

Mijune Pak takes a brief break from eating—and talking about eating, and writing about eating—at the Pan Pacific Hotel's Coal Harbour Bar, which boasts stunning views of the Vancouver Convention Centre, inner harbour and Stanley Park

Culinary Adventurer

Mijune Pak dishes on her life as a foodie **BY SHERI RADFORD**

PHOTO BY KK LAW. CLOTHING FROM BLUBIRD. HAIR AND MAKEUP BY ANITA LEE OF HELMET SALON. SHOT AT COAL HARBOUR BAR

"I've always had a big appetite," Mijune Pak says with a laugh. The vivacious Vancouverite doesn't look like someone who eats for a living. Her stylish outfits, always matched with sky-high heels, suggest a model, not a voracious eater who visited 597 restaurants in 2018. From the humble beginnings of her blog (followmefoodie.com), Pak has built a delicious career as a social media influencer, resident judge on *Top Chef Canada*, guest judge on *Iron Chef Canada*, and Global Food Correspondent for Travelzoo.

Foodie beginnings

I've always loved food. In 2009, my sister encouraged me to start the blog. I was reluctant. Then I got addicted, and I started writing every day. I didn't formally study. For the most part it was just curiosity for life, and a lot of research. My personality type is pretty excessive, so when I'm into something, I get fully into it. I would be up until five in the morning reading about an artichoke, or reading about the history of the stew I ate at an Indian restaurant.

The perils of eating for a living

At first, I could eat 5,000 calories in one day and then the next day just skip lunch and eat a normal dinner. I had a fast metabolism. But since I started blogging in 2009, I've probably gained 20 or 25 pounds.

Strangest meals

I've eaten so many weird things: sheep's penis, water beetles, bee cocoons, silkworm poo, scorpion, mealworms, tarantula. The spiders taste like hairy fries. You can feel the hairs on their legs touch your lips.

Favourite restaurants

Botanist, Tetsu Sushi Bar, St. Lawrence, Hoitong Chinese Seafood, Burdock & Co., Boulevard, HK BBQ Master, AnnaLena, The Pear Tree, Cioppino's, Maenam.

Favourite places for dessert

Chez Christophe, Thomas Haas, Beta5, La Glace, My Frosty.

Favourite brunch spots

Burdock & Co., Café Medina, L'Abattoir.

Best rooms with a view

Ancora, Five Sails.

Personal style

Elegant, sophisticated, classy, but I like big statement pieces. I like glam. I like colour.

Shoes

I have 80 to 100 pairs. I'm such a collector.

Favourite stores for clothing and accessories

Nordstrom, Blubird, Middle Sister, Fine Finds, Maska, Couturist, Zara.

Career

I never feel confident saying I'm an expert, because who's ever an expert? I tell stories, and I'm a culinary adventurer.

The future

It would be great to have a platform where I can travel, and showcase more of the world for people, and learn about food and talk to people about it, while meeting other people who can educate me about it. **E**