

# Test Kitchen: Knish – March 2022

written by Chris Guibert | March 31, 2022

The Keweenaw Mountain Lodge's concept of [rustic worldly food](#) provides an unlimited canvas for a chef to paint a culinary masterpiece. Painters know that before a brush touches the canvas a sketch must first be drawn. In the kitchen, before a recipe is finalized, the chef must test different flavors and textures to see if their idea is appetizing. ***"Be fearless and persistent in learning on a daily basis"*** is one of the Lodge's [secondary values](#) and the "test kitchen" is where Chef Widad and her team take a concept from the kitchen-counter top to the dining room table.

The other day when I walked near the kitchen a new smell intrigued my senses and guided me through the two-way hinged door. As a self-proclaimed "foodie" it is a joy to work steps from a vibrant kitchen. I poke my head in the door and ask the chef, "what's going on?" A simple, one word response comes back: "knish" (pronounced ca-NISH). It's been a while since I've even heard that word muttered let alone had a chance to eat one. It immediately brought back memories from my childhood in New Jersey and the Jewish delicatessens that we frequented weekly.

Chef Widad was in the process of rolling out the dough. She listed off the dough's simple and rustic ingredients: all purpose (unbromated and unbleached) flour, baking powder, salt, oil , egg, vinegar, sour cream and water. She first hand rolled the dough into about a three inch diameter log.



She then chopped the log into three inch balls and rolled those balls flat with a wooden dowel.





You can tell that Chef Widad is very present when she's baking, she is focused like a painter in front of a canvas. She simultaneously works the dough effortlessly and with intention; skills she learned while pursuing her degree in pastry and baking from Sullivan University.





After the dough is flat she spreads her mixture of seasoned broccoli, sweet potatoes, mushrooms, onions, and cheese (mozzarella and provolone) into the dough and then rolls it up and cuts it into knish size pieces. Some people might say that this is not a “traditional” knish filling, and Chef Widad would agree:

*“The Rustic Worldly food concept is a starting point, like a solid platform at the KML. I thrive in researching other cuisines and cultures for inspiration. I attempt to go to the roots without pretense nor embellishment: I read, I choose, I test, sometimes making changes, without really touching the essence or the integrity of how other cultures cook. I adapt it to what is feasible and reachable in a remote environment. In the end, I follow my creativity and sense of flavors that are supported by my culinary education.”*

Are you wondering how the knishes turned out? They baked in the oven for twenty minutes at 350 degrees. The sweet aroma of fresh baked knishes quickly enveloped the Lodge. Like Pavlov’s dog my mouth began to water. When Chef Wi pulled the first one out of the baking tin and handed it to me it was still piping hot. I ripped her a piece and we both popped them into our mouths. We both decided that the crust needed a few more minutes, back into the oven they went. When they came out of the oven the second time the crust was delicate, soft and just the right amount of chewiness. The savory broccoli filling was well seasoned adding balance and texture to the knish. It was delicious.







If you happen to bump into Chef Widad, ask her what's cooking next in the test kitchen and she might just give you a taste of her next worldly creation.

**About Chef Widad:** The rustic worldly culinary flair at the Lodge is led by Chef Widad "Wi" Mueller. She is known for developing dishes using simple ingredients in such a manner that exhibits the flavors from the dish's country-of-origin. She is a chef, artisan, and watercolor artist. Her interests are reflected in the food, gelato, and paintings that she creates. She is a native of Lebanon, and has lived in multiple places around the world – which provides a vibrant and progressive perspective to food offerings in the Keweenaw.

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### [Chris Guibert](#)

Chris Guibert: I have a strong passion for all things outdoors and have worked as a tour guide and professional photographer for the last twenty five years. As the Lead of Outdoor Activities at the Mountain Lodge I want make sure you and your family have a great experience while staying and playing. Please feel free to ask me any questions about the trails, regional activities and local secrets.

