

## DINNER

### Potato Cakes

While on *Emeril Live*, Worsham cooked up andouille potato cakes with fresh corn and tomato salsa. The recipe was courtesy of Emeril and is made up of different vegetables.

**Recipe (courtesy of the Food Network):**

**Ingredients:**

**For the salsa:**  
 1/2 cup blanched corn  
 4 ripe Italian plum tomatoes, peeled, seeded and diced

1/2 cup minced onions  
 1 teaspoon minced jalapeno peppers  
 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro  
 1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lime juice

1 teaspoon freshly squeezed lemon juice  
 Salt  
 Freshly ground pepper

**For the andouille potato cakes:**

1/2 cup chopped onions  
 1/4 cup chopped celery  
 2 1/2 pounds white potatoes, peeled and diced

1 tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons chopped garlic  
 3 cups water  
 Salt  
 Freshly ground pepper

1/2 pound andouille sausage  
 1 tablespoon finely chopped parsley  
 1/2 cup heavy cream  
 1 cup all-purpose flour  
 Creole seasoning  
 3 eggs  
 2 cups fine dried bread crumbs

**Directions**

**For the salsa:** Combine the corn, tomatoes, onions, jalapenos, cilantro, lime juice and lemon juice. Mix well. Season the salsa with salt and pepper. Set the salsa aside.

**For the andouille potato cakes:** Preheat a deep-fat fryer. In a saucepan, combine the onions, celery, potatoes, two teaspoons of garlic and water. Season with salt and pepper. Bring the liquid to a boil. Reduce to a simmer and cook until the potatoes are fork tender, about 10 to 12 minutes.

In a large sauté pan, brown the sausage, about six to eight minutes. Remove and drain on paper towels. Set aside. Remove the potatoes from the heat and drain. Turn the potatoes into a mixing bowl. Add the sausage, parsley, remaining tablespoon of garlic, one egg and cream. Using a hand-held masher, mash mixture until thoroughly blended. Season with salt and pepper.

Cool the mixture completely. Form the mixture into a log, about one-inch thick. Cut the log into two-inch pieces. In a small mixing bowl, add the flour and season with Creole seasoning. In another small bowl, whisk the remaining eggs and two tablespoons milk together. Season the mixture with salt and pepper.

In a third mixing bowl, add the breadcrumbs and season with Creole seasoning. Dredge the potato cakes in seasoned flour, coating completely. Dip each cake in the egg wash, allowing the excess to drip off. Dredge the cakes in the seasoned breadcrumbs, coating completely.

Fry the cakes until golden brown, about three to four minutes, turning often for even browning. Remove the cakes from the oil and drain on paper towels. Season the cakes with Creole seasoning. Place two cakes in the center of each plate and spoon some salsa over the cakes.

## & DESSERT

### Chocolate-Hazelnut Gelato

After any meal comes dessert, and Worsham supplies the recipe for a delectable chocolate-hazelnut gelato.

**Recipe (courtesy of The Food Network):**

**Ingredients**

2 cups whole milk  
 1 cup heavy cream  
 1/2 cup sugar, plus 1/4 cup  
 4 egg yolks  
 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract  
 1/2 cup chocolate-hazelnut spread (Nutella recommended)  
 1/2 cup toasted hazelnuts, crushed, for garnish

**Directions**

In a saucepan combine the milk, cream, and half a cup sugar over medium heat. Cook until the sugar dissolves, about five minutes.

Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, whip the egg yolks with the remaining sugar using an electric mixer until the eggs have become thick and pale yellow, about 4 minutes. Pour half a cup of the warm milk and cream mixture into the egg mixture and stir. Add this mixture back into the saucepan. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly, until the mixture becomes thick enough to coat the back of a wooden spoon, about seven to 10 minutes.

Place a strainer over a medium bowl and pour the warm custard mixture through the strainer. Stir in the vanilla and hazelnut spread until it dissolves. Chill mixture completely before pouring into an ice cream maker and follow manufacturer's instructions to freeze.

To serve, scoop gelato into serving bowls and top with hazelnuts.



# From Emeril to Penn State THEN...



Nine-year-old MJ Worsham whips up a dish with Emeril Lagasse. Worsham also appeared on *The Rosie O'Donnell Show*.

**Penn State student MJ Worsham knew how to cook before he reached the sixth grade — and he proved it.**

# BAM!

By Cayla Rasi  
 COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

**Ready... set... cook!**

It was that exact Food Network television show that sparked a 9-year-old's interest in cooking. Before MJ Worsham knew it, he was working at prestigious restaurants in Washington, D.C., before he even could drive.

Worsham (junior-hotel, restaurant and institutional management) said he watched cooking shows as a kid and taught himself how to cook.

"I learned pretty much everything off of the TV," Worsham said, "You can learn a lot and not realize it. It's all about the technique, and I didn't care what the chefs were cooking — I wanted to cook what I wanted to cook. I just wanted to know what the hell I was doing."

Once he hit the fifth grade, his teacher Geoff Favero noticed his skill in the kitchen and thought it would be a great idea to notify *The Rosie O'Donnell Show* about his talent.

"MJ talked about cooking at school all the time," Favero said. "Once or twice, he brought in samples of food for me. More than anything, he knew all of these chefs kids his age didn't know, and he always talked about them, and he knew all about the Food Network. That impressed me, and I felt the need to support him."

Favero said he was browsing online and came across a competition on *The Rosie O'Donnell Show* — the show was searching for kid chefs under the age of 10. A small demo video of Worsham was sent to the show, and even though Favero felt good about what was sent, he thought the chances of him making something like that would be slim.

"About a month and a half after sending in information to the show, I got a phone call from a production assistant and said they would like to schedule an appearance for me on the show," Worsham said. "It was big news, it was great, it was awesome to hear. It was also kind of nerve-wracking, but it also kind of wasn't because I felt so comfortable with cooking."

In November 2000, while taping the episode on *The Rosie O'Donnell Show*, Emeril Lagasse made a surprise appearance on set. He asked Worsham to stick around New York City for a few days to go on *Emeril Live*.

**BAM!**

In a matter of a week, Worsham was on two major network television shows. He even managed to meet the New York Giants, thanks to a special Emeril Live episode about tailgating.

Once he returned home to Maryland, Worsham and his parents had dinner at Signatures, a restaurant where chef Morou Ouattara was working.

Worsham said a server had seen him pair his parents' dinner with a specific wine. It wasn't just any wine — it was the perfect pairing. The manager asked him to return on an evening when the head chef would be in the kitchen.

He had his first gig at the restaurant as a 12-year-old — and he had never had professional cooking lessons.

"In cooking, it's not an academic thing — you get a hands-on professional education," Worsham said. "I've never gone and had any formal cooking training, but I would say the knowledge that I have is pretty good."

After his family moved from Maryland to Hershey, Pa., Worsham lost the opportunity to work in high-

end restaurant kitchens, and his interest in cooking began to decline. In his senior year in high school, he applied to two colleges: America and Penn State. He was accepted to both schools, but he decided to come to Penn State and study business. But once he found out that Penn State's hotel, restaurant and institutional management program was ranked highly, he opted to make it his major. This way, he would be able to combine his knowledge of food and get a business background, Worsham said.

Even though he doesn't want to go directly into a culinary job after graduation, Worsham said he can see himself opening a restaurant a decade or two in the future.

"What I want to do doesn't really put me in a restaurant or hotel, but it does give me the background if I ever want to go back to it," Worsham said. "At some point, I'd be pretty well-rounded and able to open up my own restaurant or work for a large restaurant."

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## NOW...



MJ Worsham is now a hotel, restaurant and institutional management major. Here, he cooks a chicken and broccoli dish.

## Student chef reflects on his culinary journey

By Cayla Rasi  
 COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

**Q: What sparked your interest in cooking?**

**A:** It was a show called *Ready... Set... Cook!* There were two chefs, ingredients, someone from the audience to help them cook, with 18 minutes to make two or three portions. So, it was a fun show to watch and I started to watch it on a regular basis. Then I would go into my own kitchen and just sort of experiment with what tasted good to me and would use those techniques. I've never taken a cooking class, nothing like that.

**Q: What took place after you found out you were going to be on *The Rosie O'Donnell Show*?**

**A:** In November of 2000 we went to New York City, and I taped my episode on *The Rosie*

*O'Donnell Show*. Prior to that, I was asked if there are any particular chefs that I like — and I said that I watch a lot of *Emeril*. I went on the taping of the show ... and I hear music starting to play, and I looked up, and running down the stairs in one of the aisles was Emeril. That was really exciting. And then he said, "When you're done here, why don't you come over and do my show!"

**Q: Can you describe what a shift was like in a high-end restaurant kitchen?**

**A:** Well, it came down to busier times than others. I would come down and in the beginning of my shift would be a lot of prepping. ... After the prep work would be a staff meeting where they would go over the specials for the night and how many covers they had.

**Q: What restaurants did you work at in Washington, D.C.?**

**A:** I worked at different restaurants in the area: Vidalia, Bistro Bis and Signatures ... I would go down there on a pretty regular basis and at service time at Signatures, sometimes I would actually work a station. It would get busy and I could handle it. It was sort of interesting that I was never really overwhelmed by the pressure.

**Q: How did you actually work at these restaurants since you were technically not legally of-age to be working?**

**A:** That was my parents' first question. The answer is, I was never paid and I was technically never working. I was just there to observe and get some hands-on training.