

the beat

arts and leisure

chef 
du jour 

Ian Lai

Northwest Culinary
Academy Instructor

STORY BY MICHELLE HOPKINS PHOTO BY BRETT BEADLE

Chicken Breast with Baby Greens, Citrus and Yogurt Dressing in a Pita

INGREDIENTS FOR BRINE FOR FOUR CHICKEN

BREASTS

1/4 c. pickling salt
1/4 c. sugar
8 cups of water
1 tsp. fennel seeds
1 bay leaf
1 sprig thyme
6 black peppercorns

METHOD:

Place all ingredients in a small sauce pan and simmer for five minutes to release the flavour of the herbs and to dissolve

the salt and sugar.

Allow the brine to cool completely before adding the chicken breasts. (Slightly pound for even cooking).

Brine for 30 to 40 minutes before grilling on high heat on a barbecue.

INGREDIENTS FOR CITRUS YOGURT

DRESSING

1 c. yogurt
1 T. orange concentrate
1 T. chopped parsley

METHOD:

Mix all ingredients together and season with salt and black pepper.

Split pita bread into two and stuff each half with baby greens and chicken breast. Drizzle contents with yogurt. Serve immediately.

Richmond's Ian Lai hopes he is planting the seed for the iPod generation.

Lai is committed to teaching local elementary and secondary students to enjoy and appreciate Mother Nature's bounty.

Lai wants children to connect with where their food comes from, so the chef and chef instructor at the Northwest Culinary Academy of Vancouver founded the Terra Nova Schoolyard Society in 2006. The farm project is dedicated to teaching children the importance of growing our own food rather than counting on food that comes from thousands of miles away.

As a chef and a parent, Lai believes he has a responsibility to create a better tomorrow for his children and all children.

"In doing so we create a better awareness of how our lives are interconnected with the earth that we have misused for decades," says Lai. "I also believe that if children understand and enjoy the fruits of their own labour, they are more likely to eat healthier, locally grown foods and become lifelong advocates of sustainable agriculture."

Students come out to the Terra Nova Rural Farm for some education rooted in the earth once a week in the spring and summer and twice a month during the fall season. To find out more, visit www.esy.8k.com.

