



We chat to
Benike, the
founder of
**I Love
Foodies.**
One of my
favourite
Cape Town
food blogs...

taste

How did I Love Foodies come about and what is the basic premise?

I Love Foodies originally started out as a mere platform for me to combine two things I really like doing – writing and eating. I mostly did this for myself, to find my voice and my own unique and more colloquial writing style, after years of academia. But I Love Foodies, as it now exists, is the project of a broken heart – as so many creative endeavours seem to be!

Its basic premise is to combine three elements of the restaurant world – finding a good restaurant, finding good specials, and reading up on reviews and launches – on one platform in a neatly organised way.

How has it grown from conception?

I had originally planned the restaurant directory and the specials listing to be the main focus of the site, with the reviews as an addition to that. But turns out it's the reviews side that has really taken off in ways I could never have imagined. I've been absolutely overwhelmed – and so tremendously blessed – with the response and interaction I've received from both the restaurants and the diners. The site has expanded in ways I never thought possible!

Tell me a bit more about the team - including each member's guilty food pleasure.

It's been very much a one-woman show for a long time, but I've managed to build up a lovely group of contributors over the last few months, who help me out by attending events, doing reviews, writing up features, and really just offering their time and support to listen to my gazillion ideas and contributing great ones to the mix!

There's my sister, Sabine, who has been an absolute gem in my I Love Foodies journey. Like

taste

me, she's also an actress and a model, but has always given me her continual support and has unwillingly been catapulted into the foodie world! I couldn't do any of this without her by my side. Guilty food pleasure: Homemade low carb chocolate and whiskey cookies!

Then there's my good friend Drue, who, with her nutrition background, has the most amazing insights into the world of healthy living – plus she's a genius in the kitchen! She's also incredibly marketing-oriented and business savvy, so it's great to be inspired by her drive! Guilty food pleasure: Nachos or anything chocolate!

Finally, there's Marieke, the master photographer! Marieke contributes regularly to the site and brings her own unique writing style to it, which is so great to have. And, of course, she's snazzy with her camera, which is always fantastic! Guilty food pleasure: The Creamery in Sea Point, especially as a treat during Sunday strolls along the promenade!

And then, of course, there's me. I write, edit, photograph, attend events and reviews, and do all the boring behind-the-scenes stuff. But I'm also a full-time actress and a model, so sometimes juggling those all can be hard – but so rewarding! And my guilty food pleasure? Hmm. Marzipan. I love marzipan.

You do a lot of collaborations - are you working with anyone at the moment? and how can others get involved?

I love collaborating with other influencers – writers, foodies, bloggers, photographers! I think it's a beautiful thing when we can all help each other grow and achieve our dreams, so that's definitely something I'll always continue doing. I now have this amazing platform, and it's so perfectly designed to share the love!

I'm not collaborating with anyone specific at the



moment, but the team I probably work with the most is InstaEats Cape Town. They've played such a huge part in my journey over the last year!

As to how others can get involved – just pop me an e-mail! I'm always happy to feature articles and recipes by talented individuals and keen to hear ideas. The one requirement is that I only do original content for features, so if that's your thing I'm more than happy to chat.

Your top three breakfast spots.

Hmm, keeping it city-based I'd say the Company's Garden Restaurant coz I love the setting, Bootleggers in Sea Point coz it's a great spot to work and eat, and Tashas at the Waterfront coz it's just so pretty!

Your top three lunch spots.

I'm out and about a lot so I'll probably choose something quick and easy. So I'd say Yours Truly for a great sandwich, Culture Club Cheese for soup or pork belly (yum), and Slug and Lettuce on Kloof Street for their out-of-this-world Banting-friendly mushroom burger!

Your top three dinner spots.

I love dinners! My favourites here will change according to occasion and you'll often find me at a little sushi spot in Sea Point, but for a more chic vibe I'd say NV-80 for the best steak, Mezepoli for their delicious tapas, and Mondial coz I just really like them!

If the I Love Foodies team could be found at any cafe, where would it be and what would you be having?

Village Idiot! Ok, so not really your café vibe, but this is definitely my go-to spot for anything foodie or fun related. And if you're not there on

a Friday or Saturday night it's actually a pretty chilled spot. I'd generally try to go there for their Tuesday evening special or their Sunday lunch-time events so we'd be having what's on offer there, but at any other time it'd probably be one of their meaty dishes (they do meat really well). We all have a healthy appetite!

Where can we follow I Love Foodies?

Everywhere (heehee)! We try to post different things on all social media, so Twitter is very focused on promoting specials and live event tweeting, Instagram focuses on everything that looks amazing but we're super picky so not everything will go up there, and Facebook is a little bit the best of all, though mostly focusing on reviews and events. But probably the best way to not miss a thing is by signing up to our mailing list. We send out a weekly newsletter so you'll get all the latest events, reviews, and recipes straight in your inbox.

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