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Brooklyn Students Get Their First Taste of Fine Dining

'I Never Saw Purple Cabbage Before,' One Says



Sydney Williams, left, triple dared Rikiyah Hereford, center, to try the red cabbage at a grand meal winding up the Spoons Across America's 12th Annual Days of Taste. "I liked it!" she said. To the right is Noel Mina, fellow student at Park Slope's P.S. 282.

Eagle photo by Mary Frost

By Mary Frost
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DOWNTOWN BROOKLYN — The cuisine was four star, the water goblets gleamed, and the service was impeccable.

The discriminating diners — dressed in their buttoned-down best — may have been only in the fourth or fifth grade at Park Slope's P.S. 282, but their taste was refined. They chose between the pork chops with red cabbage and potatoes, and the arrugula salad with roasted squash and cranberries, both served with Irish soda bread.

"The pork chops are my favorite," said Tariq Alamo. "I'll eat them again."

Shari Johnson said, "The Irish soda bread is the highlight."

This dining experience — prepared and served by culinary arts students in the Janet Lefler Dining Room at the New York City College of Technology

in Downtown Brooklyn — was duplicated all over the city last week as the culminating event of AIWF/NY's 12th Annual Days of Taste.

During this four-week culinary program, produced in partnership with Spoons Across America, chefs and food professionals teach kids in elementary schools across New York about the tastes and textures of food and how it makes its way from the farm to the table.

Brooklyn resident chef Anthony Arbeeny from the Grand Hyatt New York, Josh Grinker from Brooklyn's Stone Park Café, and chef Jean Claude at City Tech were among the dozens participating.

Though many of the young diners were not the biggest fans of the red cabbage, at least most of them tried it

— something that would not have happened a month ago.

Sydney Williams triple-dared table mate Rikiyah Hereford to eat the unfamiliar vegetable. It was an offer she couldn't refuse. "I liked it!" she proclaimed. "I will eat it again. I never saw purple cabbage before, but I'm glad I tasted it."

Before their meal, the students visited City Tech's professional food labs and kitchens and sat in during the pre-meal meeting in the impressive Hospitality Management Department, which offers degrees to students interested in becoming chefs, restaurateurs, purchasing agents, food and drink directors or entering other hospitality-related fields.

"It's a wonderful experience," said P.S. 282 Principal Magalie Alexis. "Ebony, one of my students who is from Georgia, said, 'Wow! We don't have a Days of Taste in Georgia.' She's going to try [these recipes] at home with her parents."

"All children love to eat, explore, discover. What better way to learn than through eating?"

Spoons Across America produces the American Institute of Wine and Food Days of Taste for the New York Chapter in collaboration with: The James Beard Foundation, NYC College of Technology/Hospitality Management, Art Institute of NYC, The French Culinary Institute, The Institute of Culinary Education, New York University, Greenmarket-NYC Council on the Environment, NY Women's Culinary Alliance, Slow Food NY and Just Food.



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