



THE CULINARY INSTITUTE OF AMERICA presents

12TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE & FESTIVAL WORLDS of FLAVOR

FRONTIERS OF FLAVOR
World Street Food,
World Comfort Food
November 12–14, 2009



*Discovering the
Fast Casual, Slow
Savory, and Big
Value Culinary
Traditions
of Asia, the
Mediterranean,
and Latin America*

OVERVIEW

2009 is shaping up to be a year full of daunting challenges for American chefs and foodservice operators, but also one of enormous opportunities in terms of short- and long-term trends. Certainly the big news will continue to be the slumping global economy and its fall-out for the American restaurant industry. Budgets and margins are under pressure as customers rein in their spending while food and other costs remain high and consumer confidence wanes.

At the same time, the aspirational food culture that has driven the growth of foodservice in recent years shows no real signs of slowing. If luxury food products, high-ticket menu items, and high-flying experimentalism are now in retreat, Americans are still interested in quality, culinary adventure, and world flavors—but at a price they can afford. Further, the recession will likely accelerate two megatrends that have been playing out for years: the “casualization” of the fine dining culture, and the widening of flavor concepts in fast food, fast casual and volume foodservice. Americans increasingly want a whole world of new flavors within easy reach on a 24/7 basis—from Asian to Latin and Mediterranean—in a range of settings from *tapas*, *meze*, and wine bars to Asian noodle bars, quick-serve restaurants, neighborhood bistros, airport kiosks, corporate and college dining, and more.

Against this background of change and industry trends, The Culinary Institute of America is developing its much anticipated 12th Annual Worlds of Flavor International Conference & Festival scheduled for November 12-14, 2009. The program, titled “Frontiers of Flavor: World Street Food, World Comfort Food, *Discovering the Fast Casual, Slow Savory, and ‘Big Value’ Culinary Traditions of Asia, the Mediterranean, and Latin America,*” will represent an all-senses immersion into how we as Americans now want to eat.

The phenomena of world street food and world comfort food each imply a broad range of food traditions—some of which overlap—but together represent flavors, dishes and culinary ideas that often fall outside of the realm of fine dining menus. In recent years though, American chefs, even those with the most upscale menus and operations, have found new inspiration from these “fast casual” and slow cooking world traditions.





WORLD FLAVORS, VALUE STRATEGIES

For foodservice operators, the concept of “world street food plus world comfort food” maps a strategy that addresses both customer demand for value and opportunities for menu differentiation. The need for menu and concept differentiation has been a growing, largely unmet challenge for our industry for some time. The recession puts the spotlight on this urgent need and represents a critical opportunity to remind customers why they should spend their dwindling discretionary dollars on foods away from home. The “greatest value hits” of world cuisines—which is another way of framing “world street food and world comfort food”—can be an important part of the solution in meeting this challenge.

World Street Food...and Market Food, Bar Food & Snacks

Well-traveled chefs, F & B executives, and their savvy, foodie customers have long known that in many cultures, “street food” and other non-restaurant foods (including bar foods, snacks, and the prepared foods of open-air and wet markets) represent the best, most delicious cooking in a given country. From Singapore’s famed hawker chefs and the street food vendors of Delhi, Lucknow and Mexico City to the market stalls of Saigon, Bangkok, Penang and Marrakech to the *tapas* bars of Spain and *meze* hot spots of Greece and Turkey, these are food experiences packed with vibrant flavors; hand-held, in a bowl, or otherwise easy to eat; and inexpensive. A world-class bowl of noodle soup can still be savored “on the go” in much of Asia for a couple of dollars—or less!

Street food is especially ubiquitous in tropical cultures where much of life is lived outside, and the perfect evening meal is a string of small bites from street vendors who are typically famous for one or two dishes, having perfected them for 20 or 30 years.

Hand-Held & Full of Flavor

These foods utilize all methods of preparation and cooking, from the steaming of *tamales* in Cuba and

Mexico to the very hot, wood-fired oven baking of pizzas in Naples, and from the olive oil-frying of Andalusia and deep-frying of Indian *pakoras* and Brazilian salt cod and potato fritters to the charcoal grilling of skewered meats in Istanbul, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, and Tokyo.

In many cultures, bread creates the wraps for hand-held street foods. Consider the *tortas* in Mexico City, the pressed Cuban sandwiches of Havana and Miami, the delicious harissa-spiked, grilled pepper and tuna sandwiches of Tunis, the *porchetta* sandwiches of Italy, and the *falafels* of the Middle East. In Southeast Asia, rice paper (think salad rolls) and greens (think Vietnamese sizzling crepes) are the wraps of choice, with a singular starring role for baguettes in Vietnamese *banh mi*. In Peru, a crispy dough encases the savory fillings of *empanadas*. And at Japanese train stations, *nori* wraps up inexpensive grab-and-go *sushi*.



One Dish Wonders

Street food vendors represent a very special class of culinary talent: Unlike a restaurant chef who often has an entire meal in which to impress diners, street food vendors and hawker masters often just get one shot—maybe a handful of *satay* sticks, a banana leaf with black sticky rice and grated coconut, or a bowl of *pad Thai* fresh out of a hot wok. In the case of Asian street food, flavors are often

ingeniously layered in dishes and diners are invited to customize their creations with chiles, herbs, or side sauces.

Small Plates & Sweets

In other parts of the world, the fast, casual spirit of street food goes indoors with the *tapas* bar traditions of Spain and the *meze* watering holes of Greece, Turkey, and much of the Eastern Mediterranean. Spicy *patatas brava*; stuffed *piquillo* peppers; puree of *fava* with capers and olive oil; tomato patties from Santorini; and coiled spinach, leek, and fennel pies remind us of the large role that inexpensive, plant-based foods play in this irresistible arena of Mediterranean small plates.

Sweets are well represented in world street food traditions from breakfast *churros* for hot chocolate in Mexico to the memorable gelatos of Sicily and the knock-your-socks-off Thai *khanom krok*, those sweet coconut rice griddle cakes cooked over charcoal that perfume the night air in Bangkok.



Whether American diners are ready in large numbers to respond to the specific term “street food” on their menus will likely depend on geography and type of operation. But clearly, they’re voting with their wallets for the full flavors and casual style of world street foods, bar foods, and snacks.

World Comfort Food

During a recession, what can be more reassuring and soothing than comfort foods? In the past, this typically meant macaroni and cheese, meatloaf, fried chicken and

mashed potatoes, hearty soups and the like—familiar, savory foods from our collective childhood, or at a minimum, foods that are easy to like.

To be sure these and other similar American fare still warm our hearts in challenging times. But the recession of 2008-2009 finds Americans increasingly at home with flavors of the Mediterranean, Asia and Latin America and this presents a new and unique opportunity for American foodservice operators: the comfort foods of other cultures.

Claypots, Slow Cooking & Grandmothers

Throughout the Mediterranean, slow claypot cooking—using such vessels as *cazuelas* in Spain and *tagines* (think chicken *tagine* with olives and preserved lemons) in Morocco—is the heart of home cooking. In Vietnam, caramelized catfish in claypot is welcome food after a hard day’s work, and in Puebla, Oaxaca, and much of central Mexico, *moles* bubble and develop complexity in terracotta pots over live fires.

Often world comfort food is the cooking of mothers and grandmothers, as in the curries of Thailand and Indian home kitchens, the pastas of Central and Southern Italy, and the savory *pitas* (pies) of northern Greece (bless those traditional women cooks of Metzovo!) and the islands. Sometimes it’s created by men, who labor over hot woks turning out plate after plate of what Singapore hawker food guide maven and critic K.F. Seetoh calls “die, die must try” (the equivalent of three Michelin stars for street food) versions of smoky *char kway teow* noodles and other culinary triumphs.

World Fried

When thinking of comfort food, who could leave out fried foods? French fries, anyone? Sure, but there’s a whole world of other lip-smacking fried foods, from the banana fritters of Indonesia to the *aloo chaat* (salad of warm, fried potatoes) of Delhi, the *bhel puris* (a fried, chickpea flour-based snack) of Mumbai, and those tasty rice fritters (*arancini*) of Sicily.

Hot, steaming soups capture the very essence of comfort food in cultures around the world. An aromatic bowl of *pho* noodle soup takes the chill off the morning, providing a gentle entry to the day for tens of millions of Vietnamese. The Japanese look forward to their *miso*, *ramen* noodles and other soups. Moroccans break their fast during Ramadan with *harira*, a world-class chickpea and lamb soup. Black bean soups, from Cuba to Oaxaca, are comfort food for many Latin families, as white bean soups entice all to the Tuscan table.



Barbecue & Live Fire

Barbecue, especially the smoky, slow barbecue of the American South, is always welcome in recessionary times or in the best of times. But any consideration—and tasting!—of world comfort foods would not be complete without the barbecue, spit roasting and grilling traditions of various cultures, from Mexico’s pit-roasted *barbacoa* and *cochinita pibil* to the legendary *babi guling* (Balinese roast suckling pig) of Warung Ibu Oka in Ubud, Bali.

Slow, long-cooked comfort foods often mean less expensive cuts of meat, or the braised bliss of one-pot chicken dishes. They’re also strategies for leveraging maximum flavor with smaller amounts of meat, dairy and more expensive ingredients by pairing them with vegetables, legumes, grains and spice mixtures for delicious results.

Comfort food also often implies the centrality of the hearth and fire—live fires for flavor, hot fires for *wok hay* (the smoky taste of a sizzling wok), slow fires for claypots, smoldering embers for burying meats in banana and avocado leaves and for slowly roasting vegetables (think Turkish fire-roasted eggplants), and wood-fired ovens for the crusty bread-based foods of Rome, Apulia, and Campania.

Craveable Vegetables

Vegetarian flavors, and, more generally, cooking that highlights vegetables, grains, legumes and nuts, can also yield craveable comfort foods. Consider the long-simmered legumes of India (the world of *dals*, not to mention the miracle of chickpea and lentil flours!), the wok-fried lemongrass tofu of Vietnam, and asparagus and wild mushrooms a *la plancha* (griddle-seared, with olive oil and sea salt) of Spain.

Grains are at the heart of many comfort food, as with the creamy polenta of Northern Italy, the Persian saffron-scented rice with a crispy potato crust (as many comfort food lovers know, little trumps “starch on starch”), and the spectacular *biryanis* and *tandoor* breads of the Indian subcontinent. Throughout much of East and South Asia,

a hot, creamy bowl of *congee* (rice porridge), topped with ginger, sesame oil and other condiments, is as iconic as any Asian comfort food one could name.

Potatoes by themselves say comfort foods for many Americans, as they also do for cultures from Peru to Greece and Spain. Tropical tubers, such as true yams,



yuca (in garlic, mojo sauce!) and *malanga*, warm hearts from Cuba to South America, as taro root and *kobocha* squash do in Asia. Beans also take a star turn, from the smoky baked beans that accompany barbecue in the American South to the black beans that are integral to *feijoada*, the iconic comfort food of Brazil, to the Tunisian chickpea market soup *leblebi* (with eggs, capers and harissa) that will leave you breathless. The creaminess of ground nuts, especially when transformed into the seductive, pounded nut sauces of the Mediterranean (think *romesco*, *skordalia*, *muhammara*, *pesto* or *tarator*), or a spicy, Mexican peanut mole, can also be counted on to take the chill off a winter night, or an unwelcome recession.



DISCOVER & DIFFERENTIATE

As American chefs and operators look to the next couple of years of menu development and the challenges ahead—to make more with less, to seduce customers with flavors they can’t easily prepare at home, to differentiate from the competition—world street food and world comfort food are two concepts whose time has arrived. Small plates, large plates, bowls, sticks, wraps, grab and go, or sit and savor—the applications for these option-rich, reduced-cost foodservice formats are endless.

So please join us in November 2009 for our next Worlds of Flavor adventure as we plunge into a three-day, sauce-slopping, noodle-slurping, chaat-sampling, kabob-nibbling, tamale-savoring, tapas-grazing epic tour of the best of world street food and world comfort food. Bring a big appetite and we’ll supply the napkins. And no, we don’t pay for dry cleaning!

A GATHERING OF WORLD CULINARY TALENT

“Frontiers of Flavor: World Street Food, World Comfort Food,” will gather top culinary talent from the Mediterranean, Asia, Latin America and the United States. Presenters include more than 60 street food vendors, hawker chefs, tapas and meze specialists, barbecue masters, fine dining chefs who have been inspired by world

street foods and comfort foods, mothers of chefs, legends of live fire and claypot cooking, as well as cookbook authors, street food chroniclers, and more.

Highlighted regions and food cultures include Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Japan, India, Spain, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Morocco, Tunisia, Persia, Mexico, the Caribbean, Peru, Brazil and culinary hotspots across the United States.

CONFERENCE FORMAT

Following its regular format, the 12th Worlds of Flavor Conference will be divided into four key sections:

- General sessions (for all attendees, with a state-of-the-art culinary stage);
- Seminars and kitchen workshops (held concurrently throughout the CIA’s Napa Valley campus);
- The World Marketplace (a dazzling walk-around event with both culinary and beverage tastings, demonstrations and cultural performances, and sponsor exhibits that occurs on Thursday night, Friday night and Saturday lunch); and
- The Friday outdoor tented lunch including tastes from the World Live Fire Kitchen.

THE WORLDS OF FLAVOR CONFERENCE & FESTIVAL: A 12-YEAR TRADITION

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 and trends. Now in its twelfth year, the annual gathering has become a “must attend” for leading chefs, corporate menu decision-makers, foodservice management executives, suppliers, journalists and professionals.

The event is the college’s flagship conference, and every November literally transforms the Napa Valley campus into an amazing crossroads of world food and culture. The Worlds of Flavor conference showcases the gold standards of world cuisines—from Asia and the Mediterranean to Latin America—that are increasingly reshaping American palates and the U.S. foodservice industry.

ATTENDANCE & 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 50-60 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, and Flavor & The Menu to the New York Times, Gourmet, San Francisco Chronicle, Houston Chronicle, Saveur, Sacramento Bee, Rocky Mountain News, Cooking Light and Time magazines—together with international media from Europe to Australia.

Don’t miss this seminal event in American foodservice as we discover the depth and breadth of world street food and world comfort food traditions, and their impact on American menus. And remember that the Worlds of Flavor Conference series has historically sold out six months in advance, so be sure to secure your participation early so as not to miss out on this incredible flavor odyssey. Registration opens for the November 2009 Worlds of Flavor Conference in March 2009, but sponsorships are available now. Please join us!

Watch for an announcement about the opening of registration for the 2009 Worlds of Flavor Conference as well as program updates on the Web at www.ciaprochef.com.

SPONSORS 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 governments, regional governments, trade associations and private companies, as well as compatible association and corporate sponsors from the United States.

THE CULINARY INSTITUTE OF AMERICA

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 37,000 alumni in foodservice and hospitality have 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’s newest campus in San Antonio, Texas, and in conjunction with Temasek Polytechnic Institute 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. The CIA at Greystone is the location of the college’s annual, critically acclaimed **Worlds of Flavor International Conference & Festival**. Now in its 12th year, this CIA program (for professionals only) brings together the world’s top culinary talent—from Shanghai, Tokyo and Singapore to Barcelona, Rome, Athens and Mexico City—and showcases the “gold standards” of world flavors. 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 for Best Webcast.

With foodservice in the United States now representing nearly 50 percent of the consumer food dollar and, in addition, substantially shaping consumer and retail trends—and with the CIA at Greystone playing host to thousands of the most influential American chefs and foodservice operators each year—the CIA’s California campus has become a favorite venue of many of our association, corporate and governmental partners for

reaching key audiences for their foodservice education and marketing efforts.

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



“Inspirational, 11 on a 10 scale. Fabulous beyond belief. This extravaganza has become a hot ticket as word of its previous in-depth explorations has spread. [The CIA’s recent Worlds of Flavor Conference] was a massive undertaking, the biggest and most intense of its conferences. The buzz was terrific and the learning curve steep and exciting.”

–FOOD ARTS

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