

Sally Roeckell

Talks

Food, Family, and Friends

An interview
and offering of
tasty recipes

By LISA STAMOS | Photography by LINDA M. BARRETT

SALLY ROECKELL BELIEVES IN trusting the process and sharing good (and delicious) outcomes with the people around her. In addition to her blog “Table and Dish,” the many-hats-wearing entrepreneur started a business early this year that delivers extraordinary charcuterie boards and grazing tables, as well as Mini Grazing Boxes which emphasize serving food safely at home for her clients.

Roeckell learned about cooking while growing up with several generations of women who love to cook, especially from her mother who owns Penny’s Kitchen, a family restaurant in Northern Michigan. Armed with insights and a keen sensibility about preparing food, she is inspired by a “be fearless” philosophy about cooking. For her, food connects people through love and the generosity inherent in making and serving family and friends with her recipes. Here, she shares her thoughts and a few recipes that we think you’ll enjoy.



How did you get started with your blog and business?

I’m a wife, teacher, mom, photographer, stylist, and friend. I’ve been a photographer for almost 40 years, with the last seven years photographing and styling food almost exclusively. My blog, “Table and Dish”, began as a request from my children for the recipes we have spent so much time making together over the years. We decided to name the blog Table and Dish because it is at a table, with a dish that it all happens.

Our conversations and quality time at the table over the years have played a huge part in the formation of our family. My intention was to create a catalog to curate and archive the memories and recipes I have prepared with and for my four children, husband, and friends, but it became so much more. The blog chronicles stories of my travels involving food, from shopping French markets in Provence to orchards in the Basque region of Spain to Street food in Morocco. All this has led me to work with amazingly talented teams producing content for food companies from local farms to international brands.

What will Sage and Jam Grazing offer?

Today, together with my friend Jennifer McKinney, we have a new venture (food related obviously) called *Sage and Jam Grazing*. We create charcuterie and grazing boards, tables, and boxes of all sizes for any occasion.

In October of last year, what started as a conversation about our love to help others gather and celebrate in delicious ways became the infancy of *Sage and Jam Grazing*. We started slowly by filling a few orders and by January [2020] we were taking orders for entire dining room table spreads for large crowds. With our sights set on large venues, weddings, and corporate events our calendar started to fill.

Then when the pandemic changed the plans of almost everyone on the planet we respectfully pulled back until people let us know that they were ready to gather again. Knowing we needed to pivot to meet the new need, and respecting and protecting peoples’ health led us to create our “Mini Grazing Boxes”, a personal size charcuterie box. It’s darling and delicious and has kept us very busy. Hostesses have been ordering one for each guest.

What could be easier?

Each guest has their own personal charcuterie box filled with a selection of cheeses and meats, crackers, fresh vegetables, fruits, freshly roasted season nuts, and dried fruit. That and a cocktail and the party begins. For those who are comfortable sharing food from a common board we are still filling many orders from intimate boards for two celebrating a special anniversary to complete table spreads for showers and small weddings. We strive to customize our service to the individual comfort of each client.

How do you think the pandemic will affect the holidays?

This year, I think the holidays are going to have a different feel. I think the prevailing attitude will be more about gathering, serving simple food with new twists on flavors. Tradition seems more important than ever this holiday season, so I think we’ll crave food that represents our personal journeys and our shared experiences. Smaller, intimate groups with the focus on health, mindful eating, sustainability, and quality over quantity. No fuss!

Where will you be in a few years?

My hope has always been to one day write a cookbook. Table and Dish started as a collection of recipes and experiences I’ve had that are all tied to the theme of food prepared creatively and simply, with love. I am most comfortable in the process of expressing my love, teaching, creating, and nourishing through food. That is why our company Sage and Jam Grazing started so organically. The idea of artfully arranging delicious foods to fill a need for others allowed me to share my love of food and creativity while serving others. In due time, we hope to go back to creating large scale charcuterie tables celebrating with abundance.

What inspires you?

Is the process of educating, feeding, and helping others. I love being part of a collaborative creative team in a small kitchen or a large production set or venue. I love the energy produced once creativity and good ingredients collide. I often feel humbled that I have the privilege of doing what I love to do.



Above: Sage and Jam Grazing also customizes dessert boards. Below: Sage and Jam Grazing offers custom boards to feed any size crowd. All are filled with artisan cured meats, fresh roasted nuts, veggies, fruits, olives, spread, house made jam, and assorted crackers. No two boards are alike.




PHOTO: SALLY ROECKELL

Assorted mini boxes can include artisan meats and cheeses, fresh fruit, dried figs, dried apricots, cucumber, tomato, fresh roasted spiced nuts, dips, jam, and olives; orders can be customized.

What are your favorite foods?

The problem is there really isn't anything I haven't liked. My favorite part has more to do with the experience than the food. I love experiencing how others gather whether at grandmother's table or at a soup vendor in Marrakech, each favorite experience is about the love, authenticity, and generosity that flavors the experiences. The food is just a vehicle for the love.

Will you share some cooking tips?

Don't ever be afraid to try anything new in the kitchen. So many people tell me they only want to cook with recipes under five ingredients. Sometimes the little bit extra is so worth the effort. And often, it's not the effort you think it will be. It took me until I was over 50 to make my own bread for the first time. I have no idea what I was afraid of! Slow down and enjoy the process. If you know for a fact that the kitchen is just not your space, let others do it for you. All that, and buy really good knives! 

To learn more, visit tableanddish.com and sageandjamgrazing.com.

Others Dish on Sally Roeckell

"Sally Roeckell instantly makes you feel comfortable and cared for. Not only is she extremely talented at creating and styling, but she has the true gift of hospitality. Her Sage and Jam Grazing creates lavish spreads of gourmet foods with an artistic flair. Not only is the variety of food full of flavor, but their attention to detail and personalized customer service is amazing. The grazing scene brings people together, ignites conversation, and puts guests at ease." – Kelly Barge, owner of Providence Vineyard, a luxury barn wedding venue.

"Dear Jennifer and Sally, WOW, WOW, WOW! That's all I have to say about the BEAUTIFUL charcuterie board you delivered to me on Saturday. It was outstanding and enjoyed by all! And there are not words to describe the coconut macaroons! I am dreaming about them! Help! They were beyond delicious!! Thank you both." – Sara Peterson

"Sally has such a gift for putting together an artful charcuterie board. Her standards are set high before she starts the design process for each board. Sally's Sage & Jam charcuterie boards are perfect for large to small gatherings. During these challenging times, Sally took the extra steps to design individual charcuterie boxes for each guest at smaller gatherings. Still artfully done however, in a safe manner." – Christina Currie, owner Christina Currie Events

Egg in a Hole

INGREDIENTS

12 slices bacon
6 slices bread, 1/2-inch thick
3 tablespoons unsalted butter, at room temperature
6 large eggs
6 tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan
1-1/2 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
2 tablespoons chopped fresh chives

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Place bacon in a single layer onto a baking sheet. Place into oven and bake until par-cooked, about for 5-7 minutes. Transfer to a paper towel-lined plate. Lightly oil a baking sheet or coat with nonstick spray. Using a 3-inch biscuit cutter, make a hole in the center of each bread slice. Butter one side of the bread slices. Place the bread onto the prepared baking sheet, buttered side down. Add bacon slices and eggs, gently cracking the eggs into each hole and keeping the yolk intact. Use a pastry brush to add a little butter to the edges of the top side of the bread if desired. Sprinkle with Parmesan and thyme; season with salt and pepper, to taste. Place into oven and bake until the egg whites have set, about 12-15 minutes. Serve immediately, garnished with chives, if desired.



Mini Cranberry Pecan Goat Cheese Truffles

INGREDIENTS

10 oz goat cheese
6 oz cream cheese
2 teaspoons cinnamon
3 tablespoons honey; extra for garnish
1-1/2 cups candied pecans chopped, divided
1 cup diced dried cranberries
1/2 cup minced fresh parsley

INSTRUCTIONS

In a large bowl, beat goat cheese, cream cheese, cinnamon, and honey until light and fluffy. Add 1/2 cup pecan chips, folding to combine. Set aside. Line baking sheet with parchment paper. Toss together remaining pecan chips, dried cranberries, and chopped parsley in the center of the parchment paper. Using a large cookie scoop, scoop out one round of cheese filling and toss in pecan mixture. Continue until all truffles have been rolled in coating. Refrigerate cheeseballs until ready to serve. You can make these up to three days before, just make sure and store them in an airtight container. To Serve: Drizzle with honey, if desired. Serve with crackers, warm crostini, or as is with a pretzel stick in place of a toothpick.





Vegetable Fritters

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup sweet yellow corn
- 1 cup riced cauliflower
- 1/4 cup fine diced red onion
- 3 tablespoons chopped parsley
- 1/2 cup diced peppers (red yellow green)
- 1-1/2 cups flour
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 2 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 2 tsp fried brown mustard seeds (see directions)
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 cup milk
- 1/2 cup canola oil for cooking

Raita Condiment

INGREDIENTS

- 3 teaspoons ground cumin (see note)
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 4 teaspoons black or brown mustard seed
- 1 1/2 cups whole milk Greek yogurt
- 1 tablespoon fresh squeezed lemon juice
- 2 green onions, ends trimmed and minced, plus more for garnish
- 1/3 bunch cilantro, stems and all, minced, plus more for garnish
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt
- 1/4 teaspoon chili powder

INSTRUCTIONS

First, prep the spices. Heat olive oil in a skillet, then add mustard seeds and cook just until the first few pop, 1-2 minutes. Remove skillet from heat and set pan aside to cool. When cool, strain mustard seeds from the oil. Reserve 2 teaspoons seeds for the fritters and the rest and the oil for drizzling over raita just before serving. In a medium bowl, stir to combine yogurt, lemon juice, 1 Tbs olive oil, green onions, and cilantro, 1 teaspoon each ground cumin and fried mustard seeds, and sea salt. Cover and set in fridge while you make the fritters.

In a large bowl of a food processor, add the flour, brown sugar, sugar, baking powder, cayenne, salt, pepper, and 1/4 cup of the corn. Pulse until blended, then transfer mixture to a mixing bowl. Stir in remaining corn, peppers, cauliflower, onion, parsley, mustard seeds and milk, mixing until a batter forms. It should be the consistency of a thick pancake batter. Adjust by adding more milk or flour if consistency is to thick or thin. Add oil to a large skillet saucepan and heat over medium high heat. You only need enough oil to coat the pan. This is a shallow fry, not a deep fry. To test your oil, sprinkle a few drops of water in the pan. If they sizzle, your pan is ready. You can also test the oil with a wooden spoon. The oil will start bubbling around the spoon. When the oil is hot, add a little less than 1/4 cup of batter to the skillet and then quickly smooth the batter out to a circle. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes, flip and cook another 2 minutes or until brown and crispy all over. The veggie fritters are ready to flip when they are golden brown. Remove and repeat with the remaining batter until all the batter has been used. Keep the fritters warm.

Just before serving, spoon raita into a serving bowl and swirl with a spoon. Drizzle with reserved mustard oil, and sprinkle with chili powder and reserved green onion and cilantro. Serve fritters with a big dollop of raita and a few cherry tomatoes. Note: Try using whole cumin seeds and toast and grind your own... Set a small skillet over medium heat. Add cumin seed and, shaking the pan a bit, cook just until seeds are fragrant, 1-2 minutes. Stay with it, they will burn quickly.



Roasted Citrus Salmon

INGREDIENTS

- 1 (1-1/2 pound) salmon fillet
- 2 lemons, thinly sliced
- 1 blood orange, thinly sliced
- 1 tangerine, thinly sliced
- 6-8 sprigs fresh dill
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- Lemon pepper
- Dried thyme
- Pink peppercorns
- Salt and pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

Heat oven to 350°. Season salmon with salt and pepper on both sides. Place in a large baking dish or sheet pan lined with parchment paper. Sprinkle with seasonings. Top with citrus slices and herbs. Drizzle everything with olive oil and bake until salmon is just turning opaque around the edges and is nearly cooked through, approximately 20 minutes. All ovens are different and salmon filets can be varied in thickness. Check at 15 minutes and adjust time accordingly. To serve, season with additional salt and pepper (if desired), and a squeeze of lemon juice.

