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Featuring: Hilton Head Health Institute

THE Colors OF THE *Rainbow*

Find inspiration and healthy cooking tips from Melissa Petitto,
Hilton Head Health Institute's chef to the stars.

by Kathy Newbern | photography by Andrew Purcell

Melissa Petitto— who's cooked for Lucy Liu, Carla Gugino, couples Christy Turlington and Ed Burns, and Gwyneth Paltrow and Chris Martin—shares healthy but glamorous meal ideas in her cooking classes at Hilton Head Health, a weight-loss destination spa on the tony, South Carolina island of the same name.

As guest celebrity chef a week at a time, four or five times a year, her sessions are always full, as well as her private consultations.

“My cooking style is definitely seasonal and innovative—fusion, I guess—because I try to pull a little bit from everything,” says Petitto.

Her main emphasis, as she demonstrates in her classes, is about making better choices. For instance, as Petitto whips up lasagna in one session, she uses fat-free ricotta cheese mixed with fat-free cottage cheese.

“Really? You can use no-fat?” one skeptical guest asks.

“Yes,” Petitto assures, “because you’re mixing it.”

Her recipe also calls for part-skim mozzarella, and lots of veggies, including broccoli, zucchini, and spinach. She also selects whole-wheat lasagna noodles, and adds Hilton Head Health's own marinara recipe, which is lower in fat and sugar than canned sauces.

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