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FOOD

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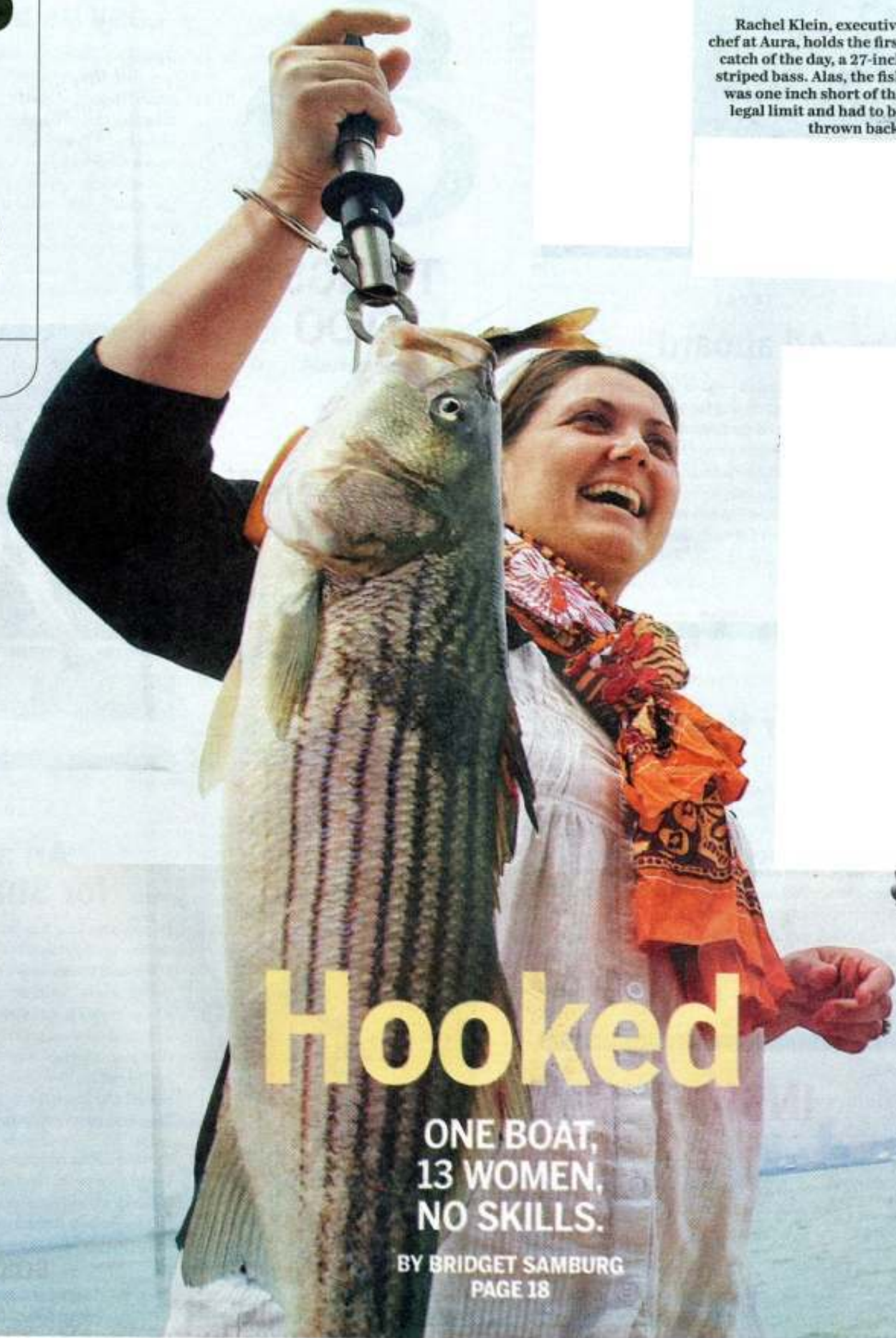
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Hooked

ONE BOAT,
13 WOMEN,
NO SKILLS.

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Rachel Klein, executive chef at Aura, holds the first catch of the day, a 27-inch striped bass. Alas, the fish was one inch short of the legal limit and had to be thrown back.





Carla Pallotta (left), co-owner of Nebo restaurant, and Jenny Johnson, producer of NECN's "TV Diner," make their best fish faces as Nancy Cushman, co-owner of O Ya restaurant

Hooked

WHEN 13 WOMEN IN THE LOCAL FOOD INDUSTRY WENT FISHING,
THE NIBBLE THEY GOT CAME SECOND TO THE BITES THEY BROUGHT



It all started with an annual hunting trip, one that a group of Boston's male chefs organize, no women allowed. The men hunt, kill, eat. "They don't invite us, so we decided to do girls gone fishing," says Carla Pallotta, co-owner with her sister Christine Pallotta of Nebo in the North End. The two called and e-mailed around town until they had gathered 11 other women who work in kitchens and other facets of the food industry.

One requirement: bring food. What is not required: fishing skills.

"This is how the girls go fishing," Carla says, sweeping her hand from side to side, pointing out the luxury fishing yacht the sisters are borrowing for the day. Pinatas hang on the back deck and the sisters have red, green, pink, and purple boas for the guests. Inside the swanky boat, white sangria and Bloody Marys, already prepared, are waiting. It's a Monday morning, just after 10 a.m. The weather is cool and cloudy.

"We'll show them up," says Christine, of the male chefs who unknowingly inspired this outing.

Two professional crew members are on hand to offer the women a few pointers on how to fish, and to slice into anything caught that day. (The crew and the captain are the only men on board.) The Pallotta sisters are hoping to snag striped bass or tuna.

It turns out that preparing fish and catching fish are two very separate worlds.

"I don't have to go into the water to fish, do I?," asks chef Joanne Chang, owner of Flour Bakery + Cafe and co-owner with her husband, Christopher Myers, of Myers + Chang. "I don't swim. You just stand there, right?"

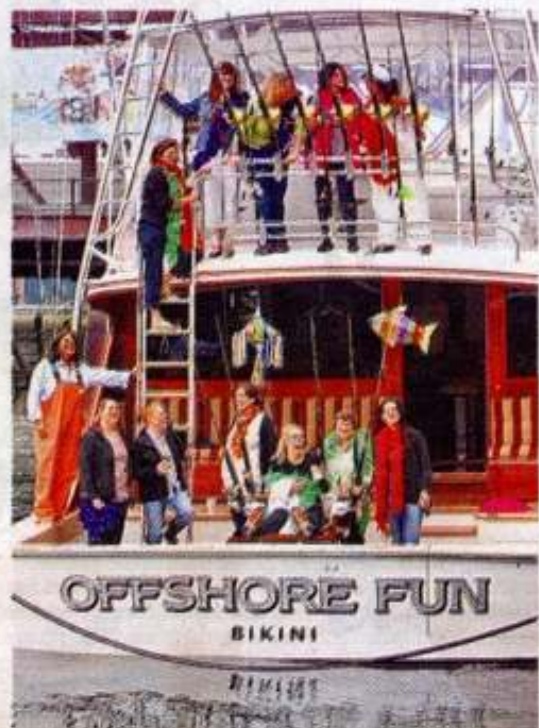
"I went fishing once in a lake," says Nancy Cushman, co-owner of O Ya, a Japanese restaurant where fish is the star. "Where's the stunt fish?"

Christine Pallotta cackles. She likes the idea: They should have brought along a gigantic, fake catch — at least for the photos. "Hey, you can serve what we catch at O Ya tonight," she tells Cushman.

"I'm a New York City girl," says Aura chef Rachel Klein. Her restaurant is in the Seaport Hotel, near the water. "I'm such a big carnivore," she adds. "But being at the Seaport Hotel, I've really been introduced to the water, water taxis, yachts. I'm a lot more connected to what is happening down here," she says, looking out over the harbor. "People are very proud of the water. To me, this is Boston."

The boat pulls away from the dock. Out in the water (location undisclosed at the captain's request, lest he give away his hot fishing spot), the women are handed rods with live bait (the crew does the honors). The women cast and wait. A few start yelling. "I've got something," someone shouts. But it's been about 15

Continued on next page



Twelve of the 13 women aboard the vessel, which had a professional crew of three, plus the captain.

13 WOMEN AND THE SEA
To see a video of the fishing trip, go to www.boston.com/food.



PHOTOS BY JOANNE RATHIE/GLOBE STAFF

concentrates on landing the catch of the day.

LUNCH IS SERVED A crew member made frozen mint mojitos. The Pallotta sisters brought grilled shrimp marinated in scallions, oil, chili pepper, salt, black pepper, and garlic. Bernadette DeVirgilio of John Accardi & Sons provided pork and gorgonzola radicchio. Tiffani Faison topped off her lobster rolls with roasted corn and onion mayonnaise. Joanne Chang of Flour Bakery brought cookies.



Little on the line, but lots of fun

Continued from preceding page

seconds and she's told it's just the live bait swimming away.

The crew has tried to manage expectations, pointing out that the women have a decent chance of catching stripers, but anything that doesn't meet length limits set by the state must be tossed back into the water.

"You'll grab me if I get pulled in, right?" asks Shannon Reed, who designs chef jackets. "I brought extra clothes."

Reed seems to expect that she's going to snag a great white shark. "Are we fishing or is this a photo op?" she asks.

"Ooh, ooh, ooh," calls one woman from the other side of the deck. "I have something," yells another.

Both are false alarms.

"I need a drink," says Carla Pallotta. She's through fishing, having held a rod for a couple of minutes.

Tiffani Faison, sous chef at O Ya, has been fishing plenty of times, so she's the calmest when her line seems to go momentarily taut. Her hook is snagged on the bottom.

And then commotion. Klein, the carnivorous city girl, is watching her rod bend away from her. It's pulling hard. She's caught something. "Ooh, ooh, ooh!" The crew gathers around for support. Klein is excited. Everyone is hoping it's not a piece of trash from the harbor.

"That's a fish!" says Klein, who has reeled in a 27-inch striped bass, its wet skin shimmering as a crew member holds it up to be measured. Alas, it's 1



JOANNE RATHE/GLOBE STAFF

From left: Tiffani Faison, a sous chef at O Ya, and Shannon Reed, who designs chef jackets, watch as Angela DeVirgilio gets an apparent bite. The strike turned out to be a false alarm.

LOBSTER ROLLS

O Ya's sous chef Tiffani Faison's recipe with roasted corn mayo is at www.boston.com/food.

inch shy of the legal length and is promptly thrown back.

"I'm bummed," says Klein. "I got seaweed," exclaims Reed. She seems happy enough. "I just wanted the clothes," says Christine Pallotta, who has donned a pair of orange waders and a captain's hat. "I don't care about the fish."

When the fish won't bite, lunch becomes the focus. Faison assembles mini lobster rolls with roasted lobster meat, Aleppo pepper, and a roasted corn and onion mayo.

The Pallotta sisters have brought grilled shrimp marinat-

ed in scallions, oil, chili pepper, salt, black pepper, and garlic. They are tender with a hint of sweetness. Their sandwiches are made with Italian tuna, capers, artichokes, tomatoes, olive oil, and salt. They are flavorful, salty, and perfect for a day at sea.

Frozen mojitos are passed around the cabin. "I didn't think dumplings were good boat food," says Chang, who instead offers homemade Oreos and other cookies from her bakery.

A glimpse of a fish, a few rounds of drinks, some delectable food, and everyone is already talking about the follow-up trip. The group agrees that this has to become an annual tradition.

Everyone understands the rules: Come to have fun. Leave the men in the kitchen.

Italian tuna sandwiches with aioli

Serves 4
AIOLI

- 1 anchovy, finely chopped
- Juice of $\frac{1}{2}$ lemon
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- Small handful fresh parsley leaves
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup mayonnaise
- 1 teaspoon capers

SANDWICHES

- 1 can (8 ounces) Italian tuna in olive oil
- 8 cherry tomatoes, cut into quarters
- 1 tablespoon capers
- 2 ounces marinated artichoke hearts, coarsely chopped
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 ciabatta rolls

Salt and pepper, to taste

1. In a food processor, combine the anchovy, lemon juice, garlic, and parsley. Slowly add the olive oil, mixing until smooth.
2. In a bowl, stir the mayonnaise until smooth. Stir in the parsley mixture, capers, salt, and pepper. Taste for seasoning and add more salt and pepper, if you like.

2 cups of arugula tossed with 1 teaspoon olive oil Shaved Parmesan (for garnish)

1. In a bowl, combine the tuna, tomatoes, capers, artichokes, and olive oil.
2. Spread aioli on each roll. Top with tuna. Add arugula leaves and Parmesan. Close the sandwiches. *Adapted from Nebo*

Grilled salt-and-pepper shrimp

Serves 4

- 1 pound shrimp, shelled with tails intact
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon sugar
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon crushed red pepper
 - 3 tablespoons canola oil
 - 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ fresh hot chili pepper, thinly sliced
 - 2 scallions, chopped
1. Pat the shrimp dry with paper towels.
 2. In a large bowl, combine the shrimp, salt, sugar, red pepper, canola oil, garlic, chili pepper, and half the scallions.
 3. Heat a charcoal or gas grill to medium high heat. Or, heat a grill pan on a burner over high heat.
 4. Cook the shrimp, stirring constantly, until they are firm and pink. Sprinkle with the remaining scallions. *Adapted from Nebo*

Homemade Oreos

Makes 16

To make Joanne Chang's Oreos, allow 1 hour for the dough to firm before shaping, then several more hours for it to chill before slicing. You can refrigerate the dough for up to 1 week or freeze it for 1 month (defrost in the refrigerator). The log may settle as it chills, so reroll it every 15 minutes if you're around during the initial chilling so the log stays round. The filling will keep in the refrigerator for up to 2 days. Let it come to room temperature before using.

COOKIES

- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, melted
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup semisweet chocolate chips, melted
- 1 egg
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups flour
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt

1. In a medium bowl, whisk the butter and the sugar until combined. Whisk in the vanilla and melted chocolate. Add the egg and stir until well blended.
2. In another bowl, combine flour, cocoa powder, baking soda, and salt. Stir to blend them. Using a wooden spoon, stir the flour mixture into the chocolate mixture. The finished dough should feel like Play-Doh. Cover the dough with plastic, and set aside for 1 hour or until firm.

3. Place the dough on a long sheet of parchment paper. Use your hands to shape it into a rough log, about 10 inches long and 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter. Place the log at the edge of the parchment. Roll the parchment around the log. With your hands on the paper, roll the dough into a tighter log, keeping the diameter the same.
4. Refrigerate the dough for at least 2 hours, or until it is firm enough to slice without crumbling.
5. Set the oven at 325 degrees. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper.
6. Remove the dough from the paper. Cut the log into 32 slices, each a quarter-inch. Set them on the baking sheets 1 inch apart.
7. Bake the cookies for 20 to 25 minutes, checking them often after 15 minutes, or until they are firm when touched in the center.
8. Cool completely on the sheets.

FILLING

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cup confectioners' sugar, sifted
- 1 tablespoon milk
- Pinch salt

1. In the bowl of an electric mixer, beat the butter on low speed for half a minute. Add the vanilla and confectioners sugar and beat until

- smooth.
2. Beat in the milk and salt. The filling will look and feel like spack-le.
 3. Place 1 tablespoon of filling on the flat side of 16 cookies. Press the remaining 16 cookies on the filling, flat sides against the cream, to evenly distribute the filling.
 4. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days. *Adapted from Flour Bakery + Cafe*