

Deserts by Last Course Sensations are Certified Delicious



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Linda Speziale loves everything about Wisconsin.

"I love the four seasons, the land itself," Linda says. "The topography of the state is beautiful."

Linda Speziale is the founder and baker at Last Course Sensation, a made-to-order dessert business based out of Bangor, Wisconsin. She grew up in Canada, where her parents own a family-run grocery store. The store continues to do business to this day. In fact, Linda's mother is the inspiration behind Last Course Sensations.

"She is still working in her 80s, running a bake shop in a grocery store that has been in our family for almost 80 years," Linda says. "She's always been a big inspiration for me."

So how does a Canadian end up in Wisconsin? Linda's first husband transferred to Wisconsin through his job, and Linda has been in the United States ever since. After his passing in 2001, Linda decided it was time to return to the food industry. She enrolled at the New England Culinary Institute in Vermont, where she earned her degree in Culinary Arts.

"You have the idea of 'someday' and eventually follow your true passion in doing what you love," she says. "It made no sense for me to wait. That's when I decided to take the plunge and go to culinary school. That happened after my husband died and all three kids had grown up and moved out of the house. So I packed up my truck and moved to Vermont and got my culinary degree."

For several years, Linda worked at fine dining restaurants in Vermont and Maine. Then, in 2005, she decided to move back to Wisconsin.

"My kids are in the Midwest," she says. "I feel more grounded here. I found love again; I married my husband David a few years ago. We live on a farm and we have cattle and chickens and a huge garden full of produce."

When Linda first moved back to Wisconsin, she worked as a chef in Lake Geneva. Her passion, however, was starting the business that she envisioned for several years.

That business was Last Course Sensations.

Sensational Certifications

Last Course Sensations was officially founded in 2007. The business really took off in 2010 when Linda found a commercial kitchen to be the center of operations.

The commercial kitchen is important to Linda, and not just because working out of a personal kitchen for a business is illegal in the state of Wisconsin. As a certified chef, Linda has high standards for the food she makes for her customers, and she ensures her kitchen is maintained to the highest degree. That's why the kitchen for Last Course Sensations is licensed and inspected by the state of Wisconsin.

Linda's signature desserts are her butter tarts, which continue to be the foundation of her business to this day. Another top-seller are her Nanaimo bars. Both butter tarts and Nanaimo bars are traditional Canadian desserts, and Linda inherited her recipes from her mother. Today, Linda bakes and sells a wide variety of desserts, including gourmet dog treats; most of these are original recipes that come from Linda's experimentation.

"I love to be creative with food and dessert is a big part of it," she says. "I love cooking. I have stacks of food magazines that I get my inspiration from. It's just always been my life."



Linda Speziale is a certified chef, nutritional manager and owner of Last Course Sensations. The butter tarts pictured with her are her signature desserts.

In addition to being a certified chef, Linda is also a certified dietary manager and food protection professional with the Association of Nutrition and Foodservice Professionals, a role that helps to inform her decision about the ingredients she uses and where they come from.

“When it comes to desserts, I still like to use healthy products, good quality products,” she says. “I source as much as I can from local farmers and local businesses.”

There are no artificial ingredients or preservatives for Last Course Sensations. Everything is all-natural. Linda makes everything by hand in small batches, so everything is fresh too.

“In terms of dessert, food feeds the soul,” Linda says. “I believe dessert is all about balance. You still have to have a little sweet at the end of your meal.”

No Guilt Desserts

It may seem odd that a nutritionist and chef would own and operate a business that sells desserts. This doesn't bother Linda. After all, “food feeds the soul.”

“There's still that element of making food enjoyable. That's where my nutrition training comes in. You can follow the dietary guidelines but you still have to make food taste good and enjoyable. It has a balance where you can still have that little dessert at the end of your meal and not feel guilty. There is no guilt!”

Linda's favorite dessert is the Nanaimo bars. “Nanaimo bars are chocolate and who doesn't like chocolate?” she laughs.

When asked about her favorite thing to make, Linda can't decide.

“Goodness, I love making them all,” she says. “I love making them all because they are all hand-crafted. My heart and soul goes into every little piece of pastry I make.”



Nanaimo Bars are a traditional Canadian dessert. Linda inherited the recipe she uses from her mother.