



Meet the Chefs at Eataly. Fitz Tallon

Eataly Magazine (March 02, 2018)



We want you to get to know the people behind the food. World-class chefs, who transform simple, high-quality ingredients into the delicious dishes in restaurants. We introduce you to Fitz Tallon, Eataly NYC Flatiron's Executive Chef!

When did you know you wanted to be a chef?

I worked on Morning Glory Farm in Massachusetts for about two years. I managed the field crew there. It was a great learning experience for me, both in managing employees and in learning about the products that I was responsible for. I had no idea that different varieties of eggplant existed. We



named an all-white eggplant “ghost face killah” after a member of the WuTang Clan. We thought it was a special eggplant because it was right next to a bunch of purple eggplants – only to later find out that it was actually another type of eggplant that had white skin. I loved managing the crew and was having a blast. I also really craved to know more about the product that I was dealing with – so I studied to become a chef.

Did you train at an institute?

I went to the French Culinary Institute (in New York).

Tell us about your past professional experience.

While attending the FCI, I worked at Blue Hill under the chef de cuisine, Trevor Kunk. I am lucky to have worked in that kitchen. Trevor was always calm, organized, and jovial. He was very dedicated to consistency and had a great attention to detail. I worked there because I thought — and still believe — that Dan Barber (Blue Hill restaurateur) did a great job pioneering a way of thinking about food, focusing on how the experience is just as important as the food and should be part of the story of why we are eating what we are eating.

After my stint at Blue Hill, I walked one block north and started working at Babbo. Babbo was a great kitchen to work in: that style of food is something that I can relate to and makes sense to me. Chef Frank Langello was and is a great friend, and he taught me how to move fast. To me, that kitchen is the epitome of NYC kitchens.

Next, I worked for Mike Toscano at Manzo (Eataly NYC Flatiron's butcher-focused restaurant), after we had worked together at Babbo for years. Mike and I were a great team, and I learned a lot from him. I opened Manzo as a sous chef and later became the executive chef of Manzo. A year later I took over Eataly NYC Flatiron as executive chef, replacing Eataly USA Executive Chef Alex Pilas, who left to open Eataly Chicago and now is heading up Eataly NYC Downtown.

What is your specialty Italian dish?

I love cooking simple pastas.

What ingredients are you craving the most right now?

Ramp season is right around the corner, so ramps! But every year, I am always the most excited for corn. To me, it is an ingredient that really can only be enjoyed during peak season and should be local. Corn is one of my favorite things to eat: it reminds me of summers with my family and simple fresh dishes that are ingredient-focused with little or no manipulation.

Do you have any quirks that your team teases you about?

Of course I have quirks – you’d have to ask the awesome group of people that I manage and put up with me all the time. (Eataly Magazine asked; nobody would give him up with juicy details.)

If you weren’t a chef, what profession would you have?

I’d like to own and operate a farm.

Tell us a behind-the-counter secret about Eataly!

I'll never tell. (Mostly because we don't have too many — open kitchens take care of that.)

Piacere di conoscerti, Chef Tallon: nice to meet you!

Source URL: <http://www.iitaly.org/magazine/dining-in-out/eataly-magazine/article/meet-chefs-eataly-fitz-tallon>



[1] <http://www.iitaly.org/files/chefjpg-3>