





# AN APPETITE FOR ENTERTAINING

---

**From Bayside High to Cooking Channel, Tiffani Thiessen has gone on to save us all when that dinner bell rings**

WORDS BY VANESSA PASCALE

It's a cold, clear October afternoon, and I am out on the Hudson New York hotel's terrace, where Tiffani Thiessen's NYWFF event *Stacked: Sandwiches and Sides* is taking place. I approach Tiffani's booth—where perfectly quartered slices of her Pastrami Reuben with Brussels sprouts slaw are being served up—and she greets me with a big, warm smile. She is bundled up in an all-black ensemble topped with a camel-hued short sleeve coat, and her shoulder-skimming ombre tresses are styled in soft waves.

If you haven't heard, Tiffani is actually a culinary maven. The beautiful actress recently received her own cooking show on Cooking Channel, *Dinner at Tiffani's*—and it was surprisingly all on a whim. "I was in New York shooting *White Collar* and I had a couple random show ideas. I'm a huge fan of Food Network and Cooking Channel, so I walked in and literally pitched them a couple of ideas and they grabbed one called *Dinner at Tiffani's* and here we go, we're on our second season already," says the California-native. Her enthusiasm and perky disposition immediately bring to mind the character I associate her most with: Kelly Kapowski from *Saved by the Bell*.

# TELL US MORE, TIFFANI!

## LOVE & MARRIAGE

Married for ten years, Tiffani's recipe for a successful marriage is: "A lot of laughter, a lot of patience, and making sure that you put time aside for just the two of you, which is hard these days with a brand-new newborn, but we try."

## FAVORITE RESTAURANTS

New York's ABC Cocina and Quality Meats and Los Angeles' Ink and Animal.

## YOU WERE EVERYONE'S CELEBRITY CRUSH GROWING UP, WHO WAS YOURS?

"Oh gosh, it's funny, I didn't have typical crushes. I was more like —I was enamored by Michael Jackson. The one I can sort of remember would be Ricky Schroder 'cause I was a total fan of *Silver Spoons*."

## FANS MIGHT BE SURPRISED TO FIND OUT THAT

"I'm not a great swimmer and I grew up by the beach [Long Beach], so you would think..." **And you played a lifeguard on *Saved by the Bell* at one point!** "Yeah, totally, that would be the wrong casting for real life," she laughs.

Fans and foodies can watch Tiffani on her cooking show as she cooks and hosts meals for friends like former *Beverly Hills, 90210* co-star Jason Priestly, Seth Green and Lance Bass. From a "Big ol' Texas Feast" with barbeque ribs, southern greens, pimento cheese spread with crusty bread and peach Texas tea to "Game Night Munchies" where she serves up tuna avocado poke; mushroom, leek and prosciutto pizza; and peanut butter chocolate bites — her menu is fun, easy and impressive. "I always was the girl that would have the dinner parties. Now that I have kids, it's always about the kid's parties now. [This past July, Tiffani and her husband Brady welcomed son, Holt. They also have a 5-year-old daughter, Harper.] And I always loved every aspect of entertaining, not just cooking, but also putting it together —the whole production of it all," Tiffani says with a smile.

This holiday season, Tiffani will be whipping up her family's favorites at home: Mom's Cream Cheese Pie —her mother's recipe she has taken over preparing— and her Fennel and Sun Dried Tomato Dressing (the recipes are featured on the Cooking Channel website and her website, respectively). TiffaniThiessen.com is a place you truly get a feel for this Aquarian's personality as it's bursting with her passion for food, entertaining, DIY projects, recipes like Ricotta Stuffed Figs with Honey & Pistachios, family photos, her favorite things, and lots of tips. As seen under the "Gather" tab as well as in *People* magazine, and her cooking show, Tiffani is well versed in the art of executing seamless affairs. A successful hostess often needs grace, patience and passion (I know from experience) —all of which Tiffani possesses. So what is her best piece of advice when it comes to entertaining? "Put a timeline together. It's less stress. When you have a timeline you can kinda just go through the beats you need to be prepared, and not be stressed out doing everything last minute." For recipes and advice on what to serve guests, visit her website, and in the near future pick up her debut cookbook, which she plans to focus on as soon as Season Two of her cooking show is finished filming.

It's doesn't matter if she's home with family and friends or on-screen depicting the bad girl on *Beverly Hills, 90210* or an event planner-FBI-agent's-wife on *White Collar* (the latter is the character she relates to best) — entertaining is a significant, and fortunately, lucrative and fulfilling, part of Tiffani's life. Having worked in entertainment for over 25 years now, I was interested in finding out what has surprised her most in her career. "That I'm sitting here at a food festival and people are coming to see me! That's weird," she laughs.

Don't miss *Dinner at Tiffani's* on Cooking Channel Saturdays at 2 pm and check out TiffaniThiessen.com. **ML**