

IN THE KITCHEN WITH SAMANTHA HARRIS

september 28,
2013



The Zoëy team had the opportunity to meet Samantha Harris at her beautiful home, and watch she and her two daughters (Josselyn, 4, and Hillary, 2 1/2) blend a delicious smoothie. We also got to talk to her about her career (hosting “Entertainment Tonight” and even “Dancing with the Stars”), as well as her very healthy lifestyle!

So, you’ve hosted a multitude of different programs, including some of my favorites, “Dancing with the Stars” and “Entertainment Tonight”! Tell us what you enjoy most about your line of work and why?

Every day is a different adventure! I love meeting new people, challenging myself to elicit more out of the stars I interview, getting to see the world while shooting on location, and working with some of the best in the business.

You make interviews with celebrities look so effortless and fun! Do you have a “most memorable” interview you can share with us, be it funny, awkward or otherwise?

One of the most thrilling was having Tom Cruise zoom off with me on the back of his Ducati motorcycle, clinging to him as we sped through the streets of Seville, Spain! It wasn’t planned and those moments always make for the best interviews and shoots!

With a degree in journalism from the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University, what drew you towards entertainment news?

Entertainment is in my blood! I grew up backstage at rock concerts, since my dad was the main concert promoter in the Twin Cities. Additionally, during the summers I was able to frolic through a 16th century festival playing dress-up with a king, a queen, gypsy dancers, knights jousting on horseback and more because my parents created and ran one of the country’s first renaissance faires. To this day, my mom and sister own and operate King Richard’s Faire near Boston, MA. It’s a blast being able to bring my own girls there now and see all the magic and amazement through their eyes.

You also have two beautiful young girls. What has it been like raising a family and also focusing on your career? Is it difficult to find a balance?



You also have two beautiful young girls. What has it been like raising a family and also focusing on your career? Is it difficult to find a balance?

Balance is always a challenge for any working mom. If your career is thriving and busy, you feel the heartache of missing out on the nuances of the daily activities, playdates, drop-offs and dance classes. If you give up a hard-earned career to stay

at home, you wonder what could have been.

I feel very lucky to have found a rather happy balance, with some anguish mixed in. Thankfully, my husband is very hands on and an incredible dad. He and I always work as a team, with others pitching in to make it all come together when work is at its busiest. We aim to have breakfast and dinner together as a family daily - so when a day or two each week or so fall short of that, no one is too disappointed because it all comes back together in rhythm again by the next day.

I've noticed on your Twitter that you enjoy doing arts and crafts with the girls! What are some of your favorite activities to do as a family?

Art projects are a big hit over here! We do everything from painting, drawing and playdough to beaded bracelets, baking, and sand castles. It's fun to get an 8-foot-long piece of sheet paper, lay it out and put out all the art supplies around it so the girls and their friends can create a humongous masterpiece.

I also saw on your Twitter feed, and rather enjoyed, all of the #FitTip's you have for your followers. We love that you have a connection with fans that really promotes a healthy body lifestyle. Have you always been very health conscious? If so, what got you started?

I think I was aware of being active at a young age because my mom was in a dance company for a few years. As I began to live on my own after college, I realized that I needed to find ways to keep in shape - I didn't have a teenager's metabolism any more! That led me to seek a more healthy way of eating. Slowly I changed my habits (no butter, egg whites only, whole grain breads, more chicken and fish, lots of fresh whole fruits and veggies!). It took time, but eventually, it became a way of life. As a mom, I immediately wanted to give my girls the best chance to have good health. So it began with breast feeding, then introducing lots of fruits, veggies (which they still don't eat much of, like most kids!), whole grains, and so on. I feel lucky that my husband and I are able to provide nutritious food for them. After having my first child, I learned that 1 in 5 American children struggle with hunger. I then became actively involved in Feeding America (www.feedingamerica.org) because of this. I hope more people will donate food, money or their time to help end hunger in America. Just \$1 provides 8 meals.

Tell us what you enjoy most about cooking for your family?

It's fun when we cook as a family. Everyone pitches in, even our 2-year-old! It's together time. I try to teach our girls by example. I love making healthy meals that have flavor and great nutrients so my kids will develop well, cognitively and physically, as well as energize and keep my husband and I in the best possible health so we can thrive as a family. I lost my dad when he was just 50. It broke my heart (and my mom's and sister's). I want to be certain we are here to see our great-grandkids, if possible!

We're so sorry to hear!

Well, you did make such a delicious smoothie for us at the photo shoot! What is the best advice you can give for someone who wishes to start living a healthier lifestyle?

Take baby steps. Don't overwhelm yourself. It can be done, just add one change every few weeks. For example, Week 1: NO FRIED foods. (Later you can add back the occasional side of sweet potato fries, like I do). Week 2: Help yourself to more fresh fruit with each meal. Week 6: Change from eggs with yolk to no yolk. Add more fish and white meat poultry into your meal plan. Week 10: Limit red meat to only 1x per week and only the leanest cut. And so on! You'll get it! Before you know it, healthy eating will be just another automatic thing you do like brushing your teeth.

