Pasta with Lemongrass Coconut Sake Cream Sauce

As a home cook, I can honestly say it is easy to get into a cooking rut. One can only eat so much baked chicken and meatloaf. When this happens-I explore! Yep, I head to a new market to see what is out there that is new and exciting. To me it is kind of like a day trip away from home that doesn’t require getting a baby sitter for the kids! It is a great way to explore faraway lands and try new exotic cuisine.

Last year I did just that. I visited my local oriental and import store. I had so much fun looking at new ingredients with a positive and creative attitude, just knowing my new favorite ingredient was out there. Ok, so I found some awesome new gourmet delights, and some that were…..let’s just say I will not buy them again! I was very thankful to the lady who warned me to peel lotus before cooking. She explained that if you don’t, your throat would swell up and it would be hard to breathe. Good to know-glad I asked! Ok, so sometimes food adventures can be dangerous, but for the most part it is eye opening. Whether you visit a Mexican, Asian or European market, it makes you realize how many undiscovered tastes there are out there, waiting for you to try!

Last year I was inspired by the Asian market for my seafood infused dish for The World Food Championships. I thought it would be creative and unique to create a Thai inspired dish, not an expected Italian recipe. After all, most cultures have a type of pasta in their cuisine, especially Asian cultures. I found an outstanding coconut lemongrass sake and inspiring Thai ingredients that begun the whole creative process of crafting a prize winning pasta dish.

I must admit, the actual recipe I used for the competition was quite laborious and time consuming. It was not only my pasta, but the sauce that won the judges over. I went straight to the point and shortened the recipe so that you don’t have to spend hours in the kitchen. Yes, this recipe will require a trip to the local Asian market. But come on…isn’t it time you left your comfort zone and had a little adventure?