Abigail L. Hitchcock

*Chef, Restaurateur, Instructor, Sommelier*

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BIOGRAPHY

Abby Hitchcock grew up on Long Island’s rural East End, known for its fishing and farming (fresh bay scallops, stripers, flounder, bluefish, farm-stands, and pick-your-own strawberries/pumpkins/apples). From her mother she learned to love simple fresh local foods and from her father, an amateur chef who enjoys preparing American and ethnic feasts, a love of reading menus and preparing exotic fare.

But it wasn’t until she attended university in England, where she was placed in a "self-catering" flat (shop, cook and feed yourself) that Abby found that food was her passion: shopping for it, cooking it, eating it, researching it. Abby began poking about in the greengrocer’s and butcher’s shops and preparing amazing repasts for her English flat mates—a New York brunch or an American Thanksgiving for 12— in her tiny kitchenette. After she earned her degree in Botany, she returned to the States and enrolled in Peter Kump’s New York Cooking School (now The Institute of Culinary Education).

With her Peter Kump diploma in hand, Abby went on to work at The Tea Box at Takashimaya in New York, Vong in London and at the BBC’s *Vegetarian* *Good Food Magazine*. She has been a private chef, worked at Martha Stewart Living television and run her own catering company. She finally settled down as part owner, then sole owner, of CAMAJE Bistro in Greenwich Village. It has been open for 20 years, something of a record in Manhattan.

In addition to being its chef/owner, Abby began a small cooking school at CAMAJE. The classes offer the unique experience of learning in a working restaurant kitchen. (If there’s a sudden rush, students stand back!) She also leads tours of various New York City neighborhoods—Chinatown Shop and Cook is a perennially sold-out favorite. In another popular cooking-class experience, One Night Stand, the student/chef works with Abby to plan, cook and serve family and friends a meal at the restaurant. Applause for the blushing chef!

A certified sommelier, Abby also conducts wine tastings, in which wines are paired with complementary foods.

Abby hosts Dinners in the Dark—sensory feasts served to blindfolded diners—twice a week. Featured in New York and national media, Dinners in the Dark feature Abby’s secret menus and other sensory “happenings” and have lured countless diners in search of an eating adventure. Valentine’s Day events are always sold out.