

B *to* *Back* *the* *Basics*

Professional chef, radio personality, and wife of NBA vet Brian Shaw, Nikki Shaw brings sexy and healthy to the kitchen.

BY KEIJA MINOR
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MEIKO TAKECHI ARQUILLOS

“Men are simple; it’s women who are more complicated,” says a relaxed Nikki Shaw, sitting in the family room of her Redondo Beach, Calif., home. “The fastest way to a man’s heart is through his stomach.”

It’s a pretty traditional statement from a very modern woman. The professional chef hosts a radio segment highlighting celeb food favorites on the Foxxhole, Jamie Foxx’s Sirius Channel; owns and operates Flavor Caterer; and travels the country preaching the importance of healthy eating. She does this all while raising three children with her husband, Brian Shaw, who, at press time, was assistant coach for the L.A. Lakers. Brian is on the road a lot, which many spouses would find challenging, however, “Distance makes the relationship stronger,” Nikki promises.

She’s now set her sights on a new goal: bringing sexiness and healthiness to the kitchen—starting with the outfit. Shortly before joining the third-season cast of *The Next Food Network Star*, Nikki designed her own chef’s coat: a form-fitting, double-breasted minidress that she often rocks with a pair

of sky-high Christian Louboutins. She is dubbed the Sensual Chef in some circles because of her distinct spin on the romantic meal. She often opts for fish and vegetables. “We’re conditioned to think we have to eat a starch at every meal, but you don’t want something that’s going to make you feel sluggish.” True, especially if you want to keep the evening going after dinner.

As part of the Lakers Fit for Life community outreach program, Nikki visits schools, arming kids with the knowledge to make healthy food choices. “You think the fast food restaurants are hooking you up by offering to supersize your meal for just a dollar more, but we are allowing them to supersize our waistslines,” is just one of the lessons she drives home.

When asked if professional women have moved away from cooking, Nikki says she fully understands that “times have changed and [as women] we have to hold down the home and hold down a job. Often no one has time to cook.” So tonight, Nikki is showing three dynamic girlfriends how to make a quick, healthy, and romantic meal.



“Two things you should always have in your refrigerator are fresh spinach and baked chicken. Try the rotisserie chicken from the grocery store for a quick meal.”
—Nikki Shaw

Nikki Shaw in her backyard, wearing her signature chef's coat



Adriane, Gilda, Nikki, and Glenda hang out in the kitchen.

THE STUDENTS:

JUDGE GLENDA VEASEY specializes in family law and sits on the bench of the Los Angeles Superior Court. Her favorite restaurant was Crustacean in Beverly Hills, but now it's The Cheesecake Factory because, with a 7-year-old son, dining out has become a family affair. Having a child has made her particularly mindful of what her whole family eats and she admits to the need for more variety in her menu. "If I eat any more chicken, I'm going to start clucking."

GILDA CLIFT BRELAND fast-tracked it up the legal ladder, becoming a partner at the law firm McBirney & Chuck in seven years. She's also president of the John M. Langston Bar Association, widely known as the largest and oldest organization for black lawyers in the country. Breland, who lives with her husband next door to the Shaws, says that when it comes to cooking, her husband is the grill master. When asked how often she cooks, "Hmmm," she stalls, as her friends perch ready to call her out if she doesn't answer truthfully. "Probably once every two weeks, because I don't have time," she explains. And when she does cook, it's pasta. "I'm half Italian!" she says in her defense.

ADRIANE HOPPER runs her own television company, In Light Productions, and is currently working on a series for Lifetime. She "wanted to be the next Oprah," but found she loved being behind the camera more. Passion and hard work have paid off: She won an Emmy while doing a stint for NBC and helmed a series for the Oprah Winfrey Network (OWN), *Breaking Down the Bars*, about women trying to change their lives while in prison. How often does she cook? If she's not in the heat of production (or traveling—Hopper is an avid scuba diver), then about two or three times a week. "If I have food in the refrigerator, I'll cook it, but I hate going to the grocery store."

"Incorporate what's in season, because it has a higher nutritional value. For summer, that means corn, berries, peaches, and nectarines."
—Nikki Shaw



PROP STYLIST: SHANNON RAY; FOOD STYLIST: ELEANOR NEUENHUIS; MAKEUP: LUIS CASCO; PRODUCTION ASSOCIATE: JESSICA KOLLAR



BRUSCHETTA

- 2 cups grape tomatoes, diced
- 1 tablespoon fresh garlic, crushed
- 1 tablespoon cilantro, chopped
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 loaf multigrain French bread

In a medium bowl, add tomatoes, garlic, cilantro, olive oil, and balsamic vinegar and stir until blended. Cover and refrigerate overnight for the best flavor, or for at least 1 hour.

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Slice bread into 1/4-inch-thick slices. Lightly drizzle

olive oil over each slice of bread, place on a cookie sheet, and put in oven for 2 minutes. Place a heaping spoonful of the tomato mixture over each slice of toast before serving.



BABY SPINACH, MANDARIN ORANGE, AND CANDIED WALNUT SALAD

- 1 cup fresh corn kernels, sliced off cob
- 1 cup fresh asparagus, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 six-ounce bag baby spinach
- 1 cup mandarin oranges, drained
- 1/2 cup feta cheese, crumbled
- 1/2 cup candied walnuts
- 1/2 cup vinaigrette dressing

In a small pot, add corn and enough water to cover corn. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to medium and simmer for 1 minute. Add chopped asparagus, cover, and let cook for 4 more minutes. Drain water off vegetables and set aside to cool for 10 minutes.

In a large bowl, add spinach, oranges, corn, asparagus, feta, and walnuts. Pour dressing over salad and toss.



KEEP IT SIMPLE BROILED SALMON

- 4 eight-ounce salmon fillets
- 1 fresh lemon
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon Old Bay seasoning

Preheat oven to broil. Place salmon on a baking sheet lined with foil (for easy cleanup).

Squeeze fresh lemon juice over each fillet, then brush with olive oil. Sprinkle Old Bay seasoning on top of each fillet.

Place baking sheet 10 inches under the broiler. Broil salmon for 8 to 14 minutes, depending on thickness and desired doneness.

* For Nikki's trademark Bean and Chicken Sausage Soup recipe, which can be frozen and defrosted whenever you need a quick, healthy meal, go to Uptownmagazine.com.



SEDUCTIVE SANGRIA

- 1 bottle dry red wine
- 1 bottle dry white wine
- 1/3 cup Grand Marnier
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 apple, peeled and sliced
- 1/2 cup strawberries, sliced
- 2 oranges, peeled and sliced
- 2 limes, peeled and sliced

In a large pitcher, add wine, Grand Marnier, and sugar. Stir until sugar dissolves. Stir fruit into wine and refrigerate overnight. Serve cold with or without ice.