

About Our Chef: Chaya Conrad

It started when Chaya was playing with her food in the shadows of the Culinary Institute in Upstate New York. Her mother was a rock climber and when it got dark, her and her friends from the local Culinary School would scurry off the cliffs and start cooking. Students and teachers alike spent Saturday nights listening to folk music and teaching Chaya the proper way to hold a knife or how to fold dumplings.

When she was an angst filled teen her family moved to Vermont and Chaya wielded her independence by lying about her age and landing her first job at a local cake shop. She was the "Tartist".

Feeling sassy and sixteen, she dove headlong in to baking, aced her way through her high school culinary program, and raced back to New York where she went to the Culinary Institute of America. When it was time to find a location to do her extern, she went to the most exotic place she could think of, New Orleans.

She fell head over heels in love. The big easy- all its food, music, and fun, got under her skin. She hit the restaurant circuit and started baking for the local framers market. After checking that off her bucket list, she ran a commissary bakery out of state and eventually found her way back to the Crescent City and Wholefoods Market.

She jumped into large-scale baking and premium grocery store bakery management, bringing love of food and creative force to the masses. Chaya honed her business skills and worked her way to the top of the industry. Anyone who has brought Chantilly Cake or Gentilly Cake in the last 15 years has tasted from Chaya's love. Her beautiful food has found its way onto the mouths and bellies of so many Louisianans.

So, now, its act 3. It's time to do the thing she thought about all this time, the thing she was gathering all these experiences for - her very own place from which to share that beautiful food. Welcome to Bywater Bakery. A.K.A., Chaya's happiness.

