

Wellness Chefs

KUOMagazine.com Cooking with Chef Noel Cunningham



Chef Noel Cunningham is a Jamaican- Canadian award-winning Chef, Author, Food Writer, and Culinary Consultant, who shares a special interview with us and a delicious recipe.

Welcome To Our Wellness Chefs

Noel Cunningham

A Jamaican-Canadian Award-Winning Chef, Author, Food Writer, and Culinary Consultant!



Chef Noel Cunningham (born Jamaican, W.I.), one of Jamaica's most recognized and celebrated young chefs socially known as Chef Cunny. Chef Noel is the dynamic force behind his catering company, Cuisine by Noel. Recipe contributor to the Jamaica Gleaner, Cooking Sense Magazine, The Jamaican Eats Magazine, and food expert at Toronto Caribbean Newspaper. Chef Noel was born and raised in Kingston, Jamaica, who was influenced at a young age by his mother Jennifer Laidley and Aunt Miriam Reid, who is a professional chef and baker. His culinary journey began in high school when he did Food and Nutrition, which developed his love for the Culinary Arts. Chef Noel continued his education at Runaway Bay HEART Hotel and Training Institute in Jamaica. He has been working in the hospitality industry since the age of nineteen in some of the leading Hotels, in the island's tourist mecca as a Certified Chef De Partie, which propelled him onto the "Culinary Catwalk."



Despite working as the head chef for several acclaimed restaurants in Jamaica, it was at Mantra, at age 21 where he truly honed his skill as Head chef/restaurant manager. It wouldn't be long before Chef Noel made a name for himself in Jamaica. I have been following Chef Noel on Instagram for some time and fell in love with his delicious cuisines. Being a Jamaican-Canadian as well, it was an honor to feature Chef Noel in this Sept./Oct./Nov. 2020 issue of KUOMagazine.com.

KUOM: When did you realized that you wanted to become a chef? I wanted to become a chef when I was in High school. I was awarded top performer twice for food and nutrition. By this, I realized it's what I really love and was good at it.

KUOM: What was your first memory of your love for cooking? My first memory for my love for cooking I would say it was during my work experience at Soldier Camp in Jamaica. The Soldier that was in charge would take us under a tree every day after the lunch shift and teach us culinary terms and he would give us in-depth knowledge on the industry, and I think that was it. After that, I started experimenting more.

KUOM: Where do you draw your creative inspiration from when preparing a recipe? I draw my creative inspiration from different cultures, mixing modern technique with traditional dishes and just doing things my way.

KUOM: What have you learn during your culinary training/techniques that you're still implementing today as a chef? I learn so much about time management and as a chef it is very important to manage your time. The importance of health safety and sanitization. That's, not something you take for granted.

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KUOM: What recipe has been your most challenging? Oh lord lol, I stay away from those challenges; they are a few that are labor intensive, takes time or need more space. I can't point on a specific now, but they are some that I need to challenge. I haven't come across many challenging ingredients as a chef once you understand cooking techniques and methods of cooking as well as flavors it easy to use any ingredients.

KUOM: What 4 ingredients are a must-have in your kitchen? And what has been your most challenging ingredients to work with? My Chef Noel's Jerk Marinade is a must-have, Pasta because it's easy to cook on a day when I can't do too much. Some Seafood, Salmon, Snapper or Shrimp and my Jamaican Ackee.

KUOM: As a professional chef, do you cook by taste or measurement? These days I cook my measurement if it's a recipe I want to blog, but cooking for myself or at home, I cook by taste for sure.

KUOM: As most people are shifting towards an alternative plant-based society, what foods you suggest to vegan/vegetarian who are experiencing a deficiency in O-Mega 3, 6 & 9 and Vitamin D, etc.? Get lots of Spinach, Broccoli, Avocado and Kidney, Chia Seeds, Brussel Sprouts & Beans in your diet.

KUOM: Do you foresee yourself as a master chef? And if so, how are you preparing yourself? Not really that's a lot of stress and expectation the higher you go, more pressure.

KUOM: If you could prepare a meal for anyone, who would it be and what would you make? I would definitely cook for Oprah Winfrey. I would keep it simple and make her a Jamaican fusion dish. Warm things up with a fire-roasted pumpkin, coconut bisque with scotch bonnet - herb oil and coconut foam, Escovitch Fish with my Bammy bites to start. Then a stuffed jerk chicken supreme with sweet potato puree sautéed veggies and my 876-Signature cocktail.

KUOM: OMG, now that's making my mouth water. What has been your funny kitchen incident? I was working at Hedonism Hotel and the sous chef told a staff member to make meatloaf and she started getting mad that they trying to pressure her because it's late and now she will have to go and make bread dough plus make the filling. She was thinking of something totally different. It was just the regular meatloaf in a loaf thin. That was a funny moment.

BONUS - Finally, what advice would you give someone that wants to become a chef? Make sure you are serious and dedicated it takes passion to stay in this business, you won't become rich overnight like a food network star but that's where you should aim. Read a lot, stay up to date with trends and what's happening in the industry. Network and make sure you find a mentor or a role model.

On behalf of KUOMagazine, we want to thank Chef Noel for this special interview and his delicious recipe of Blackened Salmon and Coconut Lemon Quinoa with Pineapple Salsa on page 40. Stay connected with Chef Noel on all her social media/website links below and to purchase his book call "Cuisine by Noel." Also, watch a video that was taken at James Beard House 2018 on: <https://youtu.be/biKeSI3hdxw>

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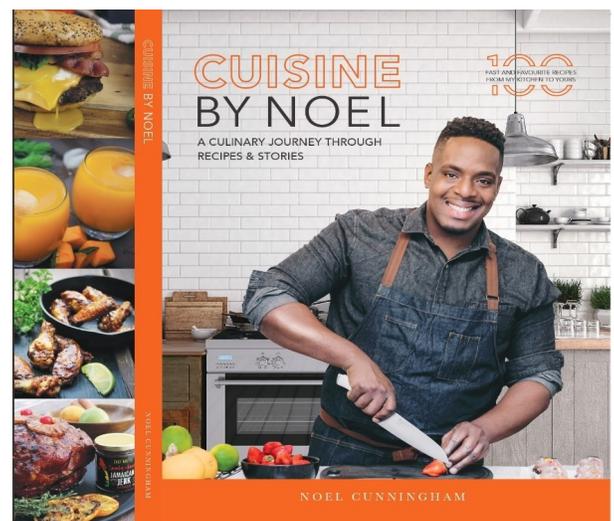
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Blackened Salmon & Coconut Lemon Quinoa with Pineapple Salsa

Ingredients:

3 6-oz. salmon fillets
salt & pepper to taste
1 tsp. cayenne pepper
½ tsp ginger powder

Salsa

1/2 diced pineapple
1/4 diced red onion
½ diced green peppers
½ diced red peppers
2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
1 tbsp. chopped fresh parsley
salt and pepper to taste
1 tsp. lime juice

Quinoa

1 cup quinoa
1 cup water
1 cup coconut milk
1tbsp lemon juice
2 tsp lemon zest

Method:

Step 1. Place all ingredients for the quinoa in a pot and bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer, cover and cook until all the liquid is absorbed. (about 15 mins)

Step 2. While the quinoa is cooking combine all the ingredients for the salsa, season to taste with lime juice, salt and put aside.

Step 3. Marinate salmon with spices and set aside. In a heated skillet cook salmon on both sides for 5 to 6 minutes per side until cook through and enjoy.

Recipe by Chef Noel Cunningham

Photo Credit: <http://cuisinebynoel.com>

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