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# Make This Decadent Lobster Ravioli with Candied Chestnuts

Kick those New Year's resolutions to the curb.

By [Alexandra Hall](#)

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Lobster Ravioli | Scampo

## WEEKEND PROJECT

When the doldrums of this dreary winter are testing your affability and that New Year's pledge to make every meal low-fat and healthy has long lost its appeal, there may be only one thing to do: cook and eat something unapologetically decadent. Toss in Valentine's Day, and you've got the perfect excuse to go all in on an all-out indulgent meal, and to make an event out of cooking and savoring it.

Well, Chef Lydia Shire has your back. For decades now, the indefatigable 73-year-old culinary legend has been racking up awards and adoration in Boston with her take-no-prisoners lavish dishes that embrace both fat and flavor. Her philosophy in a nutshell? "Live a little."

That approach is exemplified by one of her signature creations at Boston's Scampo restaurant: chestnut flour ravioli with lobster and candied chestnuts. "It takes a little more gumption and patience than your average home recipe," she muses. "But it's extremely doable. And it's a perfect dish for a winter evening—something to show off with."

When making this dish (or any dish, for that matter) Shire says not to fear fat, which she insists gets a bad rap. "It brings ingredients into their glory," she says. "I take the Julia Child approach. She said that if the nutrition police take over—she called them scareheads—they're going to kill gastronomy. Julia ate everything and lived a long, happy life. You only live once, so we should be seeking flavor when we eat, not put ourselves through this torture of seeking zero fat."

For Shire, it's a question of choosing quality over quantity. "I never sit down and eat a 14-ounce steak," she explains. "That's why I've always had a half steak on my menu at Scampo. And I'm as happy to eat a four-ounce Wagyu as anything bigger. A smart person can eat whatever they want as long as they do it right. You should maximize the flavor of your food and eat less."

Just as she's calling for a happy medium between portion size and indulgence, Shire also preaches keeping dishes like this from being too rich by balancing creamy and earthy flavors and textures—which is also how she manages to keep an ingredient like lobster exciting in a region like New England, where it's basically ubiquitous. "The chestnut changes everything," she says. "Its sweetness and earthiness brings out the lobster flavor in a whole new way."

And then there's the final flourish of fried Brussels sprouts leaves scattered across the ravioli. "Their cabbage-y taste makes everything pop—you get the sweetness of the lobster and chestnut, and then you have this deep flavor in the light and crunchy leaves," she says. "They're just another example of why you shouldn't listen to scarehead nutritionists. What bullshit! These aren't bad for you. There's very little oil, but it adds worlds of flavor."

These portions are large, so you may have leftovers—but as Shire puts it, "Something this good absolutely must have an encore." She adds that you can serve the lobster tails with their shells either on or off. "I prefer leaving them on," she says. "More drama!"

### Chestnut Flour Ravioli of Lobster & Candied Chestnut Recipe

Yield: Serves 2

#### Ingredients:

- 3 cups double zero flour
- 1 cup chestnut flour
- 1½ cups of fresh egg yolks
- A pinch of salt
- 2 cups lukewarm water
- 3 live lobsters, 1½ pounds each
- 1 pound high-quality unsalted butter, like Kerry Gold
- 2 shallots, peeled and diced
- 4 whole cloves of garlic, peeled and chopped
- 1 red jalapeño, diced and seeds removed
- ½ cup mascarpone
- ½ cup canned chestnut purée
- 4 ounces Parmigiano Reggiano, grated
- Malden's Sea Salt to taste
- Freshly ground pepper to taste
- 4 tablespoons fresh chives, diced
- ½ teaspoon lemon zest
- ½ cup peeled chestnuts
- 4 cups water
- 4 cups sugar
- 1 pint brussels sprouts
- 4 cups vegetable oil
- ½ cup pure olive oil
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 2 tablespoons of finely diced carrot

#### Directions:

##### Pasta and filling:

1. In a large bowl, mix the double zero flour and chestnut flour together with a pinch of salt. Make a well in the center and add the egg yolks and the lukewarm water. Stir until a dough is formed. Empty onto a lightly floured board and knead until it's a smooth, shiny ball. (Add a few extra drops of water if it seems dry.) Cover with a damp cloth or plastic wrap and let sit at least one hour.
2. Boil the 3 lobsters in water for 6 minutes (they'll be slightly undercooked). Place them in an ice bath and when cooled, twist off the tails and reserve. Remove meat from the claws and knuckles, and cut into small dice.
3. Sauté the garlic, shallots, and jalapeño in 4 tablespoons of butter until soft. Add diced lobster, toss to warm slightly, then add mascarpone, chestnut purée, 3 tablespoons of the Parmigiano Reggiano, 2 tablespoons of the chives, and lemon zest. Mix, and taste to adjust seasoning. Cover and chill.
4. Roll pasta dough out. Cut each out using a ravioli mold, placing about 1 tablespoon of filling on each. Lightly wet the edges of each with water, cover with another ravioli cutout, and press the edges to seal together. Freeze until firm.

##### Make the garnishes:

1. Candy the chestnuts: In a medium saucepan, bring 4 cups water and 4 cups sugar to a boil, stirring regularly. When the sugar has melted add the peeled chestnuts and turn the flame to low. Simmer for 30 minutes and remove with a slotted spoon. When cool, chop and set aside.
2. Remove the outer leaves (only) of the brussels sprouts. In a medium saucepan, heat vegetable oil to 315 degrees. Fry the leaves until crisp, remove with slotted spoon, drain on a paper towel, and sprinkle with salt.
3. Add the olive oil and balsamic vinegar to a pan over low heat, and add carrot dice, a pinch of salt and pepper, and the remaining chives. Stir that occasionally as you split the lobster tails in half, remove intestinal tracts, and add them to the pan with 4 tablespoons of butter. Keep everything warm over low heat.

##### Bring it all together:

1. Boil a pot of salted water, and place a large frying pan next to the pot. When the ravioli are cooked, take ½ cup of the boiling ravioli water from the pot and pour it into the pan. Transfer the ravioli with a slotted spoon to the pan and immediately add ¾ to 1 stick of butter, swirling all of it to emulsify, adding the remaining Parmigiano Reggiano.
2. Place the cooked ravioli and their sauce on a plate, and transfer the lobster tails and carrot on top, spooning the butter sauce they're in over. Sprinkle all of it with the brussels sprouts leaves and scatter the chopped candied chestnuts over. Serve immediately.

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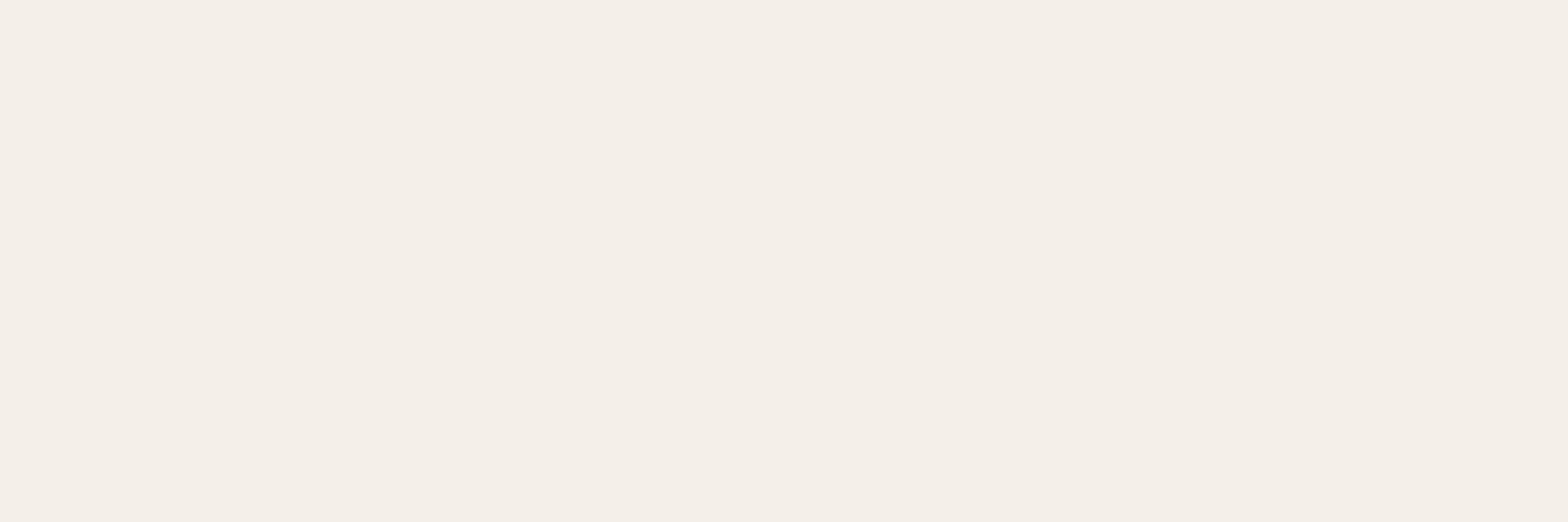
Alexandra Hall is a New England-based writer covering food and travel. She has written for The New York Times, Bon Appetit, and Conde Nast Traveler, among others, and has authored nine travel books on New England for Fodor's and Moon Handbooks.

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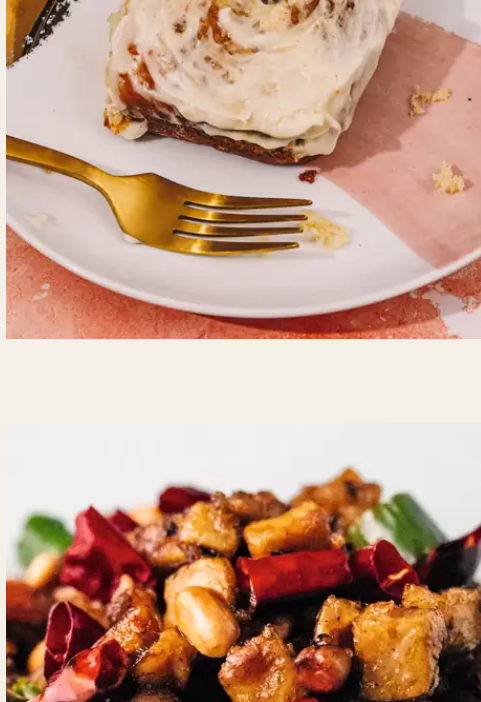
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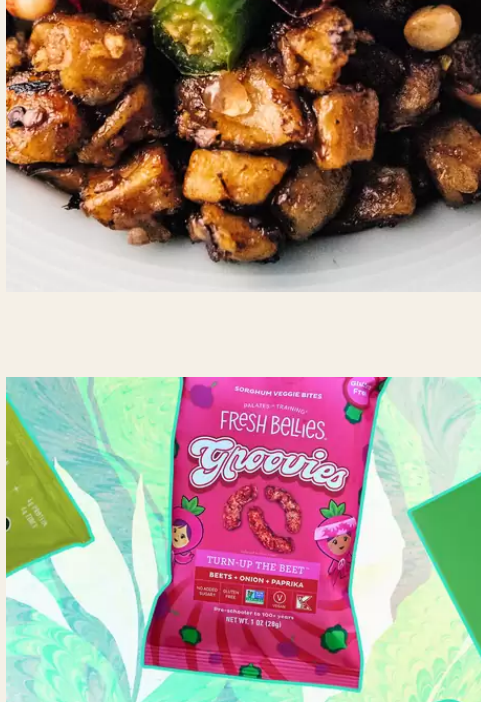
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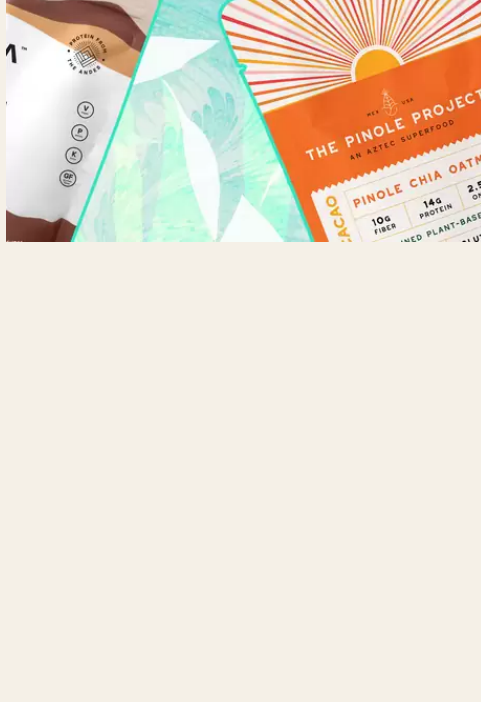
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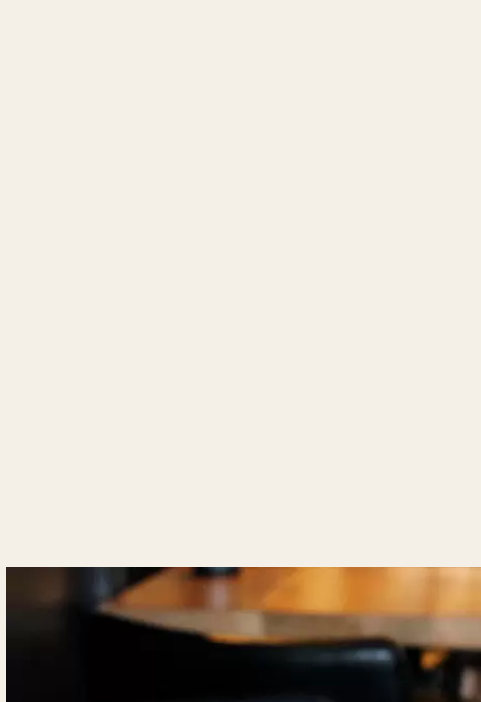
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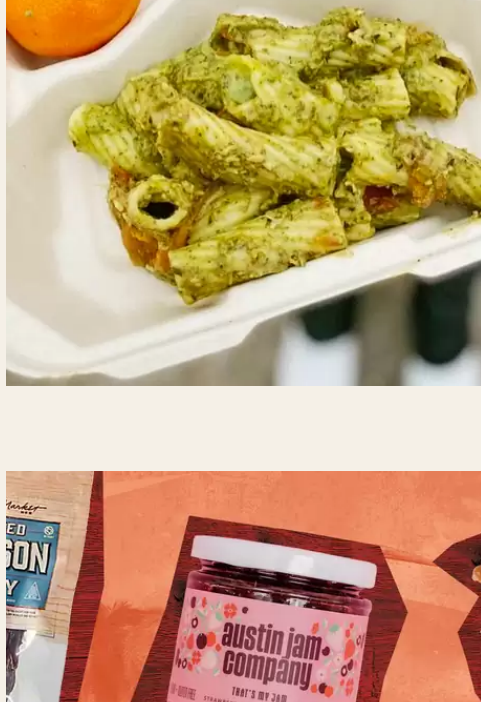
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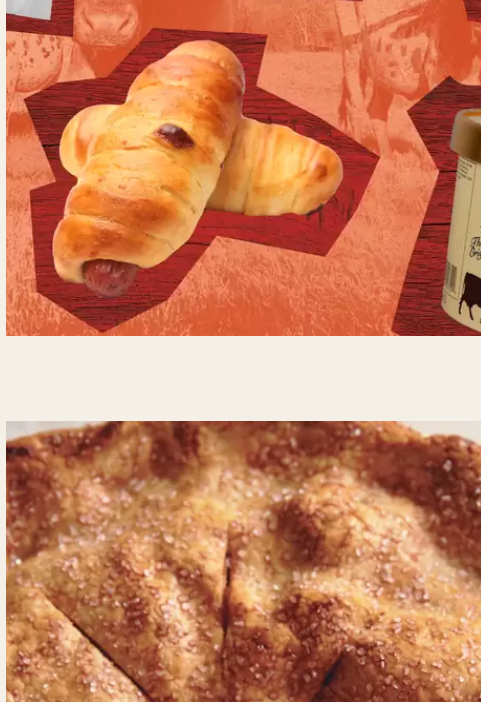
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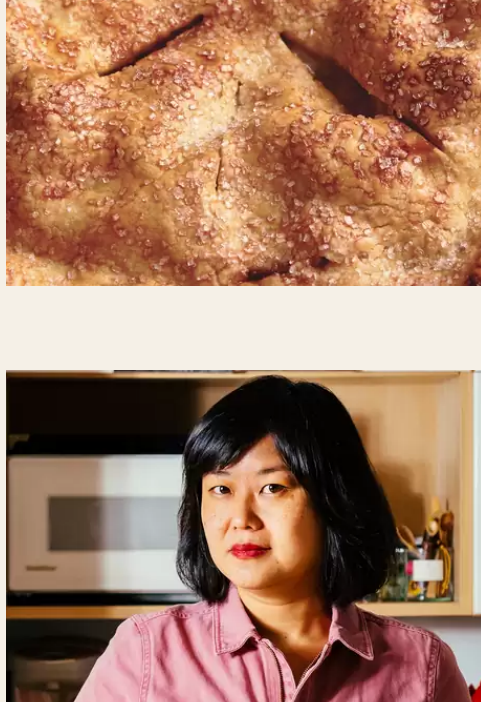
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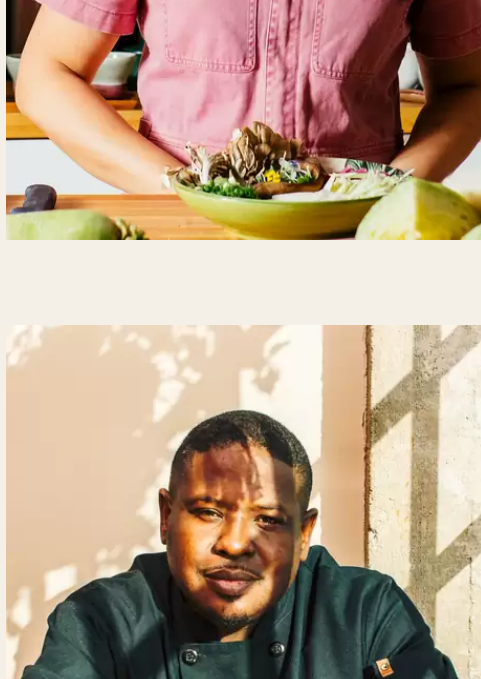
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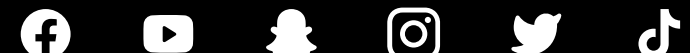
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