

SUPER CHEF

a magazine on careers, empires, trends, media, brands, and reviews by Juliette Rossant

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[Paula Deen and Food Network's Fat Chef](#)

By

[Juliette Rossant](#)

– 2012/01/16 [Posted in: * Super Chefs](#)



Consider the irony:

1. The recent [rumor/truth](#) that Food Network star [Paula Deen](#) has diabetes
2. The recent Food Network [announcement](#) of new show [Fat Chef](#), premiering on January 26

News of Paula's illness is sad, especially to her family and fans. It is perhaps not unexpected to those who watch her show and the copious amounts of fat with which she cooks.

As for *Fat Chef*, here is the pitch from FN's [website](#): *Fat Chef* follows the weight loss story of a pastry chef and a soul food chef:

Their weight is putting their lives in serious danger. Now they are doing something about it – following them over sixteen weeks,

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- [What is a "Super Chef"?](#)

Briefly: "A super chef is an empire-building celebrity chef."

Detailed: "A number of ingredients go into making Super Chefs. Their businesses reach geographically outside one city and beyond restaurants into other businesses. They are celebrated for their cooking talents and bedazzling, media-savvy ways. They manage large businesses, building brand names and personal wealth unheard of before among chefs. Their business empires are enduring."

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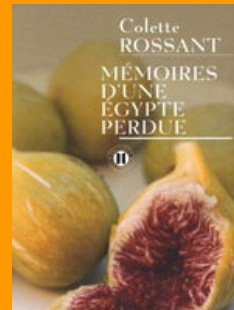
"Au fil des pages, le lecteur s'imprègne des saveurs -- l'ail, les prunes, l'estragon, le romarin -- de ce récit délicieux" -- Sunday Times

[COLETTE ROSSANT: Retour à Paris](#)

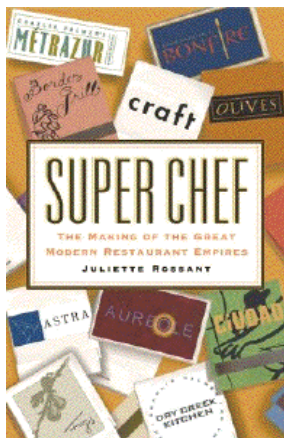
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"Les senteurs de la gastronomie moyen-orientale; cumin, cardamome, sesame, mangue, évoquent les reconforts d'une enfance heureuse." - Times Literary Supplement.



Juliette Rossant: *Super Chef*
(New York: Free Press, 2004)

([Excerpt](#) in *Fast Company*)

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Michael and Melba attempt to reassess their relationships to food. With the help of [Robert Brace](#) working with Michael and [Christine Avanti](#) working with Melba, these chefs will try to lose 25% of their body weight and regain control of their lives.

It's the [Biggest Loser](#) with chefs.

Chefs do face particularly difficult challenges losing weight: witness the struggle of White House staff: see [White House Staff Loses Weight](#)

Will the next contestant be one of the stars of the network – Paula herself?

What role do chefs have in America's weight problems, and more specifically, what role do celebrity TV food hosts have? Many have taken a vocal and strong lead in tackling obesity and health related issues, especially among children.

Do TV chefs like Paula Deen have a responsibility, both to themselves and their TV audiences, to introduce healthy food that does not lead to obesity? Does the FN have a responsibility to only show healthy food?

[Ellie Krieger](#)'s Food Network show, [Healthy Appetite](#) deals exclusively with eating a better diet, although many hosts – even [Rachael Ray](#) – do discuss healthier, low fat options.

But the truth is Paula Deen is an entertainer, not a cooking instructor. The Food Network is about entertainment, not good eating habits. The core of the network's lineup are shows like [Ace of Cakes](#), which is not about how to cook a cake – it's about relationships of the cast and cake design.

Is the answer with Paula herself and how she changes her cooking style now that she has diabetes? Her son [Bobby](#) is launching a new show this season as well. Looks like he's gotten the message (according to the FN [website](#)):

Bobby Deen takes his mother's classic recipes and makes them leaner on his new show, Not My Mama's Meals.

Tags: [Ace of Cakes](#), [Bobby Deen](#), [diabetes](#), [Ellie Krieger](#), [fat](#), [Fat Chef](#), [Food Network](#), [Paula Deen](#)



About Juliette Rossant

Juliette Rossant is an American author, journalist, and poet. Following publication of her book [Super Chef](#) (2004), she began an online magazine...

1 Comment

1. [emily](#)
Posted January 16, 2012 at 12:26 PM

I do believe that Paula Deen has known for a while that she is diabetic. To me, she looks like she has lost weight so perhaps is watching a little bit more what she eats. But all those tastings aren't going to help her. I actually thought Mario Batali would be the first to come down with diabetes. Also the cooks/chefs on the Food Channel use way too much salt.

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