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5@5 - Chef Scott Crawford

5@5 is a daily, food-related list from chefs, writers, political pundits, musicians, actors, and all manner of opinionated people from around the globe.

According to consumer market research firm Mintel, twenty-four percent of **restaurant-goers plan to spend less** at restaurants in 2011 than in 2010, with sixty-three percent of those respondents citing that it's just too expensive to do so.

For those of you opting to dine chez you, executive chef Scott Crawford of **Herons at the Umstead Hotel & Spa** in Cary, North Carolina, says you can still achieve the restaurant experience at home - it's all in the presentation, dahling. Well, that is until somebody walks in wearing their Hello Kitty bedroom shoes.

[editorial]



[The Reynolds Group Inc.] [www.thereynoldsgroupinc.com]

How to Make Your Food Artful: Scott Crawford

1. Use colorful fresh ingredients

"When planning your meal, look for opportunities to be colorful. Many common vegetables have colorful varieties, such as yellow beets and purple potatoes. These simple ingredients can be used in vegetable dishes or salads for a big impact on your guest."

2. Interesting vessels and china

"Make simple food seem more artistic by picking up some unusual or interesting china. Options run the gamut from Bed Bath & Beyond to **Bernardaud**."

3. Plate presentation

"Use grace and delicacy when plating your meal. Don't overcrowd the plate: people can always get seconds!

For instance, use a spoon for saucing versus a ladle or gravy boat.

When serving plated meals consider slicing meat dishes - this will make it feel more like restaurant cuisine. When eating a family style meal, consider presenting a whole fish dish to really impress and wow your guests.

For the ultimate in entertaining, prepare a puréed soup, place the garnish in the soup bowl and pour the soup tableside for an impressive presentation everyone will leave talking about."

4. Use fresh herbs

"Grow them, buy them, whatever you do - use them! Consider whole sprigs as a garnish or chopped for adding flavor to a dish: fresh chervil or parsley for salads or rosemary and thyme for poultry dishes. For the person with absolutely no green thumb, plant arugula, beet tops or sorrel to use as garnish or for salads - all they need to grow is good dirt and water."

5. Proper equipment

"In order to achieve the level of refinement you might find in a restaurant, you have to have the proper equipment. Spend your money on a high quality blender, food processor, mixer and knife set."