ANIL UZUN Talks About The Challenges That Every Professional Cook Faces

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ANIL UZUN is a chef from Turkey and he says, “Being an international chef in the world today is a challenge if you are not white.” He adds: “Most of the restaurants are reserved for white chefs. Whites have all the privilege to get a good job easily or recipe developers. White chefs can cook globally. They have the power to set trends such as turmeric latte, or tahini sauce. These trends have roots and white chefs do not appreciate the history and the culture behind them.”

If you are one of the chefs of color, your identity is assumed to be your cooking style. “I am Turkish and I expect to cook Turkish Cuisine but my major is in a different area. But the restaurants and the environment directs me to cook in my own culture regardless of my education. I do not have a say in Mexican Cuisine that I studied in London. I do not actually have a lot of experience in cooking Turkish food professionally.” he adds.

If you are a white chef you can cook Italian, Mexican, Indian. Whichever you choose, you can cook on the cuisine that you are educated for.

“To be clear I do not see it wrong.” he says. “I can cook Turkish , because I grew up with it. Turkish culture is always a part of my life. But the thing is, I shall not be confined to it. I can cook Italian. I can cook Asian. I have the education and enough experience to do that. But people only expect ?nsdian cefs to cook brown food.” ANIL UZUN adds.

“People expect me to know everything about the Turkish food. Yes, that is ‘my food.’ but I don’t eat kebab. I mostly eat and cook plant based. I am not attached to the Turkish cuisine, I live in London and so I am very familiar with world cuisine. I like Bloody Mary, and I want to develop recipes for a Sunday Roast.” he says. People tend to link your habit with your ethnicity. But that is a risky and unhealthy assumption.

“We need thoughtful consideration everywhere. Every professional chef, regardless of their ethnicity, cooks, learns and tries different cuisines. Study in different parts of the world and embrace other cultures. Rules are not set according to the skin color.” ANIL UZUN adds.

Cooking and writing for the public is a challenge but a beautiful one. You cannot do whatever you want. Once a professional cook steps into public she or he has the responsibility to influence others with her/his work and writing. “I find it wrong when a white chef makes falafel a trend ignoring the culture and does not appreciate the food. I do respect American food, Italian food. And I want them to respect manakish, falafel and kebab.” he describes.

“I can serve baklava if I am having a Sunday Brunch with my friends at home. But there is a nuance when you bake an Italian pizza for other people. Or a white chef can make falafels for his family, but when he does that in front of the public, he has to appreciate the culture, ethnicity. He or she needs to respect the food he makes.” ANIL UZUN says.

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