



WORST COOKS IN AMERICA

Season Five – Contestant Bios

Daniel Beyda (Hewlett Harbor, NY): Radiologist and family man Daniel Beyda is a disaster in the kitchen and his wife isn't much of a cook either - so for the sake of their three kids, Daniel is determined to improve his food skills. He longs for family dinners and home-cooked meals, and even has a scrapbook of recipes, but gets flustered and scattered when attempting to put dishes together. He is ready to gain kitchen confidence, and looks forward to making the Middle Eastern dish his uncle cooked for him as a child.

Amber Brauner (Redlands, CA): For single mom Amber, the kitchen is an emotional place because it brings back memories of her late mother. She and her mother had children very young, and Amber often gets mistaken for her daughter's sister. All of her dishes are either bland or burnt, and her friends have even called her cooking worse than prison food. She is discouraged and would rather ink it up at the tattoo parlor where she works as a tattoo artist than stink it up in the kitchen. Amber has four kids and while they handle the cooking for themselves, they are worried that if Amber doesn't learn to cook, she will never find a husband and end up alone when the kids move out.

Benjamin "Benji" Hunter Brown III (Nashville): Benji just turned thirty, but he has the finicky food tastes of a five-year-old, and his diet of chicken nuggets and fast food has led to weight gain and high blood pressure. He has only tried to cook twice in his life - both attempts a disaster - and even though he has a fear of new foods, he is willing to try and change his eating habits and create a healthier environment for himself and his partner of five years. Nominated by his sister, live music booker Benji is known for his warm and engaging personality - and he will do what it takes to improve his kitchen skills.

Mike Glazer (Los Angeles): Mike grew up using the microwave to cook, and never really learned his way around the kitchen. He is a disaster when cooking with oil, after an incident at his mother's house where his oil technique lit the kitchen curtains on fire. He is ready to propose to his girlfriend and start a family, and this writer and comedian knows improving his cooking skills will make her very happy and move their relationship forward. His girlfriend often works 60-hour weeks, and he hopes to be able to make her delicious home-cooked meals in the future.

Lance Green (New York): Lance loves cooking and watches cooking shows religiously, so it came as a huge surprise to him when his family recently told him he is awful in the kitchen. Lance, an audio engineer and music producer/writer, also stays home part-time with his gluten-free son and realizes he must learn to make healthy food to make sure he's meeting his optimum dietary needs and to live a healthier life himself. He is so confident his cooking skills will improve, he aspires to one day host his own gluten-free cooking show and write his own cookbook.

Carol Holder (New York): Carol dreams of having her family around the table for a home-cooked meal, like her mother made for her Italian family growing up - but until she learns how to cook, that dream will only be a fantasy. Carol is a successful New York City luxury realtor who sells million dollar apartments with state-of-the-art kitchens, but she admits kitchens are a strange land to her. She has sophisticated taste, but lets her husband and housekeeper take care of the food. On the rare occasion she and her husband are in the kitchen together, Carol becomes very overwhelmed and she knows improving her cooking skills will bring her family closer together.

Ken Hsu (Seattle): Personal trainer Ken is a fitness fanatic and knows healthy eating is important for his clients, but he sometimes doesn't practice what he preaches and indulges in Frito Pies and fast food. He's adventurous and willing to try new things, and though he is confident in his cooking skills, his girlfriend isn't - and she has noticed more and more junk food entering his diet. Ken admits his lazy food choices have crept back, and he is determined to learn to make fresh, healthy food on his own.



Casey Pentony (Los Angeles): Casey is a nurse who can save people's lives, but not feed them so well. She has mastered measuring medicine at the hospital, but doesn't know a cup from a tablespoon in the kitchen. When Casey attempts to cook, danger looms – she has set off fire alarms, burned food, cut herself and she is also a germaphobe. Her diet is limited to frozen meals and crackers, and she is terrified of fish – just the sight makes her sick. For the sake of her own health and her boyfriend's, Casey must learn to cook and conquer her culinary fears.

Carie Pullano-Keller (Chester, VA): Carie comes from a long line of Greek and Italian cooks, but unfortunately, that tradition has stopped with her. She is desperate to learn how to cook not only for the sake of tradition but for her family's health. She ordered take out and fast food for her kids every day for nine years and the situation is not any different today. Carie is a promotional model but won't be advertising any kitchen gadgets until she can get her act together. Carie's husband was recently laid off and the cost of ordering in is taking a toll on their finances. Carie needs to get some kitchen chops fast and prove to her family that she is capable of learning and carrying on their family tradition.

Danielle Ruiz-Wiley (Staten Island, NY): Danielle is a full-time, dedicated mother and wife whose kitchen phobia is impacting her family. When she steps into the kitchen, her nerves take over and she quickly becomes frustrated. In lieu of cooking, Danielle keeps her freezer stocked with prepared meals and frozen dinners, and she also overuses traditional Puerto Rican spices Sazon and Adobo. She and her family eat out so often, the local restaurants know their order by heart. As a result, Danielle's husband has gained weight and with a new baby and living expenses, they can't afford to eat out as much as they do. Danielle is afraid if she doesn't learn to cook she will pass her bad habits to her daughter.

Joe Slaughter (Los Angeles): Joe is the youngest in a large family of good cooks, and his grandfather was even a private chef. He moved from Chicago to Los Angeles for a career in show business and is a professional dancer/model/actor, but his skill set does not expand to the kitchen. His older brother also moved west, and keeps an eye out for Joe - he knows their parents will never stop worrying and his siblings will never stop heckling their "kitchen nightmare" brother until he learns to take care of himself and make a proper meal. Joe is eager to start making healthy food that isn't bland and tasteless, and prove to his family that he can cook and carry on their food traditions.

Stephanie St. Aubin (Bowie, MD): Stephanie has strong Haitian roots, and cooking plays a big role in her life and traditions. She works for the federal government but still lives at home with her mother, who cooks for her. Stephanie wants to learn how to cook to take some of the work off her mother's shoulders and ultimately settle down with a husband. Stephanie loves attention and isn't afraid to flaunt her looks, but in the kitchen her skills are anything but pretty. Her cooking is so bad that she says her go-to kitchen utensils are her cell phone and credit card, so she can order takeout. Stephanie fears if she never learns to cook, her family tradition will be lost, and she won't ever settle down with a husband.

Jamie Thomas (New York): Jamie has a sophisticated palate and loves good food, but he knows nothing about making it. His career as a flight attendant has exposed him to authentic cuisines from around the world, but Jamie was once turned down for a position because he couldn't make a simple omelette. His husband and family are skilled home cooks, and Jamie knows he needs to expand his culinary repertoire beyond sticks of butter, cold cereal and the microwave. He looks forward to one day hosting fabulous dinner parties with his husband in their New York apartment.



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Muneerah Warner (Philadelphia): Muneerah has a lot of love in her heart, but no luck in the kitchen. An abstinence advocate, she is saving herself for marriage but worries if she doesn't learn to cook, she will never settle down with a man. Whenever she is in the kitchen, the fire department is on speed dial because within five minutes of preparing a meal, the house is filled with smoke. Her cooking has even made her family sick. Muneerah is tired of lying to her dates and telling them she can cook, she wants to be able to make delicious, healthy meals that will sweep men off their feet.

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