

# MEET THE CHEF

## ZAKHELE BHENGU

Head Chef at Ponta, Mall of Africa

**H**eading up the kitchen at Portuguese themed Ponta restaurant in Mall of Africa is Chef Zakhele Bhengu, our candidate for this month's Meet the Chef profile. Chef Zakhele brings Mozambiquan flair to Ponta's menu, ensuring that patrons enjoy delicious and generously portioned food while also having a rip-roaring good time.

**Q: What is the restaurant and cuisine?**

**A:** Ponta Mall of Africa, serving Portuguese-inspired cuisine.

**Q: When did you decide to become a chef?**

**A:** At the age of 18, after moving from KZN to Johannesburg.

**Q: Did you study?**

**A:** No, I'm a natural.



**Q: Do you have any accolades?**

**A:** I completed a masterclass in the rolling of pizza dough and handmade pasta.

**Q: What is your cooking style?**

**A:** I wouldn't say I have a specific cooking style, but rustic Portuguese and Italian dishes are my go-to.

**Q: What is your inspiration for new recipes/dishes?**

**A:** I enjoy cooking and developing seasonal recipes, refreshing dishes in summer and more hearty, spicy dishes during the cooler months.

**Q: What is your favourite dish to prepare on your current menu and why?**

**A:** I enjoy preparing the Rump and Prawn Combo because of the unique flavours of the Peri-Peri sauce.

**Q: What is your favourite home-cooked meal?**

**A:** Oxtail for sure.

**Q: In your opinion, what is the most underrated ingredient and why?**

**A:** Lemon, be it the zest or juice. It creates depth and enhances the flavour of almost any dish.

**Q: If you could cook with only three ingredients, what would they be?**

**A:** Chicken, cream and garlic.

**Q. What are the kitchen tools you cannot function without?**

**A:** A proper pan and good knives.



*The Rump and Prawn Combo with its unique Peri-Peri sauce flavours is Chef Zakhele's favourite dish to prepare on the Ponta menu.*



# Meet The Chef Series



**Q: If money were no object, what kitchen appliances would you invest in?**

**A:** It would 100% be a self-cleaning UNOX oven.

**Q: Who is your chef idol? Why?**

**A:** Jenny Morris, by far! I love her approach to cooking, the way she mentors and the fact that she is a great businesswoman.

**Q: If you could prepare a meal for one celebrity, who would it be, and what would you serve?**

**A:** I would love to prepare a Ponta Flattie with our signature homemade Peri-Peri sauce for soccer player Ronwen Williams.

**Q: What do you think of cooking shows? Do you have a favourite?**

**A:** I love cooking shows. They are full of inspiration and ideas, and it's interesting to watch how innovative and creative people can be under pressure and with limited ingredients.

**Q: What is your favourite South African dish to eat?**

**A:** There is nothing quite like boerewors with pap and spicy chakalaka.

**Q: What will we always find in your fridge?**

**A:** Fresh vegetables and of course, butter.

**Q: If you could choose your last meal, what would it be?**

**A:** I would want to indulge in Ponta's beer-battered Hake and Chips.

**Q: What fast food is your secret indulgence?**

**A:** Pizza.

**Q: Pro or anti air fryers?**

**A:** 100% pro. I love the idea of experimenting with new ways of cooking.

**Q: If you weren't a chef, what would you be?**

**A:** I cannot imagine myself as anything other than a chef.

**Q: Any advice you would like to share with budding chefs?**

**A:** Always stay true to your style, get out of your comfort zone, and don't be afraid to mix and play around with ingredients.



*Chef Zakhele would like to make the Ponta Flattie with his signature homemade Peri-Peri sauce for soccer player Ronwen Williams.*

Come and indulge in Mozambique-style Portuguese cuisine at Ponta, Mall of Africa.

011 568 9264

# Ponta

portuguese inspired food