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ENGL 1013

Date

Paula and Giada

Paula Deen and Giada De Laurentiis are both famous cooks. They have their own cooking shows on the Food Network, but that is where the similarities end. They are different in their backgrounds, their style of cooking, and their publications.

Their first noticeable difference is in their backgrounds. Paula is a self-made success story. She learned to cook in her grandmother's kitchen. Paula started her career as a caterer, opening The Bag Lady. She prepared fresh lunches, specializing in traditional southern comfort foods to sell to people who worked in the downtown businesses and doctors' offices. She was such a hit that, in 1990 she opened a small restaurant named The Lady & Sons inside the Best Western Motel in Savannah, Georgia. There was seating for only forty-two, so it was almost guaranteed there would be a waiting list for all three meals. In 1995, Paula relocated to a larger space in downtown Savannah.

Giada started in her mother's kitchen, learning the traditional Italian recipes. After high school, her grandfather, Dino De Laurentiis, a film producer, wanted her to go into the movie industry. However, after several months, she realized that her true calling was food. Giada trained in Paris, France at the acclaimed Le Cordon Bleu Culinary Institute. She specialized in both pastry and cuisine. Now, as a private chef and caterer, she is enjoying success in Los Angeles, California.

Besides the differences in their backgrounds, their television shows are also very

different. Paula is the hostess of *Paula's Home Cooking*. The show is set in her kitchen in Savannah, Georgia. She presents menus based around the well-known comfort foods of the South. As Paula prepares the food, she goes through the recipes step by step, making it easy for the viewer to follow along. Most of the ingredients are basic staples found in nearly every kitchen. Paula makes even the novice cook feel that it is possible to prepare a wonderful meal. She is very open and friendly, making the viewers feel that they are in a long-time friend's kitchen. She closes every show with the same statement, "From my kitchen to yours, I send you best dishes and best wishes."

Giada is the hostess for *Everyday Italian*. The show is filmed on a set featuring a kitchen. Her menus follow the great Italian menus of her childhood with some changes for today's lifestyle. She presents the recipes with an Italian accent, which sometimes makes it hard for the viewer to understand exactly what the ingredients are. Most of the ingredients besides the pasta require a trip to the local grocery store. The viewer does not have the opportunity to follow along and cook as the show goes on.

Apart from the apparent differences in their shows, the number of publications from each lady is very different. Paula has published seven cookbooks, including *The Lady & Sons Just Desserts*, which features the fabulous desserts that are served at The Lady & Sons restaurant. *Lady & Sons: Savannah Country Cookbook* features the true southern comfort foods, such as fried chicken, turnip greens, and a dozen ways to spruce up mashed potatoes. *Paula Deen Celebrates* is a tribute to holiday meals. With the help of some friends, she gives decorating tips for the holidays and easy, delicious recipes that allow the cook time to enjoy the party. In this book, Paula gives bits of homespun advice called Paula's Pearls, such as "Don't get caught up in having such a good time that you make poor choices. Drink in moderation." for a New Year's

Eve party. She has recently come out with a monthly magazine named *Cooking with Paula Deen*. The magazine features recipes and stories from The Lady & Sons restaurant.

Giada currently has two cookbooks on the market. The first one is *Italian: 125 Simple and Delicious Recipes*. This is a basic how-to book for cooking an Italian meal, including basic spaghetti with marinara, penne with spinach sauce, and salmon with puff pastry and pesto. The second book is *Giada's Family Dinners*. This one seems to be more in-depth, giving recipes for large family-style meals of pasta and other Italian delicacies.

Paula and Giada are as different as daylight and dark. Their shows cover both ends of the spectrum, from friendly down-home cooking to the more advanced-chef cuisine. Therefore, personal preference and taste are the deciding factors when it comes time to choose which cooking show to watch.