



Cook yourself thin

Former model Candice Kumai trades in her Manolos for chef's clogs – and still stays fit and fabulous

There's an old saying that "nothing tastes as good as skinny feels." But what if you could have your cake and eat it, too? TV host Candice Kumai believes you can. The 29-year-old model-turned-chef has devoted her career to creating waistline-friendly fare that doesn't skimp on flavour. "I want to get my message out to people, but in a really fun and playful way," she tells *Hello! Canada*. "It's not that hard to eat healthy: take processed foods out of your diet and eat the way that Grandma wanted you to eat."

Luckily for the San Diego native, she inherited vastly different culinary tastes from her own grandmothers – and so she has lots of diverse dishes to draw on when she's looking for culinary inspiration. The daughter of a Polish-American father (a nuclear auditor) and a Japanese mother (a language teacher), Candice was raised in a home where specialty foods like sashimi and perogies

INGREDIENTS serves 6

- 4 large sweet potatoes, scrubbed
- 2 tsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp garlic powder (optional)
- ¼ tsp sea salt
- Skinny 'Cue Sauce

- 1 Preheat the oven to 450° F.
- 2 Halve the sweet potatoes lengthwise and cut each half lengthwise into 4 long wedges. Place the sweet potatoes on a rimmed baking sheet.
- 3 Drizzle the oil over the potatoes, add the garlic powder if desired, and ½ teaspoon of the salt, and toss to coat.
- 4 Roast the potatoes until golden brown and slightly crisp, 25 to 30 minutes.
- 5 Sprinkle the potatoes with the remaining ¼ teaspoon salt and serve with the Skinny 'Cue Sauce.

SKINNY 'CUE SAUCE

- ½ cup tomato paste
- 2 tbsp honey
- 2 tbsp fresh orange juice
- 1 tbsp dark brown sugar
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp balsamic vinegar
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 1 tsp garlic powder

Whisk together and refrigerate for up to 2 weeks.

Beverly Hills fries with Skinny 'Cue Sauce



To die for low-fat sliders with caramelized onions and mushrooms

INGREDIENTS makes 8 mini burgers

- 1 plus 2 tsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 cup finely chopped cremini mushroom caps
- 1 small red onion, finely chopped
- 1 garlic clove, finely minced
- ¼ cup finely chopped parsley
- ½ tsp dried oregano
- ½ tsp sea salt
- 1 lb 96% lean ground beef
- 8 small, soft dinner rolls
- 2 plum tomatoes, thinly sliced

- 8 pickle slices (optional)
- Skinny 'Cue Sauce, for serving (see opposite page for recipe)

- 1 Heat 1 tablespoon of the oil in a medium nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add the mushrooms, onion and garlic. Cook, stirring often, until the onions are soft and golden brown, about 4 minutes. Stir in the parsley, oregano and salt. Transfer the mixture to a medium bowl to cool.
- 2 Place the beef in a large bowl. Add the cooled mushroom mixture, and gently fold the two together. Divide the beef mixture into 8 equal balls and then gently form each into a semi-compact

- 2½- to 3-inch-thick patty.
- 3 Split rolls in half and brush the cut sides with remaining 2 teaspoons olive oil. Set aside.
- 4 Heat a nonstick grill pan over medium-high heat for 2 minutes. Add the burgers and grill on each side until browned, about 2 minutes per side for medium. Transfer to a plate while you grill the rolls, cut-sides down, until golden and etched with grill marks from the pan, about 1 minute.
- 5 Place each patty on a bun bottom and top with a slice of tomato, a pickle slice, if desired, and the bun top.
- 6 Serve with Skinny 'Cue Sauce on the side.

frequently appeared on the plate. "I was eating sushi in the first grade when no one else knew what it was," Candice says with a laugh. The cultural mash-up at the family dinner table sparked a love of cooking in the California girl.

After spending her early 20s working as a fit model (designers would hire her perfect size four frame as a "live mannequin") – and hitting the beach to surf at any opportunity – the lure of the kitchen became too great and she enrolled at Le

Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts in L.A. While there, she auditioned on a whim for the then-unknown show *Top Chef*. Her passion for food, bubbly personality and cover-girl good looks made her a natural for the small screen, and soon after appearing on *Top Chef's* first season in 2006, she traded in her surfboard for kitchen knives and moved to Manhattan.

Nicknamed the "Stiletto Chef" by peers because of her flair for fashion, Candice soon shot to food

TV fame. She became the host of the series *Cook Yourself Thin* and went on to appear on *Home Made Simple* and *Unique Eats*.

"I can't stay stagnant," says Candice. And she's not kidding. The fervent foodie manages *stilettochef.com*, contributes articles to magazines on how to live a healthy lifestyle and still appears on various food shows. And now she's published her first cookbook, *Pretty Delicious*, which delivers "lean and lovely" recipes designed to help ►

Lemon babycakes



INGREDIENTS makes 30

BABYCAKES

- 3 cups cake flour, sifted
- ¼ cup grated lemon zest (4-6 lemons)
- ½ tsp baking soda
- ½ tsp sea salt
- ½ cup buttermilk
- ¼ cup fresh lemon juice (1-2 lemons)
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ½ cup unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 1½ cups sugar
- 3 large eggs, at room temperature

LEMON CURD

- ½ cup fresh lemon juice (2-3 lemons)
- ½ cup sugar
- ¼ cup grated lemon zest (4-6 lemons)
- 2 large eggs, at room temperature
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

ICING

- 5 cups confectioners' sugar
- 1½ tbsp 1/3-less-fat Neufchâtel cream cheese, at room temperature
- ¼ cup unsweetened almond milk
- 2 tbsp grated lemon zest (2-3 lemons)
- 1 tbsp fresh lemon juice

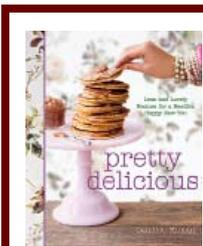
- 1 To make the babycakes: preheat the oven to 325° F. Line the cups of a mini muffin pan with paper liners. Whisk the sifted flour, lemon zest, baking soda and salt together in a large bowl. Whisk the buttermilk, lemon juice and vanilla together in a small bowl.
- 2 Using an electric mixer, cream the butter and sugar together on low speed until combined. Increase the speed to medium-high and beat until light and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Add the eggs, one at a time, mixing well and using a rubber spatula to scrape down the bowl between additions.
- 3 Reduce the speed of the mixer to medium-low and alternate adding the flour mixture and buttermilk mixture in three additions, starting and ending with the flour mixture, and mixing just until combined.
- 4 Fill the muffin cups three-quarters full with batter. Bake until the cupcakes are domed and resist light pressure, 18 to 20 minutes. Set aside to cool for 10 minutes in the pan, then remove to a wire rack to cool completely.
- 5 Meanwhile, make the lemon curd: combine the lemon juice and sugar in a small saucepan and bring to a simmer. Add the lemon zest and cook, stirring occasionally, just until the sugar is dissolved, about 2 minutes.
- 6 Whisk the eggs together in a medium bowl. Whisk a little of the hot lemon mixture into the eggs to warm them. Once the bottom of the bowl is warm, slowly whisk in the remaining hot lemon mixture. Pour the mixture back into the saucepan and place it over medium-low heat. Cook, stirring constantly, until a few bubbles pop on the surface of the curd and it coats the back of a wooden spoon, 10 to 15 minutes. Remove from the heat immediately and strain the curd through a fine-mesh sieve into a clean bowl. Using a clean whisk or spoon, stir in the vanilla extract. Place a piece of plastic wrap directly on the surface of the curd and cool to room temperature. Chill for at least 30 minutes.
- 7 Fill a pastry bag, fitted with a small plain tip, no more than two-thirds with lemon curd. Twist the top of the bag to close. Press the tip halfway into the centre of a babycake and squeeze in a little lemon curd. Lift the tip out and squeeze a little dollop on the top as well. Repeat with the remaining babycakes.
- 8 To make the icing: beat the confectioners' sugar and cream cheese together on low speed until combined (the mixture will be crumbly). Add the almond milk, lemon zest and juice and beat until smooth and creamy. Fill a pastry bag fitted with a star tip and pipe a little swirl of icing on top of each babycake.
- 9 Serve within 1 hour, or refrigerate the babycakes for up to 1 day. Let them stand at room temperature for 20 minutes before serving.

home cooks trim down while still satisfying cravings for comfort food.

The book also offers helpful tips for how to entertain on a budget. "Entertaining is a part of my life that I refuse to give up, even if I only have \$10 to make dinner!" Candice writes. For the single star – who says she has yet to meet that special someone and is holding out until she finds a partner who

can be a "best friend and a great support system" – whipping up healthy, delicious meals for friends and family is high pleasure.

The cookbook author says the art of entertaining is something that she learned from her mother. "She threw the best dinner parties and was such a great hostess," Candice recalls. "I think it's my duty to do it for her now." 



Pretty Delicious is the unique cookbook that targets your taste buds, your waistline and your pocketbook. Chock full of lean cuisine, the colourful book also serves up tips on being financially frugal without sacrificing flavour. And home cooks looking to shed a few pounds will welcome the trim-down "swap this" suggestions contained in many recipes, such as choosing hummus over mayonnaise, or non-fat Greek yogurt instead of sour cream. In addition, Candice's list of "Food with benefits" – which she also refers to as "babe-alicious" staples – packs a serious nutritional punch.