

Profile

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MELISSA LEONG

There isn't much Melissa hasn't had to do with when it comes to food in Australia. A TV Week Gold Logie-nominated television presenter and personality, freelance food + travel writer, food media consultant, radio broadcaster, MC and cookbook editor, this first generation Singaporean Australian isn't afraid to consume anything at least once.

From getting lost in the back streets of Ho Chi Minh looking for the perfect banh mi at midnight, to living on an abattoir and a sheep dairy in rural Tasmania for two years in order to better understand agriculture first hand, there is nowhere and nothing she won't do in the name of a great food experience or an important life lesson.

Melissa's work as a television host and judge can be seen on the multi Logie and AACTA award-winning show **MasterChef Australia**, as well as **Junior MasterChef** and **Celebrity MasterChef** on Network 10. She is now proud to head up MasterChef's sweet new spinoff, **Dessert Masters** alongside internationally celebrated pastry god Amaury Guichon as co-host and judge.

For something different, she has also guest-hosted **Fight Week for UFC on Foxtel Sports**, and stars alongside Samuel Johnson and Costa Georgiadis in gritty documentary **The Hospital: In The Deep End**, on SBS in 2024. She has also appeared on episodes of 10's **Have You Been Paying Attention**, **Would I Lie to You**, and **Top Gear Australia**. And not that it's about what's on the surface, but she can also boast the title of **Who Magazine's Sexiest Person of the Year 2020** on her resume, as well!

Her previous work on SBS Television's hit series **The Chefs' Line** is currently on Netflix US. Melissa has also been a season regular, sharing her recipes on Justine Schofield's **Everyday Gourmet** and Matt Sinclair's

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The Cook's Pantry, also on Network Ten. As a radio broadcaster and podcaster, she hosted a regular food show on **FBI Radio** in Sydney for half a decade, as well as a Spotify series exploring no-holds barred conversations with high profile Australian game changers including Grace Tame, on **More Than Talk**.

Melissa has featured in campaigns for **Lancôme**, and **Lexus**, **Cat Amongst The Pigeons** wines, Italian tomato icon **Mutti**, **Visit Victoria** as well as **QT Hotels**, **Perrier-Jouet Champagne**, **Witchery** and **Georg Jensen**. She is a proud Lexus Ambassador and friend of luxury watch brand, **Omega** and has also partnered with tourism bodies both in Australia and abroad, including Western Australia, Northern Territory, Lord Howe Island and Hong Kong. Melissa is also proud to support several charities and initiatives including the **OCRF** (Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation), **Children's Ground**, **Plan Australia**, **The ASRC** (Asylum Seekers' Resource Centre) and **The Lost Dogs Home**.

As an MC, she has also hosted events large and small. From a sold out **Sydney Opera House In Conversation with Jamie Oliver**, to exclusive dinners with other celebrity chefs including Quay's Peter Gilmore, DOM's Alex Atala, Marco Pierre White and Rick Stein, she has worked for top tier brands and events including **American Express**, **Margaret River Gourmet Escape**, **Noosa Food & Wine Festival** and **Parramatta City**, as well as **Fairfax Good Food Month** and **Melbourne Food & Wine** events across Australia.

A background in digital advertising working with brands such as **Coca Cola**, **Nokia** and **LG** gave Melissa her start in the food industry as a freelance food critic for publications such as **Time Out Sydney**, before moving into PR, Marketing and Digital Media consulting. Working with the likes of Adriano Zumbo, Gelato Messina, Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) and more, Melissa has worked with some of the highest profile and most respected names in the Australian food scene.

Melissa's first love will always be writing. As a freelance food journalist and critic, she continues to share her love and knowledge of all things food and travel in publications such as **Delicious**, **Stellar**, and **Escape**. Her first children's book, **A Taste Adventure** (Five Mile Publishing) was

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released in September 2022, and articulates the 6 main flavour sensations of sweet, sour, salty, bitter, spicy and umami to a whole new generation of food obsessed humans.

Melissa's life philosophy is the same as that in food - be voracious!

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