

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Marcus Samuelsson

PERSON

Samuelsson, Marcus

Alternative Names: Marcus Samuelsson; Kassahun Tsegie

Life Dates: November 6, 1970-

Place of Birth: Ethiopia

Work: New York, NY

Occupations: Chef; Restaurateur

Biographical Note

Chef and restaurateur Marcus Samuelsson (born Kassahun Tsegie) was born in Ethiopia on November 6, 1970. Samuelsson was orphaned in 1972, when a tuberculosis epidemic took the life of his mother. In 1973, he and his sister were adopted by Ann Marie and Lennart Samuelsson and brought to Gothenburg, Sweden, where his grandmother, Helga, taught him how to cook. Samuelsson went on to study at the Culinary Institute in Gothenburg, apprenticed in Switzerland in 1989, and then in France from 1992 to 1994.

In 1994, Samuelsson moved to the United States for an apprenticeship with Aquavit, a restaurant in New York City. He was quickly promoted to executive chef and then made partner of Aquavit in 1997. In 1995, Samuelsson became the youngest chef ever to receive a three-star restaurant review from The New York Times. In 2003, he opened the New York restaurant, Riingo, which served Japanese-influenced American food. He then launched a television show, Inner Chef, which aired in 2005, and another in 2008 called Urban Cuisine. In 2010, he opened a third restaurant called Red Rooster in the Harlem neighborhood of New York City. He founded FoodRepublic.com in 2011, and opened another restaurant, Ginny's Supper Club, in 2012. In the fall of 2012, Samuelsson, together with Clarion Hotels, launched a restaurant concept called Kitchen & Table. In addition, he has served as a visiting professor of international culinary science at the Umeå University School of Restaurant and Culinary Arts in Sweden, and has been an advisor to The Institute of Culinary Education in New York City.

Samuelsson is the author of Aquavit and the New Scandinavian Cuisine (2003), The Soul of a New Cuisine: A Discovery of the Foods and Flavors of Africa (2006), New American Table (2009), and Yes, Chef: A Memoir (2012). He also authored the Swedish cookbook, En smakresa: middagstips från Marcus Samuelsson, which was

named Sweden's Cookbook of the Year in 2002.

Samuelsson has received numerous honors for his work. In 1999, he was awarded the coveted James Beard Rising Star Chef Award for his work at Aquavit. In 2003, he was named "Best Chef: New York City" by the James Beard Foundation. Samuelsson has also been named a Great Chef of America by the Culinary Institute of America and a Global Leader of Tomorrow by the World Economic Forum. In 2009, he served as the guest chef for the first State Dinner of the Obama administration. He appeared on and won the reality television competition Top Chef Masters in 2010, and was a contestant on the fourth season of The Next Iron Chef in 2011. In 2013, Samuelsson won the James Beard Foundation award for Writing and Literature related to food.

Marcus Samuelsson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on July 18, 2014.

Related Entries

Culinary Institute [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Umea University School of Restaurant and Culinary Arts [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Visiting Professor

Marcus Samuelsson Group [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Founder and Owner

[EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1989 to ?]

Culinary Apprentice

[EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1992 to 1994]

Culinary Apprentice

Aquavit [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1994 to 1995]

Culinary Apprentice

Aquavit [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1995 to 1997]

Executive Chef

Aquavit [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1997 to ?]

Partner

Riingo [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 2003 to ?]

Founder and Owner

Red Rooster [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 2010 to ?]

Founder and Owner

FoodRepublic.com [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 2011 to ?]

Founder

Ginny's Supper Club [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 2012 to ?]

Founder and Owner

Kitchen & Table [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 2012 to ?]

Founder and Concept Designer

The Institute of Culinary Education [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Advisor