



LEIGH LAIDLAW

Chef Manager | McMaster

CORNER CAFE
BAYWEST CAFE
PREFERRED CATERING

Why did you decide to become a professional chef?

My first career move started at 13 years old in an authentic German restaurant making the spaetzle and pounding out schnitzels. Loved the process of busy kitchen life creating menus and the comradery of the kitchen.

What is the most rewarding part of your role?

Helping people learn the culinary trade is very rewarding. Watching someone overcome obstacles and complete tasks with confidence is rewarding all around.

What inspires you when you're planning a menu?

Current trends are important in my decision making also customer feedback helps a lot when creating menu. Knowing your target audience likes & dislikes is very important.

What are your favourite flavour combinations?

My usual go to is sweet & spicy. I also think texture combinations are important as well. The "umami balance" effect is always in the back of my mind.

What staple ingredients should everyone have in their kitchen? For starters, even before ingredients, everyone should have a quality knife, knife sharpener and quality sauté pan. Ingredient wise I keep a well-stocked cheese selection, preserves and smoked meats. The need for a charcuterie board could happen at any given time.

What is your go-to meal at home? Pasta- all the way!!!! Whether it's a béchamel cream sauce, tomato, olive oil or all three mixed it works with pasta. Hot, filling, nutritious and delicious!!

What food is your guilty pleasure? Have to go with anything peanut butter and chocolate related or just Reese Peanut Butter cups all the way.

