



Chef Bio Alice Retson

Chicago, USA

4-year-old Ali wanted to help Yia Yia roll the dolmades, 6-year-old Ali asked her aunt to show her how to make baklava, and 8-year-old Ali made homemade pasta for her family. Naturally curious and independent, she has always wanted to know what went into her favorite dishes and more importantly how she could make them herself. 14-year-old Ali came back from a holiday in Paris and promptly opened up Julia Child's Mastering the Art of French Cooking. Disappointed by the lack of croissants, eclairs and tartes in suburban Chicago, she took matters into her own hands and made a perfectly-risen soufflé on the second try. Since then, she has been the official patissiere of family, friend, and school gatherings.

Ali received her culinary education from true experts - the mothers, grandmothers and aunts who keep their families, students, and guests fed everyday. She learned dango from her host family in Tokyo, gallo pinto in a Costa Rican farm house, banchan from her school cook in Seoul, and pad thai from a lady on Phetchahung road in Bangkok. She enjoys creating new recipes using the techniques and ingredients she picks up along the way.

A baker at heart, Ali is always dreaming up new flavors and cake ideas. Recently Beijing has inspired the ma tuan cookie, a date pie, and the bingtanghulu cupcake. She is excited to work in the Hutong Kitchen to share her passion and find new inspiration.