

Farm-to-Table: Meet Chef Marjorie Meek-Bradley

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Art Credit: William Hereford

For many of us, our fondest childhood memories can be found in our family kitchen or around the dinner table. We look back on baking cookies with our mother or arguing with siblings over who had dishes duty. For Washington, D.C. chef Marjorie Meek-Bradley, a lively childhood in the kitchen led to a career that she hopes will keep people healthy, happy, and full. "I feel like I grew up in the kitchen, it was such a big part of my family life," she tells me.

Growing up in Northern California, Marjorie fell in love with cooking at her parents' soup kitchen. There her parents instilled the importance of being an economical cook—teaching her how to use seasonal ingredients (the most cost-effective), as well as how to use every single possible scrap of leftover food.

“My mom grew vegetables in the backyard and we cooked seasonally,” Marjorie says. It’s a lesson that inspired her career choice.

Now, as one of the few female executive chefs in Washington, D.C.—and, under 30, one of the youngest—Marjorie continues to stick to her parents’ philosophy, creating seasonal dishes with locally sourced produce as the chef of [Ripple](#), a restaurant on Connecticut Avenue in Washington D.C.

While farm-to-table restaurants are all the rage, Marjorie puts just as much focus on the health of her dishes as the taste. “Every time I create a dish I try to make sure it’s well balanced,” Marjorie says. “It’s not just about counting calories, but getting all the variety you need.”

Marjorie doesn’t just talk the talk. She recently competed in [DC’s Fit for Hope](#), a three-month weight loss challenge that raised money for the American Cancer Society.

Maintaining a healthy weight has to be hard when you’re surrounded by food all day, but it’s a priority for Marjorie, who works out five days a week and tries to stick to a healthy, balanced diet at home as well as in her restaurant.

Even as a relatively new chef at Ripple, Marjorie has big goals for 2014. She plans on continuing to develop new dishes and keep the restaurant growing and expanding while participating in community events.

“I’m really lucky; I get to do what I love,” Marjorie says. “Even days that I don’t look forward to going to work, I get into it after a few minutes. I always remember that it’s somebody’s night out