

Actress and brand-new cookbook author Tiffani Thiessen.

Breakfast at Tiffani's

The former teen idol shares her favorite family recipes in a new cookbook. *By Kim Peiffer*

We fell in love with her in the '90s as America's high school sweetheart in *Saved by the Bell*, but fast-forward to 2018 and the lovefest with Tiffani Thiessen is taking on a new shape. Now, the actress, wife, and mother has added cookbook author extraordinaire to her repertoire.

Featuring 125 recipes, *Pull Up a Chair: Recipes from My Family to Yours* is packed with delicious concoctions from Thiessen's own kitchen. Below, we chat with the multi-hyphenate about her latest endeavor.

Why a cookbook?

To me, it's a scrapbook of memories and recipes from my life that I've been excited to share with everyone who's followed me along my journey.

What inspired you?

Many things inspired me, from my family and friends to some of my favorite chefs. Traveling and restaurants where I've fallen in love with dishes that inspire ideas. Growing my own fruit and veggies and creating recipes that are in season.

What's a typical day in the life of Tiffani like?

Oh, gosh, there is no "typical" day in my world. Ha! It could be anything from being on set or traveling for work. But when I'm home, which is most often, it starts with a cup of coffee and snuggles with my kiddos.



What's your favorite time of day?

Anytime I'm hanging with my kids and hubby at home. Every moment with them is my favorite time of the day.

What's your all-time favorite thing to cook with your family?

Making pizza is one of our favorite things to do in the Smith home. My kids call it "decorating."

What would your last meal on earth be?

That's a hard one. Probably a gorgeous cheese and charcuterie board with a nice big glass of wine!

What do the holidays look like for you? Do you host? What do you make?

My mom passed the hosting torch on to me many years ago, but both she and my aunt still help out in the kitchen. Along with a turkey, either smoked, baked, or fried, we are always sure to make my sour cream mashed potatoes, Mom's cream cheese pie, and my aunt's green beans. And no holiday is complete without my sun-dried tomato and fennel stuffing.

What's the best compliment you've ever received?

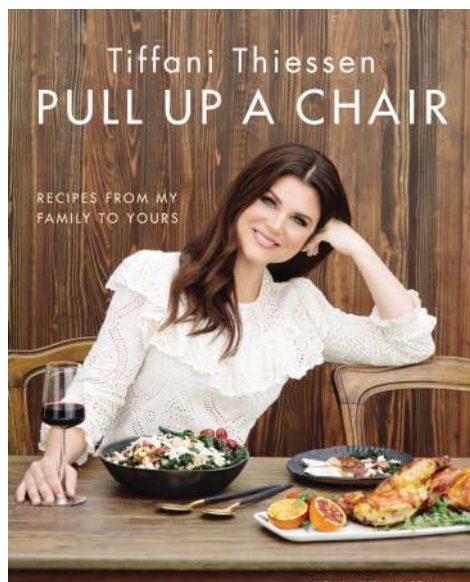
That my recipes give them confidence in the kitchen.

What is the number one thing you would tell your younger self if you had the chance?

Don't sweat the small stuff.

What's the biggest lesson that cooking has taught you?

How much food can bring people together.

**Walk me through the story of the biggest/funniest disaster that's ever happened in your kitchen.**

My oven not working on Thanksgiving and having to schlep all of my food to my neighbor's house to cook. Thankfully they weren't using theirs!

What does a perfect night look like for you?

Making dinner with the family.

What's the first thing you do when you get up in the morning?

After the usual...hug—my husband's good morning—I snuggle my kids, then make breakfast.

SUN-DRIED TOMATO AND FENNEL STUFFING**INGREDIENTS**

Two 1-pound loaves (white or sourdough) bread, crusts removed, cut into 1-inch pieces
 8 tablespoons (1 stick) butter, plus more for the baking dish
 4 bulbs fennel, trimmed and coarsely chopped, plus chopped fronds for garnish
 2 cups low-sodium chicken broth
 1 cup oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes, coarsely chopped
 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
 1 teaspoon dried oregano
 1 teaspoon kosher salt
 1/2 teaspoon black pepper

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Butter a 9-by-13-inch baking dish; set aside.

Spread the bread evenly on a baking sheet and bake, tossing once or twice, until toasted, 10 to 15 minutes.

In the meantime, melt butter in a large saucepan over medium heat; set aside 2 tablespoons. Add the fennel to the saucepan and cook, stirring occasionally until tender, 20 to 25 minutes.

In a medium pot over medium-high heat, combine the chicken broth, sun-dried tomatoes, vinegar, oregano, salt, and pepper. Bring to a simmer and cook for 10 minutes.

In a large bowl, toss the toasted bread with the fennel and the broth mixture until the bread is coated and has fully absorbed the liquid. Put the stuffing in the prepared baking dish, cover with foil, and bake for 20 minutes. Uncover the stuffing and brush it with the reserved 2 tablespoons of melted butter. Bake, uncovered, until browned on top, about another 20 minutes. Garnish with fennel fronds and serve hot.

