directly to your doorstep – either hot to eat immediately, or cold so you can heat up at your leisure. Last but not least, Yes Chef (www.yeschef.ae) run by ex-hoteliars, provides a number of catering options from set menus and canapés to buffets and barbecues.


Now you're spoilt for choice – let's hope too many cooks don't spoil the broth!

DID YOU KNOW?

1. Living in the U.A.E where so many fruits, vegetables and herbs are imported, we tend to forget what's in season. I would encourage you to buy local first and if imported, check if seasonal before purchasing. Starting this month we'll be sharing seasonal produce so you know what to look out for in the local supermarkets.

For January, we have apple, carrots, celeriac, chicory, kale, swede, Swiss chard, turnip, rosemary and sage.

2. Apples are fat, sodium and cholesterol free. Never peel an apple; the skin contains more antioxidants than the flesh.

3. Flax seeds and its oil work wonders boosting metabolism and hair/ nail growth. Sprinkle in salads or add to smoothies and yoghurt to help shed extra weight. 

SAMANTHA WOOD IS THE FOUNDER OF U.A.E-BASED RESTAURANT REVIEW AND FOODIE RESOURCE WWW.FOODIVA.NET
RECENTLY VOTED NO. 2 BEST BLOG IN DUBAI!