

A photograph of a kitchen shelf with various items. On the left is a tall, silver rice cooker. Next to it is a framed recipe card with a floral design. In the center is a vase with several colorful flowers (purple, orange, and red) and green leaves. To the right of the vase are several jars and containers, including a yellow one and a green one. The shelf is set against a white tiled wall.

Heat: Trailing The Path Of The Kitchen Goddess

Tales, Spells, Recipes, Botanicas, & Bubbling Cauldrons)

A Culinary Memoir

By Stefanie Kelly

1990's - 2015

- In the 1990s, there were only a handful of Black female chefs working in high-end kitchens in New York City. This is the story of one of those exceptional chefs and her journey from a rank amateur to a culinary professional. Along the way, she encounters some of the industry's greats and faces extraordinary challenges while achieving remarkable successes, all guided by her creativity. Interwoven throughout her journey are magnificent recipes gifted to her by mentors and muses.



The Chef

- Stefanie Kelly began her culinary career in the kitchens of the West Coast, starting at Angeli Mare, which was led by chef and author Evan Kleinman, known for her books 'Pasta Rustica' and 'Cucina Rustica.' After returning to her hometown of New York, she worked at several renowned establishments, including Union Square Cafe, Aqua Grill, Soul Cafe, and Brooklyn Moon, while also managing her catering business.
- With 35 years of experience in various kitchens, both private and public, Ms. Kelly has had the privilege of feeding heads of state, such as the Sarkozys of France and Ariel Sharon of Israel. She even served as a private chef for the daughter of Princess Sunny Von Bulow. Additionally, she was the tour chef for Grammy Award winner D'Angelo during the Black Messiah tour in the U.S. and Europe.
- Ms. Kelly's passion for fine food and its preparation has taken her around the globe. She has written a food column for the online publication "Homeslice," created a horoscope for Honey Magazine, contributed an essay to "Coon Bidness," and is the astrologer for Greg Tate's "Midnight Lightning: Jimi Hendrix and the Black Experience." She is also the author of Belly Blog.

Marketing

Black women biographies and cookbooks audience are quite broad, encompassing individuals interested in Black history, culinary traditions, and the personal stories of Black women. Cookbooks, in particular, attract home cooks, food enthusiasts, and those seeking to explore different culinary perspectives. Furthermore, cookbook sales have seen a post-pandemic rise as more people cook at home, as reported by [Marketplace.org](https://www.marketplace.org). Kristen McLean, a book industry analyst for The NPD Group, notes that cookbooks are consistently a strong category, ranking as the fourth-largest non-fiction category in U.S. sales.

Recent insights from the #METOO Movement and the Sean 'Diddy' Combs trial have shed light on the entertainment industry. Notably, Google reported that the Diddy trial was the world's top search in April 2025, with daily updates from news sources like CNN and the BBC. As a chef in hip-hop's heyday, Ms. Kelly was witness to many of the injustices that women in and around the industry had to endure, while also having her own brush with a 'trial of the century.'

HEAT: Trailing the Path of the Kitchen Goddess delves into this culinary world and the operations of renowned restaurant kitchens, i.e. Union Square Cafe, Aqua Grill, Soul Cafe, and Brooklyn Moon. The book centers on Stefanie Kelly, a Black woman whose experiences mirror a generation pursuing their dreams, overcoming obstacles, and constantly adapting.

Salads, Homemade breads, Dressings

Tuna Nicoise

Miso perfumed Salmon Caesar

Spinach Salad

Caesar Salad Dressing:

- 6 anchovies
- 2 tsp capers
- 2 tbsp Lemon juice
- 1 tbsp Worchestshire
- 1 tbsp sriracha
- 1 tbsp mustard
- 3 tbsp soy sauce



Moroccan Rack of Lamb

- 5 Racks of lamb about 5 small racks
- 2 TBSP. Ras el Hanout (Moroccan spice blend)
- 2 TBSP. Harrissa, blended with 2 cloves garlic & 2 bunches cilantro & with ½ preserved lemon to a paste
- Salt & both black & white pepper to taste
- 1 TBSP Olive oil
- Method:
 - Score (make shallow cuts at the top level of fat) the racks in a criss cross pattern & spread the spices & harrissa & herb garlic paste onto all sides of the lamb racks. Arrange racks fat side down in a deep pot. Marinate at least 5 hours up to overnight.
 - Heat a large frying pan to near smoking on high flame.
 - Sear the fat side of the lamb until well browned. Depending on the size of the pan, do this in batches. Once all are seared & brown, return to the pan & cover. Simmer in its own juices to medium rare, about 20 minutes. Serve with pan juices.
- Serves 7 - 10

Soups, Stocks & Ferments

Lentil Soup with Five Mild Mushrooms

- 2 ounces dried mushrooms
- 2 cups warm filtered water
- ¼ cup Brandy
- 14 cups chicken stocks
- 2 tbsp Worcestershire Sauce
- 1 cup dried lentils
- 2 large onions diced (approx. 3 cups)
- 4 ribs of celery diced (approx. 2 cups)
- 1 lb. carrots diced (approx. 3 cups)
- 8 cloves garlic minced
- 2 bay leaves, 2 tbsp oregano, 1 tbsp basil



Comps

It's "Julie & Julia's" enthusiasm colliding with "Like Water for Chocolate's" sensory richness and the insider grit of "Kitchen Confidential." All Wrapped in Black Girl Magic, reminiscent of "My Soul Looks Back."

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