



Ann Cooper Biography

Renegade Lunch Lady; Partner, Lunch Lessons, LLC; Interim Nutrition Director, Boulder Valley School District; and Founder, Food Family Farming Foundation's Lunch Box Project

Chef Ann Cooper is a celebrated author, chef, educator, and enduring advocate for better food for all children. In a nation where children are born with shorter estimated life expectancies than their parents because of diet-related illness, Ann is a relentless voice of reform by focusing on the links between food, family, farming and children's health and wellness.

A graduate of the Culinary Institute of America, Hyde Park, NY, Ann has been a chef for more than 30 years including positions with Holland America Cruises, Radisson Hotels, Telluride Ski Resort as well as serving as Executive Chef at the renowned Putney Inn in Vermont. She has been featured in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *Newsweek*, and *Time Magazine* and has appeared on NPR's 'Living on Earth,' ABC's *Nightline*, CNN, PBS' *To The Contrary* and the *CBS Morning Show* and many other media outlets. Ann has shared her knowledge and experience by speaking at the Smithsonian Institute, the National Restaurant Association, the Heifer Foundation, Chefs Collaborative, the International Association of Culinary Professionals and numerous conferences. She has been honored by SLOW Food USA, selected as a Kellogg Food and Society Policy Fellow, and awarded an honorary doctorate from SUNY Cobleskill for her work on sustainable agriculture.

Ann is the author of four books: *Lunch Lessons: Changing the Way We Feed Our Children* (2006), *In Mother's Kitchen: Celebrated Women Chefs Share Beloved Family Recipes* (2005), *Bitter Harvest: A Chef's Perspective on the Hidden Dangers in the Foods We Eat and What You Can do About It* (2000) and *A Woman's Place is in the Kitchen: The Evolution of Women Chefs* (1998). She is past president of The American Culinary Federation of Central Vermont, and past president and board member of Women's Chefs and Restaurateurs. She also served on the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Organic Standards Board, a Congressional appointment, and was an Executive Committee member of Chefs Collaborative - all in an effort to raise awareness about the value of healthful, seasonal, organic, and regional foods.

Ann's research for and writing of *A Bitter Harvest* provided a true epiphany for this always curious and proactive chef. No longer could the environmental and health facts be ignored when it came to producing food in this country. Ms Cooper's career shifted from primarily cooking to a path of cooking, writing, and public speaking – all advocacy work for a healthier food system. There is no doubt that Ann is an accomplished chef, however her focus is now on using her skills and background to create a sustainable model for schools nationwide to transition any processed food based K-12 school meal program to a whole foods environment where food is procured regionally and prepared from scratch. In 2009, Ann founded Food Family Farming Foundation (F3) as a nonprofit focusing on solutions to the school food crisis. F3's pivotal project is The Lunch Box- a web portal that provides free and accessible tools, recipes and community connections to support school food reform.

Chef Ann is happily doing the work of three as a Chef, Nutrition Services Director, Consultant, Author, Public Speaker, and Advocate because she sees a need for change and has the gifts to help. She envisions a time soon when being a chef working to feed children fresh, delicious, and nourishing food will no longer be considered “renegade.”

For more information please see:

<http://www.chefann.com>/<http://www.foodfamilyfarming.org/> <http://www.thelunchbox.org/>