



A M B E R
H O T E L

Danish who loves using natural products to make Kenyan cuisine

By RADING BIKO GERRO | Updated Sun, January 22nd 2017 at 00:00 GMT +3

Frederik Olesen, the executive chef at Nairobi's Amber Hotel (AH), came to Africa because he loves adventure. And as he enjoys his exploits, he laps up the diversity reflected in Kenya's culinary traditions in terms of choice of ingredients, style of preparation and cooking techniques.

"I came to Africa to help set up a catering school at the Masai Mara. I was to stay for three months, but I now work in Kenya as a chef," he says.

Having worked in London for a number of executive restaurants for about six years, Mr Olesen needed a new venture and Africa provided opportunity.

Initially, his key role was to teach the Maasai community how to prepare African cuisine at the Karen Blixen Camp.

The 29-year-old born and bred in Denmark recalls helping his mother in the kitchen. "At the age of 13 I knew I would be a chef, though most of my family members are in the communication industry. My mother influenced my career path," says Olesen.

When he turned 17 he moved to London, where he studied catering.

"Having been trained by some of the world's best chefs, I feel it is time to pass over skills I have learnt to others, and Africa is the best place to do that," says Olesen, who appreciates African dishes since they are largely affected by the subsistence nature of living in many parts of the continent.

"In Africa you find farmers, herdsman and fishermen. The crops they grow and animals they keep affects the dishes they make," says Olesen.

Olesen, who joined AH this year prefers using fresh ingredients as opposed to refrigerated ones. "I believe in nature and that is why I use fresh ingredients to ensure my customers have a taste of farm produce," says Olesen.

He adds: "At AH we value your health more than your money. I ensure we serve meals prepared from natural products."

The chef's passion for African meals is the winning goal that Olesen plans to use to attract customers to the hotel.

His ultimate dream is to promote African cuisine to international standards. "It is time for the world to understand and appreciate African cuisine in the hospitality industry," says Olesen.

According to the Travel Advisor report, African cuisine will be a game changer in the hospitality industry within the continent in the next five years.

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