



# Susur Lee



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**F**usion, a style of cooking that combines ingredients and techniques from different cultures or countries, has become one of the trendiest words in the world of cuisine. By adding different flavours and using unusual techniques, a dish is naturally accepted, but when a chef mixes in experience and passion to the eclectic flavours and techniques, cuisine becomes highly respected.

When it comes to the cuisine of Susur Lee, fusion stands no chance. Named as one of the "Top Ten Chefs in the World" by Food and Wine Magazine in 2005, Susur Lee is one of the most exceptionally distinctive and talented chefs to grace Toronto's cuisine scene.

"The cuisine is based on my experience, on my travels and what I have introduced from my knowledge of what is going on out there." Lee's cuisine is a combination of the things he has learned in the past, things that inspire him in the present, and what he projects to be the future in cooking. "When I cook up a menu, it's not one dish to tell the story, it has a component of making that experience like, 'aha! I know what [the chef] is doing, I understand what he is trying to do!'" because one dish doesn't tell the story."

Based on European and Chinese Classical cooking, Lee modernizes the two traditions by bringing the old with the new to create a dish that involves a piece of himself. It cannot come from "just idealism; it has to be experienced, it has to be tried and true, and it has to be used." Not only is Lee re-creating the foods we eat, he is also changing the way we eat it. It is through his discovery and understanding of different cultures, languages, lifestyles and their way of eating that adds to the individuality and distinctiveness of his cuisine. Lee is dedicated to creating new and unusual dishes as often as the day changes. Every day is a new learning experience and Lee believes that one can never stop learning. To this day, Lee finds traveling to be the most beneficial and inspirational means of creating new dishes. The path to discovery has inspired and aspired him to perfection.





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**S**usur Lee's passion for food started at the early age of fourteen when he began working in a Hong Kong kitchen where he discovered his desire for distinctive foods and innovative flavours. With no direction and ambition at such a young age other than to bring home money and have fun with his friends, his mission was solely to work. He gained a great deal of knowledge from the chefs he worked with throughout his early years and with the people he met along the way. Lee has never forgotten his roots, nor the years spent touring the world and its people, tastes and lifestyles. His knowledge, ideas and dreams all came together at a small location on King St. With the success of his first restaurant, Susur, an addition was added just two years later when Lee was added next door to create a more deeply modernized and stylish type of cuisine.

When asked about his other sources of inspiration and motivation for his work, Lee enthusiastically launches into a discussion about his three kids. "Jet, Levi and Kai - they're my favourite people." His dedication in his work emulates the dedication he has to his kids. Although Lee spends most of his day looking after his two restaurants, he still finds the time to be a male role model to his three sons. Quality time with his sons isn't spent reading a book

to them, but by traveling and showing them the world that he knows and educating them on different cultures and people from all over the world. "When you have something striking for people to remember, and say I remember what my dad did, those are the real important times."

After 30 years in the industry, Susur Lee has become a part of his creations and knows exactly what looks good together and which flavours work well together. Lee describes it as "a trance - once you go into the trance, everything is pure because there are no other distractions. You're in focus."