ALICIA KEYS

singer, songwriter, philanthropist

The 11-time Grammy winner released her new album, *As I Am*, this year and will be acting in the upcoming film adaptation of *The Secret Life of Bees*. Keys is also cofounder of Keep a Child Alive, a nonprofit organization that provides medicine to HIV and AIDS patients in Africa.

On tour or at home in New York, the songstress likes to eat healthy and hearty.

What do you eat when you're on tour or traveling?
Since I don't eat meat, I do a lot of fish and veggies. I love brown rice and sweet potatoes. A lot of fruit and tea and tons of water keep my body and voice hydrated. When I need a little sugar rush, I like a couple of Starbursts.

Of all the places you've traveled, where is your favorite place to eat?
I have to say, Italy has the best food! It's like heaven on earth. I don't know how people who live there don't have to roll themselves down the street!

What would people be surprised to find in your kitchen?
Nothing surprising in the kitchen—pots, pans, dishes, a blender, a toaster, and tons of spices. I do have an out-of-control junk drawer, but I assume everyone has one.

What's your favorite restaurant, and what do you order there?
One of my favorites in New York is Puttanesca. I absolutely go crazy for the baked Branzino Marechiaro that they cover with sea salt and put in the wood-burning oven. They bring it to the table, fillet it right in front of you, and drizzle olive oil and lemon on top. Oh, my goodness! It's so pure and fresh. A side of garlic spinach, and some sliced strawberries and tea to end, and I've had an extremely fulfilling dinner.

Are there foods that always remind you of home?
Things that I can get only in New York, like veggie patties and coco bread, or pretzels and roasted nuts on the street.

What do you make at home?
Sautéed swordfish with sun-dried tomatoes, onions, garlic, peppers, and brown rice. Delicious!

What are your comfort foods?
When I need to feel warm and cozy, Cream of Wheat or macaroni and cheese.

What's the most unusual thing you've ever eaten?
At one place I've been, they have these lettuce wraps. The first time I went there, they were recommended. They gave me the fresh lettuce that you put the filling in and cover it with a plum sauce. I thought the filling was vegetables. Come to find out it was pigeon. I'm not comfortable eating pigeon. I grew up with them in New York...they don't look good.

~INTERVIEW BY BEKAH WRIGHT

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