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January 17, 2013



West Wellington foodie Paula Roy will be invited into the Back Lane Café's kitchen to dish up her famous pig cheeks on January 21. All proceeds will go to the Parkdale Food Centre. Photo by Kristy Strauss

Foodie dishes up Pig in a Puddle

West Wellington food writer in the kitchen

By Kristy Strauss

At only five years of age, Paula Roy remembers canning pickles and jams from her mother's garden. At 12, she made her first turkey dinner for the family. Now, the West Wellington resident is taking her love of cooking and giving back to the community.

On January 21, Roy will cook up her well-loved dish – pig cheeks on a celery and potato purée – as a guest chef at the Back Lane Café in a fundraiser to help the Parkdale Food Centre. She calls the dish “cheeky pig in a puddle.”

“You cannot begin to imagine my excitement when I was asked to

come and cook at the Back Lane Café. I literally jumped for joy,” said Roy, who has written about food in Ottawa since 1999 and has been the food editor of Ottawa at Home magazine for more than four years. “The chance to work for one night in what I consider one of

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West Wellington foodie Paula Roy will be invited into the Back Lane Café's kitchen to dish up her famous pig cheeks on January 21. All proceeds will go to the Parkdale Food Centre. Photo by Kristy Strauss

Kitchen goddess for a day: A foodie dream come true

Continued from page 1
Ottawa's finest kitchens is like a dream come true."

While writing has always been her career path, Roy said cooking is her main hobby.

The Back Lane Café invited Roy to make her popular dish after customers came in one day, raving about the meal.

Roy had entered it into the My Neighbourhood Bites

"The chance to work for one night in what I consider one of Ottawa's finest kitchens is like a dream come true."

event, held at the Cube Gallery in December.

The meal was inspired by a trip to the United Kingdom, where Roy and her husband vacationed last year. While out for dinner,

they noticed the pig cheeks dinner on the menu.

"I tasted it, and thought it was the best thing ever," she said. "I had to figure out how to cook it."

When she got home, Roy visited the butcher and started trying out different methods with the meat. She didn't want to just re-create it, and so she put her own spin on the meal – simmering braised pig cheeks in a very fragrant stock accented with cardamom and other seasonings, and serving the pork on top of a bed of celery root and potato purée.

When the Back Lane Café invited her to be a guest chef for the night, Roy knew it would be the perfect way to give back to the Parkdale Food Centre's Nutrition Fund.

The fund helps buy much needed healthy and fresh items like milk, cheese and yogurt for the food bank's clients.

"The food bank is always on my mind," said Roy. "I'm a frugal cook, but I never have to think gosh, there's no food in the cupboard. Or, I have to make it last until the next paycheck."

The meal she's making will also be three-courses and will include Roy's homemade soup recipe and donuts for dessert.

"The fact that I get to play in this amazing space and help a favourite charity just makes everything more special," Roy said. "It is going to be an unforgettable experience for me, for sure."

She added that it's important for the community to remember to donate to their local food bank year round, not just over the holidays when many organizations host food drives.

"In January it's hard, but the need is the same," Roy said.

Those interested in attending Paula Roy's Pig in a Puddle for Parkdale Food Centre on January 21 can make reservations by calling the Back Lane Café at 613-695-2999 or visiting backlanecafe.com.



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