



Derrell Smith is a retired NFL player, executive producer, television host and Creator and CEO of 99EATS, LLC — A virtual culinary brand with a mission to spread Love through food, content and experiences.

After earning Delaware Gatorade Player of the Year honors in 2006, Smith accepted a full athletic scholarship to Syracuse University, excelling both on and off the football field. Derrell was a three-year starting linebacker, two-time All Big East performer, team MVP and captain, and ranks second all-time for forced fumbles in Syracuse history. In the classroom, Derrell graduated with Cum Laude honors, earning dual degrees in Information Management and Marketing, as well as a Masters in Advertising from the Newhouse School of Public Communications. In 2010, he went undrafted to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, and was picked up midseason by the Houston Texans. In his second season, Smith earned the starting fullback position until a neck injury, suffered in practice, ended his career. The following day, Smith returned to Syracuse and enrolled back into his Masters program. This would be a decision that would change his life forever.

One evening after a long day of school, Smith decided to make spaghetti and meatballs using ingredients from his fridge and cabinets. The sauce was so good, he immediately called his best friend over to his apartment, and during dinner told him “I’m gonna sell this one day!” And that is exactly what he did.

Fast forward to 2016. By now Rell had perfected the meatball recipe to match the sauce.

Living in Washington Heights New York City, and working as a producer at an advertising firm, Derrell would bribe his team to stay later by bringing meatballs into the office.

One day Rell's boss suggested he enter a meatball competition in Brooklyn, and he decided to give it a shot calling his entry "Meatballs in OG Sauce". He went on to win the competition and began to think "If these people like it, so will others!" Coincidentally, in 2016, America had also endured the killing of 258 Black people at the hands of police, and Derrell was tired of not doing anything about it.

Inspired by a delicious product, a burning social responsibility, and the intro to "Fight the Power by Public Enemy", Smith figured "If all I'm seeing in the world is hate, I'm going to use what I have to spread a little bit of Love." It just so happened he had some award winning, delicious ass meatballs and OG Sauce to share.

While still working his full-time corporate job, Smith would go on to create 99EATS, LLC in November of 2016, coining it "a virtual, food pop-up, that he could activate and take away at anytime and anywhere", like opening and closing a folder on a computer. In this same vein, the company's name 99EATS would also be inspired by limitation and rarity. In the video game NBA Live '99, in place of Michael Jordan, who denied rights to the game to use his likeness, Chicago Bulls Player #99 was the best player in the game that you could not have. Rell set out to create the best food [in the game] you cannot have. He modeled the logo after his grandmothers, and the women in his family, so that every time someone experiences the brand, or eats his food they leave feeling as if they just left their grandmother's table. That transcendent feeling is what he calls "AMAZEBALLS". Whenever you eat his food, or experience the 99EATS brand, the feeling you leave with can only be described as AMAZEBALLS.

Shortly after starting the company, Rell was let go from his job in April of 2017, and forced to make a decision. Search for another corporate job, or invest 100% of his time, Love and resources into himself and his business. He chose the latter.

Since starting the company in his small Washington Heights bedroom in 2016, 99EATS has catered hundreds of corporate offices and served thousands of meatballs all over and around New York City and northern New Jersey. Additionally, "AMAZEBALLS" has had stands in Smorgasburg and Barclays Center and has even served the real Elmo a meatball hoagie at Sesame Place.

When the pandemic hit, Rell was forced to shut down catering, and tucked grandma back into her folder. Luckily, early in 2017, Smith was hired as the resident chef at Bed Bath Beyond's studio kitchen in Industry City, Brooklyn. Here, he would practice cooking on film in front of a packed live audience and serving the guests what he had made after his performance. So, in mid-2020, Rell started to shift his energy towards television and TV production.

In November of 2020, Derrell moved to Los Angeles with no plan, but ambitions to host his own food television show. By April 2021 this would become reality, when season 1 of Mad Good Food aired on Tastemade. Season 3 premieres June 2022 and Smith is the host and executive producer of the show. To date, Rell has hosted or worked with brands such as Tastemade, Netflix, NBCUniversal, Disney, Amazon, Sesame Place, Subway, and Bed Bath and Beyond, amongst others.

Derrell sits on the young advisory council for the Martin J. Whitman Business School at Syracuse University. He advises the SU athletic department on alumni relations, is an active member of the NFLPA alumni association and member of Omega Psi Phi fraternity inc. Derrell is the eldest of seven siblings, and was born and raised in Philadelphia, PA before attending high school in Delaware. He currently resides between Los Angeles and New York City.