

# Tamara Stopinski

Tamara Stopinski is a mixed-media artist and educator living in Honeoye Falls, New York. In 2002, her nickname, "Talulah," combined with her fancy flair, conjured up the name Talulah's Fancy, her original line of women's jewelry designs and accessories. Tamara opened Talulah's Fancy and Friends gift shop in 2010, where she teaches and hosts creative events, such as The Mad Hatter's Tea Party and Inspiration Incorporated. Her original designs can also be found in select artisan boutiques.



## Favorite Quote

"It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see."

— Henry David Thoreau



When I was a little girl, I would spend my summer vacations and holiday breaks on my grandparents' dairy farm in the lower Catskill area of New York. My cousins and I were tasked with many chores to help manage the farm. At the time, I didn't appreciate all the chores that went along with those trips, but today nothing will compare to these great memories of my childhood.

On the farm, the chores included getting the cows in, helping in the milk house, weeding the vegetable gardens, getting the hay up, and bottle feeding the baby calves, which could be quite a job. If you didn't pay attention, you could lose your entire hand into their hungry mouths! One of my favorite tasks was during berry season, gathering fresh berries for canning jam and cobblers. Grandma would promise to deliver a warm berry cobbler as soon as we returned from the patch, and if there wasn't any fresh cream left for whipping, she would make a simply delicious sugar sauce from hand-churned butter and sugar.

Being raised on a farm, my grandpa took pride in working hard his entire life. Every evening and on holidays, I loved to watch him create meals from memory for the family. Grandpa loved to cook and was dedicated to farm fresh and homemade before it was a trend. I can remember the long farm table full of carefully prepared ravioli that were made completely from scratch. The meat was farm raised and home ground, while the cheese was dairy fresh; of course it was served with homemade sauce and fresh baked bread.

My grandfather was a serious man and looked like a giant to me. The kitchen was no place to get in his way, but somehow I figured out a way to sit quietly in the corner on the milk can that housed the baking flour. I would sit and watch him; little did I realize that it was there that I learned the most valuable and priceless lessons about the art of cooking.

My grandma was talented too. Before we even thought of waking up, she would bake a dozen loaves of bread. Grandma crafted the most beautiful flower gardens and created simply elegant arrangements for the dinner table. She made do with what she had. I think sometimes it was a challenge for her to see how creative she could be. Sometimes she took me with her to the store, and I would watch her stretch her grocery budget to purchase the few pantry items that couldn't be raised on the farm. To my delight she would always manage to find some change for a homemade ice cream cone at the local stand for the ride home.



# Easy Lemon Berry Tart

Makes 2 piecrusts  
This recipe comes from my husband's Nana – she and I would make dozens of piecrusts for the freezer.

## Crust

- 2 cups flour
- 1 cup Crisco
- Dash of salt
- Ice water

1. Mix first 3 ingredients, adding ice water as needed.
2. Roll out pie dough onto floured surface to size and shape of pie plate. Using rolling pin, pick up dough and lay into pie plate. (If baking a cream pie, prick holes in bottom of crust with a fork.)
3. Bake at 425 degrees for 8–10 minutes. (A store-bought pastry or graham cracker crust will work for this recipe as well.)

## Filling

- 1 (12 oz.) jar lemon curd
- 1 (8 oz.) package cream cheese, softened
- 1 (8 oz.) container mascarpone cheese
- 3 TB. milk
- 16 oz. strawberries (or any combination of fresh berries)
- 1 (6–8oz.) bar white chocolate, for melting

1. Using hand mixer, combine and blend lemon curd, cream cheese, mascarpone cheese, and milk. Slowly increase mixing speed to lightly whip mixture for 1 minute.
2. Pour into piecrust and chill for a minimum of 1 hour.
3. Slice strawberries and arrange on top of pie. Melt white chocolate on low heat in microwave for 30-second intervals until creamy. Drizzle melted chocolate over berries, and allow to set.
4. After chocolate has set, re-chill for a minimum of 30 minutes before serving



## Poor Man's Caviar

- 3-6 anchovy filets
- 3-4 cloves garlic, pressed
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 TB. freshly squeezed lemon juice
- ½ cup pine nuts
- 2 (6 oz.) cans large black olives
- 1 large bunch of parsley
- Salt & pepper, to taste

1. In a large bowl, macerate anchovies and garlic. Add oil and blend by hand until creamy. Add lemon juice and combine.
2. In a small skillet, lightly toast pine nuts over medium heat and set aside to cool.
3. Drain olives and discard liquid. Finely chop olives, parsley, and pine nuts. Add to anchovy mixture, and combine.
4. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serve with a fresh baguette. This recipe is also wonderful over pasta or on pizza, and is great for a panini or sandwich topping.



My grandparents taught me so much about life and the joy of doing what you believe in and love. They taught us how hard work and making-do adds a quality to life like nothing else can. To this day, I find true delight and satisfaction in creating a meal with less than a few ingredients. I love creating appetizers, meals, and desserts using what I have on hand. Like my grandmother, it's a thrill to know that you can create something delicious with what you have.

Being resourceful helps me to be more creative and come up with fun, original recipes that people really enjoy. Over the years, I've won a few local cooking contests and have had several recipes make the pages of cookbooks and restaurant menus; this has truly been an honor. For me, creating a new recipe in the kitchen is like creating in my studio. I keep a simple well-stocked pantry and fridge and first look for what I have on hand. Then, I let those ingredients inspire me. Fresh and basic ingredients are the foundation, but there is always room for something special and fancy.

For many years, I have learned to create meals without recipes and resurrect some of my favorite childhood memories. I am grateful for the love and joy I witnessed as a little girl of my grandpa cooking for all of us. And although our big family has sadly long since scattered, I create these meals with the same joy and share them with all the people I love. I like to think that my grandparents are proudly watching over me as my family and friends delight in the lessons I learned from my childhood.

**Where Women Cook** would like to thank Tamara Stopinski for her involvement in our Summer Issue. To learn more, visit [talulahsfancy.com](http://talulahsfancy.com) and [tamarastopinski.com](http://tamarastopinski.com). Tamara welcomes email at [tamara@talulahsfancy.com](mailto:tamara@talulahsfancy.com).

### Tip

Keep a basic but well-stocked pantry and fridge, and don't be afraid to alter and experiment with a recipe using what you have. Just keep it simple at first and then add or substitute in other flavors as you go.

