



SpearWrites - Recent Work
2025

PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS
OFFER CULINARY TRAINING AS EARLY AS
HIGH SCHOOL — AND OFFER PROFESSIONAL
CHEFS A GROWING TALENT POOL FOR
RECRUITMENT // BY JEFFREY SPEAR**

While culinary programs were once the sole domain of universities, there are programs being offered in high schools as well as community colleges, many led by certified professional chefs, that give students a well-rounded foundation in the culinary arts and an indisputable advantage upon commencement. Whether graduates go straight into the workforce or pursue post-secondary education, they have skills, certifications and experiences that far outweigh those of candidates walking in from the street.

At the high school level, ACF contributes to high school curriculums, providing industry-approved access to knowledge, skills competencies and widely recognized certifications. Then, there are a handful of other educational

organizations offering culinary instruction and training at younger ages.

Two such programs are ProStart, a two-year, industry-backed culinary arts and restaurant management program produced by the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation, and SkillsUSA, a workforce development organization that empowers students to become skilled professionals, career-ready leaders and responsible community members.

In some communities, there are a large number of underserved as well as vulnerable school-aged individuals that face overwhelming barriers to employment. To help them minimize these hurdles, organizations such as C-CAP (ccapinc.org) and Catalyst Kitchens (catalystkitchens.org),





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- ACF Chef Pamela Bedford, CCE

both with a focus on foodservice and hospitality industries, provide positive interventions in terms of guidance, training and essential life skills that lead to better job opportunities and a brighter future.

REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCES

No matter which program is selected, students get a holistic look at the industry and what it takes to

become an active participant. They are introduced to a wide variety of culinary practices and restaurant management principles, get hands-on experiences and obtain the skills needed to become a successful industry leader. They also have an opportunity to earn CFC (Certified Fundamentals Cook) and CFPC (Certified Fundamentals Pastry Cook) ACF certificates, all recognized industry-wide as essential credentials for foodservice careers.

Through these programs, high schoolers acquire an impressive array of skills and experiences that are undeniably attractive to prospective employers. “Our program is more than just kitchens and cooking,” says **ACF Chef Pamela Bedford, CCE** (left), director of culinary arts at Eastside High School in Gainesville, Fla. “Our students are exposed to the full spectrum of culinary opportunities. They hear about life events that could influence how and where they work, learn about alternative career paths in hospitality, management and event planning and get all the skills they’ll need to get a job.”

Along with traditional culinary curricula, some schools provide real-world experience through internships and shadow programs supported by restaurateurs, chefs, vendors and other professionals in the culinary community.

At the Lebanon County Career and Technology Center in Lebanon, Pa., **ACF chefs/instructors Brian Peffley, CEPC, CCE, AAC** (opposite top), and **Robert Corle Jr., CEC, CCE**, run a broad scope culinary program that is nationally recognized and accredited by the ACF. At the same time, they operate a fully licensed, 60-seat, in-house restaurant as part of their curriculum. In this environment, students obtain real-world experiences that relate to every aspect of restaurant operation. “We push an idea we call PAW, an acronym that stands for



“We push an idea we call PAW, an acronym that stands for professionalism, attitude and work ethic. In this regard, when our students enter the workplace, we will have minimized culture shock and prepared them for success.”

- ACF Chef/Instructor Brian Peffley, CEPC, CCE, AAC

There are many dedicated chefs, restaurateurs, vendors and other related industry professionals who are more than willing to share their time and expertise with both teachers and students, ensuring real-world experiences and a heightened understanding of the scope of career opportunities across a broad spectrum of foodservice and hospitality industries. These individuals bring specialized learning experiences to the classroom as guest lecturers, organize visits to their workplace, arrange internships, act as mentors, participate on advisory committees, function as judges at culinary competitions and offer scholarships, all contributing to a larger number of better qualified and enthusiastic professionals entering the workforce.

ACF Chef Bryan Bernstein (left), merchandising manager and corporate chef at Saval Foodservice in Baltimore, says, “I feel it’s important for high schoolers pursuing a career in foodservice to know what they’re getting into and to have a real understanding about what it means to work in this industry. I didn’t have these sorts of opportunities when I was in school. As such, I’m active with the Maryland



professionalism, attitude and work ethic,” says Chef Peffley. “In this regard, when our students enter the workplace, we will have minimized culture shock and prepared them for success.”

MENTORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

It’s important to note that while students have access to a variety of programs that improve their culinary and life skills and provide improved access to career opportunities, the education they receive comes from more than just their instructors working under the schoolhouse roof.



Restaurant Association Education Foundation and ProStart. I've recognized that the students I support today could very well be our clients tomorrow."

COMPETITION PREP

Beyond the trainings conducted in classrooms and kitchens, competitions — held on a local, statewide, national and global basis — have become highly sought after by students, thanks in part to the popularity of food challenges that appear regularly on television. Supported by a wide range of industry professionals who volunteer their time as judges, mentors and coaches, these events offer opportunities for students to showcase their proficiencies and impress industry representatives as well as connect with ACF members for mentorship and career growth. Some even offer cash awards and high value scholarships aligned with prestigious post-secondary institutions.

According to **ACF Chef Greg Beachey, CCC, HAAC** (above), chair, SkillsUSA National Technical Committee, Culinary Arts, "Competitions have become the ultimate destination for highly motivated students, creating a pressurized

environment that forces them to test their fundamental techniques and prove they can cook," he says. "Knowing that a wide variety of industry professionals are judging their every move, competitors understand that how well they perform could open doors for highly sought-after apprenticeships and well-paying jobs. When students put themselves out there, demonstrate that they want to be the best, these folks take note."

Without a doubt, the individuals who have taken the time to prepare for these highly pressurized competitions, whether local, national or even global, are the next generation of exceptional culinary talents and the ones who can provide real value in the workplace.

Professional chefs looking to expand their workforce might want to consider tapping into these competitions, volunteering their time and expertise as a mentor, coach or judge, or connecting with ACF competition hosts and committee members to recruit these well-trained up-and-coming chefs. There are ACF-sanctioned competitions offered year-round, as well as the regional qualifier competitions held in the spring and the national competitions at the ACF National Convention in July.



NEXT-GEN RECRUITING

For seasoned chefs working in the field, especially those looking to hire well-trained entry-level individuals, taking the time to understand the benefits these organizations bring to the industry, the culinary talents they nurture and even finding ways to support these programs, makes sense.

Of course, the benefit from their participation goes beyond doing good deeds and philanthropy. For many of these highly supportive industry representatives, they get to interact with exceptionally well-trained students, many viewed as ideal candidates for employment in their own organizations. In addition, exposing emerging professionals to essential products and services at the beginning of their culinary careers helps build brand awareness and valuable relationships that could translate into meaningful sales further down the road.

“There are many benefits to getting involved with organizations like ProStart, C-CAP, SkillsUSA and with

For Students: Widespread Opportunities for Culinary Education

Whether you’re in high school or simply seeking specialized education, there are many ways to pursue a culinary career. ACF helps individuals pursue a career in culinary arts with accredited programs that meet industry standards. For high schoolers, there are numerous ACCEF-accredited culinary programs being offered around the country. Here are just a few of the organizations that offer them.

C-CAP (Careers through Culinary Arts Program) (ccapinc.org) provides job training in the kitchen as well as paid internships, apprenticeships, job shadows, mentorships, work opportunities, college and career advising and higher-education scholarships. The organization operates nationally through nine regional locations, including Arizona, Baltimore, Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami, Newark/Camden, NYC/Hamptons, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C.

Catalyst Kitchens (catalystkitchens.org) provides learning opportunities and resources that help individuals overcome barriers to employment. Through its network of community organizations and teaching kitchens, the organization is working to end joblessness through foodservice training.

FCCLA (fcclainc.org) is a nonprofit, career-oriented organization for students in public and private school through grade 12. Its hospitality and tourism program prepares students for operations, management and marketing of restaurants, hotels and travel-related services.

ProStart (chooserestaurants.org) is a nationwide, two-year career and technical education program uniting high schoolers with the restaurant industry while teaching valuable workplace skills including teamwork, professional behavior, time management and communication.

SkillsUSA (skillsusa.org) is a nonprofit education association serving high school and college/postsecondary students, empowering them to become skilled professionals, career-ready leaders and responsible community members. SkillsUSA offers a wide variety of trade skill development, including culinary arts.



workforce development programs,” says **ACF Chef Dina Altieri, MS.Ed., CEC, CCE, AAC** (above), director of education and training for Catalyst Kitchens (see Sidebar) and a member of the SkillsUSA National Technical Committee, Culinary Arts, and board member of the Arizona C-CAP. “It’s a way of giving back for many chefs, but it’s also a recruitment tool. On a given line in any kitchen there might be six cooks, but those six cooks did not all come through the same funnel of traditional culinary school. We’re seeing more cooks come from apprenticeship and workforce development programs that produce high-quality employees.”

Knowing that a comprehensive culinary education can lead to satisfying and rewarding careers, getting started in high school makes a lot of sense, especially when the educational system is operating with its collective fingers firmly positioned on the pulse of the foodservice and hospitality industry. Plus, students are exposing themselves to the culinary community, making potentially valuable connections early in their careers. For professional chefs looking to recruit the next generation,



timing is everything. Staying abreast of these programs and the incredibly talented individuals that are rising through the ranks is imperative. In the end, graduates are entering the workforce with fire and passion — ready to work and take on exciting new challenges.

“I look forward to helping with the ProStart program every year. It’s amazing what these high schoolers pull off with very limited resources,” says **ACF Chef Jason Pooker** (right), executive chef, Prime Inc., Springfield, Mo. “These culinary programs, especially the competitions, provide a path that prepares students for the future. When I volunteer as a judge, I get to watch these students in action and witness, firsthand, the skills and level of professionalism they bring to the challenge. Without a doubt, these events are a valuable recruiting tool.”





At Supra, elevated dishes include sokos khachapuri (cheese bread topped with oyster and cremini mushrooms) and carrot khinkali (dumplings with spiced heirloom carrots), while at Tabla, guests enjoy khachapuri stuffed with pork & pomegranate barbecue, and Georgian Avenue Fries served with guda cheese dressing and ajika ketchup.

TRENDS > NEW RESTAURANT CONCEPTS

The cuisine of the other Georgia gains a foothold in the United States

The cheesy breads, dumplings, and meat dishes of the former Soviet republic are being enjoyed by a wider audience.

Jeffrey Spear | Jul 10, 2024

Many assume a conversation about Georgian cuisine references the southeastern American state and dishes such as chicken & dumplings, boiled peanuts, and peach cobbler. But increasingly the food of the former Soviet republic of Georgia is getting attention in the United States.

Bordered by the Black Sea, Russia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Turkey, Georgia's noteworthy cuisine stems from local production of poultry, beef, pork, and mutton, a remarkable assortment of regional cheeses, lots of fresh fruits and vegetables, an abundance of nuts, herbs, and spices, an ancient winemaking tradition, and centuries of culinary tradition.

Georgia's distinctive cuisine is also the result of its strategic location along the "Silk Road," the caravan route

that linked European, Central Asian, Middle Eastern, and Chinese markets. From a culinary perspective, those pathways have brought Ottomans, Turks, Persians, Tatars, Arabs, Greeks, Romans, and Russians to Georgia, all introducing their own flavors, ingredients, and foodways to those already in place.



Some of Georgian cuisine's notable ingredients include blue fenugreek, a spice blend called khmeli suneli, a spicy condiment called ajika, French marigold, herb scented Svanetian salt, and tkemali, a zesty, somewhat sour condiment made from locally grown plums.

Walnuts and walnut sauces frequently appear in Georgian cuisine, including in a chicken dish called satsivi, vegetable pâté called pkhali, the stewed beef dish khachcho, and an eggplant roll by the name of nigvziani badrijani.

Khachapuri, a category of cheese-stuffed breads, is making inroads in the United States, and other popular dishes include dumplings called khinkali and a traditional candle-shaped confectionary known as churchkhela.

Although awareness about Georgia, a small country of around 3.7 million people, remains limited among Americans, there is a growing number of restaurants specializing in its cuisine, especially in larger cities where populations include considerable numbers of Georgians, Russians, and Ukrainians. Of course, the demand for new and exciting culinary experiences, especially among Millennials and Gen Z, is adding to the appeal of these establishments.

Alex Rubinsky, a Russian immigrant who opened Kavkaz, a Georgian restaurant in North Miami Beach, Fla., in 2016, explained the cuisine's appeal.



"A lot of Russians, like me, prefer Georgian food. Plus, when you look at some of Georgia's most popular dishes like khachapuri, made with dough and cheese, or kebabs, which are simply meat on the grill, this cuisine is familiar and easy to embrace. What's not to like?"

After 8 years, Rubinsky admits that there are still plenty of people who are not familiar with Georgia or its cuisine. That being said, business is good enough for his plans to expand. From a promotional perspective, he said, "We've found advertising and a lot of promotional activity has been a waste of money. Social media and word-of-mouth have been the most effective. Plus, we will be promoting happy hour specials to attract people living and working nearby, giving them a relatively low-risk opportunity to explore Georgian cuisine."

Similar dynamics existed when Chicago Diplomat Cafe opened its doors in 2017.

"Our family is from Georgia. When we opened, we wanted to serve authentic Georgian cuisine and provide the level of hospitality we all experienced back home," said manager Asal Ahmadi. "While we've been popular among Georgians, lots of people from Russia, Ukraine, Poland, and other Slavic origins [as well as Armenians] have been attracted to our place for the same reasons."

In the early days, advertising on the radio and in ethnic newspapers helped attract customers. Today, favorable reviews, especially being included in a number of "Chicago's Best" lists, coupled with an active social media

presence, is doing more of the heavy lifting. With trends favoring unique global flavors, a growing number of guests with no connection to Georgia or its neighbors are attracted to the restaurant simply to experience the cuisine for the first time.



Jonathan Nelms developed his appreciation for Georgian food while studying and working in Russia, frequenting Georgian restaurants that were as commonplace as Mexican restaurants are in the United States. When he returned home to Washington, D.C., recognizing that the only way to enjoy Georgian food was to visit New York City, where restaurateurs catered to a large Russian community in certain neighborhoods, he decided to open a place of his own. Today, as co-owner of both Supra and Tabla restaurants, he caters to the Georgian and Russian diaspora, individuals who work in D.C.'s international community, and adventurous diners. In all cases, they can enjoy both traditional Georgian dishes as well as more contemporary interpretations.

At Supra, elevated dishes include sokos khachapuri (cheese bread topped with oyster and cremini mushrooms) and carrot khinkali (dumplings with spiced heirloom carrots), while at Tabla, guests enjoy khachapuri stuffed with pork & pomegranate barbecue, and Georgian Avenue Fries served with guda cheese dressing and ajika ketchup.

A conversation about Georgian cuisine would not be complete without mentioning the "supra." Typically, a large gathering featuring an abundance of food, wine, and heartfelt toasts, the supra is an important element of Georgian foodways and part of the experience that Keipi restaurant in Greenville, S.C., offers.

"We strive to be faithful to the premise of a Georgian supra, the shared experience and generous hospitality," Keipi general manager Evan DeBiasse said. "The best part of a dinner at Keipi is the shared experience," he

added. "While our menu includes both authentic and elevated Georgia dishes, the toasts, the camaraderie among our guests, and the unparalleled level of enjoyment is what makes an evening with us special."

He said the unique experience has piqued the interest of visitors.

"What's amazing is how far people will drive based on what they've read or heard," he said.

While awareness of Georgia remains limited in the United States, the growing number of Georgian restaurants opening around the country is a clear indication that its cuisine is an exciting new dining opportunity that Americans are eager to embrace.

Source URL:<https://www.restaurant-hospitality.com/new-restaurant-concepts/cuisine-other-georgia-gains-foothold-united-states>

A large, polished copper distillation still stands prominently in the foreground of a distillery. The still has a bulbous body and a tall, vertical column. In the background, another similar still is visible, and the walls are made of brick and concrete. A sign on the wall reads "ST. AUGUSTINE DISTILLERY CO.". A smaller sign on a piece of equipment in the background says "50 GALLON BOTANICAL GIN STILL".

A GIN-SOAKED JOURNEY

The Sunshine State is making a splash
with craft distilleries

BY JEFFREY SPEAR

ST. AUGUSTINE
DISTILLERY CO.

50 GALLON
BOTANICAL
GIN STILL

From the PANHANDLE

to the peninsula, Florida is home to a large number of craft distilleries, many producing intriguing and undeniably appealing varieties of gin. When you consider that gin is a contrivance that starts with a neutral grain spirit followed by juniper berries and other botanicals, and methods for distillation and infusing flavor vary from one producer to the next, the range of innovative flavor profiles and new drinking experiences that can be found across the state is considerable.

It's important to note that the formula for gin has been evolving for centuries. Originally produced in the 1600s in the Netherlands and referred to as "genever" (the Dutch word for juniper), this early version was made from a distillation of malt wine with added juniper berries and other botanicals. When introduced to England, the name was shortened to "gin," distillation processes improved, and the Gin Craze was born.

Once it landed in America, gin became the drink of choice during Prohibition. It was popular with Dorothy Parker and her cadre at the Algonquin Round Table, and when Ian Fleming wrote *Casino Royale*, his debut spy novel, the martini that James Bond requested included gin. Gin reached its peak in the US during the '70s, a time when martinis and cocktail parties were all the rage.

Today, with the influx of higher quality, super-premium gins, the only way to

truly appreciate them is by tasting—and there's no better place than Florida.

While Florida tends to be recognized for its warm and sunny climate, sandy beaches, and bucolic waterways, these destinations are also ideally suited for refreshing gin-based cocktails, especially the ever-popular gin and tonic. With aficionados displaying an insatiable appetite for artisanal gins and so many distilleries across the state, now is the time to get to know the impressive volume and variety of gins to be found in Florida.

David Cohen, president and head distiller of **Manifest Distilling** in Jacksonville and president of the Florida Craft Spirits Association, says the organization includes nearly 50 member distilleries and that the industry has seen rapid growth in the last 10 years. While not all of them make gin, Cohen adds, "People are searching out more unique and authentic spirits versus the ones their parents drank back in the day. That's why Manifest presents all of its spirits, including its gins, from a culinary perspective and advocates the art of craft distilling."

Along with the number of distilleries, flavor-forward cocktails are on the rise. For a taste, try **Islamorada Distilling**, one of the southernmost operations in Florida. Stephanie Harper, head distiller, says their original gin is a "good gateway gin," light with floral and citrus notes,

NORTH FLORIDA

ST. AUGUSTINE DISTILLERY St. Augustine

Built in a restored 1900s ice plant amid this city's noteworthy historical landmarks, St. Augustine Distillery has become a popular destination for both aficionados and inquisitive visitors. Complete with a self-guided tour and generous tastings, there are plenty of opportunities to discover New World and barrel-aged gin and more.
staugustinedistillery.com

while the hibiscus gin adds a distinct flavor and purple color to gin cocktails.

At **Big Cypress Distillery**, located on the southwestern edge of Miami, head distiller Fernando Plata expresses a similar sentiment. "You'll find at least six gins available in our tasting room at any given time, with 15 to 20 other styles in rotation. We make a lot of stuff. When we have visitors, we like to talk about everything. We don't keep secrets." Be sure to ask about their special gin (infused with rose and saffron), their barrel-aged gin that's released just once a year, and their Lemon City gin (made without lemons, deriving its flavor from lemon verbena, lemongrass, and lemon balm).

While many other distilleries approach gin-making in a comparable manner, Tampa-based **Fat Dog Spirits** has taken an unusual approach. As advocates of medical marijuana, they make their own hemp extract, then infuse it into their Nirvana gin made with 16 botanicals. According to senior partner Dr. Ram Ramcharran, the hemp-infused spirits offer a relaxing drinking experience.

No matter where in Florida you travel or which distilleries you choose to visit, there are worthwhile gins to taste and enjoy at every stop. While it could take a long time to visit them all, if you're planning a visit to Florida, make sure to include at least a few.





FLORIDA'S CRAFT DISTILLERIES

From Panhandle to Peninsula

There are 50 licensed distilleries around the state that currently belong to the Florida Craft Spirits Association, many producing impressive varieties of gin. For more information, visit floridacraftspirits.org

NORTH FLORIDA

MANIFEST DISTILLING Jacksonville

Manifest makes several styles of gin, including Green Label (made for mixed drinks), Florida Botanical (featuring locally sourced ingredients), and a barreled variety that changes from batch to batch. Located in downtown Jacksonville near the sports complex, the distillery invites visitors to tour, taste, and enjoy. There's always something off-menu—make sure to ask. manifestdistilling.com

30A DISTILLING CO. Santa Rosa Beach

The Florida panhandle, especially along the Gulf coast at Santa Rosa Beach, has some of the most spectacular beaches in the country. At 30A Distilling Co.'s somewhat off-the-road, speakeasy-style tasting room, visitors are invited to kick back, relax, and experience their truly artisanal gins and selection of craft cocktails. 30adistillingco.com



Manifest Distilling president and head distiller David Cohen

Islamorada's
hibiscus gin makes a
refreshing cocktail.

CENTRAL FLORIDA

FAT DOG SPIRITS

Tampa

Fat Dog Spirits was the first craft distillery licensed in Florida. While the use of hemp extract distinguishes their Nirvana gin (and vodka), their organic certification, use of locally sourced ingredients, and dedication to sustainability are also commendable. You can enjoy the widely distributed Nirvana gin in bars and restaurants along the Gulf Coast and other parts of Florida. fatdogspirits.com

SUNCOAST LOADED CANNON DISTILLERY

Bradenton

With tales of buccaneers and a spirit of adventure, Loaded Cannon (2023 Best of Florida, guidetoflorida.com) embraces a pirate theme. Their Margoza gin, American oak barrel-aged alternative, and other highly regarded spirits are named after pirates. Hear the tales and sample their treasures with a visit to their distillery and tasting room. loadedcannondistillery.com



SOUTH FLORIDA

ISLAMORADA DISTILLING

Islamorada, Florida Keys

Located in the heart of Islamorada, considered the "sportfishing capital of the world" with easy access to the Everglades, this distillery and tasting room is someplace special. Of course, their purple-hued hibiscus gin makes the visit worthwhile, but their other spirits and beers are also a great way to start a Keys-based adventure. islamoradadistilling.com

BIG CYPRESS DISTILLERY

Miami

Experience artfully crafted gins, including their Old Tom-style Magic City gin, traditionally sweetened with a neutral base distilled from sugar cane and 11 botanicals. There's lots more available in their intimate tasting room, open for small groups Thursdays through Saturdays. Ask about small-batch offerings and enjoy elevated cocktails. bigcypressdistillery.com

CHAINBRIDGE DISTILLERY

Fort Lauderdale

Recognized for their award-winning fruit brandies, ChainBridge offers several gins along with a wide range of spirits well suited to every palate. Be sure to try their barrel-aged gin, its special character derived from used brandy barrels. Intrepid visitors will want to experience their carrot spirit and beet spirit. chainbridgedistillery.com

An Enduring Affair with Hot Dogs

September 26, 2023 - edited by: [Jeffrey Spear](#)

Americans have a thing for hot dogs. Called by many names and served with a dizzying variety of toppings, any way you make 'em, we'll eat 'em.



For those of you who remember the Patty Duke Show, a television sitcom that aired on ABC from 1963 to 1966, the opening theme song indicated that “Our Patty loves to rock and roll, A hot dog makes her lose control.” While I wouldn’t say my relationship with the great American frankfurter impacts my state of mind to this degree, I do get excited whenever they’re served at backyard barbeques, from rolling carts on city streets, at sporting events and carnivals. The interesting thing is, I’m not alone.

According to the National Hot Dog and Sausage Council, it is estimated that Americans consume approximately 20 billion hot dogs a year. That’s 20 with a “B” for billion. That’s a lot of hot dogs – about 70 per person per year. With stats like this, I’d say this particular food has earned bragging rights as an indelible part of the American culinary narrative.

While I’m basically an equal opportunity hot dog enthusiast, there are those who believe their hometown dog is the unequivocal best. While I make no assertion that one’s better than the other, these are just a few of the places I’ve visited that serve a damn fine dog. Having grown up in Baltimore, I’ll start there.

BALTIMORE – Mandel Ballow, one of Baltimore’s highly regarded Kosher-style delis, opened in the 1940s. When they made a hot dog, it was two slices of slightly crispy, pan-fried bologna placed in a bun, followed by the hot dog, then

topped with yellow mustard. While that deli is long gone, you can still get a good Baltimore dog at Attman's (attmansdeli.com), the only surviving deli on Baltimore's "Corned Beef Row." As an avid fan of corned beef, coleslaw and Russian dressing sandwiches, it's always a toss up whether I'll get the dog or the sandwich. Frequently, I'll have both.

NEW YORK – You can find hot dogs on just about every corner in Manhattan. Most common are Nathan's (nathansfamous.com) and Sabrett (sabrett.com). While some are sold without any specific brand affiliation, they're all good, especially when served with mustard and sauerkraut. Every now and then I'll find a vendor grilling up coils of Italian sausage. Served with tantalizing mounds of caramelized onions and peppers, getting one of these puppies on freshly baked Italian bread is a real treat. Who needs the Statue of Liberty, Guggenheim Museum or the Empire State Building when you can bliss out on street dogs.

LOS ANGELES – There's always been just one place for hot dogs in Los Angeles – Pinks (www.pinkshollywood.com). Founded by Paul & Betty Pink in 1939 near the major studios, Pink's was popular among producers, directors, movie and TV stars. This modest fast-food stand has grown, becoming an undisputed Hollywood landmark

frequented by locals and tourists alike. Pinks now serves over 2,000 hot dogs and 200 hamburgers a day. My all-time favorite dog is their Chili Dog – a hot dog topped with mustard, chili and onions. Whether for lunch, an afternoon snack, or in the wee hours after a night of carousing, if you're in L.A. and crave a hot dog, Pink's is the place.

WASHINGTON DC – Ben's Chili Bowl (benschilibowl.com), opened in 1958 by Ben Ali, a Trinidadian-born immigrant of Indian descent, is renown for its fresh homemade chili, half smokes and banana pudding. Today it has become a historic landmark in DC and a vital part of DC's black community. For those unfamiliar with half smokes – half-pork and half-beef smoked sausages (they look just like hot dogs), they are a DC phenomenon. You can get them from sidewalk vendors but, when you sit down to a couple of dogs at the counter at Ben's, you are experiencing history.

CHICAGO – Chicago is a city famous for deep dish pizza, Italian beef sandwiches and, most importantly, hot dogs. No matter where you find them, a true Chicago dog is an all-beef dog (many are Vienna Beef brand) served on a poppy seed bun topped with yellow mustard, chopped onions, bright green sweet pickle relish, a dill pickle, sliced tomato, pickled peppers and a dash of celery salt. While you can find them all over town, and even in the airport, a few of the best places include Superdawg, Jimmy's Red Hots, Byron's

Hot Dogs and The Wieners Circle.

COSTCO – No matter where you live, Costco hot dogs, sold as a combo deal (with a soda) for \$1.50, have been a favorite among shoppers since the store launched on-premise sales in 1985. While certainly an affordable treat, they are surprisingly good dogs. Along with the store's many loyal hot dog buyers, celebrated American chef Julia Child was known to be a big fan. For me, a trip to Costco always includes a little extra time for a dog or two, even if I have to get them to go and eat them in the car. If you have any doubt about their popularity, sales are rumored to exceed 135 million hot dogs per year.

BASEBALL STADIUMS – According to the song “Take Me Out to the Ball Game,” written in 1908 by Jack Norworth and Albert Von Tilzer, baseball is about the game, peanuts and Cracker Jacks. For me, it's the game and the hot dogs. Depending on the city you're in, the dogs served vary from one stadium to the next. For Orioles fans, there are Esskay dogs at Baltimore's Camden Yards, Chicago Cubs fans have Vienna hot dogs at Wrigley Field, Red Sox fans enjoy the Fenway Frank in Boston's Fenway Park, and Brewers fans have the Klement's “Wisconsin Dog” at Miller Park in Milwaukee. I would imagine there's a different dog at every stadium. Could make for an interesting road trip. Any takers?



THE BUZZ ON REAL HONEY

**FROM VERSATILITY AND FLAVOR TO ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS—
REAL HONEY IS WINNING OVER CHEFS AND THEIR CUSTOMERS.**

Real honey is creating a buzz on menus across the country as it makes its way onto chefs' preferred ingredient lists. While applications may vary from restaurant to restaurant, customer reaction has been consistent—a resounding thumbs up for the deliciousness and authentic flavor real honey brings to a variety of dishes.

But craveability and flavor aren't the only benefits from menuing this completely natural ingredient. Menuing real honey also offers an educational opportunity to restaurant staffs and their customers on honey bees' role as pollinators. Honey bees pollinate many of the fruits and vegetables at the core of our diets. One-third of the world's food supply is made possible by honey bees. A growing number of chefs and their customers have begun to appreciate the invaluable contribution honey bees make to a plentiful, sustainable global food supply.

cranberries, strawberries, cherries, pears and peaches, then used as a flavor forward ingredient, topping or garnish.

When thinking about managing labor and the level of processing certain foods require, TJ Callahan likes the fact that real honey works well in a variety of dishes without further processing. In particular, real honey is at the heart of his restaurant's signature Applewood smoked honey, as well as their honeyed simple syrup, both adding noteworthy levels of distinctive flavor to their featured menu items and cocktails.

Because of its versatility, Chef Cameron enjoys using real honey in granola, honey ice cream, French toast, goat cheese spreads and dressings, while honeycomb makes an attractive and appealing topping and garnish. She also infuses real honey, along with candied ginger, into vodka for special cocktails.

Like these three innovative chefs, many others are discovering that real honey represents value on their own menus. And to build greater awareness across the industry, the National Honey Board has created the first-ever **Honey Saves Hives Pledge** for foodservice. This will not only encourage chefs and restaurateurs to utilize and support real honey products, it will also help to elevate the awareness of honey bee health and the benefits that honey bees contribute to our global food supply.

To take the Honey Saves Hives Pledge visit honeysaveshives.com/foodservice/.



BEE BUDDIES
from left to right
**CHEF HELEN
CAMERON,
TJ CALLAHAN
AND CHEF
CHRIS GADULKA**

For restaurateurs Chris Gadulka, executive chef at **Sylvan Table** in Detroit, TJ Callahan, co-founder and owner of **Farm Bar** in Chicago and Helen Cameron, co-owner of Chicago's **Uncommon Ground**, the value and utility that real honey provides in their kitchens, as well as the benefits that honey bees bring to the planet is immeasurable.

Chef Gadulka acknowledges that real honey lends its appealing sweet and acidic flavor to both sweet and savory dishes. He finds it is especially appealing when fermenting fruits such as



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Chefs have found menuing real honey offers a myriad of benefits. It helps expand their culinary repertoire while increasing customer satisfaction and lets them highlight the vital role honey bees play within the environment.



To read more about real honey, the Honey Saves Hives Pledge and other ways chefs are menuing real honey, scan the QR code to the left for the full article. For more resources from the National Honey Board and an exciting recipe file featuring honey, visit honey.com/foodservice.



Food Presentation with a Flair

WORDS JEFFREY SPEAR

With impeccable culinary skills, meticulous attention to detail and an imaginative eye, highly skilled chefs deliver more than just sustenance. They stimulate and delight us with immersive and artistic dining experiences. For these chefs, each plate is a palette to create not only gastronomic sensations for our mouths but a visual presentation that heightens our appreciation of the cuisine. I caught up with some chefs in Northeast Florida to learn more about their techniques and thought processes behind such edible masterpieces.

Some foodways and the ingredients associated with them are so unique that they require special handling and distinctive presentations. Such is the case at Lotus Noodle Bar, according to executive chef and owner Barry Honan. "We source unique ingredients from Japan, then plate and present them in a manner that creates exciting experiences and enduring memories," he says. "My intent is to deliver an immersive Japanese-styled experience that exudes peace, tranquility and beauty." Evidence of this approach, including the use of decorative tableware, can be seen in Honan's yellowfin tartare (avocado mousse, daikon, katsuo mirin, wasabi and toasted seaweed) served with tamago kake gohan (soy cured egg yolk).

Private chefs can create ever-changing displays of culinary art based on the setting and type of meal, as Joshua Agan, chef-owner of Routes: Culinary Travels, can attest. After years at some of Jacksonville's most enduring restaurants, he now finds deeper satisfaction as a private chef, where he can apply both his visual arts and culinary training to create masterfully prepared ingredient-driven dining experiences. "I love introducing guests to unique and exciting flavor combinations," Agan says. "It's always my goal to achieve harmony on the plate through

the composition of colors, shapes, textures and flavors." With just one look at his exquisitely plated honey nut squash tartare with espresso middlins chip and yuzu marmalade, the blend of art and cuisine is strikingly apparent.

At Rue Saint-Marc, chef-owner Scott Alters also views each dish as a tabula rasa. "I take a very artistic approach, composing each plate in a way that mirrors the way an artist creates a painting, ensuring a visually exciting and intensely satisfying dining experience for our patrons," he says. The restaurant offers a menu inspired by culinary traditions rooted in France. "While we embrace French influences, the dishes we serve are uniquely ours," says Alters. Across the menu, Alters



Left: Chef Scott Alters pours the finishing sauce on his monkfish dish at Rue Saint-Marc. Photo by Cole LoCurto.

Right: Yellowfin tartare at Lotus Noodle Bar. Photo by Chef Barry Honan.



*Left: Anticuchos (marinated chargrilled beef heart skewers) at Llama Restaurant. Photo by Brady Skye, Meerkat Media Group.
Right: Guava panna cotta-topped cheesecake. Photo by Chef Rebecca Reed.*

embraces the complexity of ingredients and presents them with a creative flourish. This approach can be seen in the shapes, textures and composition of ingredients assembled for his North Atlantic monkfish with a spinach mousseline, roasted artichokes, Bang's Island mussels, nori dusted potato chips, summer herbs and finished with a sauce "bourride" split with leek oil.

Often a meal becomes more than just the food on the plate: it is a glimpse into another culture. Guests at Llama Restaurant come away with more than a taste of Peruvian cuisine. "Dining at Llama is the whole experience," says chef-owner Marcel Vizcarra. Using authentic Peruvian ingredients and flavors, the restaurant takes diners through a geographical and agricultural lesson about the South American country with a gastronomic flare. Take for instance the highly popular anticuchos, marinated chargrilled beef heart skewers served with giant Andean corn, golden potatoes and panca pepper aioli. Arriving tableside under a smoke-filled glass dome, the smoke cascades over the plate and reveals the dish as the dome is lifted. A showstopper at the table, this presentation consistently turns heads throughout the restaurant. "A theatrical flourish adds dimension and intrigue to

our dishes and heightens the overall experience," says Vizcarra.

Main entrees are not the only opportunity to showcase a chef's artistic worldview. Serving creatively inspired sweet treats gives Rebecca Reed, corporate pastry chef at Pesca and Michael's, an outlet to express her culinary imagination and make people smile. "At the end of a meal, fanciful and creatively plated desserts heighten celebrations and infuse meals with a touch of color, whimsy and fun," says Reed. The colorfully presented guava panna cotta-topped cheesecake with a pretzel crust, dragon fruit, charred lime segments and dulce de leche is a perfect example. "I love chocolate. It's really fun and I can do so much with it in terms of color, texture and presentation," Reed says. "From a culinary perspective, the most important thing is making the food taste good."

Each of these creative and uncompromising chefs continues to elevate the act of dining into truly memorable experiences. After years spent refining their craft and amassing a broad vocabulary of ingredients, flavors, textures and aromas, they have successfully found innovative ways to source, pair, plate and elevate foods in unexpected and exciting ways.



Chefs Patrick Terrail (left) and JJ Vigoureux



Patrick with Wolfgang Puck and Suzanne Somers (below)



Master Chef

A CULINARY ICON IS SHARPENING THE SKILLS OF CHEFS IN FIRST COAST RESTAURANT KITCHENS

BY JEFFREY SPEAR

If you happened to be living in Los Angeles in the late 1970s, you likely heard the name Patrick Terrail. As the owner of Ma Maison, he created an inviting atmosphere, provided remarkable hospitality and launched "California nouvelle" cuisine, an altogether new approach to cooking that integrated fresh regional produce with French culinary techniques.

Equally important was the notoriety attached to the restaurant and its patrons, including some of Hollywood's brightest stars. While the list is considerable, names including Jack Lemmon, Jacqueline Bisset, Joan Collins, Warren Beatty, Jack Nicholson and Orson Welles were all known to frequent the LA hot spot. Without a doubt, the bistro quickly became the most glamorous gathering spot in the city.

When asked about the notoriety and the celebrities, Terrail offers, "The celebrities paid to come to my restaurant. I was their servant, not their friend. That's a line that could not be crossed. I had to be very diplomatic and careful not to step on egos.

"It helped that I never watched television," he adds. "I didn't even know who some of these people were."

Of course, Terrail did not achieve success without a little help from the kitchen, led by a virtually unknown chef with the name of Wolfgang Puck. Over a period of seven years, the restaurateur and its exceptionally talented chef made dining history that continues to resonate with leading restaurateurs today.

When Puck left Ma Maison to open Spago in 1982, the restaurant's fortunes began to decline, eventually closing altogether in 1985. But Terrail didn't excuse himself from the table. Instead, he endured, enjoying a string of high-level consultative positions with companies including Hiram Walker & Sons and Allied Domecq Spirits & Wines, as well as a successful run as publisher of *85 South/Out & About*.

In the wake of the pandemic, delighting in visits with friends in Ponte Vedra Beach, and looking for a school district that would give his teenage son a well-rounded education, Terrail realized Northeast Florida was the

place he and his family could call home.

With decades of noteworthy accolades under his belt, he enjoys a slower paced existence today. Still keeping busy as a restaurant consultant, Terrail is currently making his mark assisting and training chefs at JJ's Liberty Bistro in Ponte Vedra. Opened in 1994, JJ's is a longstanding favorite at the Beaches.

Considering its reputation and longevity, Terrail is applying his experience, helping to preserve all the elements that made the bistro an enduring success and, at the same time, innovating and infusing a breath of fresh air into well-worn aspects of operation. When asked if JJ's would be the next Ma Maison, he says, "Things aren't the same as they were back in the '70s. Entertainment was an entirely different industry. Even the way we eat today is different than it was back then. While I'm a few years older, and nowhere near as fast on my feet, I'll give it a go."

To read more about Patrick Terrail and his storied career in Los Angeles, check out his book *Ma Maison-A Hollywood Phenomenon*. ★

Ode to Corned Beef

May 17, 2023 - edited by: [Jeffrey Spear](#)



What is it about corned beef that elevates its stature to the level of an Oscar winning musical performance? What is it exactly that makes it so consistently crave-worthy and satisfying?

In the 1965 film “The Sound of Music,” Maria (played by Julie Andrews) sings about “raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens” as some of her favorite things. When I sing the song, the tune is the same but my favorite things

include (c'mon, sing it with me) "thinly sliced corned beef on rye bread with car'way."

From a historical perspective, corned beef (salt-cured beef) has been around for a long time in many cultures. While Britain and Ireland played a significant role in its popularity, the corned beef that's the hero of this story became popular in the United States in the 19th and 20th centuries in New York's densely populated Jewish communities. At that time, it was prepared by kosher butchers using brisket that would be cured with salt (corns), sugar, spices, garlic and herbs before cooking. In some cases, the same brisket would be cured and smoked, giving rise to pastrami.

My earliest memory goes back to a deli encounter at a time when a half sandwich of corned beef on rye with mustard was all I could handle. What impressed me the most was the way the meat was piled high between two slices of rye bread (with caraway seeds, of course). This was nothing like the flat cheese or PB&J sandwiches I was used to at home. Then there was the way in which the texture and flavor of the thinly sliced meat contrasted with the bread and mustard. One bite and I was in heaven.

It's important to remember that, when I was a kid, I could barely wrap my mouth around what seemed like a beast of a sandwich. Jumping ahead about 20 years, I would discover

(and continue to find) true bliss from oversized triple deckers loaded with corned beef, coleslaw, Swiss cheese, chopped liver, mustard and Russian dressing. If you can imagine the way a shark rolls its eyes before taking a bite, that would be me with one of these corned beef goliaths. Of course, my adult mouth cannot open as wide as a shark, making these mammoth creations unwieldy for sure and a challenge to get past my lips.

As a die-hard fan, I believe the best corned beef still comes from the lower east side of New York. While I've mourned the loss of so many of the great New York delis (Carnegie and Stage most recently) there are noteworthy kosher (adhering to kosher laws) and kosher-style delis (non-kosher foods are on their menus) still in operation. In New York, you'll want to check out Katz's (since 1888), 2nd Ave Deli (since 1954) and Sarge's (since 1964) that are maintaining the culinary tradition with aplomb. Manny's, a Chicago institution since 1942, is a fierce contender. So is Attman's (since 1915), the lone survivor on downtown Baltimore's celebrated (but mostly abandoned) Corned Beef Row. Needless to say, whenever I visit these cities, these are the places that I eagerly seek out.

If your appetite is as voracious as mine, here are a few noteworthy corned beef creations that merit attention. Of

course, after the meal, you'll need some belt loosening and perhaps even a nap.

Katz's Delicatessen

There is no one item on their menu that ranks higher than others. Order one of everything, mix and match, eat your fill, and roll out happy.

2nd Ave Deli

ROYAL 2ND AVENUE – a sandwich containing everything but the kitchen sink.

Sarge's

THE MONSTER – thick sliced rye bread, with corned beef, pastrami, roast beef, fresh turkey, salami, sliced tomato, lettuce, cole slaw & russian dressing.

Manny's

THE CHAZZER – corned beef and pastrami piled high on rye with cole slaw and muenster cheese and a side of 1,000 island dressing.

Attman's Delicatessen

“THE ORIGINAL” CLOAK AND DAGGER – Corned beef, coleslaw, russian dressing.



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