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Rosti Tuscan Kitchen—veggie friendly Italian

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Photo: Rosti Tuscan Kitchen

Wednesday, October 26, 2011 - Culinary Quest by Linda Mensinga

Linda Mensinga



Ask me a question.

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SANTA MONICA, Ca. Oct. 2011—Arugula & fig salad, penne with asparagus or pesto hazelnut pie are just a few vegetarian options at Rosti Tuscan Kitchen in Santa Monica, California.

Italian is an easy choice for many vegetarians because many pasta and pizzas can be meatless. Rosti goes an extra step offering separate menus with vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free options.

Busy owner Kevin Goldfein took time out to answer questions about his unusual—and welcomed—spin on tradition.

Why did you decide to create vegan, gluten free and vegetarian menus?

At Rosti Tuscan Kitchen in Encino and Santa Monica, I started getting frequent requests from guests with dietary restrictions and I wanted to accommodate these individuals. I then decided to expand my menu and added gluten-free, vegan, heart healthy and vegetarian choices to better cater to my diverse clientele.

Please tell me a bit about your background.

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I started my hospitality career waiting tables in a Los Angeles Restaurant called Miyagi's in 2000. I then earned a Masters Degree in Business Hospitality & Management from Cornell University in 2003. Following Cornell, I held a variety of hospitality positions at Harrah's Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, China Grill Management in New York City and the Peninsula Hotel in Beverly Hills. From 2005 to 2007, I launched, operated and sold a restaurant company in Downtown Los Angeles called The Loose Leaf Salad Company. Most recently, in 2008, I formed a new hospitality management company called KBG Dining Group which purchased Rosti Tuscan Kitchen.



Kevin Goldfein

Why did you open an Italian/Tuscan restaurant?

I decided to own Rosti because Italian food has become a staple in the United States. It has become almost as popular as American food; all types of people enjoy pasta and pizza.

Since Californians like to eat healthy, I wanted to own a restaurant that offered wholesome Italian dining and Tuscan food is very light.

How often do guests ask for the gluten free menu? The vegan? The vegetarian?

Guests ask for gluten-free, vegan and vegetarian menus every day, all of the time.

What is most popular on your menu? Most popular on vegan or vegetarian or gluten free?

Pastas and pizzas are the most popular items on our menu. The most common dishes ordered on our vegan and vegetarian menus are the salads and pastas. Pizzas are ordered the most on our gluten-free menu because it's usually hard to find tasty gluten-free dough.

Is there a very different taste or texture to the gluten free pastas or pizzas?

There is a slightly different taste and texture to the gluten-free pastas and pizzas but we found a product that is very close to the real thing. While you can notice the difference, the thin-crust pizza is still delicious and when the pasta is cooked the right way, you may not even notice that it is gluten-free.

What's the best thing that's happened in your business this year?

I signed a new lease in Calabasas and we will be opening a third location in the fall. We are very excited to be expanding the Rosti brand.

What's the last book you read?

The Big Sleep by Raymond Chandler

What's coming next on your menu?



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QUESTION OF THE DAY

What are your vacation plans this summer?

- Beach or outdoor vacation
- Family road trip
- Going abroad
- Hitting the theme parks
- Staycation
- What vacation?

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Rosti Tuscan Kitchen, Santa Monica

Shredded romaine, grilled steak, gorgonzola crumbles, cherry tomatoes, caramelized onions & our basil herb dressing.

Penne with asparagus \$11.99

In a hazelnut-marsala wine sauce. Add shrimp or chicken \$4.50.

Pollo al mattone \$10.50

Rosti's famous brick pressed chicken marinated in garlic, rosemary & sage.

Grilled Vegetable Sandwich \$9.99

Grilled Eggplant, Zucchini and Tomatoes with Balsamic Drizzle

Mushroom & Onion Pie \$11.50 / \$16.00

Mushrooms, Caramelized Onions, & Fresh Thyme

Pesto Hazelnut Pie \$12.00 / \$16.50

Fresh Mozzarella, Cherry Tomatoes, Hazelnuts and Pesto

Rosti Tuscan Kitchen

931 Montana Ave.
Santa Monica, CA 90403
310-393-3236931

Linda Mensinga was editor of *Culinary Trends* for 15 years, now a contributing writer to *Great Taste Magazine*. If you have a great restaurant, recipe or food you'd like to share please send an email. You can reach her at mensingabakes2@gmail.com.

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We have new additions coming out when the Calabasas location opens. A few of our new dishes include: Insalata Alfredo salad, Northern Style Chicken Parmesano, Southwest BBQ Chicken Pizza and Risotto Il Forno.

Menu highlights

Arugula & fig salad \$13.50

Arugula & endive lettuces, dried figs, toasted hazelnuts, caramelized onions & goat cheese, tossed in our honey balsamic dressing.

Chopped steak salad \$14.50



Penne with asparagus

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Seattle buses will remove Muslim terrorist posters
Is it racist or Islamophobic to make people aware of terrorism by using posters on the sides of buses? Seattle says it is.

Why are we talking about 2016 and Hillary Clinton?
Hillary Clinton needs to be in the news but not because she is a potential candidate for president. She has plenty of explaining to do.

Egypt continues to struggle for its identity
Two years after Egypt rid itself of Hosni Mubarak, the country continues to struggle as protests could erupt again.

Hypocrisy reigns in Paula Deen story
The Paula Deen story is getting a lot of attention, but there really are more important things to be talking about.

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