

Janet Burgess

Founder of 4 Little Cooks

Founding Member, Les Dames d'Escoffier International, San Diego Chapter

Member, LDEI LA/OC Chapter

She studied culinary arts in Tuscany and trained at the Culinary Institute of America. Then she established 4 Little Cooks (<http://www.4littlecooks.com>)—a San Diego-based hands-on program that teaches kids about healthful cooking. She spent a number of years working at the Macy's School of Cooking too, where she developed the Iron Chef Competition series. (She also created a Jr. Iron Chef program for kids' cooking camps in the early 2000s.) It all qualifies as a full and impressive 23-year career history. So it may surprise you to learn that, before all of this, **Janet Burgess** spent 35 years working in law enforcement. "I was one of the first female officers trained for patrol with the San Diego Police Department," she notes. "I'm sure I'm the only Dame who ever worked as a decoy prostitute."

What isn't surprising, however, is Janet's commitment to Les Dames d'Escoffier—her priority when it comes to supporting nonprofits. "I am a founding member of the San Diego Chapter and believe in their mission to further women in the fields of food, beverage and hospitality professions."

But her story doesn't end there. Here's more delicious dish...

What do you like most about what you do?

Expanding the palate of kids and having them experience new foods and learn about nutrition.

Name one culinary figure you admire.

I admire Jacques Pepin. He's patient, kind, so eager to share his knowledge.

What's the most important lesson you've learned in this business?

To believe in yourself against all odds.

What's the best advice you've ever gotten?

Don't be afraid to reach out to others and ask questions.

What advice would you give to someone following in your footsteps?

Believe in yourself and be with other supportive people who share your goals and dreams.

And how would you finish the following sentences?

The one dish you cannot get enough of right now is... eggplant Parm.

Your most indulgent guilty pleasure is... milkshakes.

Your favorite vegetable is... corn on the cob.

Your least favorite vegetable... beets.

And a quick lightning round Q&A...

Talking wine: Red or white? Red.

Ice cream or crème brûlée? Gelato.

Surf or turf? Surf.

Burgers and fries, or soup and salad? Burgers and fries.

Caviar or oysters? Neither.

Brunch or happy hour? Happy hour.