#GetCreativeWithPorsche: cooking with Maria Sharapova

25/06/2020 If tennis and cars are the first two loves of five-time Grand Slam champion Maria Sharapova, food comes a close third. In the latest instalment of the #GetCreativeWithPorsche series she shares how to make some of her favorite dishes.

Like so many elite athletes, the disciplines instilled over a long career at the top of her sport have had a lasting effect on tennis star Maria Sharapova. The Porsche Brand Ambassador, who hails from Russia, pursues a high energy and healthy lifestyle, with the occasional foray into foodie indulgence.

“There are many lessons I have taken away from my career and a good, healthy diet is certainly one of them,” says Sharapova, who’s spent the last few weeks at her home in Los Angeles. “I’ve always been someone who takes good care of their body. But it doesn’t matter if you’re a professional athlete or you work in an office, what you put into your body is always going to be extremely important.”

“I start my day really healthy,” she explains. “I drink a lot of water with lemon to being with – I’ve done that throughout my career – then I have a green smoothie with kale, lemon, spinach and sometimes a little apple or avocado. Usually with some rye toast. Then I just see how I feel during the day.”

She avoids carbs if exercise isn’t on the agenda, and sticks instead to lean protein. “There’s always an element of nutrition in food for me, despite not playing professional sport at the moment. Usually I travel a lot and I’m always in different time zones, so taking care of my body is a huge part of staying healthy. I’m certainly not as strict these days, not always thinking ‘food for fuel’ like when I was playing, but is still has an impact.”

With international travel curtailed of late, Sharapova has been racking up the miles closer to home, either in her 911 Turbo S or Cayenne. Combining her love of cars and food, she has been driving out to support local shops and takeaways that have been feeling the pinch during the pandemic. “We’ve been up the coast on the Pacific Coast Highway, which has been beautiful. There’s actually so much to gain from this time, seeing things from the car and being in your own little world with your family. For my birthday recently we drove to Malibu and ate takeaway lobster rolls on the beach,“ she reveals.

Today, cooking is a means of relaxing for Sharapova, whose weekly menu leans heavily on her Russian roots. Hearty soups and simple salads, soured cream, radishes and herbs, it’s the unfussy fair of her homeland and something she continues to explore. Lockdown is even opening up some new avenues for the former world number one, who has dusted off a previously overlooked kitchen accessory. “Someone gave me an ice cream machine a few years ago that I thought we would never use. But with all this extra time on our hands I pulled that bad boy out and made my own ice cream for the first time. It was surprisingly good. Any time I make something and get decent feedback I’m like ‘Ooh thanks. I’ve

got game!'"

To encourage fans to extend their own repertoires, Sharapova shares some of her favorite recipes below.

Russian Borscht

"My mum taught me everything I know about cooking and we've spent a lot of time in the kitchen together, especially in recent weeks. One of our favorite dishes to make is Borscht – a very traditional, chunky beetroot soup. It takes a bit of time to prepare – and time is something I don't usually have a lot of – but it is definitely worth the work. It's really healthy and filling – perfect for cold evenings. And it's a fantastic color.

"Start by dicing one onion, two carrots and two beets and then sauté them in a couple of tablespoons of olive oil with two cloves of finely chopped garlic for two or three minutes. Add two liters of vegetable stock, two diced potatoes and half a small cabbage, put the lid on the pot and cook on a medium to high heat for 10 minutes. If I have some at hand, I'll add a couple of bay leaves at this stage for extra flavor.

"Next, add two tablespoons each of freshly squeezed lemon juice, tomato purée and chopped dill and season the pot really well with salt and pepper. Cover and cook on a medium to high heat for five more minutes, before turning the heat down and letting it simmer. Check it after 15 minutes to see if everything has softened – if it has, it's ready to go.

"Back home we eat this all year round and at any time of day, but I like mine best when it's cold and rainy outside. With a chunk of fresh bread and a dollop of sour cream on top it's a nutritious meal and it keeps well in the fridge which is great when your schedule picks up."

Russian Vinaigrette Salad

"This is a real favorite of mine from back home and is made with potatoes and beetroot and dressed really simply with lemon juice, olive oil, parsley and some salt and pepper. It's super-easy, full of flavor and you can tweak the recipe to add in carrot and onion for a slight twist.

"I've always taken care of my body but it doesn't matter if you're a professional athlete or you work in an office, how you fuel your days is so important if you want to feel full of energy. This is a clean way to pack plenty of nutrients in and it's so easy to prepare.

"Start by putting three peeled beets on to boil and cook until you can pierce them with a knife – it can take up to an hour so if you're in a hurry use pre-cooked beetroot. In a separate pan, boil three peeled potatoes and three peeled carrots, until they're soft, but not mushy. Drain the vegetables and leave them to cool before dicing them.

“Finely chop a small onion and combine everything in a bowl with two tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil, a dash of white vinegar, lots of lemon juice and some freshly chopped parsley. Add salt and pepper to taste, and you’re good to go.”

Russian Honey Cake

“Being diligent about the choices you make around food, while allowing yourself something special every once in a while, is so important. I know what’s good and what isn’t. And one thing’s for sure, I don’t go hungry.

“We made Russian Honey Cake for my birthday recently and it’s a big favorite of mine. The layers can be fiddly and it takes a lot of time to put it all together but if you’re up for the challenge there are some good recipes online – some easier than others – and the results are show-stopping. My mum’s recipe is a family secret – she won’t even give it to me! – but here’s one of the simpler ones I like.

“Heat 270g of honey, 80g of butter and 120g of superfine sugar in a saucepan over a low heat until the sugar has dissolved. Take care that it doesn’t catch on the bottom of the pan. Remove from the heat and slowly whisk in a couple of beaten eggs. Keep the movement up – you need to whisk constantly so that the eggs don’t cook, which happened to me the first time I attempted this.

“At the same time, you can bake all the bits you trimmed off when you were cutting your circles out. Save these because when they’ve cooled you can whiz them up in a food processor to sprinkle on the top of the finished cake.”

“To make the creamy filling, whisk 250ml of heavy cream until it’s forming little peaks. Whip up a pint of sour cream with 80g of powdered sugar, then fold your whipped cream into this mixture, along with three or four tablespoons of honey, depending on how sweet you want it to be.

“The fun bit starts now: spread a few spoons of the filling on your first baked circle, and place another on top. Repeat the process until you’ve used up all your pieces. Add a final layer of mixture to the top of the cake and then sprinkle with the processed cake crumbs, mixed with finely chopped nuts. I’m afraid you have to let it set in the fridge for a few hours before you can tuck in, but it’s worth the wait, I promise.”

Info

If you try your hand at any recipes, use the #GetCreativeWithPorsche hashtag to share your results on the Porsche Newsroom Instagram feed and the best ones will feature on the feed in the coming days.

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