ASIA AND THE THEATER OF WORLD MENUS

Flavor Discovery, Culture, Innovation, and Style

Napa Valley | April 22-24, 2015
Chefs from Europe to the Americas are increasingly turning to Asia for inspiration, dipping into age-old techniques and flavors, intriguing textures found nowhere else, ingredient lists rich in vegetables and seafood, and unique stylistic presentations that impact spatial as much as tableware design. Firmly grounded at the intersection of tradition and innovation, Asia sets the stage for 21st century culinary exploration, and challenges us to re-imagine the theater of world menus.

In this 17th edition of The Culinary Institute of America’s Worlds of Flavor® International Conference & Festival, we will meet the guardians of traditions as diverse as street foods and noodle bars, monastic vegetarian flavors, and the ethereal food experiences of Kyoto’s kaiseki and the Thai royal court, along with the most accomplished chefs and innovators from urban Asia.

We will immerse ourselves in cuisines from China to India, Indonesia to Japan, Korea to Thailand, Singapore to Vietnam, and talk Asian approaches to building and layering flavor, the evolution of the region’s restaurant culture and booming hospitality scene, Asia’s quick-serve equivalent of the “dollar meal,” world-class tasting menu experiences, and elements of food design.

We will also look at the ways in which traditional Asian flavors, ingredients, and techniques have reshaped the thinking of chefs around the world and contributed to some of the most innovative flavors and trends of the 21st century. Whether working to bring authentic Asian dishes to local Millennial hotspots or next-generation hybrid flavors to the world’s top tables, we’ll learn from the best practitioners about their strategies for menu success.

Join us April 22-24, 2015 for Asia and the Theater of World Menus, to explore one of the biggest culinary mega-trends of our time: the integration of Asian flavors and styles into Western concepts of food and hospitality, and the rise of Asia as a new center of gravity for chefs—and their flavor-seeking customers—around the world.
ASIA AND THE ROOTS OF INNOVATION

The cuisines of Asia are deeply rooted in history and traditions that have evolved over millennia, many of which survive intact in the everyday lives of the citizens of bustling metropolises and remote villages alike. Rituals, whether embracing a bowl of rice or a cup of tea, are still at the center of many a meal, especially when it comes to celebrations. Today, chefs throughout the continent operate within these roots and traditions, while they also bring in new points of influence from around the globe to their cuisines, taking risks as they build on the old to create the new.

As part of our upcoming Asia and the Theater of World Menus, culinary experts and accomplished chefs will represent the time-honored and the innovative, as we look at iconic but lesser known traditional and authentic recipes and dig into dishes with modern sensibilities that integrate East and West with a focus on flavor quality, highlighting the tastes and textures of Asian ingredients—herbs and aromatics, spices, vegetables and legumes, rice and noodles, seafood, fish and meats, and specialty sauces from Sriracha, which has risen in popularity in the US to reach a nearly salsa-like level, to the Korean ganjang.

We will experience first-hand how tradition and innovation collide throughout the continent, whether it is with a chef who blends contemporary French cuisine and seasonal Japanese ingredients with playful gastronomic twists to stimulate the senses and give dishes their own distinct character, with an operator who offers modern interpretations of Southeast Asian cuisine paired with specially handcrafted Asian cocktails, or with yet others who have re-imagined long-established street foods as bar snacks.

A BALANCE OF CULTURES AND FLAVORS

Asia is the immense breadth of China and the beaches of Indonesia, the neon street corners of Tokyo and the temples of Kyoto, the rice-filled plains of Thailand and the peaks of India’s Himalayas. It is faces, sights, colors, sounds, and flavors that vary as much within a country as they do over the continent. Asia is all encompassing, with 24/7 food cultures that are both shared and distinctive among various countries and regions.
Chefs and experts will explain and explore those differences and similarities, covering topics that will include:

- **Rice cultures**: jasmine, basmati, sticky, black and more, along with dishes served with rice, the custom of serving rice at the end of a meal, steaming and frying, and congee, with its different names and preparations
- **Noodle cultures**: wheat, rice, mung bean, buckwheat, in soupy, dry, boiled, wok fried, deep-fried preparations
- **Curry cultures**: from creamy to watery, fiery to mild, always complex
- **Bread cultures**: French-style baguettes, steamed buns, deep-fried mantou, naan, chapatti
- **Fermented foods**: from miso and shio koji to kimchi, tempeh, pickles and more—millennia-old, with a surge in popularity in recent years in the US
- **Vegetarian and special dietary cuisines for religious or health purposes**
- **Celebratory meals and dishes and the rituals that accompany them**
- **Wet markets**: floating or town center, vegetable and produce, meat and seafood
- **Fire**: from the fires of outdoor kitchens to tabletop grilling
- **Iconic artisanal foods and how to make them in the US**
- **Sweets**: Asian flavors in desserts and the artistry behind Asia’s most elaborate desserts
- **Asian beverages**: sake, shochu, beer, distilled beverages, cocktails
- **Tea cultures**: black, green, pu’erh, matcha, herbal, with tea cuisines and tea ceremonies

Asian cuisines also critically consider the balance, and in many cases layering, of flavors—sweet, hot, sour, salty, bitter, umami—as well as the balance of textures essential in a way found nowhere else in the world. Further, typically a balance of hot and cold, cooked and fresh, rich and light are part of the total script of the menu, whether it be for a casual family meal or a festive dining out experience (think fresh Vietnamese herbs with grilled lemongrass pork; or the role of Indian, Japanese, and Korean pickled foods). Culinary experts will showcase balance strategy and discuss its place in the contemporary American restaurant. Guest chefs will light up the stage with demonstrations of culinary techniques and equipment, from the time-honored to the latest in the world of culinary science and technology, from chopsticks, woks and cleavers, mortars and pestles, tandoor ovens, donabe and hotpots, binchotan and satay grills to immersion circulators and lyophilizers.
SETTING THE STAGE

Whether it is a cook serving a plate of just-fired Char Kway Teow on a banana leaf-covered plastic plate at a hawker stall in Singapore, 10 curries in an alley restaurant in New Delhi, a suckling pig fresh off the spit in Ubud, a fully orchestrated Kaiseki menu with antique china embracing every morsel of seasonal beauty in a dining room with a Zen garden view in Tokyo, or a modernist tasting menu in a secret dining room in Shanghai, dining throughout Asia is deeply imbedded in performances and rituals. As diners, even as culinary professional diners, we are as likely to be moved by these elements as we are by the foods foreign and familiar.

Eating in Asia means being open to experiencing with equal frequency meals within the context of a restaurant’s groundbreaking architecture or the plastic chairs of a street stand, a dining room’s minimalistic design or the colorful boats of a floating market, tableware made of the finest porcelain or hand-shaped from local clay, wall décor ranging from graffiti to world-class photographers, beach front or skyscraper landscape, and a soundtrack that can as easily be a soothing brook as the sounds of traffic running by as we stand at a corner to eat.

We will explore the magic behind sophisticated restaurant spaces with world-class designers and talk about the street as performance space with cultural experts from around the world. We’ll look at art and style trends throughout Asia and how they are reflected on our shores with chefs and journalists. We’ll see how tableware can transform the ordinary into the unforgettable, and how colors and environment are critical to shaping experiences, from the simplest to the most sophisticated of meals. Whether you are thinking about design, setting, and performance for a food truck or quick-service concept or for a chef-driven restaurant, you will leave filled with inspiration and strategies for success.
ASIA IN AMERICA

Through food media marketing efforts on behalf of countries eager to spread the word about their cuisines and expand the availability of their products exported to the US, a myriad of travel options, and overall interest in expanding our experiences with respect to ingredients, techniques and flavors, Americans are discovering ways to satisfy an ever-growing interest in a wide variety of cuisines from around Asia.

Americans—Baby Boomers and Millennials alike—are curious and adventurous, regularly seeking out opportunities for discovery, challenge, and education in their dining experiences and appreciating the increasing availability of such occasions. The cuisines of Asia stimulate the mind as well as the senses, sometimes because of the unfamiliar languages and lack of easy points of reference. Their frequent focus on vegetables, fruits, grains, and fish, with meat rarely taking center stage, and a wide variety of light dishes also appeal to those seeking to eat more healthfully.

Although diners may feel like they know a variety of dishes and cuisines from a number of countries in Asia, in reality the selection and access in the US is still limited. Even in intensive Asian enclaves in and around places like Los Angeles, the San Francisco Bay Area, and New York, many operators still don’t have the full range of authentic ingredients and flavors to work with, handicapping adventurous American cooks and diners—and the media who follow them.

Nonetheless, we are a long way from the chow mein and cashew chicken of years gone by. Our cities, large and small, our food television programs, and our computer screens are increasingly overflowing with the bright, vibrant flavors of South Indian vegetarian and Thai curries, banh mi, hand-crafted ramen, every variation of Korean BBQ (including Korean tacos), pho, sushi and sashimi, more unusual dim sum (and dim sum re-imagined), a riot of Southeast Asian salads, rice bowls, cold noodle bowls, and much more.

Having tasted this rising tide of Asian flavors, our industry is still just beginning to learn how to replicate and adapt these flavors—even as we eagerly track what’s next in terms of Asian culinary stars.

Through Asia and the Theater of World Menus, we will explore countless techniques, ingredients, flavors, and dishes worthy of wider attention and enjoyment by American diners. With American chefs embracing and experimenting with what once was considered exotic, these foods are poised to become ever-bigger players in our national dining scene, from casual, independents to high volume, from food trucks and QSRs to university cafés.

Creative, artistic, imaginative, inventive, inspirational, anchored: contemporary Asian chefs, chefs influenced and inspired by Asian cuisines and cultures working around the world, and chefs from every continent who are opening restaurants in Asia embody all of these qualifiers and more, as we will discover during the 2015 Worlds of Flavor® International Conference & Festival, Asia and the Theater of World Menus.
"The Worlds of Flavor conferences are truly the most epic and inspirational food experiences. Yes, they're educational, but for anyone who cares deeply about food and what it means to this world—they're emotional. I will always remember the first conference I attended, which was on Latin America. Rick Bayless called to the podium a man who had been flown up from the Yucatan to bury and roast a pig on the grounds of the CIA in order to make a traditional cochinita pibil. He had never been outside of his village, from what I understand, and when he walked up in front of all those people to accept our applause, he started to weep. And so did I, and I think everyone there."

SARA DESERAN
Food Editor
San Francisco Magazine

2015 WORLDS OF FLAVOR INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE & FESTIVAL

The Culinary Institute of America’s Worlds of Flavor® International Conference & Festival is widely acknowledged as our country’s most influential professional forum on world cuisines, food cultures, and flavor trends.

Each year, the Worlds of Flavor conference welcomes more than 60 guest chefs and other expert presenters from around the world and across the United States to the college’s historic Napa Valley to explore the best of world cuisines that are reshaping American palates and our industry. Now in its 17th year, this annual gathering of professionals has become a “must attend” for leading chefs, corporate menu decision-makers, foodservice management executives, suppliers, and media.

ATTENDANCE AND REGISTRATION

Total attendance for the Worlds of Flavor conference is limited to 700 senior-level chefs, independent and chain restaurant operators, university and contract foodservice managers, hotel food & beverage directors, leading foodservice manufacturers and marketing experts, wine and other beverage producers and distributors, supermarket foodservice operators, educators, world cuisine experts, and other influential foodservice industry professionals from the United States and around the world.

As part of the attendance, the conference has traditionally included 50 consumer and foodservice trade media representatives. Recently, journalists attending and/or covering the Worlds of Flavor Conferences have represented publications ranging from Nation’s Restaurant News, Food Arts, Plate, and Flavor & The Menu to the New York Times, USA Today, San Francisco Chronicle, Houston Chronicle, Saveur, Time, Eater, and Food Republic—together with international media from Europe to Australia.

The Worlds of Flavor Conference typically sells out months in advance, so be sure to secure your participation early so as not to miss out on this incredible flavor odyssey.

For program updates and registration, please visit worldsofflavor.com.

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The Culinary Institute of America welcomes a wide range of organizations to participate in helping to make this ambitious program a reality, including national and regional governmental agencies, trade associations and private companies, as well as association and corporate sponsors from the United States.
THE CULINARY INSTITUTE OF AMERICA (CIA)

Founded in 1946, The Culinary Institute of America is an independent, not-for-profit college offering bachelor’s and associate degrees in the culinary arts and baking and pastry arts. A network of more than 44,000 alumni in foodservice and hospitality has helped the CIA earn its reputation as the world’s premier culinary college. Degree programs, certificate programs, and courses for foodservice professionals are variously offered at the college’s main campus in Hyde Park, NY; at the CIA at Greystone in St. Helena, CA; at the CIA, San Antonio, TX; and CIA’s newest campus in Singapore.

For many years, The Culinary Institute of America has been a widely recognized leader in making the best of world cuisines and flavors more accessible for foodservice professionals and the media. Educational programs highlighting world cuisines permeate the curriculum and special initiatives of all campuses of The Culinary Institute of America. The CIA’s annual DVD and web series, Savoring the Best of World Flavors, was honored with a James Beard Award in 2007 and 2009 for Best Webcast.

To learn more about The Culinary Institute of America and the programs and activities of its four campuses, please visit the college’s two websites: ciachef.edu (for general information about the college, and especially its degree programs) and ciaprochef.com (for information about the college’s programs for culinary and wine professionals, as well as access to its many online learning opportunities).

For more information please contact:

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