



# Moving On *Up*

From humble line cook beginnings to celebrity chef status, Chef Chuck Hughes is taking his food game to the next level

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FOODIE CULTURE is becoming more and more of a popular thing these days. And as a result, those involved in the industry are constantly forced to up their game in order to stay on top. It's incredibly competitive, incredibly fast-paced and incredibly pressured. But, for those who love what they do, this is all worth it for being able to pursue their passion day in and day out, and deliver a dining experience they can truly be proud of.

Fall Flavours is the prime time to not only see our own local chefs in action, but also have up close and personal interactions with various well-known chefs from across the country, like Chef Massimo Capra, Chef Anna Olson and Chef Mark McEwan, among others.

A new addition to this year's mix is Montreal born and bred, Chef Chuck Hughes. The charismatic chef has been cooking since he was a young child and decided to turn his passion for food into a career. In fact, Chuck loves food so much that he even has his favourites tattooed on his arms: bacon, lemon meringue pie, lobster and arugula, just to name a few.

He began his television debut on the popular

Food Network television

Chef Chuck Hughes has made quite a name for himself in the foodie world—don't miss your chance to see him in action at this year's Fall Flavours Festival in September.



While Chuck spends much of his time on the road, shooting TV shows, doing charity events, or promoting his books, he still feels most at home behind the cooking line.

show, *Chuck's Day Off*, and soon enough his face—not to mention his tattoos—became a familiar sight. Since then, he's appeared on *Chef America*, *The Next Iron Chef: Super Chefs*, and his spin-off show called *Chuck's Week Off*. All this while running two popular Montreal restaurants—Garde Manger and Le Bremner—on top of everything else. Currently, he stars in *Chuck's Eat The Street*, which airs on the Cooking Channel in the U.S. and he has joined an all-star panel of expert judges on *Chopped Canada*.

In the midst of all this, he remains an incredibly down to earth and humble guy. So much so that he even made time to connect with G! for a quick Q&A in early August to discuss the evolution of his career, his tips for work-life balance and what he's most looking forward to during his visit to P.E.I. this September.

#### **Looking back on your days of working in advertising, did you ever expect your career to lead you in this direction?**

I don't know if I would call it a career. I studied marketing in school and you think what you study in school is what you should do with your life. I was always working in kitchens on the side, though, as well as cooking for friends and family. I really enjoyed cooking and this was before it was popular and there was no 'foodie culture.' So I just followed my passion, but I had no idea that it would get me to where I am today. The most I was hoping was maybe someday, if I was really lucky and worked hard, I could open a restaurant.

#### **What made you want to make a change and why did you choose cooking?**

From when I was a kid, I loved cooking and I

had always worked in different jobs in the kitchen. But when I first started cooking, the idea of cooking for a career was not popular or promoted much, not like it is now. So for me, it was more of a natural evolvement—just doing what I loved to do and a career came out of that.

#### **How has it been to balance running your restaurants, Garde Manger and Le Bremner, and appearing on various television shows (on top of everything else)? Any work-life balance tips to share?**

I am really lucky in that everything I do—from the appearances, to TV show, to working in the restaurants—I love to do it. So being busy is great. I'm doing what I love to do and having a terrific time. The only reason it all works is because of my partners, the great staff and, most importantly, the two chefs who keep the restaurants running: Danny Smiles at Le Bremner and Josh Lauridsen at Garde Manger. As far as work-life balance tips, I would say try to every day take some time for yourself to do something physical to clear your head. Doesn't matter what it is—it could be playing hockey or yoga but just do some physical activity.

#### **This may be a difficult one to pin down, but what is your favourite style of cooking?**

More and more I'm finding that it's the simplest and the oldest techniques that appeal to me. Life is so fast and there is a lot of modern styles, techniques and equipment, but the ones I'm liking the most are the basic ones—fire,

hot coals and a whole animal that has been on spit and roasted for three hours, with incredibly fresh ingredients. We are really lucky this time of the year that we have so many great fresh ingredients and I don't want to hide or complicate them, but just bring out their natural flavour.

#### **You've made quite a name for yourself as a "Celebrity Chef"—how has life, if at all, changed for you under this sort of title?**

I don't call myself a celebrity chef and I never will. I'm just the same guy when I started. That whole Celebrity Chef thing doesn't really mean anything. I'm just very lucky to be able to what I love to do and I hope I can inspire people to eat good food and enjoy cooking as much as I do.

#### **What are you most looking forward to during your trip PEI this September?**

More like what am I not looking forward to! Clam digging, foraging, seaweed collecting, some oyster shucking, checking out some of the restaurants, going fishing with Ross. I'm trying to stay longer so I can have a real P.E.I. experience and live the outdoor life a little.

*For more information on Chef Chuck's events and any other Fall Flavours events, visit [www.fall-flavours.ca](http://www.fall-flavours.ca). To stay connected with Chuck Hughes, visit [www.chuckhughes.ca](http://www.chuckhughes.ca).*

### **Chef Chuck Hughes' Signature Fall Flavours Events:**

#### **OYSTERS ON THE PIER**

Date: September 13th, 20124

Time: 6:00-10:00 p.m.

Location: The Northport Pier Restaurant

#### **PEI LAMB LUAU**

Date: September 14th, 2014

Time: 4:00-7:00 p.m. (sunset)

Location: Rodd Crowbush Golf & Beach Resort

#### **TOE TAPS & TATERS**

Date: September 26th, 2014

Time: 7:00 - 11:00 p.m.

Location: Canadian Potato Museum

