

● MY FAVORITE THINGS

Kitchen Confidential

CHEF LALA DISHES OUT SOME OF HER BEST-KEPT DOMESTIC SECRETS. BY SHERA DALIN

PROFESSION

Cordon Bleu-trained chef

AGE

37

ROOTS

Los Angeles

WHY WE LOVE HER

Her new book, Best-Loved Mexican Cooking, is out this month



Numi Dancing Leaves Flowering Teapot

LaLa can't live without these flowering teas that blossom in a glass Numi teapot. Low-cal and *delicioso*. \$27, worldpantry.com

Villa Manodori Balsamic Vinegar

"This is my new thing," she says. "It isn't all runny, so it's good when I want to decorate a plate for presentation. With bread, it's like a meal." \$44, williams-sonoma.com



Metromint Multi Sampler Pack

LaLa lines up eight water bottles on her desk daily and aims to drink them all. Sometimes she adds cucumbers for a spa feel. "I try to treat myself special." \$10, metromint.com



Whole Foods Organic Unsweetened Dried Mango

"I have a bad sweet tooth, but sugarless sweets actually turn on your desire for more. I do fruit instead." She shares dried mango with her 2-year-old son, Maddox. About \$9, wholefoodsmarket.com



AeroGarden Garden System and Herb Kit

Homegrown basil, oregano, cilantro, rosemary and thyme inspire LaLa's culinary creativity—plus, they're amazingly easy to grow. \$150, target.com



Farberware Millennium 12-inch Nonstick Skillet

"It doesn't require oil, so you'll save calories," she says of this pan, which is also sturdy and has a heat-proof handle. \$40, target.com



J.A. Henckels Twin Pro "S" 8-inch Carving Knife

"You can cut yourself more with a dull knife than with a very sharp one," LaLa says. She prefers 8- and 10-inch blades. \$70, cutleryandmore.com

PHOTOGRAPHS: CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY OF CHEF LALA; COURTESY OF AEROGARDEN INTERNATIONAL INC.; COURTESY OF FARBERWARE; COURTESY OF METROMINT (3); COURTESY OF ZWILLING J.A. HENCKELS; ANTHONY VERDE (2); ROBERT CARDELLINO.