



YOU CANNOT HAVE JUST ONE!

CHAPTER II



Rebecca's Dumplings
Make a Delicious Debut

BY SUSAN I. SHIBER

Recap: Last issue, you met Rebecca Jordan and learned about her amazing pork, veggie, and gluten-free dumplings. Rebecca's dedication to perfection and a few family cooking secrets are behind what is quickly becoming a must-have delight in many area homes. After an intensive search, she found a prime location at Artisan Exchange in West Chester and was ready to take on a larger world soon to be filled with dumpling connoisseurs.

Before greeting that wider universe, Rebecca had much to do. Gone were the days of chopping, mixing, filling, pinching, and steaming her delectable treasures at home in a cozy kitchen. The Artisan Exchange provides a fully approved state-of-the-art commercial kitchen where she could settle in and create perfection each week prior to Saturday sales day.

In anticipation of a long tenure at the singular farmers' market, the budding entrepreneur purchased a commercial refrigerator, freezer, pots, pans, stainless steel tables, and induction heating units. Induction cooking offers many benefits, including faster heating and consistency, improved thermal effectiveness, and more energy efficiency.

The next step involved acquiring Chester County and Pennsylvania approvals to operate a food business. "Frank Baldassarre (owner of Artisan Exchange) was very helpful during this process," says Rebecca. "He walked me through all the requirements,

"Opening day was thrilling.

Even before customers came, we had orders from market employees for parties and showers. The kids did a really good job and began to understand the art of balancing a business and other activities. The best part was: we sold out. I was so tired when we got home that I couldn't sleep, but it was a wonderful rewarding kind of fatigue."



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Enthusiasm prevails every week and selling out is the rule, not the exception.



A delightful Saturday morning at Artisan Exchange

It's fascinating to observe what happens when individuals of all ages suddenly come upon a wonderful new product. Faces immediately light up, and they quickly boast to friends about their discovery. Most often, though, they ask: **What makes them so delicious?**

ensuring there would be no surprises when the inspectors came.”

“I'm very excited Rebecca joined us,” notes Frank. “We are delighted to support her as the business takes off.”

“Frank is one of our best customers,” adds Rebecca. “He and his kids are at our counter every Saturday.”

Because Rebecca began making dumplings by her mother's side in Nanjing, China, she was ready for any and all inspections. She diligently went through the entire *from scratch* procedure for Pennsylvania officials. Critical points were temperatures, preparation, storage, equipment, and timing. “I gave the inspector a detailed list of what I do from beginning to end, and he compared it to what I actually did and took lots of notes. I was a bit breathless as I waited at the market for his decision.”


She didn't have to linger for long. The pleased food inspector granted approval, and a Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Food Safety Inspection Certificate arrived within a week. Next, Chester County Health Department conducted a rigorous investigation. “They were particularly concerned with what happens on market day,” recalls Rebecca. “Hot must be hot. Cold must be cold, and all equipment is required to constantly show proper temperatures. Everything has to be covered and away from customers. Once again, I was nervous until I knew I would receive a county Certificate of Food Safety. It was in our mail on a Thursday, and I couldn't wait to open that weekend.”

And wait, she did not. The next evening after her children Rachael and James went to bed, she headed straight for Artisan Exchange, where she prepared and packaged dumplings. After a short break to return home, Rebecca made breakfast for the family, and was back at the market for the grand opening of a distinctive new business. Her biggest supporters, the kids and


husband, were by her side brimming with pride and anticipation. The younger Jordans were in charge of greeting shoppers and sharing dumpling samples, although James, with a mischievous grin, popped quite a few into his mouth.

“Opening day was thrilling,” exclaims Rebecca. “Even before customers came, we had orders from market employees for parties and showers. The kids did a really good job and began to understand the art

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"It was like Christmas," declares Rachael. "Our first customer was a parent from my school." "I had the most fun watching people get excited about dumplings," interjects James.

Enthusiasm prevails every week and selling out is the rule, not the exception. When credit card access was added, sales rose even more. A shopper from the first Saturday was absolutely gleeful she could use her Discover card just three weeks later. "Oh yay!" she cried. Another customer echoed the sentiment when he was able to buy veggie dumplings, which were sold out the week before. Someone else thanked Rebecca in Chinese and wished her luck.

Shoppers applaud when they first taste these exceptional dumplings. Eyes widen and, invariably, heads nod with approval. Word spreads quickly from stand to stand, and it's not unusual to see lines waiting to sample or buy.

It's fascinating to observe what happens when individuals of all ages suddenly come upon a wonderful new product. Faces immediately light up, and they quickly boast to friends about their discovery. Most often, though, they ask: *What makes them so delicious?*

Abhh! Delicious. That is the not so secret ingredient making Rebecca's Dumplings the talk of the town. From an heirloom family recipe in China to an overnight taste sensation, this is a great American success story. Stay tuned for more.

Next issue, Food Network comes calling. CCL

Rebecca's Dumplings
 Artisan Exchange
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