



# CATARACTS AND COOKING



The art and joy of cooking helps me to unwind after a long day in the OR.

BY SIMONETTA MORSELLI, MD

When I was 10 years old, my mother was in poor health and was hospitalized 300 km away from our home for about 6 months. During this time, my younger brother and I were supported by my primary school teacher and by my grandmother. I wanted to help my brother and me grow up without needing to depend on anyone else, so I asked my teacher to help me learn simple housework such as washing clothes, ironing, cooking, and feeding my brother. In about 3 months, I was able to prepare pasta and pizza, and even bake a cake. It was then that I fell in love with cooking, and, when my mother returned home still unable to cook, I became the official *chef* in my family until I married and moved away.

I use cooking as a way to relax, by creating something special for the people who I love. When I am exhausted after a long day, I love to bake biscuits or a cake for the following day. I am the chief of the ophthalmic unit at my hospital, and every week I bring in a different cake for my staff. When I was still studying in college, I eased my anxiety by baking a cake the night before each of my exams—for 58 exams, I prepared 58 different cakes. I like to express myself by creating something that is appealing to all the senses. Color, smell, and taste, in that order, are the most important characteristics in my dishes.

I love preparing a first course, main course, and dessert when creating

a meal. Sachertorte and Sedano di Verona soup with scallops are my specialties, but I also enjoy cooking meals that include white asparagus (see recipe at right). In 2005, I was featured on Gambero Rosso RAI SAT, an Italian national television channel, cooking a personal recipe I invented consisting of soup, scallops, and Verona celery. This television show allows nonprofessional chefs to showcase their talent with cooking and to feature a meal they invented. The show's producers prepared all the ingredients for me, and I cooked the meal on camera. At the end of the program, a professional chef critiqued my cooking and my recipe. To me, it was much more stressful than a live surgery! ■

Dishes cooked and prepared by Dr. Morselli.

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## MY FAVORITE RECIPE

### Raw White Asparagus With Raw Prawns

- ▶ Cut the asparagus into small, thin pieces. Marinate with olive oil, a pinch of salt, vinegar, and a pinch of pink pepper.
- ▶ After 1 hour, open and clean the prawns, putting one prawn for each of your guests over the marinated asparagus.
- ▶ Flavor with extra virgin olive oil, a pinch of pink pepper, a pinch of salt, one tomato confit, and one leaf of shredded basil.
- ▶ Enjoy!