

For 20 years, chef, food writer and nutritionist Robin Miller has been a fixture on the Food Network and, more recently, has become a popular attraction at the Scottsdale Culinary Festival (where she'll appear at Cooks & Corks on April 9). Here, the busy mother of two and host of "Quick Fix Meals with Robin Miller" shares what she's most looking forward to at this year's culinary event and how to interest kids in cooking.



AFM: *Where does your interest in food stem from?*

RM: It started with an interest in nutrition and the role that food plays in health, wellness, energy, longevity and even physical appearance. Once I discovered cooking, I realized I had a true passion for it. Now I combine the two loves into one [with] healthy cooking for family, friends and fans.

AFM: *How did you end up on the Food Network?*

RM: I've been doing Food Network since it first launched in the early 90's. I did hundreds of guest appearances and mini commercials for them. I have also been a regular guest on the morning shows ("The Today Show," "The Early Show," "Good Morning America," "The View" and "Live with Regis and Kelly"). One day, seemingly out of the blue, I got a call to do a show. But since I've been no stranger to the network and am one of the early players, it made sense.

AFM: *As a mom, what are your tips for getting kids in the kitchen?*

RM: Always invite them into the kitchen to do fun tasks. Ask them to stir, mix, knead, snip with child-safe scissors, season to taste, and so on. My favorite moments are those I spend with my boys in the kitchen. Plus, when you introduce kids to new flavors, they're more likely to try new things.

AFM: *Any advice for convincing kids to eat healthy?*

RM: Involve your kids in the cooking process and they'll be able to explore new things while adding their own input. Make meal-making a cool science project so they want to sample the outcome. Also, partner well-liked and familiar foods with new foods. For example, serve new vegetables with their favorite dips and dressings; serve their favorite protein (chicken, fish, beef) with a new vegetable on the side. Introduce new foods slowly and consistently and one at a time.

AFM: *What are your impressions of the Scottsdale dining scene? Any local favorites?*

RM: I think the Scottsdale dining scene is fun, lively and diverse. Since I often dine out with my kids, my favorite haunts might seem odd. We love The Office [Bar and Grill]; my son adores the tilapia with tropical fruit salsa. They serve excellent food and have a huge selection of delicious items. There's something to suit every palate. We also love Ling & Louie's [Asian Bar and Grill] for the same reason—a wide variety of amazing meals for all members of the family.

AFM: *What sets this month's Scottsdale Culinary Festival apart from other festivals?*

RM: I think the vibe at the Scottsdale Culinary Festival is more trend-setting than other festivals I've been to. Restaurants try to set culinary trends and think outside the box while enticing new patrons.

AFM: *What are you most looking forward to at this year's event?*

RM: I enjoy meeting the chefs and watching the other professionals do their thing. I also enjoy walking around the Great Arizona Picnic after my demo.

AFM: *What do you love most about what you do?*

RM: I love that I can do what I love every day, which means I can test recipes, prepare meals for my friends and family, write cookbooks, blog for Food Network and still pick up my kids from school. I can work from home and enjoy my family. I feel very lucky.