

WEST WINDSOR: Food, family and web are a student's specialities

By John Saccenti, Staff Writer

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WEST WINDSOR — Nikita Gupta grew up watching her mother and her grandmother cook.

From family recipes, to new tastes from different corners of the world, to finding ways to express their creativity, cooking has always been much more for than a means to an end for Nikita and her family. For them, it was a time to get together, try new things and to learn about each other and other cultures.

"Because of them I've gotten inspired to cook. As a young girl, it was fun, and their food was delicious," said the West Windsor-Plainsboro High School South sophomore.

It is those experiences, the very ones that have helped shape and form the young adult she is today, that Nikita wants to share with others. Earlier this year, Nikita, with some help from her father, Anupam, started her own website, www.nikitaskitchen.com, in which she shares recipes, talks about food and prepares food during video clips.

"For people who don't like cooking, I just want to tell them that cooking is not complex at all. It's easy, relaxing and enjoyable," she said. "It is a way for someone to show their creativeness. They can always express their creativity through cooking."

Nikita's recipes include step-by-step instructions for dishes such as Tandoori chicken, mango salad, banana bread and her favorite, chicken parmesan, among others. Future updates, she said, will include recipes and advice on how to prepare seafood. Members can comment and review the recipes.

The young chef also has plans on inspiring her peers into moving away from unhealthy choices or quick and easy fast food. She said cooking at home can be healthy, economical and exciting.

"I'm trying to inspire everyone, especially young adults, and I'm trying to show them that cooking is not complex," she said. "I heard that sometimes following just the recipes is not easy so through my videos, people can follow along step by step."



Nikita Gupta, a sophomore at West Windsor-Plainsboro HS South, has created a recipe website.

As a child, Nikita and her family got the opportunity to travel throughout the world, sampling new dishes and foods along the way. As recently as December, she visited Egypt and took a Nile River cruise, saw the pyramids and sampled a variety of Egyptian food.

"Each cuisine has its own taste," she said. "Traveling around the world brought an awareness of different cultures and their cuisine so it's been good."

Those experiences were often brought home as she and her family would make traditional Indian food as well, allowing Nikita to explore her own heritage as well as that from other parts of the world.

"In Indian cuisine, there is this bread called Roti, and my mom would have me make the dough, then I'd roll it out, and she'd take that and cook it on the pan," she said.

Working hand in hand with her family is something she continues to do this day. Her family often helps create recipes for the website and even gets to taste and advise on how to improve her dishes.

"I had a passion since I was a very young girl," Nikita said. "Growing up, I watched my parents and grandparents cooking so I just wanted to express my passion through the website."

jsaccenti
@centraljersey.com.

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