

SOUTHERN FAVORITES

WITH *Flair*

A south Georgia TV chef, cookbook author and entrepreneur showcases Southern cuisine by putting new twists on classic dishes

By Sarah James | Recipes by Lara Lyn Carter | Photography by Todd Stone

Whether she is developing a new recipe or embarking on a new culinary venture, Southern TV chef and entertaining expert Lara Lyn Carter always has something on the front burner.

She will be a guest chef at Whiskey, Wine & Wildlife, a food and spirits festival on Jekyll Island, April 22-24. In February she was a guest chef at the Food Network and Cooking Channel South Beach Wine and Food Festival in Miami. At the event, one of the largest food festivals in the United States, Lara Lyn served Whiskey Bites, a whiskey and espresso-infused brownie, and Georgia Shrimp and Grits (which needs no explanation to any self-respecting Southerner).

"It's my twist on shrimp and grits, and I was the only person serving it at the festival," says Lara Lyn. "Everything in it is from Georgia, so I took Georgia with me. Georgia has a lot to offer, and I was proud to represent our state."

Recipes With a Twist


Lara Lyn has been creating recipes since age 16 when she tried to replicate a chicken crepe dish at a former restaurant in her hometown of Albany, Georgia. And she made sure that she had the tools to do it. After all, she had saved her babysitting money to buy an electric crepe pan from a local store that carried specialty cookware.

"My friends were saving their money to buy earrings," says Lara Lyn, who still lives in Albany with her husband, Chris, and their three sons. "I was saving up to buy a crepe maker."

She had started cooking years earlier, however, under the tutelage of her mother and grandmother. "I started cooking before I was old enough to see over the kitchen counter," Lara Lyn recalls. "They would let me do things like chop a banana with a butter knife."

The first recipe she ever fixed by herself (mostly) were pancakes that she made to serve her mother breakfast in bed on Mother's Day when she was 5 or 6 years old. Even then, she tried to do it her own way.

"I was old enough to mix the batter, but my grandmother probably did the flipping," says



"Georgia has a lot to offer, and I was proud to represent our state."