



## DELICIOUS DINING & AUTHENTIC REGIONAL DISHES WITH AMAWATERWAYS PROFESSIONAL CULINARY TEAM

| BY TRACY ELLEN BEARD

Traveling opens your eyes to experience new and exciting things. My favorite way to get immersed in a new culture is by meeting locals and dining on the local fare. Each river cruise with AmaWaterways features traditional local dishes alongside their delicious standard chef-selected cuisine.

On a recent AmaWaterways Danube River Cruise, my husband and I tasted a delicious selection of wines and food. We enjoyed trying the regional wines and dishes from Germany, Austria, Slovakia, and Hungary. Some of my favorites were: Crêpe Suzette with a delicious orange-Cointreau caramel sauce, the Selbach 2021 Riesling from Mosel, and the Knödel from Austria (a traditional bread dumpling) served with a creamy wild forest mushroom sauce accompanied by cheese and broccoli. The Knödel was the quintessential comfort food for a cold rainy day!

### The Culinary Team at AmaWaterways

Robert Kellerhall, the Culinary Director and Corporate Executive Chef at AmaWaterways, works diligently to provide mouth-watering cuisine highlighting authentic regional offerings on all AmaWaterways cruises.

Robert routinely brainstorms with Co-Founder/President Rudi Schreiner, born in Vienna, and Co-Founder Kristin Karst, born in Germany, to improve and tweak the menus each January. Their collaborations include reviewing customer comments to adjust and enhance the culinary program.

AmaWaterways benefits from a “hierarchy” of chefs. Robert Kellerhall and the Co-Founders set the majority of the menu. Jozsef Kovacs, one of four AmaWaterways Corporate Chefs, shares responsibility for ensuring the quality and consistency of all cuisine served on board AmaWaterways ships. When not sporting his chef whites on board the ships, Jozsef enjoys fishing, traveling, and reading. The Executive Chefs and Chefs Table Chef aboard each boat manage their vessel’s day-to-day operations.

During my cruise, I interviewed Corporate Chef Jozsef Kovacs and learned more about how fresh, local ingredients are celebrated through the AmaWaterways culinary program.

**How and why did you choose the culinary industry?**



When I was 13 or 14 and living in Hungary, I had to choose what I wanted to be. So, I went to work in the kitchen at a hotel. I loved it. The culinary industry is full of flavor and is just bursting with opportunities. It is interesting, diverse, and exciting. Then I went to culinary school in Hungary and learned all aspects of the industry.

**Which part of the job, management or hands-on cooking, do you like best?**

It is all the same. There are good things and bad things about both. It is good that I learned how to make everything from sauces to pastries because sometimes I have to jump in and cook wherever needed.

**Do you have a signature dish or drink?**

Our signature with the cruise line is fresh and homemade products. The Chef's Table tasting menu is a signature of AmaWaterways. We change the components of the menu every year so our returning guests can experience something new and surprising. Our guests talk a lot about how much they love our homemade soups, and we share many recipes with guests. However, our potato wedges are also a favorite; that recipe is a secret, so we do not share it.

**How would you describe your most triumphant moment or day?**

Our staff feels successful when we see our guest's appreciation and enjoyment of our culinary creations.

**What is the hardest part of your job?**

The hardest part and most responsible is to cater to the multiple palates of our international clients and the different food intolerances or allergies.

**What do you want people to say about the food on your ship?**

We hope guests remark on the freshness of all the ingredients that go into our dishes. The food is an essential part of how our guests experience a destination, and we are very proud of the local dishes we prepare to give guests an authentic taste of the countries or regions they visit.

**What do you think the dining staff at AmaWaterways does best for customer service?**

AmaWaterways is the only river cruise line with an onboard bakery, all our products are fresh and homemade, and we listen to our guest's feedback and adapt to their expectations. "Above and beyond their expectations" is the AmaWaterways credo.

Our dining staff's personal approach and attention to detail are so important, and they notice small details like how our guests prefer their coffee in the morning or if they have a favorite wine that they prefer at dinner. The dining staff is also very attentive to allergies and food preferences, and they coordinate closely with the kitchen team.

After the cruise, I had the opportunity to speak with Brenda Kylo, Vice-president of Strategic Alliances. She had a few additional things to say about the overall culinary program at AmaWaterways. "Everything served on our cruises is fresh, and there is only one small freezer on each vessel, reserved for ice cream. Executive chefs follow the corporate recipes but are encouraged to be creative during lunch and change up the appetizer or amuse-bouche each day with their own recipes. The local chefs also choose their favorite regional wines to pair with the food."

AmaWaterways is also a proud inductee of the prestigious La Chaîne des Rôtisseurs—an exclusive international culinary society. Membership is by invitation only and is extended to those with world-class culinary acumen.

The culinary team at AmaWaterways does a fabulous job serving thousands of people each year. The items on the menu are varied and tasty, and the regional dishes provide a memorable experience that celebrates each travel destination. ❖

