



Michael D. Rosenblum, an American who used to work in Chinese restaurants, finds himself in the kitchen of the residence of the U.S. Ambassador to China, from which he serves government officials and celebrities with delicacies.

MASTER OF THE AMBASSADOR'S KITCHEN



• Text by Jeff
• Translation by Leo

Michael, 33, came from a Jewish family in the United States. At 14 years old, he began to work in the family restaurant. Later, an accidental opportunity brought him to work in a restaurant run by a man from Hong Kong. While having dinner with the owner and other employees, as they always did, he was surprised to find that authentic Chinese food was much more delicate and sophisticated than what was presented on the menu. This aroused his curiosity and interest in the exotic land of China.

Upon finishing high school, Michael jumped into the campus of Shanghai Normal University through an exchange program. Thereafter, he became a Chinese food addict. He further honed his mastery of Chinese through a M.A. program in the Department of Chinese Language and Literature of Peking University. However, it was far more difficult to fathom the subtlety and sophistication of Chinese interpersonal relations than the language – the huge cultural gap almost sent him home for a time. From 2010 to 2011, feeling depressed, Michael set out from Beijing on a long journey. He travelled across a large part of West China, including Ningxia, Xinjiang, Qinghai, Shaanxi and Sichuan provinces on his bicycle and continued to travel by motorbike from Sichuan to Taishan, Guangdong. He dived into local gourmet food along the way. This journey turned out to be, as he believes, one of the proudest things that he has done in his life.



At the end of this journey Michael became Executive Chef at a 4-star hotel in Chengdu, Sichuan, where he made a Chinese friend who let him truly understand all kinds of Chinese humor, jokes, and historical allusions as well as meanings behind such vague Chinese expressions as “Bu Fang Bian” (not convenient) and “Ji Ben Ke Yi” (basically ok). This friend really helped him to decide to stay in China. Not long after this, he came to the attention of the Consulate General of the United States in Chengdu for his marvelous culinary skills, who later recommended him to the then U.S. Ambassador to China, Gary Locke.

According to Michael, as an American Mr Locke was not a big fan of Chinese food, though he did love fresh vegetables as Michael himself did. On the list of high officials and eminent personages who Michael has served are Mr. Zhang Yesui, the then Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, Mr. Pan Shiyi, a Chinese property tycoon, and Yao Ming, to name just a few. As a chef, Michael said that what pleases him most is to see empty plates on the dining table and satiated smiles on guests' faces. “Sometimes I would take home the menu in a restaurant, secretly of course, if the dish really impressed me. So I would be more than delighted to see my menu gone with my guests,” he said.

Michael was promoted to butler after Max Baucus took over. In this position he is in charge of everyday life of the ambassador's family, though his mind is more focused on the kitchen. Although most of the ingredients are delivered by vendors to the doorway of the residence, he will sometimes go to the market himself and talk with the vendors in fluent Beijing dialect. 🇺🇸

厨神 大使家的

曾在中餐馆打工的美国人罗朗，可能从未想到有一天，会深入大使官邸的厨房，用亲手制作的美味佳肴，来款待政府官员和社会名流。

现年 33 岁的罗朗出生于美国的一个犹太家庭，从小便开始在家族的餐馆里帮工。一次偶然的机，罗朗到一家香港人开的餐馆打工。每天下班后老板会留员工吃晚饭，罗朗惊讶地发现，原来真正的中餐比餐牌上更加活色生香，于是他对中国这个遥远国度产生了浓厚兴趣。

高中毕业后，罗朗通过文化交流项目来到上海，自此生煎包子和糖醋小排有了一位新拥趸。随着他在北大汉语言文学系完成硕士课程，罗朗完全掌握了汉语这个交流工具，然而，这个国家微妙的人情世故和巨大的文化差异曾让罗朗一度萌生去意。2011 年，一场跨越整个中国西部的游历归来，罗朗在成都的一家四星级酒店当了总

厨。不久，他出色的厨艺引起了美国驻成都总领事馆方面的注意，并将他推荐给了时任美国驻中国大使骆家辉。骆家辉喜欢新鲜的蔬菜，这与罗朗的个人喜好不谋而合。罗朗招待过中国外交部副部长张业遂、中国经济界大腕潘石屹、姚明等政府官员和名人，而作为厨师，罗朗最高兴看到客人们满意的笑脸和被洗劫一空的餐具。

鲍卡斯大使接任后，罗朗晋升为管家，除了饮食，还要照顾大使一家的起居。不过他更关注的仍然是厨房里的事务。虽然大使馆需要的食材多数会有人送货上门，罗朗有时还是会亲自上街，顺便向菜市场里的大妈们展示一下自己倍儿溜的京片子。