

EPISODE 8

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:01] AS: You know battling food and your body doesn't work. You want to love and accept yourself. And because you're insatiable, you want results too. And wouldn't you know, you bring the same intensity to your life, wanting to maximize your time, potential, and experiences you have here on this beautiful and wondrous planet Earth.

Fair warning, it will be a rollercoaster. But for those insatiable, that's your prime time to thrive. We're here to say "YES!" to the hunger of wanting it all. I'm your co-host, Ali Shapiro, a health coach who helps people end the losing battle of dieting and find a truce with food.

[0:00:44] JB: And I'm Juliet Burgh, nutritionist, fitness expert, and a co-owner of Unite Fitness Studio Franchise.

[EPISODE]

[0:00:53] AS: Hello everybody and welcome to Episode 8 of the Insatiable Podcast. Today, we're talking about how to simplify cooking with our very special guest, Brigitte from White Apron Chef. Hello, welcome Brigitte and Juliet.

[0:01:08] BT: Hi Ali, thanks for having me.

[0:01:11] AS: Sure, sure. Thanks for being here, we're really excited, Juliet and I were talking before we hit record about how our clients want to eat healthy, they want to cook but everyone comes up against the same advice of, "Well cook all day Sunday," and Juliet and I were both like, "Bleh, that sucks!"

[0:01:30] JB: No one wants this, it's too much work.

[0:01:32] BT: Yeah, nobody needs to be doing that. You work so much Monday through Friday, most people even end up working in the weekends now. The last thing you want to do is just waste your precious free time slaving away, cooking a bunch of meals.

[0:01:47] JB: Exactly, exactly and I think if you can do it, it's great with the weeks that you can but it's not a realistic solution.

[0:01:57] AS: Yeah, I love that point. I want to first give people a little bit of your amazing background before we get into your story and everything. But everyone, Brigitte, you can find her at whiteapronchef.com but she has been a personal chef for over 10 years in San Francisco and New York City and she recently opened up the Personal Chef Business Academy where she mentors other personal chefs on how to make a living from this. And I just love this Brigitte because people don't realize if they've never worked in the food service industry, which I have, it is like slave labor in there, isn't it?

[0:02:34] BT: It is, it is. It's really, really hard work for no money.

[0:02:40] AS: Yeah.

[0:02:40] BT: Yeah, exactly.

[0:02:43] AS: And people who get irritated at the stupidest things but that's a whole other topic but what we love to kick off today is can you just give us a background and I think you have such an amazing story of transformation and food was part of that. And what I think is so interesting is so many of the clients that Juliet and I work with, food is such a pain point and it becomes a transformative experience. But for you, it was the opposite. You had a painful past and then you got food to help you heal. Can you tell us about that?

[0:03:14] BT: Yeah. It's a really long story but basically, I had a really tumultuous childhood. Becoming a teenager was kind of the worst thing that happened to me and I lost my head and I stopped going to school when I was 15 and my mom couldn't get me to go to school and I was just miserable. I got myself into a lot of trouble and finally, I had this boyfriend when I was 16 and his mom was this amazing cook.

I started cooking with her and realized that I was actually really good at it and from then on, I just spent hours in the kitchen on a regular basis and all my friends were coming over to me for dinner and it was like what I really love to do. And eventually, a couple of years later, I ended up moving to Montreal and over there I went to cooking school and even before I had started cooking school, I was like, “Okay, so what I love to do is be in people’s kitchens, and that’s what I like. right?”

Not even people’s kitchens, my own kitchen. I just like to be in a home kitchen. That was my happy place and that was where I felt good and could really nourish myself and also nourish others. I was 18 and I was like, “I’m going to start this business where I go into people’s houses and cook for them,” and I had no idea at the time that personal chefs were even a thing. I remember I called my business Rent-A-Chef and I printed out these crappy business cards.

I went around distributing them and I also advertised my services on youth groups and actually got a couple of clients from that and I was like, “Okay, this is a viable business idea but I need more training.” So I ended up going to cooking school and that year was probably one of the best years of my life in terms of it gave me a skill and it gave me the knowledge to today be able to pass onto people. But to have a career when really I had, considering my tumultuous teenage years, most people would have thought that I would have ended up pregnant with three kids and no education and food was really able to turn that around for me. So it’s been amazing so yeah, that’s it.

[0:06:15] AS: So one thing about your story that I want to ask before we get into tactics of cooking is that, what I found interesting in what you just said is you didn’t know personal chef was a thing but you just loved it and sometimes I think especially, actually the root of a lot of eating issues are people who want certain things but they don’t feel they have the permission.

If it’s not hard and it’s what I love, it feels like it’s bad or something. How did you have the chutzpah or intuitive knowing, you didn’t even know it was a thing but you’re like, “I love this and I’m going to do it.”?

[0:06:49] BT: That's just my personality. I think every time that I love something or acquire a skill, I have this natural intuition or desire to turn it into a business and I was like that when I was 18 and I'm like that today. It's the way that my brain works.

[0:07:10] AS: Yeah, no I get it.

[0:07:11] JB: When you were younger Brigitte, where you really tenacious. I know you said you got into a lot of trouble when you were younger but was part of that just you getting a very tenacious person and just going for it and just being sort of independent at even a young age?

[0:07:28] BT: Yeah, I was not happy in my parent's house. So my goal was to move out at 16 and I would have moved out at 14 if I could have. I was determined to get myself out of there and so I did.

[0:07:44] JB: Where did you grow up?

[0:07:45] BT: In Ottawa in Canada.

[0:07:47] JB: Okay.

[0:07:48] AS: She's a Canadian. I love Canadians.

[0:07:50] BT: Canadians are so nice.

[0:07:52] AS: They are. They don't have guns, they're not scary. So we're talking about simplifying cooking today but one of the things you mentioned about like going to culinary school to become a personal chef and work at that level but I find often that for those of us mere mortals who just want to eat some veggies and everything, often my clients build up cooking that it has to be more of a big deal than it is. And so what are some basic things that you think are really important for people to know so that they can feel that intuitive knowing that you had even before you went to training?

I know it takes practice but what would you recommend or a couple of things, maybe its mindset shifts? And you know as a side note, I interviewed you a year ago for my list. Actually, a year ago today, Facebook reminded both of us. But people loved it because you gave them this mindset of doing less not more. I just love that because I think that so many people don't even get into cooking. They order takeout because they think they have to have a recipe. They have to have to found it on Pinterest, it has to look a certain way, they need to get the exact spice, there's no substitutes. So I'd just love to hear your thoughts on that.

[0:09:07] JB: It's a very intimidating process for a lot of people and my clients are like, "I don't even know how to bake a piece of chicken. Like what temperature do I put it at?" And even that alone intimidates them that they won't cook at all.

[0:09:23] BT: Right. Well I actually think in some ways cooking school is great to teach you about techniques and how to do basic things like cook a piece of chicken properly and make a chicken stock but I also think in a way for me, it's like you go to school and the chefs tell you to do things a certain way and there's definitely some structure that you're supposed to follow.

I think in some ways for me that killed my own intuition with food because it made me sort of start to question, "Was this okay to put this thing in this thing?" And prior to cooking school, I was more like a happy go lucky cook. I would experiment and not think about it as much, so I think there's value in not going to cooking school and also getting off Pinterest.

[0:10:28] AS: And Instagram.

[0:10:29] BT: And Instagram because it's not reality.

[0:10:33] JB: For any recipe book really or you know?

[0:10:35] BT: Or any recipe book, yeah. You know there are certain places, there are certain blogs that I really like to follow because they teach you about technique and that's what I try to do with my blog. If you want to learn to cook without recipes, it's about learning basic cooking techniques. So maybe for a month, you learn how to bake a piece of chicken and you read a

blog post or watch a You Tube video and you learn how to bake a piece of chicken or broil a piece of chicken.

That piece of chicken doesn't really have to have anything on it if you are able to cook it the way that brings out its' best flavor. So with the right amount of salt and the right salt and the right cooking technique, then just practicing cooking that piece of chicken can really change the way you cook.

[0:11:35] AS: So can you give us some details of that, how do you cook? Because that's one of my questions, is like, we eat a lot of chicken, and some nights I'm just like, "I can't eat more chicken." What are the basic techniques? If someone is coming home at 6:00 at night, they're on the east coast and it's freezing out and they're like, "I want Saag Paneer but I have a chicken breast at home," what do they do?

[0:12:02] JB: Are you talking about yourself right now Ali? Ali is the queen of Indian food.

[0:12:07] BT: That's funny.

[0:12:08] AS: It's Saag Paneer, I just love Saag Paneer.

[0:12:11] BT: It's so good. Saag Penire is a lot of work.

[0:12:15] AS: Oh, I buy it out.

[0:12:16] JB: Yeah, we're not cooking that.

[0:12:17] BT: Oh, I got it.

[0:12:20] AS: I love that you think that I could though.

[0:12:24] BT: It's not hard to do but it takes so much spinach. You have to buy pounds and pounds and pounds of spinach to wilt it down so yeah, it is work. But yeah, I actually did this last night. I had two chicken breast and I always have Thai curry paste in the fridge and then I have

coconut milk and so I buy a really good brand of curry paste and I was going to make that but then I was missing something and then I was like, “How do I prepare this piece of chicken?”

So what I did was basically used my chef knife and I cut it horizontally into cutlets. With that thick chicken breast, I made three cutlets out of one chicken breast and I sprinkled some dried thyme on it and some garlic powder and I took out my cast iron pan. I put it out pretty high and then I added some oil and butter and then I browned the cutlets until they were a little bit crispy and that was delicious. It was a really simple way to prepare chicken but it was really good.

[0:13:36] JB: How long did that take you from start to finish?

[0:13:40] BT: 20 minutes.

[0:13:43] JB: See, I've made chicken before and I feel like it could take even like 10 minutes just to make pan friend chicken.

[0:13:50] BT: Yeah, totally especially if you cut it out really thinly or I could've broiled it. So the same chicken breast, I could have gotten my microplane zester which is a tool that I think everybody should have in the kitchen and put a bunch of lemon zest on it, maybe some oregano, lemon juice and a little bit of olive oil and then you put it under the broiler until it's nice and brown and that's usually a 10 minute process to broil a piece of chicken and then you have to let it rest for a few minutes because you should always let meat rest after you cook it but it's not time consuming.

[0:14:31] AS: So I have a couple of questions. How long should you let meat rest after you cook it?

[0:14:35] JB: Yeah, I was just thinking I don't rest my meat. It dawned, I mean I'm sorry, my partner makes fun of me because if I am hungry, it doesn't matter how hot the food is, I am putting it in my mouth and I will burn my mouth. He's like, “What are you doing?” I'm like, “I don't care. I'm hungry.”

[0:14:56] AS: You're not resting your meat Juliet.

[0:14:58] **JB:** I'm not resting yeah, I am not so I never even heard of that so yeah, definitely want to know about that.

[0:15:04] **BT:** Okay, so when you cook a piece of meat, the proteins are going to cease and the juice is all going to seize and once you take it off the heat, the protein relaxes and all of the juice that's in the meat redistributes throughout the entire piece of meat and so if you don't let it rest, you are getting a piece of meat that is not going to be at it's ultimate. It's all seized and not as good as it's going to be if you let it rest for three to five minutes for a small piece of meat, three to five minutes if it's like a turkey.

[0:15:42] **JB:** That requires patience

[0:15:43] **BT:** Well, it's about...

[0:15:46] **AS:** Eat some nuts while you're waiting.

[0:15:48] **JB:** So you know what? It's making me think though. It's making me think of being a kid and baking cookies and my mom being like, "Let the cookies cool down" and I want to eat them when the chocolate is melting inside.

[0:16:03] **BT:** That's different, that's okay.

[0:16:05] **JB:** That's all right? Okay because we're supposed to get a snow storm in a couple of days here in Philly and I'm looking forward to that. I was thinking about making cookies.

[0:16:15] **AS:** Chocolate doesn't need to rest.

[0:16:17] **BT:** Yeah, exactly. It's not juicy.

[0:16:20] **JB:** Yeah.

[0:16:21] AS: And Brigitte, I remember in our interview last year that this tip changed my life but you talked also before you cook chicken, if you heat the pan up beforehand for three minutes, it changes, how juicy versus dry the chicken will be. Am I remembering those details correctly?

[0:16:38] BT: Yeah. It's juicy and it's also that caramelization process that draws out the sugar out of the protein and that is flavor.

[0:16:50] AS: So is it just turning on a cast iron pan, if people have one, or a skillet and putting some butter or whatever oil or fat they're cooking it in and you turn it on medium, medium high?

[0:17:03] BT: So this is one of the issues that people encounter when they try and do this. You have to put the oil in — okay, so here is the process. You have to heat up the pan for about three minutes and you should not do this on high heat ever. The only reason to use high heat for something is to boil water for pasta or to blanch vegetables or something but it should be on medium high heat and closer to high but never on high because you're just going to make a mess and burn your meat.

But you want to let your pan heat up for three minutes and then, when the pan is hot that is when you add your oil and butter because if you don't do that, if you put your oil in at the beginning, your fire alarm is going to come on from all the smoke that it creates. So it's like the pan is hot and then you put in the oil and then really, it just takes like 15 seconds for that oil to heat up and then you put your piece of meat and that heat, that sizzle is what draws out a lot of the flavor.

[0:18:19] JB: Cool.

[0:18:19] AS: Yeah, that's so simple.

[0:18:21] JB: And this podcast is not brought to you guys by Perdu.

[0:18:25] AS: No, don't use Perdu.

[0:18:26] JB: I know, we're talking all about chicken. There are other foods that I'm sure Brigitte posts that we all cook.

[0:18:33] BT: Yeah, I do. You can do the same... Oh go ahead.

[0:18:36] AS: I was to say, one more question before we move on from chicken. You said that combination was thyme and garlic powder. Do you have two more other combinations for those of us who eat chicken more than a couple of times a night?

[0:18:50] BT: Yes, so you could do smoked paprika with thyme and garlic, that's one of my favorites. I have an obsession with chili powder and cumin. That's like you're basically making taco chicken or taco meat at that point but it's so good and satisfying and easy to make. That like putting on, crusting it with like a little bit of chili powder, cumin, you want a bigger ratio of chili powder to cumin and just some salt and pepper and maybe some lime zest or something, that's a really good combination.

[0:19:30] JB: Now what are the proportions?

[0:19:32] AS: Oh, I'm just thinking about my clients who are listening to that, well what are the proportions because when you're first learning something.

[0:19:37] BT: Sure, if we're talking about a piece of chicken again, you could do this on a piece of steak or even like fish. It really doesn't matter but I would say about three quarters of a teaspoon of chili powder and then a quarter teaspoon of cumin and then probably half a teaspoon of salt and then some pepper and you can do lime zest. You don't have to but it definitely adds a freshness to it.

[0:20:14] JB: Yeah, I know for myself and for a lot of my clients that even just having to stand in front of the oven and watch something cook and have the patience to see it all the way through can be a mental challenge. So for me personally, I end up baking my meat, baking my fish or baking my chicken more than I pan fry because I can set the timer and then I can go attend to other things, relax and watch a show or do some e-mails or the multi-tasker in me.

[0:20:50] BT: I prefer as a cooking method, I prefer broiling. If you're going to bake something because that's a way to really get the caramelization on the food that's going to add some flavor but it's not like you have to watch it that much when you're broiling it but you do have to watch it more than if you're baking it but one tip that I really like for fish if you're going to bake it and this works really well especially with salmon is using a really low oven.

So it's like 250 degree oven and then you bake your fish but you put some olive oil and salt in it and then you bake you fish for about 12 minutes and it might not look like it's cook through but it is and it still has like a silky and delicious texture that is just a little bit more interesting than if you're baking it on a higher heat.

[0:21:55] JB: Interesting. I will now have to try that because I typically just do salmon in 350 for 20 minutes so.

[0:22:01] BT: Right, oh really?

[0:22:04] JB: Yeah.

[0:22:04] BT: You know even 20 minutes is probably like 12 to 10 minutes is more than enough.

[0:22:09] JB: I'm totally the intuitive cook here.

[0:22:10] AS: You're intense is what I'm thinking.

[0:22:12] JB: I'm intense cook, no. I mean I just cook. Let's be real, my partner cooks most of our food but it's good. But it's I haven't had to cook for about five years now. I'm really super spoiled.

[0:22:28] BT: That's nice.

[0:22:30] AS: Yeah, that's really nice.

[0:22:31] JB: I know. I'm not helping our listeners right now.

[0:22:35] AS: Well, no. We'll get them to have a partner who likes to cook, that's Juliet's tip so you don't cook on Sundays. Brigitte, what oils do you use to broil in because I don't know if our listeners know but things like olive oil and coconut oil when you take them up to high heats, for olive oil, it's above 375, they turn into trans fats, coconut oil depending on what kind you have is different smoke point but what smoke point can stand broiling? Butter?

[0:23:04] BT: Well I guess Ghee would work and I know that extra light olive oil has a higher smoke point, so that could work maybe avocado oil.

[0:23:17] JB: Okay.

[0:23:18] AS: So Ghee or avocado oil and butter. Carlos is always laughing at me when I'm like, "Put butter on it". He's like, "You love butter. We go through way too much butter".

[0:23:28] BT: Butter is everything.

[0:23:29] AS: Yeah, but it great. Yeah, it's really, really good. After all those years of eating of soy bean oil like spray.

[0:23:35] JB: I add margarine.

[0:23:37] AS: Yeah, when I thought it was healthy or earth balanced. All those years of making up for it. So okay, just one more question, for people if they are going to then broil or put it in the oven instead of pan frying it, do they put the spices on while they're cooking it the same way that you recommend it with the salmon?

[0:23:53] BT: Yes.

[0:23:54] AS: Okay.

[0:23:55] BT: Absolutely.

[0:23:57] AS: Great. So I have another question that came up because you mentioned the zester and you said that's one of the tools that you would recommend. What other tools do you think just make this intuitive cooking where you don't have the meal planned and you can just get something together, what tools do you recommend? I know Juliet has one that she loves too so one thing about that.

[0:24:19] BT: Yes, I'm such a minimalist in the kitchen. I don't really think that you need a bunch of tools to be effective. I do think that having a really good sharp chef knife is important. So if you have Cutco knives or something, you might want to reconsider and get a Wusthof or Sean or just one really good knife makes such a difference. I swear, 80% of people don't have one so that's just the first way that you can make your life easier in the kitchen and not wrestling with your knife on a regular basis.

[0:25:00] JB: Yeah, no that's definitely true. I invested in a good knife a few years ago and it truly put a difference.

[0:25:08] BT: Yeah.

[0:25:08] JB: You don't even realize until you get it like, "Oh my gosh, how have I been living without a good knife?"

[0:25:15] BT: Exactly. It's life changing. People have revelations just like that when they actually cut with a knife that works.

[0:25:25] JB: Yeah, I'm with you with the whole the whole simplifying and you don't need a lot of tools but definitely over the years of changing my diet, eating cleaner. I do have certain kitchen tools that I love that help me to eat healthier and help me to prepare my food rather than get take out.

[0:25:45] AS: You mean that helps Macky prepare the food?

[0:25:49] JB: I mean, let me rephrase. I sometimes cook.

[0:25:52] AS: No, I don't disagree.

[0:25:53] JB: I can but for me, the things that I have acquired over the years that I really can't live without now but one of them is my spiralizer which I got for \$30 on Amazon to make zoodles.

[0:26:07] AS: Explain what a spiralizer is.

[0:26:08] JB: Yeah and what zoodles are. So spiralizer or the "the jetty" you could find it and I like my spiralizer, it's basically a tool where you take a vegetable like a zucchini or a cucumber or any vegetable and you turn the crank and it basically makes it spiraling that it makes it into different shapes but mostly like pasta. So zoodles are taking a zucchini, putting it in your spiralizer and you're making noodles out of zucchini and there you go, that's zoodles.

[0:26:41] AS: Again, these names are the best.

[0:26:44] JB: So I love my zoodles and I'll put pesto on it and chicken or make a meat sauce and put it over it and it really is giving the same effect, I think a lot psychologically of having spaghetti so that's a tool that I can't live without and I always recommend that to clients. It's only 30 bucks at the most and it's so easy to use. It's not very hard to clean either because I think that's a pain point for people is the cleaning of things. If a tool is hard to clean, then you're not going to use it.

[0:27:13] AS: Yeah, that reminds me, one of the greatest tips of cleaning, if you have a blender or a vita-mix or a blend tech is when you're done with it, put just a little bit of soap in it and then water and then blend it like a smoothie and it cleans itself.

[0:27:26] JB: Yeah.

[0:27:27] AS: My clients love that tip, they're like, "This is amazing".

[0:27:29] JB: Yeah, you don't have to do anything.

[0:27:31] AS: Yeah because I think it's important for people to realize when we think we don't want to cook or do something healthy, it's often not the thing itself. It's the little things like not having the right knife or not having the right utensil. It's these little things that stop us. It's not the actual once we're in it. I hear from a lot of my clients, "Once I'm cooking I love it, it's the..."

[0:27:51] JB: It's the intimidation factor.

[0:27:53] AS: Yeah but that's like a feeling that goes away to your point when you got a great knife, you're like, "Oh my God," that feeling of like, "Oh" and the cooking changes when you have the right utensils and know some basic techniques, they feel more capable.

[0:28:07] JB: The other thing for me is the cooking tool that I can't live without is my Instapot which is both a pressure cooker and you can use that as a slow cooker or rice cooker. There are all these different settings on it but I can make soups and stews and chilies and all these things in under 45 minutes versus something like a traditional slow cooker. It's in there slow cooking all day and you can use it as that but I like the pressure cooker it's just amazing for just cooking anything at a really fast amount of time and Brigitte, are you familiar with one or something I got for business last year.

[0:28:51] BT: I've heard of them. It's been on my list for things to get, what brand do you use?

[0:28:56] JB: It's called Instapot.

[0:28:58] BT: Instapot, okay. Awesome.

[0:29:00] JB: Yeah but I mean, we have made so many things with it that we never made before because, "Oh that takes five to 10 hours to slow cook all of that." It makes pulled pork or any kind of slow cooked meat and it's really amazing because it keeps all the juices in there and then when you're making vegetables, it keeps all the nutrients in because I guess with pressure cooking, you're not killing all the nutrients.

[0:29:24] AS: Yeah, what is pressure cooking? I have a crockpot and I've heard of rice cookers but I don't understand what a pressure cook is.

[0:29:31] **JB:** You're actually cooking the food under pressure and then you're releasing the pressure at the end, I mean I'm not an expert.

[0:29:36] **AS:** What's the pressure, the heat?

[0:29:38] **BT:** Steam. I think it's the steam, yeah.

[0:29:42] **AS:** "Under pressure".

[0:29:42] **JB:** Yeah because if I put my face on it, I'm getting a nice facial. I'm like, "Oh the steam feels nice," but yeah, for me those are the two tools that I use weekly.

[0:29:57] **AS:** Yeah, are there any more that you recommend Brigitte? You have the lemon zester.

[0:30:03] **BT:** The microplane zester, the chef knife and honestly, I really have an obsession with cast iron.

[0:30:12] **JB:** Me too.

[0:30:13] **BT:** Yeah, cast iron, people spend thousands of dollars on pots and pans and that's fine. But really, a good cast iron skillet and spend \$30 on it is perfect to do almost anything. You can make stir fry in it, you can cook meat, there's just so many things you can make in it.

[0:30:38] **JB:** That's my Christmas present or a holiday present for people in the past few years is I get them, if I don't have one, I'd find out if they have one or not. If they don't, I get them a cast iron pan.

[0:30:51] **BT:** That's awesome.

[0:30:52] **JB:** Well, you know it changes their life, they're like, "Oh my God, the food tastes better" so.

[0:30:56] **BT:** Yeah, exactly.

[0:30:57] **AS:** Don't you get more minerals too?

[0:31:00] **BT:** I don't know, do you?

[0:31:02] **AS:** I thought I read that somewhere. I would have to check my sources.

[0:31:06] **JB:** All I know about cast iron is that you get a more savory flavor because your pan stores the flavors of all the foods you've cooked. So the more you use it, you've seasoned your pan basically so you're getting more flavor when you cook.

[0:31:23] **BT:** Exactly.

[0:31:25] **AS:** So speaking of flavors, do you have any ideas on how people can get really good tasting veggies aside from a smoothie easily into their diets? I'm always try to come up with it. I have a few recipes that I send to clients but I'm always looking for new ways to get really good vegetables quick and easy into people's diets. Do you have any off the top of your head?

[0:31:51] **BT:** Quick vegetables like roasted vegetables?

[0:31:53] **AS:** It doesn't matter.

[0:31:56] **BT:** Well, it's funny because I think we probably all know about that you guys roast vegetables, right? Do you guys roast vegetables?

[0:32:03] **JB:** Not so much anymore because I don't really like the taste of roasted vegetables. I feel like it burns them.

[0:32:09] **BT:** Really?

[0:32:10] JB: Well sometimes they're caramelized and they're delicious but lately, I have a kick on just eating the pure steamed vegetables or I actually like the flavor without the caramelization but I know when you roast them that they got a lot more caramelized.

[0:32:27] BT: Right, for me roasted vegetables are a revelation and I can see your point that it's nice to get the pure flavor of something and just to flavor them goes back to that lovely cooking tool that I love, the microplane zester. You can zest lemon on broccoli, a little bit of lemon and butter on steamed broccoli with some nice molden salt or something. It's so simple but it's so good.

Oh, what else is good? If you want to go Asian, a little bit of Tamari and sesame seeds and some Turigashi or something, that Japanese hot pepper, that's really good and also that same seasoning, I'll cut up a cucumber and slice it up and add a little bit of Tamari, sesame oil and the same thing, the sesame seeds and that's really delicious.

[0:33:32] JB: Like a cucumber salad?

[0:33:34] BT: Yeah, exactly.

[0:33:35] AS: But I think, for our listeners out there, I think it's really important and I don't know if you feel the same way but just to understand, "Here are the flavor combinations that you should have. Like the condiments and the spices and if you put these together, this gives you more of a Mexican type of flavor, here's how you can create more of a Japanese flavor.

Here's how you could create a more Italian flavor and that's what I've done. I know that these three spices, put them together, put them on chicken and then this is more of an Italian chicken breast versus if I do sesame oil and a little bit of Tamari and sesame seed, now I have an Asian flavor.

[0:34:15] BT: Exactly and so it's helpful to store your pantry with the Asian condiments which are going to be the Tamari and the sesame oil and some rice wine vinegar and maybe some Mirin though if you get Mirin, you have to be careful with the ingredient list because I recently realized that the brand that I was buying, the first ingredient was corn syrup.

It's one of those things that I never thought to check the label and then I eventually checked it and it was like, "Oh, oops" and then for the Mexican pantry, I always have chili powder or I go a little bit fancier and I get whole chilies and roast them and grind them myself which does make a difference but if you're trying to be simple in the kitchen it's probably not a good idea. Some cumin and then I always have stuff like onions and garlic and things that are more aromatics that are flavor basis for dishes.

[0:35:21] AS: I think sometimes people want to try those combinations like you said, because eventually and intuitively, you know like, "Hey, I have this much Tamari or this much Mirin". For each kind of genre like Italian, Asian, Mexican, if you add too much of a spice is there any way to recover? Like add this to neutralize it and salvage it.

[0:35:49] BT: Well, that's a hard question. You can probably scrap it off a little bit. I mean if you add too much spice or something, you can add honey or something to temper it but it might just be a learning lesson to not do it again.

[0:36:10] JB: I do think that there's a level of experimentation that's got to happen in the kitchen. You have to know. Well, there's two things, one is you don't need to be perfect with this. You really can try, you can experiment, we're not going off a cookbook here, you're going off with testing and tasting. So just understand that there is no such thing like a perfect recipe because we're not going off of the recipes.

[0:36:41] BT: Exactly.

[0:36:41] JB: We're just going off of flavor combining and just see what you like.

[0:36:46] BT: Exactly.

[0:36:47] AS: Yeah, so let's talk about and we get this common advice of "use your weekend to prepare your meals for the week." To Juliet's point, I usually do some work on Saturdays not all the time but a lot of people are working or they're running or their kids are around or whatever and then you have Sunday which I started calling Sunday "fun day" because it's like, "I'm not

working” or whatever. I don’t want to cook that day? So Brigitte, how do you get ready for the week and then Juliet said she has some tips too so I totally want to hear what you both have to say.

[0:37:18] BT: Well, I usually just go to the store and I get a bunch of protein so I know that I need protein for five nights and so usually, I’ll get a whole chicken and I’ll get a couple of pounds of fish and some ground beef and that’s my go to proteins and I try and get most of that stuff frozen. Not the chicken because the chicken is in the package and it will last for three to four days in the fridge if I need it to.

This way, having it frozen helps me not waste the stuff and to defrost stuff, all I do is I’m going to make some salmon for dinner tonight and probably in two hours, I’m going to put it in a bowl of water in the plastic and it’s going to take maybe 45 minutes or so to defrost. So if it’s not a big portion, it’s really easy to defrost at the last minute and the same thing for ground beef and such.

Well ground beef takes a little longer than fish but still not more than 2 hours so I always do that. So I always do that. That’s part of my grocery shopping routine because I don’t always plan my meals ahead of time. Some weeks I do and I do find it easier but most of the time, I just want to cook on a whim. In my pantry, I have all my staples. I have a huge bag of sushi rice, I have a big bag of Basmati rice, I have quinoa and some polenta and a couple of other grains.

Then I have all my spices and I have the Tamari and sesame oil, all the Asian condiments and then I have some coconut milk and some canned tomatoes and then the onions and the garlic and once a week, I go to the farmer’s market and I get all my veggies and that’s usually a random assortment of what’s in season and I usually will get five different vegetables. So I will have one vegetable a day and one head of kale is going to be enough for two people in one day.

So that’s usually how I come to, to make my meals and I always have yogurt in the fridge. I do a lot of Tzatziki or if I want to make a sauce if I’m making tacos or something, I’ll just add some canned Chipotle peppers to the yogurt to make the Chipotle sauce. It’s all little things but just

having stuff in the pantry that you can use and then having stuff in the freezer is a huge thing for me and that's mostly how I organize myself around cooking for the week.

[0:40:15] AS: So I guess it comes backs to knowing some of those, in addition to spice combinations," a couple of dressings or sauces that you like as well?

[0:40:25] BT: Yeah, sauces, I really like to make Thai curries so having the curry paste and the coconut milk, just all I have to do is put a little bit of Thai curry paste in the coconut milk and that's a sauce that I can just throw some chicken and broccoli into and that's my dinner. If I have that in the pantry and I have some chicken that I know that I can easily make something.

I do a lot of tacos. I really like tacos and if it's not tacos, I'll do Thai chicken larb or I'll do it with fish or ground beef or whatever and whenever I give people this recipes, they become obsessed with it. All my personal chef clients are obsessed with it. It's just so satisfying but clean and delicious and it's really just ground chicken that you fry off in a pan and you finish it.

If you have a pound of chicken, you probably will use about three tablespoons of fish sauce and then three tablespoons of lime juice and that flavor combination is so good. If you serve that in lettuce cups or you can do cabbage cups or you can do rice and then I will usually do an almost butter sauce or peanut butter sauce on top of that and it's the most satisfying dinner and it doesn't really take any time to come together.

So that's one of my things and then I do a lot of tacos. I just cut up some chicken or use ground beef because that's easy and I'll add some chili powder and cumin to it and some salsa as I'm cooking it and that's also a big staple of mine.

[0:42:15] AS: It sounds amazing.

[0:42:17] JB: I want Vietnamese lettuce cups after you're talking about that.

[0:42:23] AS: What do you do Juliet?

[0:42:25] JB: Similar in that. So I grocery shop once a week. I don't go to a grocery store other than once per week and it is on Sunday but I'm not slaving my whole Sunday away with grocery shopping and cooking. So I'll go to the store and I'll also do the proteins. I will pick usually four to five proteins that I'm going to eat for the week.

Often times its chicken, its bison, ground beef and fish. Sometimes it will be one other one like the ground turkey and then I'll decide what I want to have as far as my carbohydrates or my starch with it because I try to balance all my meals having the protein, some sort of unprocessed carbohydrate and then vegetables and then the healthy fat just come with what I'm cooking it in.

I'll think for example, "Tonight, I'm having ground turkey with tomato sauce which I don't make from scratch. I buy a glass jar tomato sauce that is organic that is made with olive oil and no sugar added. So I am having ground turkey with that over black bean spaghetti. So I would pick up some black bean spaghetti at the store and that would have been a carbohydrate choice.

A lot of times, I have enough food leftover so that what I have for dinner often will be my lunch for the next day. So I'm only having that meal no more than two times and Brigitte, you were saying about having and buying frozen meat but I don't buy frozen meat because often, I am coming home really late and so I don't have any time to thaw out anything.

All of my meats are fresh because I am cooking them right away when I get home. So really, that's how I do it or I'll have my quinoa for one meal. I have a lot of staples in my house like white rice, Basmati rice and quinoa and beans. All that stuff is stocked in my cabinets. You don't have to buy all that stuff all the time because it last for more than one meal.

So I mainly focused on just buying the proteins and the vegetables and I will probably buy between four to five different vegetables as well and then I have staples that I eat. Usually one night we'll have an Asian meal like a stir fry or make some Asian sesame miso dressing or maybe I use a peanut butter to make a peanut sauce but I have all of those condiments.

I have Tamari and I have organic peanut butter and I have sesame oil and rice vinegar and all those things stay in my house so I can just put them together and make a sauce and I'll buy the

canned water chestnuts and canned organic baby corn and then just sauté all of that together and make cook a stir fry, sometimes I'll put it over like brown rice or white rice and then another night we'll have Italian, we usually have taco salads so what you're talking about just sauté just some ground beef with the seasonings that are going to make it taste like a Mexican flavor.

We'll slice up some avocado, put it over a bed of lettuce with Salsa and if we're feeling daring, we'll crunch up some organic tortilla chips over some croutons. We'll do that and then one night, a meet, a potato and a vegetable, like a standard American meal. A good grass fed piece of steak with some roasted purple potatoes and I eat a lot of salad because I like salads.

[0:45:56.0]AS: I like salads in the spring and summer but I'm just naturally cold so in the winter as it is now. I found that one thing that's been really helpful for me, I kind of do it a little differently, we have the same — I mean, Carlos and I are both big protein people I guess, we do the same thing that you guys do with proteins but I found I have to make like the rice...

I get so tired of just regular brown rice or white rice so I will make something that is a rice and I'll triple the recipe and it will have like a little dried fruit in it, some nuts and some sort of spice and then that's made for the wheat. That will be like my weekend thing. Then I also like really love vegetable soups. I am someone like if I don't have three to four vegetables at lunch, I'm famished.

It doesn't matter what else... I mean, I need to eat other things but if I don't have like a lot of vegetables at lunch. I've learned that soup bases and Brigitte maybe you can give me some pointers here but I've just learned like if I just sauté onion and garlic and like celery and then put like chicken broth or mineral broth, whatever, and then like a vegetable, like a squash or broccoli and then just blend it. You don't really even need recipes for soup as long as you have like a basic stock.

[0:47:06.5] BT: Exactly, it all taste good if you mush it together.

[0:47:08.3]AS: Yeah, that's what I did last night.

[0:47:09.9] JB: It does, yeah.

[0:47:12.5] **AS:** That's like, I'll try to do that on the weekend but if I can't, like last night, totally made really a soup in like 20 minutes. Yeah, another thing that I love to do is kind of like a Buddha bowl just do some...

[0:47:25.3] **JB:** Are those your dogs Brigitte?

[0:47:27.4] **BT:** Yup.

[0:47:27] **AS:** We made it almost the whole time.

[0:47:30.0] **BT:** I know, I heard them throughout the call.

[0:47:33.4] **JB:** But what kind of dogs do you have?

[0:47:34.8] **BT:** I have three little mutts.

[0:47:37.6] **AS:** They sound bigger.

[0:47:39.9] **BT:** That's because there's three of them. One thing that my clients really love and so do their families is I'll do like just take cabbage, green cabbage or I did red cabbage the other day and it tasted really good. I just chop it up and then stir fry it with butter and salt.

[0:47:56.4] **JB:** Oh my gosh, German cabbage, girl, that is the best.

[0:47:59.4] **BT:** I didn't even know it was...

[0:48:00.1] **JB:** I could seriously eat buckets of red cabbage like that.

[0:48:05.3] **BT:** It's so good.

[0:48:05.6] **JB:** It is, it's so satisfying.

[0:48:09.1]AS: Really, everyone listening, you have to get comfortable eating butter because you're just missing out on so many great vegetables.

[0:48:16.4] BT: Exactly. It helps, it definitely helps with flavor for sure. Organic, grass fed butter.

[0:48:20.9]AS: Yeah. I think it's so great that we each share because there isn't like a right or wrong way but I think sometimes the food channel or the food network is really made for people who like to eat, not for people who like to cook and I think it presents this idea that like, "Oh there's all this buildup and there has to be all these techniques," and really, what was interesting to me was when I finally realize like baking is actually where you have to be very exact. But cooking, cooking is much more forgiving."

[0:48:50.2] BT: Absolutely.

[0:48:53.6]AS: This has been really helpful Brigit, I hope that everyone has a complete mindset shift, I know I'm super excited to try some new spice combinations and get out. Yeah, I really like Asian food but I always... I tend to skip it if it we're out because I don't know what sauces are gluten free and whatnot but I can now have it when I'm in

[0:49:15.4] BT: Exactly.

[0:49:17.7]AS: Yeah, Juliet, do you have any more questions or parting words or...

[0:49:21.2] JB: Just things I find so helpful and I think Brigitte was saying the same thing. It's just having staples in your house, stocking up on things, always having canned beans, always having quinoa or rice, canned tomato sauce and also there's certain salad dressings that I like that there are certain salad dressings that I like that are basically, they're homemade salad dressings but I'm not making them that I'll pick up and have on hand that you can marinate things in or just have — really just about preparing in that way, not actually cooking things but just having those things that you can easily — I don't even like to call it cooking, I like to call it assembling.

[0:49:57.7]AS: That's what I call it!

[0:49:59.2] JB: Yeah. Cause it just sounds, “I’m gonna assemble this all together.” Less intimidating for me.

[0:50:06.8] AS: Yeah, totally, I think that’s such a great point.

[0:50:08.8] JB: Once you start cooking, you got hooked on, or assembling, you really get hooked on eating your own food that you’ve prepared because...

[0:50:16.9] AS: It taste so much better.

[0:50:17.8] JB: It taste so much better but you feel better, you feel lighter, you feel cleaner and then when you eat out, I know if I get into a habit of — or need to go out more than I want to during a week, I just crave going home and eating.

[0:50:33.1] AS: Cooking for me?

[0:50:33.2] JB: I’m like, “I need a vegetable.” No, I just need something where I know what’s in this food.

[0:50:39.2] AS: Yeah, I totally get it. The more that you cook at home, the less you want to eat out. But I think, Brigitte, I loved how you said, for one month, focus on chicken and figure out how you really like it and a couple of different ways and then another month, try the salmon because once you get comfortable with one and it is amazing how it really becomes intuitive. I used to be — when I first started changing my diet, all of the stuff, this was 10 years ago. I mean kale was new, quinoa was new and I had no idea what I was doing and so like, I was following every recipe to the T because I thought you had to.

[0:51:15.4] BT: Yeah.

[0:51:16.2] AS: Now, so many years later, I’m just amazed at how it can be so intuitive if you just experiment.

[0:51:23.1] BT: Even cooking something like rice or quinoa, not with water, cooking it with coconut milk or vegetable broth or a chicken broth, game changing right there.

[0:51:31.8] AS: Yeah.

[0:51:32.7] BT: Right?

[0:51:34.3] AS: You were gonna let us end the episode without reminding to give us that tip. I did that last night. My mom made some mineral broth and she was like, “Do you want some?” I was like, “Yes,” I got our rice in it and I was like, “Oh my god, it just taste so different.”

[0:51:49.9] JB: So much better.

[0:51:50.6] BT: Yeah, for those who, I know back in college, I used to love to get those Mediterranean Couscous boxes where it’s like, already flavored for you but it’s not good, all types of sugar and cornstarch in there. People really do like to have more flavor in their food which is why we’re all attracted to going out to eat but if you cooked your rice or something like we were talking about in a broth and not just water, then you will have that extra flavor to your food.

[0:52:18.1] AS: Yeah, I think connecting too, I’m so big on my clients always connect, like measuring the outcome because measuring the outcome essentially makes you intuitively want to cook at home right? Saying like, “Oh wow, I do feel better.” But really notice the difference that you feel after a home cooked meal versus going out to eat because you were too tired or take out.

Just notice the difference, just tune in and see what makes you feel lighter and healthier, what makes you feel lethargic and water logged? Who knows? Experimenting with some spices, it may be the home cooked meal but thank you so much Brigitte, do you have any parting things that maybe these last conversations brought up that you’d like to share or say?

[0:53:07.5] BT: The only thing I wanted to add was when you were talking about making soup and cooking onions and celery and stuff. I think one of the things that people do that could be

improved is really taking the time to create that flavor base with the cooking of the aromatics which aromatics are like onions, celery, carrots, garlic. You want to really use enough olive oil or whatever oil that you're using and give it time. That onion has to cook for at least 10 minutes in order to develop a really good flavor base for the soup.

Just a little thing but I'm always teaching people to not cook onions until they're translucent, you cook onions for seven to 10 minutes every single time that you cook onions because it just makes such a big difference in the outcome of whatever dish that you're preparing.

[0:54:03.3] JB: I'll be honest, the only time I do that is on Thanksgiving. I'm going to change, no, this is really highly helpful for me.

[0:54:14.8] BT: I know its extra work but it makes such a difference.

[0:54:19.1] JB: Yeah, for sure.

[0:54:20.6] AS: Look, everyone can just turn on the insatiable podcast and let their onions marinade.

[0:54:24.8] JB: Let me say this one last thing because I find this really helpful for my clients. Cooking does not need to be this arduous task, you can make it ritualistic and fun. Often, I will listen to a podcast when I'm cooking and I'll catch up on a book on tape or I'll have a show on the background that I'm watching, maybe I'll prop my laptop up on the kitchen counter, it doesn't have to — you can actually do more than one thing and make it more fun.

[0:54:24.8] AS: Yeah, I found for me like asking Carlos to help me with stuff or us cook together, it makes it so fun. Then we just laugh and it becomes, I realize for me it's like doing it alone that I don't like but I'm like, "Come on, let's just come in here for an hour," and he doesn't even have to — after that, I'm like, "All right, I'll make something else." We split everything pretty evenly but he's happy to have the same thing every day. I need variety.

Yeah, find a way to make it more enjoyable and I know some of my clients have actually are single and live alone. Invite a friend over and they'll each like make something different and split

it and then have twice as much food. Get creative. All right, thank you for that tip Brigitte, that's so true because I think the stock base is probably what makes or breaks the soup.

[0:55:44.5] BT: Exactly.

[0:55:46.4] AS: Please tell everyone, give them your website again where they can find you and check out her blog so that you can learn these cooking tips so that you really, the build up around cooking and also grocery shopping, right? Then you can just go to the grocery store and you don't have to be like, I forgot my list or whatnot, you just have those staples and you can pop in and out, you eliminate a lot of the buildup.

[0:56:08.0] BT: Exactly. I have all of this on my blog too, lists for what to stock in your pantry, what chef knife to get, all of my essential tools, all of that is on my blog and you can find it at Whiteapronchef.com.

[0:56:24.8] AS: Great, we'll also put your website in the show notes on our podcast page. Thank you so much for your time and expertise.

[0:56:33.1] BT: Thank you for having me.

[0:56:34.9] AS: Yeah, take care.

[0:56:36.7] BT: You too.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[0:56:42.0] JB: Thank you so much for listening to the insatiable podcast, we hope you enjoy today's episode, you can connect with us on social media, follow me on Twitter and Instagram @julietunite and Ali @alimshapiro, M stands for "Marie". Please feel free to also email us any questions, we would love to hear from all our listeners, you can reach us at ali@alishapiro.com and Juliet@unitefitness.com. We'll see you next time.

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