

Art of The Meal: Author and Pilot Judy Whitmore Takes us on a Flying Tour of Her New York Food Haunts

A renowned vocalist, pilot, best-selling author, psychologist, and theatre producer, Judy Whitmore recently found time to release her new album, the Arden House Music-released *Can't We Be Friends*. As well as a passion for performing, Judy has a love of good food so we spoke with her recently to discuss some of her favourite foods and to gain some insight into some of her favourite food haunts in New York.

Hi Judy, thanks for your time. How are you today?

Judy Whitmore: "Considering the events of 2020, I have to say I'm very fortunate. My family is well, and I am well. What more could I ask for?"

I read that you're a pilot. If you could fly anywhere in the world to sample the cuisine where would you fly to and why?

"The number one item on my culinary 'To Do' list is Massimo Bottura's Osteria Francescana, in Modena, Italy to have tortellini with Parmigiano Reggiano cream. I saw a news story last year which proclaimed it 'the best dish in the world.' As for a place I can recommend from experience... La Giostra on Borgo Pinti in Florence, Italy. I have been there many times. The food is indescribably delicious, the staff is friendly, and every meal ends with a complimentary glass of limoncello. They also serve the best dessert in the world, gelato di riso, which is vanilla gelato with frozen pieces of rice, layered with mashed strawberries and raspberries. It's sort of like a frozen rice pudding, but better!"



Do you have a favourite nationalities food?

"Yes! Italian! No, Japanese! No, Greek! No, Chinese! No, French! No, Indian! Wait... do I have to choose only one?"

"New York Medley" was the third single off your debut album Can't We Be Friends. If you could pick three particular foods to eat in New York what would they be?

"My ideal day in New York: Breakfast, steamed eggs and croissants at Buvette in the West Village. Lunch, the chicken salad sandwich at The Tartinery in the Food Hall at The Plaza Hotel. Dinner, grilled margarita pizza followed by the duck ragout pappardelle at Fresco by Scotto, which is temporarily closed, but hopefully will re-open soon."

What is your favourite type of place to eat in New York? A restaurant? A street vendor? A nice café?

"I love Alain Ducasse's beautiful French café, Benoit. Their frisée salad with lardons and poached egg is perfect for lunch or dinner. Trattoria Dell'Arte, across from Carnegie Hall, is also a favourite. They serve 'family style' and they make great pizza. Did I mention I love pizza?! I especially like getting a slice at any of the hundreds of pizza joints in New York."



Where is your go-to place in New York when you want a really special night?

"I love Le Bernardin and Per Se for special celebrations. Marea is great too!"

Given how multi-cultural New York is, what is your favourite type of cuisine to eat?

"I love Asian food, and New York has so many of these great restaurants to choose from. It doesn't matter if it's a hole-in-the-wall dumpling house or the upscale Shun Lee Palace. Momofuku Noodle Bar is one of my favourite places. The pork belly buns are heavenly!"

If someone was visiting New York for the first time, where would you recommend they go to eat?

"The Grand Central Oyster Bar... not just for the food, but for the whole experience of that fabulous iconic building! I'd also tell them not to miss a quintessential New York experience...getting a Sabrett hot dog from a cart on 5th Avenue."

What food do you think sums up the New York vibe?

"Good, old-fashioned New York deli food! Bagels and lox, Reuben sandwiches, New York cheesecake! Where's my fork?"

Do you cook? If so, what is your signature dish?

"I make great pasta carbonara. But my real love is baking bread, muffins, cakes, cookies, doughnuts, and candy. I find baking to be a wonderful stress-relieving activity."

Artwork for 'Can't We Be Friends' by Judy Whitmore

As a vocalist, pilot, best-selling author, psychologist, and theater producer, time must be at a premium. What tips do you have for a good diet to suit a fast-paced lifestyle?

"I like to have a little protein at every meal. It makes a big difference in controlling food cravings. I always carry protein bars in my purse for emergencies. I'm lucky because I love vegetables whether they are in salads, oven-roasted, or steamed. Once you add a little fruit to the protein and veggies you've got a well-balanced diet. I also often give myself a treat at night... one or two sugar-free, mini Hershey's chocolate candies."

Outside of New York, do you have a particular favourite go-to food establishment that you always make sure you have time for when you're in that particular town or city?

"Oh, yes! La Super-Rica Taqueria in Santa Barbara! I discovered it about 20 years ago. It's a little hole-in-the-wall restaurant. They make their own fresh tortillas all day long, and they prepare the best quesadillas and chilaquiles I've ever had!"

Finally, good luck with everything. Just to finish, how would you sum up 2020 for you, and what are your hopes for 2021?

"2020 has been challenging for so many people in so many ways. I'm grateful I've been able to stay in touch with family and friends via Zoom. I'm optimistic about 2021. I know I'll appreciate small pleasures like having a cappuccino at Starbucks with a friend. In June I'm planning to record a jazz album, and I'm hoping to return to performing in the fall. I can't wait!"and I get to choose all the songs myself."

Visit judywhitmore.com for all the info.