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FEATURED MAMA MARJORIE DRUKER



Welcome to [Boston Mamas Rock!](#) - where we're giving a voice to fabulous local mamas, whether they're entrepreneurs, avid volunteers, stay at home moms, moms who have closet talents, authors, media professionals, politicians, professors, etc. Read on for today's interview with Marjorie Druker, mother of one and chef/co-owner of the [New England Soup Factory](#). Then go ahead and [nominate](#) yourself or a friend!

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Marjorie Druker, Chef & Co-Owner, [New England Soup Factory](#)

Christine: Tell us a bit about your background Marjorie. You're a chef and co-founded the New England Soup Factory with your husband Paul in 1995. What was the path that led you to your current profession?

Marjorie: I have been cooking professionally since I was 17 years old. I started out working in Newton's first gourmet shop named Nibbles in 1981 and instantly fell in love with the idea of Gourmet To Go. Over the years I worked at many of these types of stores that specialized in prepared foods. I had the opportunity to work for many interesting concepts that emphasized ethnic cooking, rotisserie chicken, homemade pasta making, whole foods, and lots of catering. I also attended Johnson and Wales Culinary School, which gave me the foundation and the tools to pursue a life in the food service industry. It's not just a career for me but a way of life.

Christine: At NESF you're committed to creating healthy comfort food. Have you found it challenging to work around the fatty creams and high sodium content prevalent in many traditional soups? What are some of your best fat/salt cooking workarounds?



Marjorie: I am committed to serving food that is of the highest quality and flavor. Incorporating whole grains, legumes, dried beans, and lots of fresh vegetables is my everyday approach. You will find cream in some of our soups but they are all stock based soups and cream is the last ingredient we add and it's just a touch to create a great smooth feel. Salt is an essential ingredients in bringing out flavor and balance in a way that brightens the soup.

Christine: Tell us some of your favorite soups for fall.

Marjorie: Fall is the best time of year for wonderful ingredients like mushrooms, sweet potatoes, squashes, and pumpkins.

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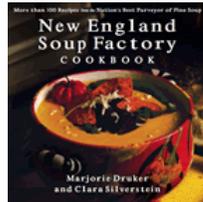
During the fall you will find wild mushroom barley and butternut, apple, and sage. One of our most popular flavors is sweet potato chicken barley. It's my daughter Emily's favorite soup because it's like pumped up chicken soup with bits of barley and sweet and creamy sweet potatoes.

Christine: You work alongside your husband; what are the best and most challenging parts of that arrangement?

Marjorie: My husband Paul is my closest friend and confidante. We have worked side by side since the day we met. Our professors in college used to call us peanut butter and jelly because we were stuck to each other. When I was at home for Emily's first few years I would miss him terribly while he was at work. The food service profession demands many hours and we did not get to spend as much time together as we liked. I love working with him but sometimes we talk about the business too much and we need to shut it off once in a while.

Christine: My understanding is that your daughter was very young when you and your husband founded NESF. What were your best strategies for getting your business off the ground with a toddler in tow?

Marjorie: Emily had just turned three when we opened New England Soup Factory. When I look back on what I did to get opened and started I can't believe that I did it. First, I found a day care situation that made me feel completely comfortable. I wanted Emily to have a warm, loving, and safe place to come to everyday. I found that in a place called Gan Yeladim, which translates into "garden of children" in Hebrew. That was the most important thing for me and I was blessed that this school was everything and more than I wished for. I did not have enough money to pay for day care so we took our tax refund check from the government and invested it into day care so that I could get out of the house and back to work. It was a tremendous comfort for me in knowing that my child would be well cared for. I did not take a paycheck for the first two years and instead used what I would have made and paid for day care. It never bothered me because it was not about the money; it was about following my passion for food and starting my own business.



Christine: Your cookbook, [New England Soup Factory Cookbook](#) just came out last year, but I'm curious - are there plans for a follow up? Would you ever consider writing a cookbook about a different food genre other than soup?

Marjorie: Writing the New England Soup Factory Cookbook was one of the most rich and rewarding experiences I have ever had. It became more than just a cookbook filled with recipes. It's a story about my life in food and the people that shared it with me over the years. For the reader that has never met me before, they will feel as though they know me after reading the book. It was pure joy for me and I hope to write another book with even more recipes of New England Soup Factory favorites that were not included in the first book.

Christine: You have two locations, in Brookline and Newton. Are you mulling further expansion, in Massachusetts, or beyond?

Marjorie: We have been so fortunate to have locations in neighborhoods where the community is so in tune to what we do. They are the best people to feed because they love to try new and inventive things. They are progressive and have wonderful palates. We also have a franchise in Salem, Massachusetts that has been operating for close to three years. We make all of their soup as well as ours. We also sell soup to Dine Boston in Boston's Logan Airport in Terminal E. We are

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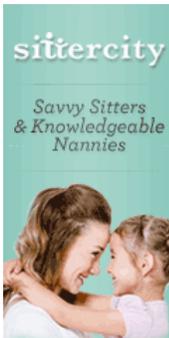


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always looking at ways to grow our business but we want to make sure that we make sound decisions that are in the best interests of our customers and the business.

Christine: I'm always curious about chefs and what they do for cooking around home. Who preps dinner? Does your daughter enjoy cooking?

Marjorie: I am the chef de cuisine in our house. I love cooking and when I cook at home my kitchen is my place to be. I have a great herb garden that provides me with a wide array of fresh herbs. My pantry is stocked with ingredients that allow me to be creative and playful with my family's meals. Ingredients just thrill me! Emily does not really enjoy cooking but she sure enjoys eating it! She knows her food and she knows good food from bad but she does not enjoy cooking in the kitchen with me. It totally bores her and she is always quick to tell me that she never wants to be a chef. That's OK because I just want her to find a profession that drives her and makes her happy and complete. I love the fact that I love what I do and I wish the same for Emily.

Christine: We've talked all business up to now. When you're not testing recipes and running your business, tell us about the favorite things you do to unwind.

Marjorie: Summertime is the only time of year when we have some time off. When we do, we pack up a huge gourmet picnic and go fishing for the day. We take a boat out into the waters of Scituate and enjoy the warmth of the sun and the relaxation it provides. It's the one quiet space where we can be alone in peace and just have time to ourselves. When we catch fish we bring it home to cook with our fresh herbs and our neighbor David's heirloom tomatoes and we make something delicious and fruitful.

Christine: And finally, what's your favorite thing about being a Boston mama?

Marjorie: The best thing about being a Boston mama is that you can enjoy the pleasures of raising a family and enjoying a fulfilling career at the same time. I am most grateful that Emily has been raised in a community that has taught her to understand and appreciate all people from all walks of life. She has an open mind and an open heart that will be guide her as she finds her own path in life.

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Posted by Christine Koh on 23 Sep 2008 | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | Filed in [Books & Entertainment](#); [Boston Mamas Rock!](#); [Food & Drink](#); [For Grownups](#); [Local](#)

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