

About the Chef

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The [rustic worldly culinary flair](#) at the Lodge is led by **Chef Widad “Wi” Mueller**.



Guided by a passion for flavors derived from worldly-influences, Chef Wi adds unique twists to the Lodge’s [dining room menu](#) each week to create dishes that bring the world of food to the Keweenaw. She is known for developing dishes using simple ingredients in such a manner that exhibits the flavors from the dish’s country-of-origin. The dishes she has created with the KML team span all parts of the globe: Africa, Asia, Europe, Middle East, Central America, South America, and North America.

She is a chef, artisan, and watercolor artist, with worldly exposure. Her interests are reflected in the food (*and paintings*) that she creates. She loves pairing flavors of food that are vibrant, yet provide a balanced feel in one’s mouth. She is known for being able to use simple ingredients available to anyone and crafting them into diverse dishes from around the world. She does so while still balancing the flavors in the dish in such a manner that the trueness of the dish shines.



Widad was born and grew up in Lebanon, and has lived in Kuwait, South Africa, and the United States, and has travelled to various places in Europe, namely France and Italy. During her teenage and young adult years she experienced what went through the civil war in Lebanon (1975 to 1990). The country was known as the “*Switzerland of the Middle East*”, where many people traveled to experience a diverse culture. As such, Widad was exposed to a wide array of European culture, but also experienced hardship because of the war. This is the basis for her wide understanding of worldly cultures and where she learned how to be resourceful with resources. As a result, she has developed a philosophy on being efficient with food and waste less – a philosophy she has instilled in the food and beverage operations at the Lodge. Her humble mindset and motherly demeanor allow the KML kitchen team to learn with her and blossom.

The global focus that she brings to the Lodge comes from her own experiences and worldly friends. She has lived in Kuwait City

(Kuwait) and Cape Town (South Africa). In the United States, before coming to the Lodge, she has lived in the Midwest (Champaign, Kalamazoo), in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains (Longmont, Colorado), in the South (Louisville), in the Southwest (Austin), on the East Coast (Hobe Sound), and on the West Coast (Fresno). She now spends her time between Copper Harbor and Austin.



Dishes from the dining room menu, the week of September 27, 2021: Chicken Tetrizzini [Italian-influence], Gratin Parmentier [French-influence], Turkey Breast Pide [Turkish-influence], Rataouille [French-influence]. Click on the image to see the full menu.

Listen to an interview with Chef Wi about whitefish and Lake Superior. The interview is conducted by host, Capri S. Cafaro.

[Eat Your Heartland Out: Fish Feast: Great Lakes Fish as Food](#)

"This episode of Eat Your Heartland Out, in collaboration with Great Lakes Now from Detroit Public Media, celebrates the flavorful and nutritious fish of the Great Lakes. Brandon Schroeder, Extension Educator with Michigan Sea Grant and Michigan State Sea Grant programs, shares details behind the Great Lakes Fisheries Heritage Trail. Geneva Langeland,



Communications Editor at Michigan Sea Grant, tells us about Freshwater Feasts, a website from Michigan Sea Grant that provides recipe ideas and inspiration on how to prepare Great Lakes fish at home. And, Chef Widad “Wi” Mueller gives us a seat at her chef’s table as she discusses how she uses Great Lakes whitefish and trout with a fusion of flavors at the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge in Copper Harbor, Michigan.” Eat Your Heartland Out is Powered by Simplecast.



Widad found her food focus at a late age, after having worked in industries that were considered stable (banking and healthcare). While she lived in Louisville (Kentucky) she completed her [culinary arts](#) and [baking & pastry arts](#) studies at Sullivan University, in their [College of Hospitality Studies](#). She learned how to cook in the French-colonized country of Lebanon. And with Sullivan’s program is based upon French-culinary techniques, she was provided a solid understanding of culinary techniques in both a formal and informal environment. She traveled to various locations in the USA during her tenure at Sullivan to learn more about how other places cook and bake.



Pastry (and art), Chef Wi

Gelato gelato – as part of a trip to Italy in 2011, she was inspired to work on artisan gelato, where she spent several years with her company, Rollin' Gelato. She will be bringing her gelato and sorbet acumen to the Lodge.

In her spare time, she enjoys to sit and paint. Watercolor is her preferred medium.



Watercolor painting, Widad Mueller

She spends her time in the Keweenaw, in Austin, in nature, and thinking about different flavors from around the world. She is married to John; who have two children, Martin and Naya.



Enjoying the national parks: Widad and her family, in Yosemite National Park.

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