

***“Like, I do my passion, but work still feels like work”*: Carla Lalli Music’s rise from line cook to best-selling author**

How Bon Appétit’s Food Director turned Food Editor-at-Large combines her passion for food and writing

Written by Drew Massey



An image captured by a fan of Music’s best-selling cookbook “Un libro davvero fantastico” by Dana L. Brown is licensed under [CC BY-SA 2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/)

Countless times, I've fallen down a YouTube hole. As of late, I can't stop myself from exclusively watching *Bon Appétit's* entire channel. The food magazine features many of their test kitchen chefs as hosts of their videos and I've been especially gravitating towards one of them, Carla Lalli Music. Carla's videos are now my go-to since I can count on her bubbly, sarcastic personality to entertain me while I pick up some new recipes or tips for dinner tomorrow night.

As Carla puts it herself in an interview from Sakara, she grew up in a "very food-forward, food-focused family with a mom who's a great cook, but also a cookbook editor and a food writer." It seems Carla was bound to be the well-loved chef we know her as today. Her personality strikes me as refreshing, especially considering the world of TV/online chefs. She is clearly herself and it makes for an approachable atmosphere around cooking. Besides being such an endearing and talented host, Carla Lalli Music is actually a food editor-at-large for *Bon Appétit's* magazine and has been in the food writing industry for the latter half of her career. Her dedication to sticking to the food writing industry has led her to many opportunities including publishing her own bestselling cookbook and possibly a second on the way. The best part is she still gets to write about what she loves—food.

Carla Lalli Music began establishing herself in the food writing industry in 2009, positioned as Deputy Editor for the magazine, *Everyday Food*. She served as Deputy Editor until 2011 when she moved on to a

new position at a new magazine: a features editor at Bon Appétit.

She has remained at Bon Appétit ever since. Bon Appétit actually later promoted her to be Food Director of the magazine in 2014. It was only January of this year, 2020, when she made the decision to change her position to food editor-at-large in accordance with her current food writing adventure, working on her second cookbook.

Of course, Music's appearances on *Bon Appétit's* YouTube channel were the catalyst for her internet popularity. She's most known for being the host of their series, Back to Back Chef. The series involves a celebrity, including appearances from Natalie Portman to their latest guest, drag queen Trixie Mattel, and Carla's attempt to guide them through a recipe despite being physically back to back. Carla is also featured like other chefs in the Bon Appétit test kitchen, she's been the host of numerous informative-but-fun videos teaching us recipes of all kinds (often her own).

Carla's food writing career continued as she wrote her own bestselling cookbook published in 2019, titled, "Where Cooking Begins: Uncomplicated Recipes to Make You a Great Cook: A Cookbook." She comments on one of the most important responses she's received in her interview from Sakara, "it's been amazing to receive feedback from several people who are recovering from disordered eating. They've reached out to me to say that the way I present food

has made it feel safe again. That has floored me almost more than anything else.”

The first half of her career in the food industry is what helped her get her to where she is now, of course. According to her Wikipedia page, Carla Lalli Music attended the French Culinary Institute (notably after she earned a degree in literature and society from Brown University). She worked as a line cook and kitchen manager at Rocco DiSpirito and later became the first General Manager of the popular restaurant chain, Shake Shack. Later, she served as an instructor in culinary management for the Institute for Culinary Education.

Carla on her work, in her own words: “You want to go work for people who are doing quality work. And you want to treat work like a continued education. People talk about how if you do your passion, you’ll feel like you’re not working a day in your life. And, like, I do my passion, but work still feels like work. Thinking about work as a way that you go to school and get paid at the same time has been how I like to frame my jobs.” (TheCut)

Carla Lalli Music is a real example of someone who writes for a living and works with it in her own current, particular way. She focuses on her passion,

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food, and has created a name for herself through the opportunities her food writing career has brought her. Her educational approach to each job she takes on should speak volumes to modern writers. Remain true to yourself and your interests, be open to uncharted territory, and the opportunities will come.