

## Jessica Benjamin Bio

For nearly two decades, First Bite Producer Jessica Benjamin has committed her time and energy to connecting her community to local food. From marketing one of Boulder's most prominent restaurants, The Kitchen American Bistro, to producing events with restaurants across Boulder County, to now taking one of Colorado's most popular food events to the next level, Jessica is an important part of the fabric of the Boulder County restaurant scene.

After growing up in Colorado and receiving her degree from the University of Colorado, Jessica worked her way from hostess to managing the marketing for The Kitchen, where she coordinated their events. She then shifted to director of operations for Access Marketing & Events, producing large-scale corporate events, including global conferences and trade shows, where she secured and managed sponsorships from more than 300 businesses every year.

In 2010, Jessica founded [1517 Events](#), where she crafts world-class events to serve Boulder County. She has since designed and executed dozens of events in Boulder with established partners, including Jax Fish House, The Kitchen, The Post Brewing Co., Corrida, Avery Brewing Co., Snooze an A.M. Eatery, and many others. Jessica brings a fresh perspective and unflagging passion to every event, whether it's a private VIP special event at the Fiske Planetarium, a nonprofit fundraiser raising tens of thousands of dollars, or a farm-to-table dinner for 60 guests.

Throughout her time in Boulder, Jessica has worked tirelessly for area nonprofits, businesses, restaurants, University of Colorado, and her husband's campaign for city council in 2017. After experiencing Boulder's growth and evolution for more than 14 years, Jessica invested even more into her community by purchasing First Bite: Boulder County Restaurant Week in March 2019.

With an intrinsic desire to deepen the connection between her community and the Boulder County food industry, extensive knowledge of the Boulder restaurant scene, invaluable long-term partnerships with area eateries, and an undeniable entrepreneurial spirit, Jessica is securing a mix of never-before-featured restaurants and old favorites for this year's event. In her first year alone, she'll be introducing strategic changes, such as a nonprofit program and two different prix fixe menu levels, to become even more inclusive to its restaurant participants and diners, as well as a stronger community partner. Jessica is driven to build and connect First Bite's guests to the Boulder County restaurant and food scene all year long.

In her free time, Jessica enjoys all Boulder has to offer with her husband and two small children. On the weekends, they often enjoy gardening, traveling, cooking and exploring Colorado's outdoor wonders. She has also volunteered at Garden to Table (Growe Foundation), both as a board member for four years, and as a volunteer for more than a decade, to support their efforts to improve nutrition at school, and enrich education experiences through school gardens and curriculum.