

# FUTURE MENUS



TOP FOODSERVICE TRENDS  
NORTH AMERICA | VOLUME 3 | 2025



Unilever  
Food  
Solutions



As we look out over the landscape of our ever-changing industry, it is very important to keep up with menu and business trends. Up to date knowledge about what is happening will not only put you at the forefront of ideas, but will make your establishment exciting to customers, and ensures your core group of regulars come back for more!

Now, keeping up with trends is no easy task. It can be a huge undertaking with some establishments even using full teams to discover, translate, and eventually execute those trends onto the plate for the diner to enjoy. This is where *Future Menus* comes to the rescue.

We have an amazing team of 250 chefs globally, 10 in North America alone, that have worked together with our partners to gather all the ingredients you need to keep your business at the forefront of the trends landscape. With over 250 years of collective experience here in North America, we are positioned to help you create exciting new experiences for your diners.

The recipes in the *Future Menus* report have been carefully crafted to bring the trends to life in your establishment. Each one has been designed with cost, execution, and various skills in mind. And as we see more and more technology being utilized in our industry, how do we best harness A.I. and the ability for the diner to create their own experience? This report will also provide inspiration for ways that the diner can decide their own path.

In the report you will not only find on-trend, globally inspired and locally adapted recipes and ideas, but you will also find amazing information on how the trend was developed, numerous insights and inspiration behind each one, and easily executable ideas for your establishment.

So as we look to the future of food, we understand that food moves us every day. Sometimes further from our comfort zone and sometimes into the arms of our grandmothers. We are here to help guide you through the amazing world of food from traditional to Avant Garde and to help you establish your business at the forefront of the industry.

*Brandon Collins*

**Executive Chef**  
*Unilever Food Solutions, North America*







**ALVARO LIMA**  
Corporate Chef  
*Unilever Food Solutions*

An alumnus of the Technology Center and College of DuPage, Chef Alvaro has worked as a chef for 19 years. During his career, he has worked for the likes of Sodexo and Quest Food Management. First joining *Unilever Food Solutions* as a culinary intern in 2005, he returned to the company in 2014. He is now a Senior Corporate Chef, leading the Midwest in supporting sales with menu and recipe development.

 @chef\_alvy



**KYLE JAKOBI**  
Corporate Chef  
*Unilever Food Solutions*

Chef Kyle started his career as a culinary school graduate and has since honed his skills in roles at upscale wine bars, Fairmont Hotels, and Bosch/Siemens, eventually rising to Executive Corporate Chef. Now with *Unilever Food Solutions*, he serves as Western Zone Chef, collaborating with food service operators across national accounts, non-commercial sectors, military, and regional chains. Chef Kyle's adventurous style blends Asian and Southwestern flavors, fostering connection and creativity through food.

 @chefkylejakobi

# CONTRIBUTORS



**KYLA TOURI**  
Corporate Chef  
*Unilever Food Solutions*

Chef Kyla Tuori leverages her marketing degree, from the University of Guelph, and Culinary Management training, from Canada's prestigious George Brown College, to provide solutions for a wide variety of Canadian restaurant operators over her 18 year tenure with Unilever. Chef Tuori is passionate about making delicious food accessible for all through community organizations, customer solutions for diverse diets, and supporting the Fair Kitchens movement for better health and sustainability in the industry.

 @chefkylatouri



**BRANDON COLLINS**  
Executive Corporate Chef  
*Unilever Food Solutions*

A graduate of the Culinary Institute of America, Chef Brandon worked at restaurants before moving to a role at Sodexo as Executive Chef at Pitch, which was Unilever's personal care division's co-creation space. After working closely with the company, he took a position as Corporate Chef Northeast, later becoming the Corporate Executive Chef, which is his current title. Here he manages a team of eight chefs from across the US and Canada. Chef Brandon is also one of only two people in the world to hold the title of Maille mustard sommelier.

 @chefbrandonc



**RUDY SMITH**  
Corporate Chef  
*Unilever Food Solutions*

During his career spanning more than 40 years, Chef Rudy has held executive chef positions in several independent, fine dining restaurants as well as club and resort properties in places like Aspen, Colorado; Palm Beach, Florida; and New York City. He Joined the Unilever Culinary Team in 2006 and loves working with operators. Chef Rudy has a passion for food and cooking that he loves to share.

 @chef\_rudys



**CORI BOUDREAUX**  
Corporate Chef  
*Unilever Food Solutions*

Chef Cori Boudreaux began his culinary career in a small South Louisiana restaurant before gaining professional kitchen experience and graduating from the French Culinary Institute. He spent nearly a decade as an Executive Chef at a New York college, then moved into commercial development. In 2022, he joined Unilever as the Corporate Chef for the Northeastern US, bringing his passion for learning and Southern cuisine to the role.

 @chef.corib





**J.C. LOPATEGUI**  
Corporate Chef  
*Unilever Food Solutions*

Chef J.C. Lopategui, a Culinary Institute of America graduate, hails from San Juan, PR, where his passion for hospitality first took root. With experience spanning fine dining, fast casual, and casual dining across Spain, Northern California, and South Florida, Chef J.C. brings a wealth of international insight to his work. A fluent speaker of Spanish, Portuguese, and English, he is deeply passionate about culture, history, and how these elements shape the culinary world at *UFS*. With a focus on inspiring restaurant operators, Chef J.C. combines creativity with practical, trend-savvy expertise to drive success in the industry.

 [@chefjclopategui](#)



**SEBASTIAN RIVERA**  
Corporate Chef  
*Unilever Food Solutions*

Sebastian Rivera's culinary journey is driven by a deep passion for food and hospitality. Born in Bogotá, Colombia, he immigrated to New Jersey with his mom in 1992. After graduating from Johnson & Wales University, he honed his craft from garde manger to Executive Chef, working alongside industry icons like Daniel Boulud and Mike Isabella. Transitioning to corporate dining, he now serves as Corporate Chef for *Unilever*, supporting the non-commercial and retail food service teams at *Unilever Food Solutions*.

 [@chef\\_sebastianrivera](#)



**DANA COHEN**  
Marketing Chef  
*Unilever Food Solutions*

Chef Dana has spent the last 20 years exploring her passion for sharing her love of food and cooking. After working in restaurants and hotels, Dana became the director of the Viking Cooking School, where she developed recipes and taught a wide range of hands-on cuisines to aspiring home chefs. Dana joined *Unilever Food Solutions* in 2018 as the Corporate Marketing Chef, where she supports chefs and operators with their menus through products, trends and more.

 [@chefdana\\_eats](#)



**BRITNEY JEROME**  
Corporate Chef  
*Unilever Food Solutions*

Chef Britney is a proud graduate of Johnson County Community College. She spent her ACF apprenticeship in modern Italian fine dining before moving to Charleston, South Carolina, to pursue high-end catering. Chef B's culinary perspective is a crossroads of creativity, curiosity and understanding. Her approach to food and people instituted her as a top performing culinary consultant for one of the largest food distributors in the world for over a decade. She is delighted to be a part of the *UFS* global culinary team, as of 2024.

 [@sunshine\\_and\\_shortribs](#)





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# GET #PREPPED FOR TOMORROW WITH UNILEVER FOOD SOLUTIONS



Unilever  
Food  
Solutions

#Prepped for tomorrow

*Unilever Food Solutions (UFS) is a business of chefs for chefs. Accounting for 20% of Unilever's Foods Business Group, UFS operates in over 75 countries as a dedicated supplier to the food service industry. Drawing on the expertise of over 250 professional in-house chefs, UFS offers food service professionals high-quality products, industry inspiration, and best-in-class services.*

Our highly regarded portfolio of key products and solutions features power brands like *Knorr Professional* and *Hellmann's*, which perform exceptionally well in the professional kitchen.

UFS' annual *Future Menus* initiative is a very important resource for chefs. It offers the most up-to-date global culinary trends via indepth market research along with chef-developed recipes that allow you to bring these trends to life very easily in your food service business.

In fact, our ever-growing collection of unique and classic recipes (available on [www.ufs.com](http://www.ufs.com)) are a valuable source of inspiration, helping chefs at all skill levels with both creativity and profitability.

The *UFS Positive Kitchens* initiative helps to foster a positive culture in the professional kitchen by addressing the key challenges commonly encountered and providing tools, training, and advice to promote wellbeing.

In addition, our culinary training programs provide chefs and food service professionals with valuable advice on key skills and techniques, along with other vital areas in the professional kitchen.

To find out more about how we help chefs and food service professionals across the globe to better serve their guests, visit [www.ufs.com](http://www.ufs.com)



# FOOD THAT MOVES US



Welcome to the latest edition of *Unilever Food Solutions’ Future Menus*. Now in its third year, it’s proving a valuable annual resource for chefs and food service professionals who recognize the importance of using data-driven insights to craft menus that satisfy evolving diner needs and preferences.

Every year, *Future Menus* identifies the big trends that are defining the global food service industry. The list of menu trends has gone from eight last year to four key trends this year. This reflects the shifts in the industry as we see a big emphasis on “FOOD THAT MOVES US”, where we see taste in motion from the chefs’ perspective, imbuing food with a sense of movement and discovery driven by emotion and the need to thrive in the evolving food service industry.

The four key trends identified in this year’s *Future Menus* are:

- 1 Street Food Couture
- 2 Borderless Cuisine
- 3 Culinary Roots
- 4 Diner Designed

The trends have been shaped by three big shifts. The first is the strong culinary shift that includes the global demand for Asian and Latin American flavors and cuisines, underpinning all the trends.

The second shift is the effect the mass movement of people is having on the culinary landscape. Migration and migration tourism are strong drivers of the Street Food Couture, Borderless Cuisine, and Culinary Roots trends. They are fueling new and exciting developments in how chefs bring new ingredients, culinary techniques, and flavors together to create something unique.

Lastly, advancements in digital are driving the Diner Designed trend, which is all about satisfying guests with the more personalized experiences. Artificial intelligence and augmented reality are enabling this, along with an emphasis on new and exciting ways to create and serve dishes that fit with diners’ personal flavor preferences.

Other factors, such as Gen Z consumers coming of age and their particular approach to eating and drinking, are heavily influencing the four *Future Menus* trends. The continued cost-of-living crisis is also playing a part as consumers look for affordable luxuries that bring them joy. Dining out to experience new and exciting dishes meets this need.

Traditional ideas of food and how we experience it are being redefined as cultural and social dynamics evolve. The Street Food Couture menu trend is a prime example and is heavily influencing culinary demand from the bottom up. Gourmet versions of traditional street foods, crafted with a chef’s expertise, are now penetrating every channel in the food service industry, including fine dining establishments.

## **Making the trends work for your business**

The *Future Menus* trends and insights included in this book are meticulously researched and validated—ready to spark creativity and innovation in your kitchen.

The trends are compiled using robust global data and extensive chef inputs, including reports, social media analytics and more than 300 million online searches across 21 countries. In-depth feedback from more than 1,100 chefs in 20 markets and the *Unilever Food Solutions* team of highly experienced in-house chefs was also used.

The *Unilever Food Solutions* chefs have developed delicious on-trend recipe concepts you will find throughout *Future Menus*. Each recipe concept belongs to one of the four trends. They are a key source of inspiration and will help you to implement the trends that are most relevant for your business.

You will find more information on this year’s *Future Menus* and dish inspiration at **[www.ufs.com](http://www.ufs.com)**







# STREET FOOD COUTURE

This trend focuses on elevating the essence of *Street Food* by incorporating high-quality ingredients and refined techniques, while maintaining its informal charm and sense of discovery. The result is a higher-quality dining experience that retains the casual and dynamic atmosphere of the street food scene. It appeals to modern diners seeking both accessible and exciting food options, particularly those influenced by global flavors.



**MEXICAN,  
INDIAN, KOREAN  
& FILIPINO**

ARE FOUR CUISINES THAT  
ARE EMERGING RAPIDLY  
WITHIN STREET FOOD.  
FILIPINO IS GAINING  
THE MOST TRACTION  
IN AMERICA AND ASIA.



**Key factors contributing to this trend include:**

- The cost-of-living crisis, making accessible, affordable food more appealing
- Gen Z’s preference for informal dining experiences
- Ongoing migration and globalization influencing food choices
- Increased social media visibility of global street food dishes
- An opportunity for younger chefs to showcase creative, approachable food

At the core of this movement is the fusion of authentic cuisines, blending ingredients and techniques from various cultures in a thoughtful, innovative manner. This approach results in bold, exciting flavors while preserving authenticity, paving the way for more inviting and accessible dining experiences. By elevating street food, chefs offer diners an informal yet premium culinary adventure, balancing creativity with the roots of traditional street food culture.

**The top techniques dominating this trend:**

- Fermentation
- Grilling
- Steaming
- Wok hei
- Marination
- Charcoal grilling

**A taste of the delicious dishes prevalent in this trend:**

- Mexican elote
- Indian chaat
- Gyros
- Loaded fries
- Gourmet mac and cheese
- Korean rice rolls
- Shawarma

Previous page:  
A street food staple, this chicken taco is garnished with radish, onion, feta, coriander, and lime.

# ONE TO WATCH

DUCK BREAST! LIKELY TO BE AN EMERGING INGREDIENT WITHIN STREET FOOD OVER THE NEXT 12 MONTHS, AND BEYOND.





WRITTEN BY  
Andrés Cardona  
Corporate Chef  
**Unilever Food Solutions**,  
North Latin America.



# THE BEAT OF THE

# STREET

**DRAWING INSPIRATION FROM THE  
EVOLVING STREET FOOD SCENE IN LATIN  
AMERICA, CHEF *Andrés Cardona*  
OFFERS SOME INSIGHT INTO WHAT  
MAKES STREET FOOD SO SPECIAL.**

Street food in Latin America has undergone a remarkable evolution in recent decades, transforming from simple food offerings to vibrant dining experiences that captivate contemporary diners. This phenomenon is due in large part to the growing demand for bold flavors and innovative presentations from a public seeking not only to satisfy their hunger, but also to enjoy a unique and informal dining experience. Street vendors, traditionally associated with emblematic dishes such as tacos, arepas, or empanadas, have begun to reinvent their recipes, incorporating gourmet ingredients, modern cooking techniques, and cultural fusions that elevate the quality of their products. At the same time, the use of social networks has allowed these ventures to achieve unprecedented visibility, inviting diners to explore new flavors and share their experiences, generating a community around street food. Therefore, what was once simply a means of eating has become an artistic expression that celebrates the region's culinary diversity and creativity. The beat of the street is now one we can all move to.



“What was once simply a means of eating has become an artistic expression that celebrates the region’s culinary diversity and creativity.”

There are many reasons street food has become so appealing, but here are a few examples of what draws people to the street—all are adaptable ideas to bring the vibe of the street to your food service business.

**Themed Pop-Up Events:** Street food offers variety—there’s something for everyone. With that in mind, host temporary events that celebrate different types of street food from various cultures. This can attract a new audience and maintain the interest of regular customers.

**Interactive Culinary Experiences:** Being able to watch the food being prepared is appealing to diners. Many are often impressed by the intriguing techniques used to create their street food favorites. Offer workshops where customers can learn how to prepare typical street food dishes, which not only engages them, but also provides a memorable experience.

**Rotational Menu:** Introduce a menu that changes regularly—similar to the daily evolution of the street food menu—featuring new recipes or specialties from different regions. This can encourage customers to return to try something new.

**Creative Pairings:** Offer drink recommendations that complement street food dishes. This can enhance the dining experience and increase sales.

**Customizable Options:** Merging with the Diner Designed menu trend, street food allows customers to customize their dishes, choosing ingredients or spice levels, giving them a sense of control and satisfaction.

**Attractive Ambiance:** When we think of street food, we imagine socializing with friends, conversing with chefs, and a fast-paced and excitable energy. Create a welcoming and inviting space that reflects the street food culture, using vibrant décor and appropriate music to attract customers.

**Collaborations with Local Artists:** At the heart of street food is culture—and culture comes in all shapes and sizes. Invite local artists to showcase their work in your business, which can attract their followers and enrich the consumer experience.

**Loyalty Programs:** Establish a rewards program that encourages customers to return. Offering discounts or free meals after a certain number of purchases can increase loyalty.

**Testimonials and Reviews on Social Networks:** Lastly, encourage customers to share their experiences on social networks and offer incentives for doing so. Personal recommendations can attract new customers and build trust.







Opposite page: Smashed sliders with melted cheese.

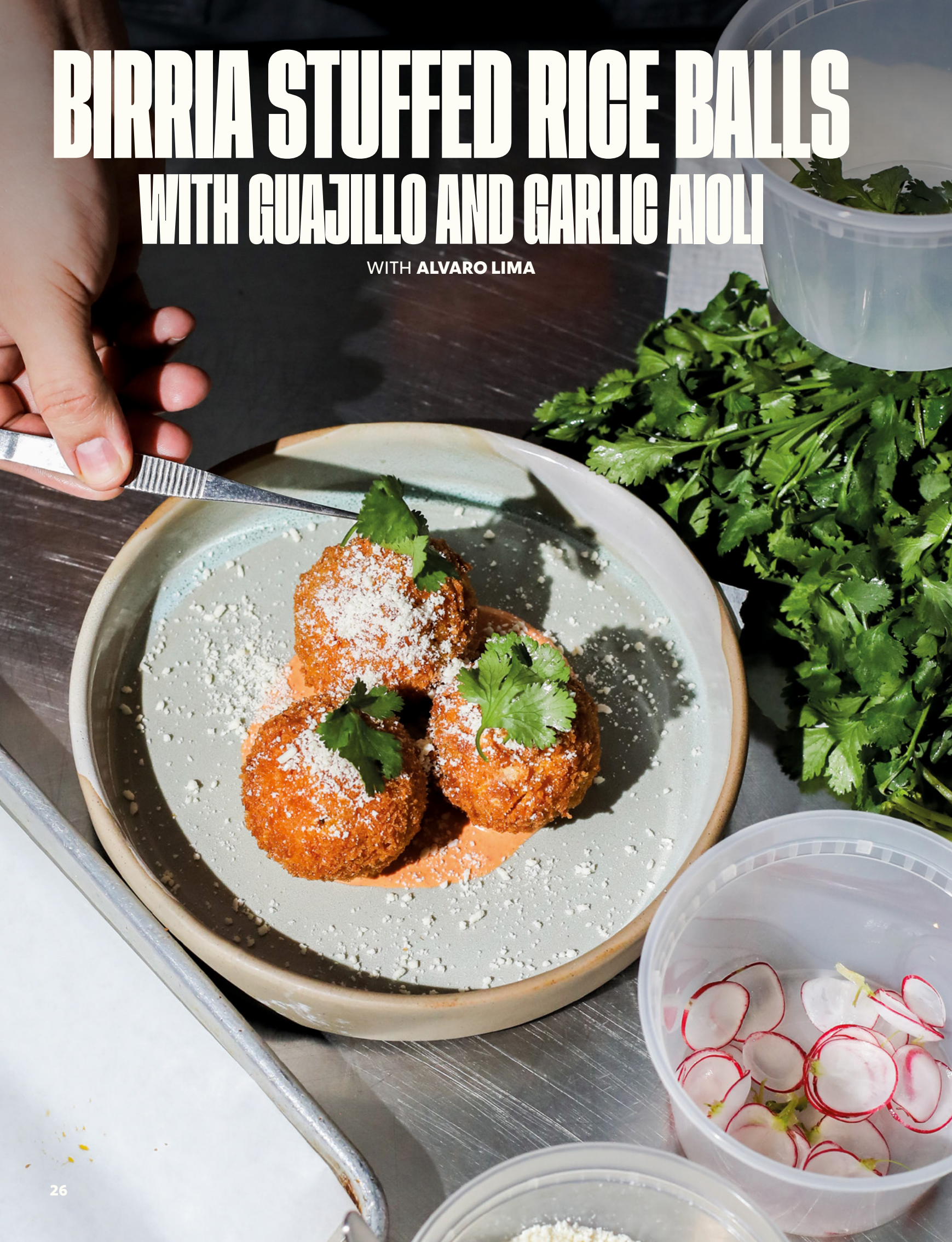
This page: Chef Andrés Cardona enjoys a smashed slider.





# BIRRIA STUFFED RICE BALLS WITH GUAJILLO AND GARLIC AIOLI

WITH ALVARO LIMA



"THIS CREATIVE TWIST IS PERFECT FOR FOOD STALLS OR YOUR FAVORITE QSR OR FAST CASUAL RESTAURANT, AND IT'S A FUN WAY TO *repurpose* LEFTOVERS."

— ALVARO LIMA  
Corporate Chef  
Unilever Food Solutions

A take on an arancini dish with a twist of Mexican inspiration.



## Knorr Caldo de Vegetales

Knorr Professional Caldo de Vegetales is the perfect blend of traditional spices such as cumin and coriander, enabling chefs to deliver the authentic and familiar flavor guests know and love to vegetarian dishes.

## INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4)

### Rice

1 cup Long Grain White Rice  
2 cups Water  
1 TBSP **Knorr Professional Caldo de Vegetales**  
1 tsp Achiote powder  
1 TBSP Olive Oil

### Birria

1 # Chuck Roast  
1½ TBSP **Knorr Professional Caldo de Res**  
1 tsp Oregano  
1 qt Water  
1 Small Onion half  
2 cloves Garlic  
1 Bay Leaf  
1 Avocado Leaf  
2 Guajillo Chilies pureed  
¼ cup Brick Achiote  
¼ cup Olive Oil

### Guajillo and Garlic Aioli

1 cup **Hellmann's Real Mayonnaise**  
¼ cup Guajillo Puree  
3 large cloves Garlic  
1 Lime juiced  
Salt to taste

### Rice Balls

½ # Chihuahua Cheese block cut into cubes  
2 cups Fine Bread Crumbs or Panko  
2 cups AP Flour  
3 eggs, cracked and whisked  
Sliced Radishes  
Cilantro Leaves  
Cotija Cheese for dusting

## METHOD

### Rice

In a pot heat up the Olive Oil, add Rice and begin to toast.

Season the rice with the **Knorr Professional Caldo de Vegetales** and Achiote Powder.

Add the Water and let it come to a quick boil. Once it has boiled, turn the heat low and cover with a lid. It should cook for approx. 15 minutes. Once the Rice is cooked, let it rest for 5 minutes covered. Pour Rice onto a sheet pan, smooth it out and refrigerate.

Note: You want chilled Rice to work with in order to form and shape the balls.

### Birria

In a large pot sear the Beef, season with **Knorr Caldo de Res**, Oregano, and start adding the Onion, Garlic, Bay and Avocado Leaves and Water.

Add the Guajillo Puree.

Let this all braise low and slow for about 3 hours. Once the meat is fully cooked, let the Rice lay on a sheet pan and let it chill in the cooler. Keep some of the braising liquid to help keep moist when shredding.

Note: All the ingredients should be in the pot, not fully submerged and not at high heat.

### Guajillo and Garlic Aioli

Combine all ingredients in a blender and buzz until smooth.

Pour in a container or squeeze bottle and chill in a cooler.

The color should be vibrant. It should be thinner consistency.

### Rice Balls

Cut the Rice into 8 even squares on the sheet pan, do the same with the Birria Meat.

Begin to make the Rice Balls by taking one square of Rice, some of the meat and mold in a cube of Cheese. Repeat this process 8 times, you should be able to form the Rice Balls easily.

Once the Balls are formed, dip them in Flour, Egg and then Breadcrumbs. Repeat 8 times, place on sheetpan and freeze.

Once the Balls are chilled, you can begin to deep fry them until they are golden brown. Remember everything is fully cooked already, you just want to make sure the Cheese melts inside.

### Plating

In a bowl, spoon the Guajillo and Garlic Aioli.

Add two Rice Balls.

Top with Cotija Cheese dusting, Cilantro Leaves, Radish Slice.





### Knorr Professional Caldo de Pollo

Trusted by Chefs, this authentic chicken bouillon is made from a blend of chicken, onion, parsley, and spices enabling chefs to deliver the authentic and familiar flavor guests know and love to their dishes.



**"I AM ALWAYS DRAWN TO THE *whimsical*, FUN SIDE OF FOOD AND THESE HIT THE BULLSEYE ON THAT."**

— **KYLE JAKOBI**  
Corporate Chef  
**Unilever Food Solutions**

Korean-style corndog encrusted in potato chips and topped with onion dip and caviar.

## INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4)

### Hotdog Skewer

- 6 ea Skewers
- 6 ea Hotdogs

### K-dog Batter

- 1½ cups All-Purpose Flour
- 1 cup Water, warm
- 2 tsp **Knorr Caldo de Pollo**
- 1 tsp Salt

### Onion Dip

- 1 cup Best Foods Mayo
- 1 cup Sour Cream
- 1 pkg Onion Soup Mix

### K-Dog Frying Setup

- 1 pan - Cornstarch
- 1 pan - Batter from above
- 1 pan - Potato Chips
- 1 pan - Panko Breadcrumbs
- Oil for frying

### Plating

- 1 tin Caviar
- Onion Dip
- Micro Chives

## METHOD

### Hotdog Skewer

Skewer the Hotdogs then freeze.

### K-dog Batter

Mix the Sugar, Yeast, And Warm Water. Let stand for 10 minutes until foamy and Yeast is active.

Mix together the AP Flour and the Caldo de Pollo and fold into the Yeast mixture.

Blend well and set aside for an hour. It should be bubbly and have risen.

### Onion Dip

Mix all the ingredients together, and place into squirt bottle.

### K-Dog Frying Setup

Remove Hotdog Skewer from freezer.

Coat in the Cornstarch. Then roll into the Batter spreading it evenly. Next press on as many Potato Chip pieces as firmly as possible. Then finish by pressing the Panko on. Drop in the fryer immediately.

Fry until golden and crispy, making sure the inside is warm.

### Plating

Finish and serve the K-dogs with Caviar, Chives, and Onion Dip on the side.

# CAVIAR & POTATO CHIP K-DOG

WITH KYLE JAKOBI







**“CRISPY, GOLDEN-FRIED EGGPLANT RINGS WITH A DELICATE, SEAFOOD-LIKE CRUNCH THAT TANTALIZES THE TASTE BUDS AND REIMAGINES PLANT-BASED APPETIZERS WITH *irresistable* TEXTURE AND FLAVOR.”**

— **J.C. LOPATEGUI**  
Corporate Chef  
**Unilever Food Solutions**

Elevate your street food experience with this Vegan Calamari, a plant-based twist on a seafood classic. Tender eggplant rings are delicately poached in a savory broth infused with Nori, soy sauce, lemon zest, and aromatic spices, capturing the essence of the ocean in every bite. These rings are then lightly battered and fried to golden perfection, delivering an irresistible crunch that gives way to a flavorful, melt-in-your-mouth center.



**Hellmann's Vegan Mayonnaise**

Hellmann's Vegan Mayonnaise excels as a sandwich spread or as a topping for plant-based burgers and other plant-forward dishes. It's Vegan Action certified and contains no artificial colors, flavors, or cholesterol.

**INGREDIENTS**  
(SERVES 4)

**Preparing the Calamari**

- 2 lbs Eggplant
- 3 TBSP **Knorr Professional Vegetable Liquid Concentrated Base**
- 3 TBSP Tamari Sauce
- 2 Qts Water
- 2 ea Nori Sheets
- Juice of 1 Lemon
- ½ TBSP Lemon Zest

**Breading the Calamari & Deep Frying them**

- 1 cup Banana Peppers (drained),
- 1 cup AP Flour
- 1 cup Almond Milk
- 1½ cup Panko
- 1 tsp Kosher Salt

- ½ tsp Black Pepper
- 1 tsp Granulated Garlic

**Vegan Tartar Sauce**

- ½ cup **Hellmann's Vegan Mayonnaise**
- ¼ cup Sweet Relish
- ½ TBSP **Maille Dijon Mustard**
- ½ TBSP Fresh Chopped Dill
- 1 TBSP Lemon Juice
- 1 TBSP Chopped Capers
- ½ tsp Lemon Zest
- ½ tsp Granulated Garlic

**METHOD**

**Preparing the Calamari**

Slice Eggplant to 1 inch thickness using round cutters; make the rings as big or small as you can get them (Cut the center with a smaller cutter). Put the rest of the ingredients in a medium stock pot and bring liquid to a quick simmer. Poach the Eggplant Rings for 30-45 seconds and place them on a clean sheet tray. Refrigerate and reserve for next step.

**Breading the Calamari & Deep Frying them**

Standard Breading procedure set-up; Mix the AP Flour w/ Salt, Pepper and Garlic and place that on a ½ pan, place the Almond Milk on a ½ pan and the Panko on a separate ½ pan. Now dip the Eggplant Rings on the Flour, followed by the Milk and finished with the Panko. Repeat the same breading procedure for the Banana Peppers. Place all of them on a sheet tray and freeze for a minimum of 1 hour.

Deep fry the Vegan Calamari at 350 degrees, until light-brown and crispy. Place on a sheet tray with racks for plating.

**Vegan Tartar Sauce**

Combine all ingredients in a mixing bowl and serve.

**Plating**

Use a bed of Greens or Cabbage for Plating.  
Serve Calamari and Banana Peppers on top of greens. Serve the sauce on the side for dipping.

Decorate with Edible Flowers on top!

**VEGAN CALAMARI**  
**WITH HELLMANN'S TARTAR SAUCE**

WITH **J.C. LOPATEGUI**







# BORDERLESS CUISINE

This food trend transforms diverse food traditions into harmonious, innovative experiences. This movement is driven by *globalization* and migration as well as a new generation of chefs aiming to honor their multicultural roots. These chefs are reimagining how different culinary influences can be combined to create unique yet authentic dishes that go beyond novelty.

## GLOBALLY

TAHINI, MATCHA  
GOCHUJANG & SUMAC

ARE THE INGREDIENTS GROWING  
IN POPULARITY MOST RAPIDLY.





**Key factors contributing to this trend include:**

- Globalization and migration expanding culinary knowledge and influences
- A second generation of chefs honoring their cultural heritage
- Increased social media visibility of global cuisines
- Consumers seeking authentic experiences in food discovery
- A growing demand for meaningful storytelling behind these culinary creations

At the core of this movement is a desire to creatively and thoughtfully merge cuisines, combining traditional ingredients and techniques in ways that respect their origins. This trend paves the way for more refined and cultivated dining experiences that offer not only bold flavors but also a deep sense of authenticity and cultural significance.

**The Top Techniques**

Here are some of the trendy techniques that are dominating this trend:

- Marination
- Brining
- Aging
- Sous-vide cooking
- Curing
- Steaming
- Caramelization
- Smoking

**Borderless Shopping List**

Here are some of the trendy ingredients that are dominating this trend:

- Miso
- Cured fish
- Kimchi
- Shiso
- Calamansi
- Pomegranate
- Mentaiko
- Aged soy sauce
- Pandan

Previous page: This marinated chicken burger is inspired by international techniques and ingredients.

# ONE TO WATCH

ALEPPO PEPPER IS A MUST-HAVE AT THE MOMENT. CONSIDER INCORPORATING IT INTO DISHES TO ATTRACT THE INTEREST OF DINERS.









THE KEY TO

WRITTEN BY  
Alvaro Lima  
Senior Corporate Chef  
*Unilever Food Solutions*, North America

# BORDERLESS

CHEF *Alvaro Lima* CALLS UPON HIS  
OWN PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AS  
A GUIDE TO BORDERLESS CUISINE.

CUISINE

Raised in Chicago, Chef Alvaro Lima has led a varied career in the world of food service. However, as a personal passion point, he enjoys cooking with bold Latin flavors and creating Modern Latin-inspired dishes—bringing together different international flavors in order to create harmonious dishes that draw from multiple culinary traditions.

For Chef Alvaro, this approach serves as an opportunity to educate individuals about the similarities between different cuisines and global cooking techniques. “Whether you’re stewing meat Indian-style or you’re stewing it Mexican-style, you’re still stewing and using the same technique. Then you’re shredding the meat and folding it into a Mexican rice bowl or an Indian basmati—those ingredients are very interchangeable.”

From these points of commonality, it’s easier to spot ingredients or dishes that might easily blend together or to discover the techniques that might enable this cross-pollination of different international flavors. From a consumer point of view, Chef Alvaro relishes the opportunity to introduce guests to new

and brilliant combinations. “It’s important that diners become more aware of the different ingredients that are out there. It’s something new and exciting.”

When it comes to devising blended recipes, he recommends embracing an experimental method to help get the creative juices flowing rather than entering into the process with hard and fast rules. “The fun part for a chef is doing trial and error to see what works. It helps you step out of your comfort zone,” he explains. “When things don’t work, something different can still come out of it. You can tweak things here and there and end up with something that you never would have thought was going to work.”



“It’s about taking things that the diner is comfortable with but they never would have thought of marrying together.”

While some kitchen teams might be nervous about adopting the principles of borderless cuisine, Chef Alvaro explains that chefs can step in and help to educate their staff on broader, more global food practices. “Even with cuisines they may have never cooked or tried before, there may be techniques that are familiar. Exposing a team to the ingredients and the culture is important, even if it’s through videos on YouTube or social media,” he says.

Chef Alvaro recalls bringing different cuisines together when creating birria ramen: a Latin-Japanese dish that he ideated after taking stock of the ingredients he had to hand. “I had stewed meat and a flavorful broth so I wondered if I could fold in Japanese noodles to it and add scallions. I did this a couple of years ago where we married these things together. It wasn’t even fully intentional—birria was on the rise on menus and ramen was still doing extremely well in North American menus—but it worked out wonderfully.”

Understanding the hesitancy that some diners might have around trying new dishes, Chef Alvaro explains that fusing together aspects of well-known dishes, can be a good entry point into the world of borderless cuisine. “With the example of ramen with birria, the diner might think, ‘Whoa, I like ramen and I like birria, but I like birria in tacos and I like ramen with pork belly. Hey, let’s try it,’” he says. “It’s about taking things that the diner is comfortable with but they never would have thought of marrying together. This can help open diners up and make them feel a little bit more comfortable.”

He believes borderless cuisine can be a way of sharing his Latin heritage while expressing his personal interests, and sees it as an opportunity for chefs to share the depths and breadths of their own tastes and experiences. “With borderless cuisine, it tells a story of who the chef is. I can showcase what I grew up eating and what I still like to preach and share but I can also introduce a new flavor,” he explains. “I love Japanese food, for example, so I can make a Mexican-influenced dish that is also very Japanese-influenced.”

He also thinks it’s important to combat misconceptions about borderless cuisine—namely, that it isn’t cost-effective. He feels that borderless cuisine can actually help us minimize waste by unlocking new creative ways to reimagine how we use ingredients. “The big thing is being able to take sauces and produce and being able to repurpose them,” he explains. “Let’s say you make a dish and it doesn’t work out. Can you still build other dishes out of that? You can utilize just about everything, depending on the cooking technique, from that ingredient.”

Whether it’s introducing new combinations, finding ways to entice diners into trying new dishes or getting inventive with minimizing waste, borderless cuisine promotes a sense of creative exploration.



Opposite page:  
Chef Alvaro Lima,  
**Unilever Food Solutions**,  
North America.



# THE F WORD

WRITTEN BY  
Esther Tseng

## THE FACE OF FUSION HAS CHANGED. BORDERLESS CUISINE IS THE *new normal*.

There is nary a culinary term more controversial and yet commonly used to describe the blending of cultures than “fusion.” On the surface, the merging of cultures, or influence of one over another, began as early as migration, colonization, and trade did. That’s to say, thousands of years ago. But context matters and addressing the history of when and how certain cuisines converged is more important than ever. The way fusion cuisine is referenced today tends to overlook the many ways cuisines were created outside an East Asian-Western purview before the latter half of the 20th century, when “fusion” in modern cuisine was coined. For the purposes of this section, we’ll address the large impact Asian migration has had on Californian cuisine, which has influenced and spread to many other parts of the world.

There are certain, ubiquitous dishes we might take for granted that act as timestamps in the history of fusion cuisine. In the 1960s, the California roll—the cut roll substituting raw fish with avocado, cucumber and (imitation) crab meat—was said to have been created by Ichiro Mashita in Little Tokyo or Ken Seusa near Hollywood in Los Angeles, or Hidekazu Tojo in Vancouver. Whether its invention was a result of the constraints of access to ingredients or acclimating to local tastes, the roll became popular throughout Southern California before spreading throughout the States, becoming the gateway to sushi for many North Americans.

There are many other notable dishes in the timeline of fusion cuisine that are still iconic today, including the Chinese chicken salad by Sylvia Cheng

Wu of Madame Wu’s Garden, which incorporated cabbage with lettuce along with cooked chicken dressed with a vinaigrette made of sesame oil, soy, and mustard, which was also created in the 1960s. The smoked salmon pizza by Wolfgang Puck has been on the menu at Spago since its opening in 1982, and is topped with dill cream, chili and garlic oil, chives, and caviar. Yellowtail sashimi in a sauce made of soy, citrus, and katsuobushi with thin slices of jalapeño on top is an iconic starter dish initiated into fusion cuisine by Nobu Matsuhisa, now seen everywhere. During the birth of social media, the Korean short rib taco peddled by Roy Choi’s Kogi taco truck became a well-known success story not only in the fusing of Mexican and Korean cuisines, but in the internet virality of foodstuffs.







There are also many iconic foods that have resulted from the convergence of cuisines all over the world centuries ago. There's bánh mì (Vietnamese and French), there's the Jamaican patty (Jamaican and English), and there's vindaloo (Portuguese and Goan). There's also pancit palabok (Chinese, Mexican, Spanish in the Philippines) and ramen (Chinese and Japanese). But the most important component behind all of these foods is the rich history from which they arose, whether the integration of their cultures was a result of colonization or shared exploration. Problems begin when cooks fail to acknowledge how cuisines or ingredients do or don't fit together, simply combining cuisines in a slipshod manner, believing that adding one to another will necessarily equate to a sum bigger than their parts. There is a reason why fusion cuisine has gotten a bad rap, sometimes earning the moniker among its critics, "confusion cuisine."

In fact, Matsuhisa's expertise didn't come about in a vacuum. He's a steward of Nikkei cuisine, itself a culinary movement that dates back to the late 19th century, when the first Japanese settlers landed in Peru. They adapted their recipes to fit local Peruvian tastes, becoming a local staple by the mid-1900s. Matsuhisa, who was born in Saitama, Japan, opened his

first Nobu in Peru in 1970, before moving to Los Angeles to open Matsuhisa. Today, there are over 50 Nobu restaurants all over the world.

Another blend of cuisines birthed in Peru is chifa, incorporating Cantonese and Peruvian flavors and ingredients to become a genre entirely its own, with the largest number of Chinese laborers arriving in the mid-1800s. Dishes such as arroz chaufa (fried rice) and lomo saltado (beef and vegetable stir-fry) populate menus in restaurants serving Chinese-Peruvian cuisine.

In France and Japan, cultural exchange began in the late 1800s during the Meiji Restoration after Japan opened its ports to Western trade. Frenchman Louis Begeux was employed as the first foreign head chef in Japan at Tsukiji Hotel and spread French influence throughout Japan, even cooking at imperial banquets. His Japanese apprentices would travel to France to study French techniques there, just to return and continue spreading French culinary influence throughout Japan. For France's part, in the 1960s, Japanese influence became more mainstream in nouvelle cuisine, with French chefs lightening up their touch with thinner sauces and more delicate notes on the palate. Cuisine

"Understanding the history of these cuisines can only help chefs better understand how to integrate these influences."



showcasing this duality even arrived in the States, through restaurants such as the late Akira Hirose's Maison Akira in Pasadena, which was open from 1999 to 2019, and still lives on today, in Charles Namba and Courtney Kaplan's just-opened and third restaurant, Camelia, in Downtown Los Angeles.

In North America, Chinese food made for palates in the United States meant adding more sugar and frying more ingredients. Dishes such as egg foo young, General Tso's chicken, and orange chicken were created in American kitchens. Though Chinese migrants first landed on the shores of the States to work the gold mines, build its railway system, and work agricultural jobs, large-scale immigration didn't happen until 1965, when Chinese food could be supported by a larger Asian population because of the passing of the Immigration and Nationality Act, striking down the restrictive Chinese Exclusion Act. Until then, Chinese food had to be acclimated to more Western palates in order to stay in business.

Today, fusion can be found anywhere and everywhere, also thanks to a few international chains that help make it ubiquitous in its many interpretations. Nobu, for one, continues to thrive on

its identity as a reliable, cosmopolitan fusion restaurant offering sushi but also izakaya-like dishes in locations all over the world. Sushisamba offers a Japanese, Brazilian, and Peruvian menu for an East-South American experience within a colorful, modern setting in soon-to-be nine locations, including Las Vegas and Dubai. Award-winning Roy Yamaguchi's Roy's Restaurants, which serve Hawaiian fusion, has 30 locations, mostly in the United States, but also Japan and Guam. But there's also California Pizza Kitchen, with its over 200 locations worldwide, bringing fusion pizzas and Chinese chicken salad to the masses.

While it's impossible to address the roots of how the foods of countless cultures all over the globe have integrated with and influenced each other, there's a clear pattern when it comes to East Asian flavors and ingredients gaining acceptance when integrated with Western cuisines and palates in the mid-20th century. These are loosely what we recognize as "fusion" food, born out of migration patterns and the adjustments these communities had to make in order to please local palates and stay in business. At its essence, some of this innovation was born out of struggle, and understanding the

history of these cuisines can only help chefs better understand how to integrate these influences. Though there are no limits when it comes to fusion cuisine, and though the terminology might have some baggage to shed, its evolution continues and is simply inevitable.



# COOKING BEYOND BORDERS

WITH CHEF *Santiago Lastra*







Chef Santiago Lastra is leading a new culinary moment that dissolves borders and rewrites tradition. At KOL—celebrated in The World’s 50 Best Restaurants since 2022—he reimagines the vibrant flavors of his native Mexico using exclusively British ingredients. His cooking is as much about honoring heritage as it is about embracing innovation.

“I left Mexico when I was 18 and didn’t want to look back,” Chef Santiago recalls. “At the time, leaving Mexico was the definition of success. My dream was to learn from Europe’s top chefs—it never crossed my mind that my heritage or Mexican gastronomy was unique. It took 10 years for my perspective to shift.

That realization came while working at the Nordic Food Lab in Copenhagen. There, Chef Santiago explored how to make tortillas using Scandinavian grains and nixtamalization—the traditional Mexican technique of cooking corn with calcium hydroxide. “I discovered how I could get Mexican flavors even without specific Mexican ingredients. That opened my eyes and made me realize how special it was to be Mexican and to be able to represent my country by serving Mexican food outside Mexico.”

**Local ingredients for Mexican flavors**

In Mexico, people cook with what they have around them, they don’t import ingredients. At KOL, I imagine the UK as an island that’s part of Mexico, creating Mexican flavors using only British ingredients. Each dish has a Mexican narrative or incorporates traditional techniques, like cooking ingredients wrapped in leaves. Everything is new, but also traditional.

We chefs like to think we can create tradition in our lifetime, but it takes a lot of time and effort to create something that is even equally as good as tradition. Just think—developing the first taco took at least 3,000 years. That doesn’t mean we shouldn’t try. At KOL, we’re building a culinary language and a way of working that, someday, could become tradition. Hopefully our process will become an easier and more natural thing to do.

**The secret behind the cuisine**

During my travels across Mexico, I discovered that Mexican food is made not for fuel, but for pure pleasure. So for the past decade I have been obsessed by the science behind that pleasure and how it influences both the palate and the mind. I return to Mexico multiple times a year, exploring taquerias, villages, markets, and indigenous communities. Each visit deepens my understanding of what makes Mexican cuisine so special, helping me represent my country and its flavors in the best way possible.

Mexican food is explosive, yet perfectly balanced. It engages every part of the palate. Take the taco, for example: the crunch of the tortilla, the dumpling-like softness, the creaminess of the salsa and the chewiness of the meat. It’s everything you can ask for, a complete bomb of sweet, alkaline, sour, umami, spicy, and aromatic. Everything you can ask for in just three bites. And that’s just street food. Mole sauces can contain up to 70 ingredients—ash, chocolate, vegetables, plantains, chilies, nuts, and seeds—all layered to achieve maximum flavor complexity.

One of the most elegant things you can eat in Mexico—and one of my favorite dishes ever—is escamoles, known as Mexican caviar. It’s only available in late spring, as it’s made from the eggs of queen ants harvested from agave cacti. These delicate eggs are sautéed in butter with shallots and served with a tortilla, avocado, and salsa. It’s just divine.

**The craft of flavor**

At KOL, we reimagined escamoles by steaming and cooking pine nuts until they softened into a jelly-like texture, mimicking the delicacy of ant eggs. We paired this with truffle, mushrooms, and a veal and bone marrow stock. To complete the dish, we added a sprinkle of Formica rufa ants from Kent, whose sour flavor resembles lemon, as a nod to the queen ants from Mexico.

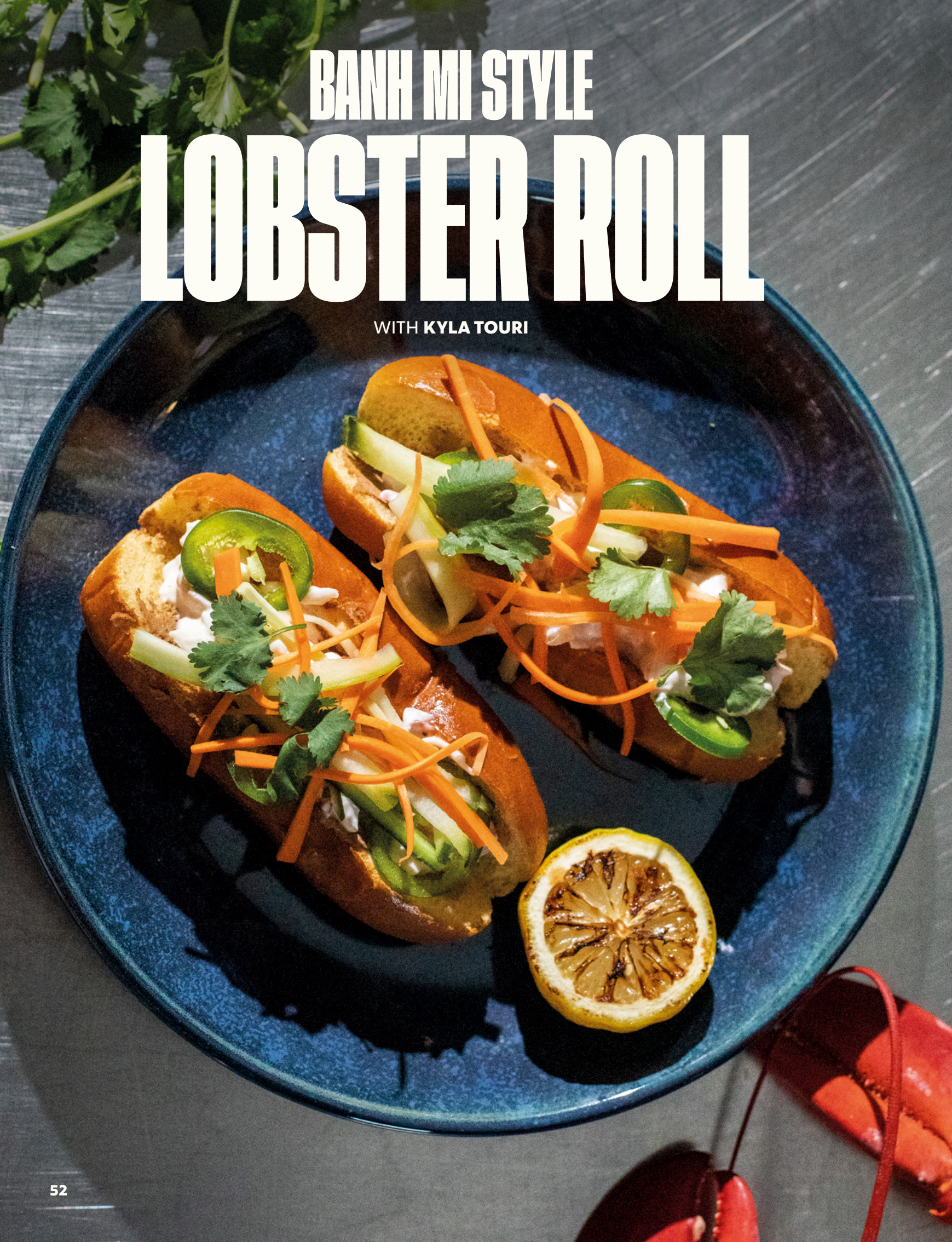
Creating dishes like this asks for a meticulous analysis of flavors. You really have to break them down and see them as flavor maps in order to seek alternatives. If I need to replace mango, for example, I look for something equally sweet, yellow, and floral in the UK. That could be elderflower for the floral note—which we make into a syrup. Squash kombucha brings the right acidity and color, or in summer yellow bell pepper. Together, they become an ice cream that tastes remarkably like mango.





# BANH MI STYLE LOBSTER ROLL

WITH KYLA TOURI



“LOBSTER ROLL BANH MI PERFECTLY EMBODIES BORDERLESS CUISINE WHICH LEAPS *beyond* THE MASH-UPS OR FUSION DISHES WE HAVE SEEN TRENDING IN THE PAST.”

— KYLA TOURI  
Corporate Chef  
*Unilever Food Solutions*

This dish combines some of the traditional ingredients of an Atlantic Canadian Lobster roll, which includes succulent pieces of lobster served on a brioche style bun, and a Vietnamese banh mi which is a sandwich that includes components like meat, pickled vegetables, and pate.

## INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4)

### Pickled Vegetables

4 med. Carrots, peeled, julienned  
3 stalks Celery, tops and bottoms removed, julienned  
3¾ cups Hot Water, boiled  
1¼ cups White Sugar  
10 tsp Salt  
1¾ Rice Wine Vinegar

### Pork Pate

6¾ oz Pork Pate, prepared  
7¼ oz **Hellmann's Real Mayonnaise**  
1 tsp Chinese Five Spice

### Lobster Filling

2.9 lbs Lobsters  
¾ cup **Hellmann's Real Mayonnaise**  
1 TBSP Tamari  
1 tsp Sesame Oil  
As Desired Lemon, Juice and Zest

### Garnish

2 cups Cilantro, fresh, washed, leaves removed  
½ cup Mint, fresh, washed, leaves julienned  
1 cup Green Onion, sliced

### Toasted Buns

10 Top Split Buns  
3½ oz **Hellmann's Real Mayonnaise**

### Assembly

Pickled Vegetables  
Pork Pate  
Lobster Filling  
Garnish  
Toasted Buns

## METHOD

### Pickled Vegetables

Dissolve Salt and Sugar in the hot water, then add Rice Vinegar.

Add Carrot and Celery, then let stand for at least 1 hour.

Drain and reserve for Sandwich build.

Massaging with Salt and Sugar, before adding the liquid, helps quicken the pickling process.

### Pork Pate

Combine all ingredients in a food processor and blend until well combined.

### Lobster Filling

Cook live Lobsters in a heavily salted pot of water. Approx. 11 minutes per 1lb of lobster.

Remove and submerge into an ice bath.

In a bowl, whisk together **Hellmann's Real Mayonnaise**, Tamari, Sesame Oil, and Lemon Juice and Zest.

Remove meat from shells, let cool, and roughly chop meat.

Gently fold Lobster meat into Mayonnaise mixture. Cover and refrigerate until ready to use.



## Hellmann's Real Mayonnaise

As America's favorite mayonnaise, Hellmann's real mayo delivers a smooth texture, balanced flavor, excellent hold, and quality to your signature dishes that your customers will love."

### Garnish

Combine all herbs.

### Toasted Buns

Spread equal amounts of **Hellmann's Real Mayonnaise** on the outside of each Bun.

On a flat top, or in a pan, toast both sides of each Bun until golden brown.

### Plating

Spread Pork Pate on one side of the inside of the Toasted Buns.

Fill each Bun with Lobster Filling.

Top each Bun with Pickled Vegetables.

Top each Bun with Garnish.





### LeGout Vanilla Instant Pudding and Pie Filling

Great as a pie and pastry filling or as the base for a vanilla pudding dessert, this dry puddingmix gives busy chefs a quick and reliable option for creating delicious dishes that patrons will love.



**“OUR LEGOUT VANILLA PUDDING CREATES AN *excellent* FILLING THAT IS PATISSERIE QUALITY WITH A QUICK AND EASY PREPARATION”**

— **RUDY SMITH**  
Corporate Chef  
*Unilever Food Solutions*

A Filipino egg-roll filled with an American apple filling and coated with a crisp caramelized sugar coating.

### INGREDIENTS (SERVES 24)

#### Apple Compote

7 cups Apples - small dice  
1 ea Lemon - juice of  
1 cup Dried Cranberries  
½ cup Dark Brown Sugar  
2 oz Butter  
2 TBSP Red Wine vinegar  
¼ tsp Allspice  
¼ tsp Ground Ginger  
¼ tsp Ground Cinnamon  
¼ tsp Ground Cardamom

#### Vanilla-Cardamom Sauce

1 pkg **LeGout Vanilla Pudding and Pie Filling mix**  
As needed Whole Milk  
1 TBSP Ground Cardamom  
1 cup Heavy Cream  
- whipped – unsweetened

#### Assembling the Turonitos

12 ea Spring Roll Wrappers, cut into half diagonally;  
1 recipe Apple Compote  
1 ea Egg beaten

### METHOD

#### Apple Compote

Toss Diced Apples with Lemon Juice.

Melt Butter with Sugar, Vinegar, and Spices.

Add Apples and Cranberries. Cover and cook over medium heat until sauce is reduced - about 10 - 15 minutes.

Cool and reserve.

#### Vanilla-Cardamom Sauce

Mix Cardamom with Milk. Make pudding per package directions using the Cardamom Milk.

Fold 1-part Unsweetened Whipped Cream into 2 parts of the prepared pudding.

#### Assembling the Turonitos

Lay wrapper on table with long side toward you.

Brush with Egg Wash.

Place approximately 2 TBSP of Apple Compote on wrapper and fold and roll as you would an Eggroll.

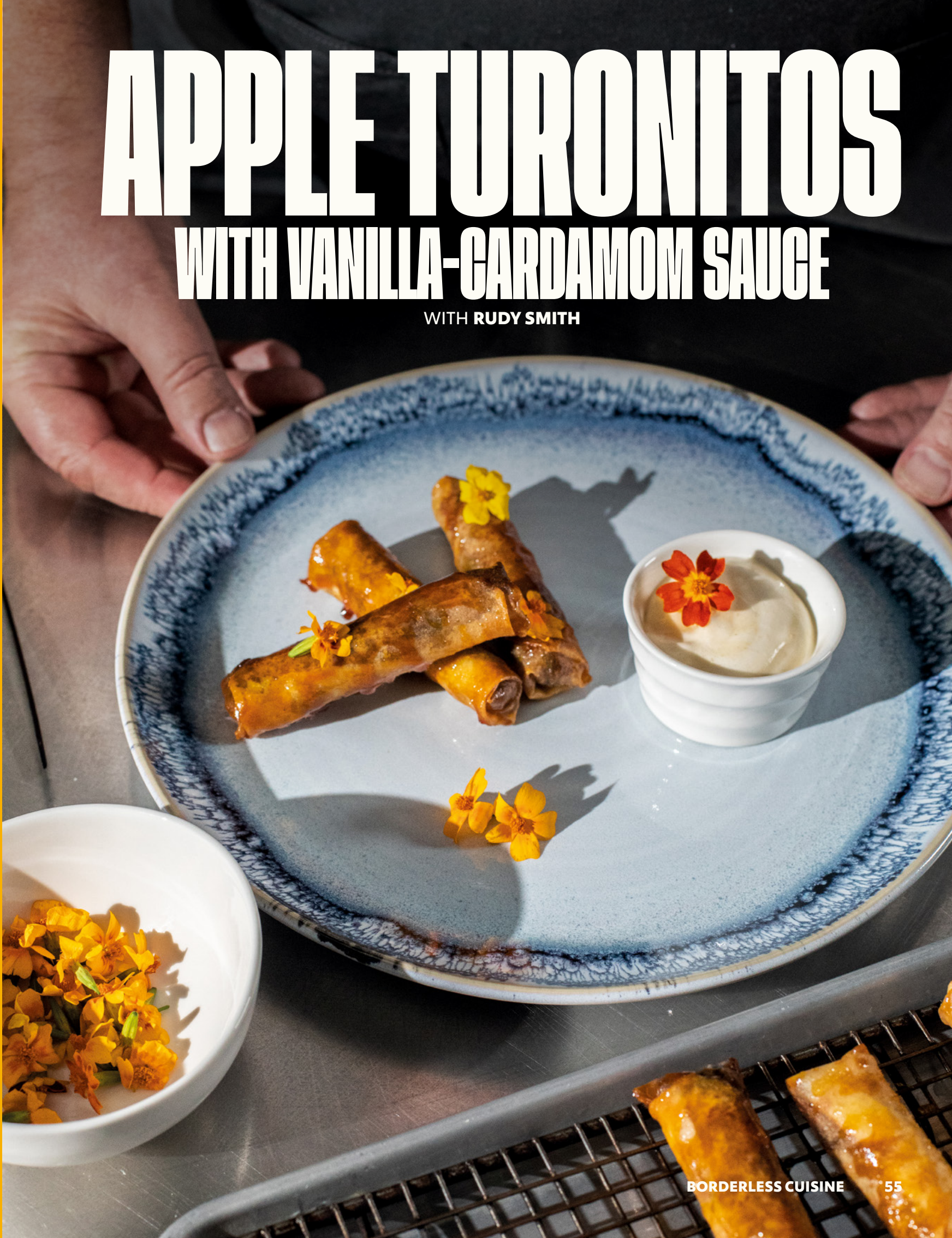
Refrigerate until needed.

#### Cooking of the Turonitos

Heat Oil in a thick bottomed pan to 325 degrees. Oil should be about 3-4 inches deep. Put 3-4 Tablespoons of Sugar into the Hot Oil. Watch and wait for the Sugar to melt and just start to brown around the edges. Add 3-6 Turonitos into the Oil with the Sugar. Fry the Turonitos stirring them to the bottom of the pan as possible. As they fry they will pick up the Sugar and it will caramelize on them. When the Turonitos are covered with a nice coating of Sugar and are a nice dark golden brown, remove them to a drying rack. Do not let them touch each other on the rack as they cool. repeat the procedure with the remaining Turonitos adding Sugar as needed. Allow to cool to luke warm (they will be extremely hot when first cooked), and serve immediately with a side of the Vanilla/Cardamom Sauce for dipping.

# APPLE TURONITOS WITH VANILLA-CARDAMOM SAUCE

WITH **RUDY SMITH**





# GALBI JJIM TACOS

WITH SEBASTIAN RIVERA



"I'VE COME TO SEE A TACO AS A VESSEL RATHER THAN JUST A STANDALONE DISH, ALLOWING ME TO EXPLORE DIFFERENT FLAVOR PROFILES AND INTRODUCE *exciting* NEW COMBINATIONS."

— SEBASTIAN RIVERA  
Corporate Chef  
Unilever Food Solutions

Braised Beef with Korean fermented Chiles.



## Knorr Professional Beef Liquid Concentrated Base

Knorr® Professional Liquid Concentrated Bases are in a convenient, ready-to-use format, which allows chefs to add scratch-like flavor at any stage of the cooking process with no prep time. Made from high-quality ingredients, they consistently deliver exceptional flavor, color and aroma to dishes.

## INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4)

### Braised Beef

¼ cup of **Knorr Professional Caldo de Res** (for seasoning beef)  
4 pounds Beef Chuck  
1 Onion  
6 cloves of Garlic  
1 gallon prepared **Knorr Professional Beef Liquid Concentrated Base**  
¼ cup Soy Sauce  
3 TBSP Gochujang  
2 tsp Gochutgaru  
¼ cup Mirin  
2 grated Korean Pears  
1 stick Cinnamon

### Building the Taco

Beef  
Broth  
Corn Street Taco

### Garnishes

2 sliced radishes  
½ sliced White Onions  
1 sliced Jalapeño  
¼ cup Cpiced Pickled Onions  
¼ cup Cilantro Chiffonade  
1 Lime cut into wedges

## METHOD

### Braised Beef

Season the Beef Chunks with **Knorr Professional Caldo de Res**.  
Heat the Vegetable Oil in a large pot over medium-high heat.

Sear the Beef Chunks until browned on all sides. Remove and set aside.

In the same pot, add the Sliced Onion and Minced Garlic. Sauté until the Onion is translucent and the Garlic is fragrant.

Add the Beef Broth to the pot, scraping up any browned bits from the bottom.

Stir in the Soy Sauce, Gochujang, Gochugaru, Mirin, and Grated Korean Pear.

Add the Cinnamon Stick. Return the seared Beef Chunks to the pot.

Bring the mixture to a boil, then reduce the heat to low.

Cover and simmer for about 2-3 hours, or until the Beef is tender.

### Building the Taco

Once the Beef is tender, remove it from the broth and shred it using two forks.

Heat a small amount of Vegetable Oil in a skillet over medium heat.

Dip each Corn Tortilla into the Beef Broth to coat it lightly.

Place the Dipped Tortilla in the hot skillet.

Add a generous amount of Shredded Beef to one half of the Tortilla.

Fold the Tortilla over to create a Taco.

Cook the Taco for about 2-3 minutes on each side, or until the Tortilla is crispy and golden brown.

Repeat with the remaining Tortillas and Beef.









HERO INGREDIENT

# POSITIVE KITCHEN CULTURE

Kyla Touri  
Corporate Chef  
Unilever Food Solutions, Canada

Every day, chefs across the globe exhaust themselves to deliver—for both their teams and customers. It’s what drives them, but it can also come at a cost—their physical and mental wellbeing.

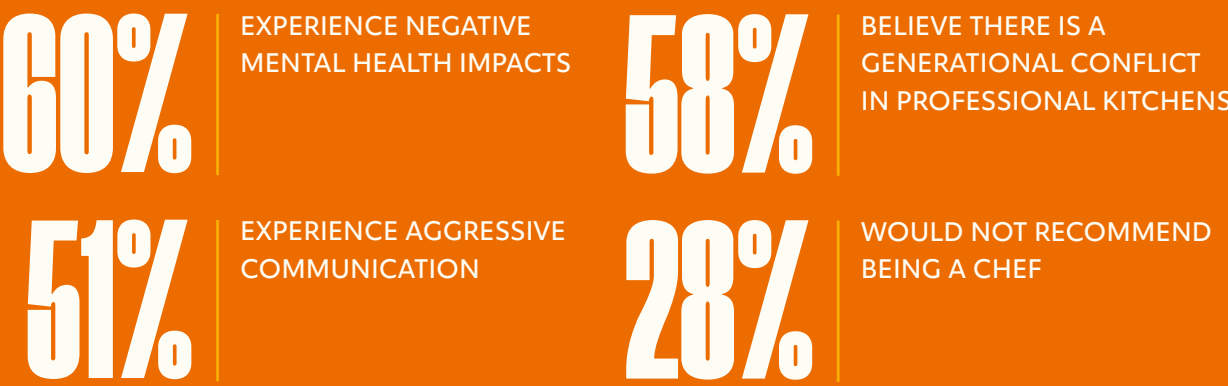
Positive Kitchens, like FairKitchens before it, is here to support that drive, ensuring that delivering does not come at too high a cost for chefs or their teams, bringing some much-needed support to professional kitchens internationally.

Founded by *Unilever Food Solutions* in 2018, Positive Kitchens is a free support resource that provides the training, tools, and inspiration chefs and their teams need to thrive and perform at their best in the professional kitchen environment. We can’t eliminate the pressures of service, but we can provide support, arming you and your team with a blueprint of resources, training, and tools to help you make your environment as positive as possible, improving kitchens now and for future generations.

Positive Kitchens start with you, but we’re with you every step of the way, celebrating our people, championing diversity and inclusivity, and creating the positive environments that we all want to be part of.

*UFS* research findings show that professional kitchen culture is still highly toxic in many food service environments around the world, negatively impacting the health and wellbeing of chefs and their teams.

Our survey findings showed:





# RECIPE FOR A POSITIVE KITCHEN

LEADING THE WAY  
TOWARDS A POSITIVE  
KITCHEN CULTURE  
WITH CHEF *Asma Khan.*

Restaurant kitchen culture has long been associated with grueling hours, strict hierarchy, and abusive language. That would come to an immediate end if it were up to Asma Khan, chef and founder of Darjeeling Express, an all-female Indian restaurant in London. The activist and disruptor is on a mission to revolutionize the way kitchens operate—focusing not just on the food, but on the people who make it. Building communities and creating an environment where every person is valued, respected and empowered. Discover the positive kitchen.

At Darjeeling Express I wanted to do things differently. We are a sisterhood. We look different and we come from different traditions, but we operate as a tribe. A group of women who cook together and who believe in each other. Women have always been at the center of every culinary tradition, yet are often sidelined in professional kitchens. They feel underrepresented, isolated and disadvantaged. That is a massive issue. They should be made to feel welcome, equal, safe, and that the doors are open for them to one day progress to head chef.

The hospitality business is run by people of all backgrounds, yet they are often not respected. But if you want to be successful, you need everyone in your team to feel valued. Restaurant owners should nourish their staff emotionally, physically, and mentally. The idea that you have to endure abuse because of the pressures of the kitchen is absurd. If you can't handle the pressure, you need to step back and breathe. It's not a reason to mistreat others. People need to be able to play sports, to go out, to see a film, to meet their friends, and to spend time with their cats.

We live in a revolutionary time of change within the industry. We're no longer talking about chefs doing molecular cuisine, we are talking about taking care of your staff.

Your priority is not the bottom line, the Michelin stars, or the good reviews. It's the mental health of your own team. Look after them first, then look after your customers. The greatest legacy of our generation should be that we changed the industry for the next generation.

“The greatest legacy of our generation should be that we changed the industry for the next generation.”



## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

If you build a really good dish, everything has to be in equal proportion. The same goes for your team. Every kitchen should have an emphasis on diversity. Diversity not just regarding skin color, but also gender and sexuality. You must have people of every kind of background. Through food, conversations, and mutual respect you can build bridges. Start a conversation with your team about what they need to feel equal. Make them feel their opinion matters. That is how diversity will be successful.



## FAIRNESS

As many as 74% of chefs feel sleep deprived to the point of exhaustion and 53% feel pushed to breaking point. People should get fair treatment and fair pay. That starts with shorter shifts and more reasonable working hours. Staff should be given the time to rest, pursue their personal passions, and live balanced lives. Exhausted people make bad decisions, which only leads to poor outcomes.



## JUSTICE

Toxic work environments have been normalized in the restaurant industry for far too long. As many as one in four chefs have suffered physical abuse. I believe a kitchen should be a place where you feel safe. Owners, chefs, and managers are responsible for setting up a framework of respect and equality. You need to have policies in place that oppose bullying, that state there is zero tolerance of racism and zero tolerance of anyone being touched against their consent.



## EMPATHY AND COMMUNITY

Create an environment where staff feel supported, respected and empowered. That can be done by celebrating everyone's birthday, holidays of all cultures, or by simply taking the team out for ice cream on a hot day. Those small gestures foster connections and break down barriers. By promoting understanding and celebrating diversity, chefs and kitchen staff can create a space where everyone feels seen and valued.







# CULINARY ROOTS

An exciting growing menu trend that celebrates and revives lesser-known regional cuisines, honoring indigenous ingredients and cooking techniques that connect to cultural heritage. This movement emphasizes the importance of preserving the past while moving forward, ensuring *authenticity* remains at the heart of each dish. The trend often begins within a region and may gain wider recognition, but it must retain its true essence to succeed.

FERMENTATION,  
STEAMING &  
SMOKING

ARE EMERGING  
TECHNIQUES IN  
THE UNITED STATES





Key factors contributing to this trend include:

- The post-Covid pandemic era and supply-chain issues, sparking interest in local and cultural food traditions
- Diners seeking depth and authenticity in their food experiences
- The rediscovery of one’s own culinary culture rather than focusing on foreign influences alone
- Chefs embracing their heritage first and foremost
- Storytelling as a means to connect with tradition and history

Chefs are now reviving traditional and micro-regional recipes, offering diners access to rarely celebrated cuisines. This approach preserves culinary heritage by using authentic techniques and ingredients. While modern twists can be applied, maintaining the authenticity of the cuisine remains essential, providing a rich cultural experience that celebrates history as much as innovation.

The top techniques in this trend:

- Wood-fire cooking
- Stewing
- Infusion
- Slow cooking
- Charcoal grilling
- Marination

Cuisines with Culinary Roots that fit this trend:

- Oaxacan
- Andean
- Basque
- Emirati
- Korean temple
- Sichuan
- Yucatecan

Previous page:  
Dan dan noodles are trending globally.

ONE TO WATCH

THE POPULARITY OF HUNAN CUISINE, WHICH ORIGINATES FROM THE XIANG RIVER REGION, DONGTING LAKE AND WESTERN HUNAN PROVINCE IN CHINA, IS INCREASING RAPIDLY.











# THE SOUL OF THE LAND SERVED ON A PLATE

WITH *Ana Roš*

At three-Michelin-starred Hiša Franko, in the remote Slovenian Soča Valley, nestled between the Julian Alps and the Italian border, each dish tells a story of place, tradition, and creativity. Co-owner and chef Ana Roš has built a cuisine shaped by the alpine climate and rooted in seasonality, local sourcing, and respect for the land. From reviving traditional farming methods to challenging perceptions of what makes an ingredient valuable, her creations are bold, personal, and reflect the region's unique character.



Hiša Franko is the first and only restaurant I’ve ever worked at. I actually graduated in international science and diplomacy. I wasn’t a professional cook when I started working here 25 years ago, so I had a bit of a romantic approach and philosophy. I began liaising with local farmers, suppliers, and foragers around me, because we’re so far away from any cities that we needed a strategy on how to get ingredients. So what today is a trend, we already started doing all those years ago.

**A slap to the face**  
I see us as ambassadors of our land. At the table of Hiša Franko, you can sense and experience where you are and who is cooking for you. Our food is a patchwork of seasonality and territory and the main color is the personality of the chef. My food is very intense and spicy. Guests are sometimes shocked and say the menu was like a slap to the face. But that’s precisely what I want.

**Working with the seasons**  
We follow nature and work with the seasons. Our ingredients are micro local. When I step on top of the mountain here, I can see all the places we’re sourcing from. That challenges us to be creative, because nature isn’t a supermarket—we constantly need to adapt. We don’t use foie gras, lobster, or most of the ingredients you find at famous restaurants. We stick to the produce we can find around the Soča Valley, such as potato, trout, and roebuck.



“My food is very intense and spicy. Guests are sometimes shocked and say the menu was like a slap to the face. But that’s precisely what I want.”



**A climate of abundance**  
Our unique alpine climate, influenced by the salty breeze of the nearby sea and the mineral-rich soil, gives plants and the animals that feed on them distinct flavors. It is incredible to discover how much more this soil and this climate can give than what our ancestors knew. Traditionally, this is the area of green beans, but through our farmers Jeanne and Matteo we discovered that our climate is similar to that of New Zealand. So now we have New Zealand spinach, wasabino, kiwi, and mustard leaves. So we let our imagination go wild and every year the list of ingredients we have is longer.

**Keeping tradition alive**  
Sometimes I think one of my major successes is keeping the traditional ways of farming alive here. We sustain the valley economically through the way we source, which also has a social impact because young people are staying to become farmers instead of moving to the cities. The strong fermented cottage cheese we use—with a spicy and sour flavor—is typical for this valley, but unfortunately it is rarely eaten anymore. We buy it from old farmers to help the tradition and knowledge survive.



“For me, Culinary Roots is about returning to nature. It’s about embracing the local territory and being mindful in how we garden and forage, so we don’t deplete the forests or meadows.”



**One euro potato**

One of our most famous dishes is the potato baked in hay crust. That dish began with a conversation I had with a farmer about the potatoes we needed. When I asked him to set the price, he said, “One euro.” Per potato that was, not per kilo. At first, it felt excessive, but then he asked: “Why do we pay so much for good meat or fish, but not for vegetables?” That question shifted my perspective. The dish itself brings this idea to life. A potato is baked in a crust of high-mountain hay and salt, absorbing the floral, earthy aromas of alpine meadows. Breaking the crust releases a scent that evokes sleeping in a hay bed in the high Alps—a romantic experience that tells the story of Hiša Franko.

**Return to nature**

For me, Culinary Roots is about returning to nature. It’s about embracing the local territory and being mindful in how we garden and forage, so we don’t deplete the forests or meadows. Every chef should have the skills to source locally. If we can make it work in the challenging climate of the Soča Valley, it can be done anywhere. Let’s stop buying tomatoes year-round and instead focus on eating more seasonally and locally. We should stop moving food around too much. Not just to lower CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, but also because each day that passes after the harvest of fruit and vegetables, the plant is losing essential oils, which completely changes the flavor.”





# CAJUN RICE & GRAVY ARAYES

WITH CORI BOUDREAUX



"I WANTED TO UPDATE THIS *classic* DISH INTO SOMETHING FUN AND HANDHELD WHILE KEEPING TRUE TO ITS ORIGINAL SPIRIT."

— CORI BOUDREAUX  
Corporate Chef  
Unilever Food Solutions

Arrays stuffed with pork, rice, and greens.



## Knorr Professional Ultimate Demi Glace

This demi-glace mix delivers a perfect balance of beef, mirepoix, and tomato flavors that is certain to impress your guests.

## INGREDIENTS (SERVES 6)

### Rice & Gravy

2 lbs Cubed Pork Shoulder  
2 TBSP Cajun Seasoning  
3 TBSP Vegetable Oil  
1 Yellow Onion, diced  
1 Green Pepper, diced  
2 ribs Celery, diced  
3-5 cloves Garlic, minced  
1 qt Chicken Stock made with **Knorr Professional Chicken Liquid Concentrated Base**  
2 cup prepared **Knorr Professional Ultimate Demi Glace**

### Collard greens

2 qt Shredded Collard Greens  
2 TBSP Vegetable Oil  
2 tsp Cajun Seasoning  
¼ Yellow Onion, fine dice  
½ Green Bell Pepper, fine dice  
2-3 cloves Garlic, minced  
¼ cup Water  
½ TBSP **Knorr Professional Vegetable Liquid Concentrated Base**

### Meat filling

1 lb Ground Beef  
1 TBSP Cajun Seasoning  
½ TBSP **Knorr Professional Chicken Liquid Concentrated Base**  
½ Yellow Onion, grated  
½ Green Bell Pepper, grated  
¼ cup Scallions, thin sliced  
¼ cup Parsley, minced

### Tahini Ranch

1 cup **Hellmann's Real Mayonnaise**  
1 cup Buttermilk  
1½ TBSP **Hellmann's Original Buttermilk Ranch Salad Dressing Dry Mix**  
½ cup Tahini  
2 TBSP Lemon Juice  
¼ cup Sliced Green Onion

### Arayes

Rice & Gravy  
Collard Greens  
Meat Filling  
2 cup Cooked White Rice  
6 Pitas, cut in half  
¼ cup Vegetable Oil

## METHOD

### Rice & Gravy

Toss Pork with seasoning and let rest overnight. Brown Pork in oil over medium low heat until well browned all over, then remove Pork and add Onion, Bell Pepper, and Celery.

Sweat vegetables until Onions are translucent, then add Garlic and cook until fragrant. Add Pork and Stock. Bring to a boil, reduce to a simmer, cover, and cook until pork is tender - approx. 60-90 minutes. Stir occasionally.

Add Demi-Glace and stir well. Continue simmering until Pork separates easily with a fork. Defat, separate meat from Gravy, then chill.

### Collard Greens

Sweat vegetables in Oil until Onions are translucent. Add Garlic and seasoning, cook until fragrant.

Add Collard Greens, Water, and Base. Stir and cook over medium-low heat until Greens are tender and most water has been cooked out, approx. 10-15m.

### Meat filling

Place Onion and Pepper into cheesecloth or similar and squeeze out as much liquid as possible. Combine squeezed vegetables and all other ingredients in a bowl and mix well.

### Tahini Ranch

Combine Ranch Mix with Buttermilk. Mix well.

Add remaining ingredients. Mix well then refrigerate.

### Arayes

Combine Rice with reserved Gravy until desired level of coating is achieved.

In each Pita half place approx. 2-3 TBSP of Rice mixture, then some of the cooked Pork, then some of the Collard Greens. Top pita with approx. 1½ oz of the raw meat mixture, being sure to cover the entire opening.

Over medium-low heat, cook Pitas in Oil on both sides before finishing by cooking vertically with the raw meat contacting the pan. Pitas should take on lots of color and meat should be very well browned. Serve with Tahini Ranch for dipping.





**“IN THIS DISH, I TOOK THE FLAVORS AND COOKING TECHNIQUES OF AN ENTIRE MEAL AND COMBINED THEM INTO ONE *remarkable* BITE.”**

— **DANA COHEN**  
Marketing Chef  
**Unilever Food Solutions**

Food that reminds you of being gathered around the table with family for the holidays is so much more than just food - it evokes memories, familiarity, and the feeling of tradition. In this dish, I took the flavors and cooking techniques of an entire meal and combined them into one remarkable bite. Although the confit method was historically used as a preservation technique, its resurgence is a reminder that all trends carry a piece of the past. Whether it's duck, eggplant, or citrus peels, the concentration of deep flavor and luxurious texture can be used to elevate many dishes.

## INGREDIENTS (SERVES 10)

### Croquettes

5 Duck Legs Confit, shredded and chopped fine  
2½ cups Mashed Potato  
2 Small Shallots, finely minced  
1¼ cups Shredded Comte Cheese  
1 tsp Fresh Thyme, minced  
1 TBSP **Maille Old Style Mustard**  
Salt and Pepper to taste  
1 cup AP flour  
4 Eggs, whisked  
4 cups Panko Breadcrumbs  
Oil, for frying

### Cranberry Red Cabbage Sauce

1 lb Red Cabbage, roughly chopped  
3 oz Port Wine  
1½ oz Red Wine Vinegar  
1 tsp **Maille Dijon Mustard**  
1 tsp Kosher Salt  
1 cup Cranberry Sauce  
0.035 oz Xanthan Gum

### Make the Citrus Aioli

2 cups **Hellmann's Real Mayonnaise**  
½ TBSP Lemon Zest  
½ TBSP Orange Zest  
2 cloves Garlic  
1 tsp Chopped Fresh Thyme  
½ tsp Cayenne Pepper

### Plating

2-3 Croquettes  
1 TBSP Cranberry Red Cabbage Sauce  
1 TBSP Citrus Aioli

## METHOD

### Croquettes

Combine the Duck, Mashed Potato, Shallot, Comte Cheese, Thyme and Mustard in a large bowl and mix well. Form into small round balls and refrigerate until set.

Season the Panko Breadcrumbs. Use the 3-stage breading process to bread the Croquettes, then fry until golden brown and crisp. Drain and set aside.

### Cranberry Red Cabbage Sauce

Combine the Cabbage, Port and Vinegar in a sous vide bag and vacuum seal. Sous vide at 200 degrees for 2 hours, or until Cabbage feels soft. Let it cool in the bag.

In a blender, combine the sous vide Cabbage (including any liquid) with the Dijon Mustard, Salt and Cranberry Sauce. Puree on high speed until completely smooth. Sprinkle the Xanthan Gum and continue to blend.

Strain the Puree through a fine mesh sieve and place in a squeeze bottle. Refrigerate until needed.



### Hellmann's Real Mayonnaise

As America's favorite mayonnaise, Hellmann's real mayo delivers a smooth texture, balanced flavor, excellent hold, and quality to your signature dishes that your customers will love.

### Make the Citrus Aioli

Puree all ingredients in a blender until smooth. Place in a squeeze bottle and refrigerate until needed.

# DUCK CROQUETTES

## WITH CRANBERRY CABBAGE SAUCE & CITRUS AIOLI

WITH **DANA COHEN**





# KING CRAB

## WITH OXTAIL & KOREAN SCALLION PANCAKE SERVED WITH GRILLED SCALLION AIOLI

WITH BRANDON COLLINS



"THIS DISH SHOWS THAT 'SURF AND TURF' CAN BE TAKEN TO A NEW LEVEL AND ENJOYED AT AN *approachable* PRICE POINT."

— BRANDON COLLINS  
Executive Corporate Chef  
Unilever Food Solutions

Using familiar flavors and exciting textures to create an easily accessible, luxurious dish. Realizing that "Surf and Turf" can be taken to a new level and enjoyed at an approachable price point.



### Knorr Professional Caldo de Vegetales

Knorr Professional Caldo de Vegetales is the perfect blend of traditional spices such as cumin and coriander, enabling chefs to deliver the authentic and familiar flavor guests know and love to vegetarian dishes.

### INGREDIENTS (SERVES 6)

#### Braised Oxtail

3 lbs Oxtail  
1 ea White Onion Sliced  
4 ea Garlic Cloves  
4 cups of **Knorr Professional Caldo de Vegetables**  
1 cup Kimchi Juice  
2 in Ginger sliced

#### Grilled Scallion Aioli

1 bunch Scallions, cleaned  
1 cup **Hellmann's Extra Heavy Mayonnaise**

#### Scallion and Oxtail pancakes

2 cups Flour  
2 cups Scallion Aioli  
2 cups Shredded Oxtail  
½ cup Boiling Water

#### King Crab legs

16 piece of Crab meat  
½ cup Butter  
1 cup Kimchi Juice

#### To build dish

1 Pancake  
2 pieces of Crab  
Scallions or Chive sliced  
Scallion Aioli  
Kimchi Butter

### METHOD

#### Rice & Gravy

Sear Oxtail in a rondo and remove.  
Add Onion, Ginger, Garlic and saute.  
Deglaze with Kimchi Juice and add prepared Caldo. Braise in a 300 degree oven until tender and set aside.

#### Grilled Scallion Aioli

Grill Scallions with a little oil.  
Puree with the **Hellmann's Extra Heavy Mayonnaise** and season to taste. Reserve.

#### Scallion and Oxtail pancakes

Mix Flour and Boiling Water and knead until smooth. Let rest for 1 hour and then cut into 8 pieces.  
Make each piece into an oval and spread 2 TBSP of Aioli and 2 TBSP of Oxtail Mixture.  
Roll into a snake and then into a snail shape. Let rest for 20 min covered.  
Heat a griddle and roll each snail to about ¼ inch thick. Cook each side on a griddle until it is cooked through about 4 min per side.

#### King Crab Legs

Clean Crab Legs.  
Melt Butter and add Kimchi Juice.  
Dip Crab in Butter and griddle on each side until warmed through.

#### To build dish

Place 1 Pancake down cut in half.  
Add Crab on top.  
Drizzle with Scallion Aioli and Kimchi Butter.  
Top with Greens and serve.







# DINER DESIGNED

Dining is moving beyond generic customization to more interactive, personalized experiences, where diners take part in meal creation and modification. The *Diner Designed* menu trend focuses on making dining immersive and multisensory and offering unique, value-added experiences.



# 55%

INCREASE IN SEARCH RESULTS FOR GRILL-IT-YOURSELF KOREAN BBQ—HIGHLIGHTING A SHIFT TOWARDS UNIQUE, PERSONALIZED DINING EXPERIENCES.



**A number of factors are driving this evolving menu trend, including:**

- A growing desire for personalized, engaging, and immersive dining experiences
- Diners seeking communal experiences beyond traditional sharing platters
- Gen Z’s preference for curated choices and social-media-worthy moments
- Technological advancements (AR, AI) reshaping how meals are experienced
- Access to data-enabling hyper-personalized dining interactions

While tech and food have grown increasingly closer together in recent years, the relationship is evolving more than ever. Augmented reality (AR) can create interactive menus, while artificial intelligence (AI) tailors recommendations based on past preferences. These tools will help diners engage all their senses, offering a more customized and immersive experience. Restaurants will continue experimenting with tech to offer highly tailored, multisensory dining experiences. These will go beyond taste, incorporating visual, auditory, and even tactile elements, making dining more memorable and unique.

This trend reflects a shift toward deeper engagement in dining, where personalization and interaction are key, driven by evolving tech and diners’ demand for more meaningful, shared experiences.

**The top techniques dominating this trend:**

- Build-your-own
- Foams, espumas and aerated sauces
- Pureeing
- 3d printing
- Table-side cooking
- Flash freezing
- Fermentation
- Blowtorching

**Key ingredients for the Diner Designed menu trend:**

- Nuts
- Beetroot
- Chocolate
- Lemon
- Saffron
- Mustard
- BBQ Meats
- Gelatin

Previous page:  
Traditional bibimbap  
is easily modifiable  
for the diner.

# ONE TO WATCH

SEASONAL FRUIT IS EMERGING AS ONE OF THE FASTEST-GROWING INTERNET SEARCH TOPICS ACROSS THE US AND CANADA.





# A PLAN FOR PERSONALISATION



*Eric Chua* **UFS EXECUTIVE CHEF IN SINGAPORE, VIETNAM, AND CAMBODIA, SHARES COST-EFFECTIVE SUGGESTIONS TO SERVE UP PERSONALIZATION IN THE RESTAURANT.**

Personalization has become a cornerstone of the dining experience. By allowing diners to tailor their dishes according to their preferences, restaurants can create memorable and engaging experiences that keep customers coming back.

Personalization has become a critical factor in the dining preferences of Gen Z, a demographic that values individuality, health consciousness, and meaningful experiences. Unlike previous generations, Gen Z diners seek meals that reflect their personal tastes and dietary needs, making personalization not just a menu trend but a necessity for food service professionals to deliver on.



**Create Topping Stations:** Set up a salad or wrap bar with a variety of toppings (e.g. proteins, vegetables, nuts, and seeds). This allows Gen Z diners to craft their own dishes, enhancing their sense of ownership and creativity.

**Custom Dressing Stations:** Introduce a variety of interesting dressings and sauces inspired by regional cuisine flavors such as South East Asia. Patrons can mix and match to create their own unique blends, making each dish distinctly theirs.

**Flavor Profiles:** Provide diners with a choice of dynamic flavor profiles (e.g., spicy, tangy, sweet) that they can incorporate into their dishes. This helps cater to individual palates and encourages experimentation.

**Build-Your-Own Options:** Offer a selection of base ingredients for salads or wraps, allowing diners to choose their preferred proteins, vegetables, and grains. This not only caters to dietary preferences but also engages customers in the creation of their dish.

**Seasonal Specials:** Rotate seasonal ingredients and limited-time offerings that encourage repeat visits. Diners will appreciate the freshness and the opportunity to try new combinations.

**Feedback Loop:** Encourage diners to provide feedback on their personalized dishes, allowing the restaurant to refine offerings and build a closer relationship with its clientele.

**Encourage Sharing:** Create a “custom dish of the week” that diners can share on social media. This can incentivize them to try new combinations and helps promote your restaurant organically.

## WRITTEN BY

Eric Chua  
Executive Chef, Singapore,  
Vietnam, Cambodia and  
Future Platform Chef Lead  
**Unilever Food Solutions,**  
South East Asia & South Asia





# HOW TO MAKE A RESTAURANT PROFITABLE (AND KEEP IT THAT WAY)

Ah, restaurants—those tantalizing temples of gastronomy where dreams are plated and credit cards weep. It's easy to get caught up in romanticizing about the industry, imagining yourself as that chef passionately crafting dishes that people rave about to their friends. But behind the beautifully garnished plates and the Instagrammable ambiance lies the cold, hard reality: Restaurants operate on razor-thin profit margins. So how do you ensure your business remains profitable? Below are five tips to follow.

A restaurant's profitability isn't just about what's on the plate—it's about what happens behind the scenes. Every day you have to contend with unpredictable realities like: how many diners are going to show up today/tonight; suppliers gone AWOL with that essential order of ingredients; staffing issues and those unplanned power outages that melt your frozen inventory along with your profit.

Even the best-run kitchens face a constant battle with unpredictability, so it's important to mitigate the risk with reliable strategies that underpin your profit margin.

**WRITTEN BY**  
Thaís Gimenez  
Executive Chef  
**Unilever Food Solutions, Brazil**

## 1 Menu Engineering: The Art and Science of Profitable Plates

A profitable menu is more than a collection of dishes; it's a masterclass in balancing creativity and economics. Here's what it takes:

- **Understand your stars:** Some dishes fly off the menu and make you money. Others are passion projects that barely break even but showcase the chef's soul. Striking a balance between profitable crowd-pleasers and soulful culinary art is the key.
- **Practice ingredient wizardry:** Great chefs don't just cook; they maximize every ounce of every ingredient. From turning carrot tops into pesto to using beef trimmings for broth, efficiency is the secret sauce.
- **Adopt food trends (wisely):** Menu trends that align with your brand and audience can generate buzz—and revenue. Use this *Future Menus* book to find the one, or ones, that best fit your menu.

## 2 Harness the Power of Data (Yes, Data!)

Data might not sound sexy, but it's the lifeline of a profitable restaurant. Here's why:

- **Predicting demand:** By analyzing sales patterns, you can forecast customer flow and plan your purchases more accurately, reducing waste and avoiding stock shortages.
- **Tracking costs:** Integrate recipes, ingredient prices, and yields into your system to understand your food-cost percentage (the magic number that tells you if you're making money or just feeding people for free).
- **Scheduling efficiency:** Use historical data to determine peak dining times and staff rostering accordingly.



### 3 Equipment: A Professional Kitchen's Best Friend (or Worst Enemy)

Let's talk gadgets. Sure, you'd love a kitchen fitted out like a spaceship, but practicality matters.

- **Multitasking marvels:** Convection ovens, sous-vide machines, and high-powered processors can streamline operations and reduce prep time. Efficiency is your sous-chef.
- **Energy efficiency:** Lowering your energy bill is great for both the planet and your bottom line. Modern equipment with energy-saving features is worth the investment.
- **Training matters:** Even the best tools are useless if your team doesn't know how to use them properly. A well-trained team is more efficient than the fanciest mixer.

### 4 People Make the Professional Kitchen

Speaking of staff: they're the beating heart of your restaurant. But let's be real—the restaurant industry isn't exactly known for work-life balance. A happy, healthy team is a productive one. Here's how to keep your kitchen running smoothly:

- **Proper training:** Teach your cooks how to follow recipes and portion sizes accurately. Consistency reduces waste and ensures quality.
- **Mental health matters:** Burnout is real. Treat your team like humans, not machines. Healthy hours and a positive environment lead to better food service and reduced staff turnover. If you don't know about it already, check out the Positive Kitchens movement. *UFS* is a founding member. It's a free resource offering tools, training, and advice tailored for the food service industry (go to [www.ufs.com](http://www.ufs.com) for more).
- **Creative problem-solving:** A well-supported team can focus on creative ways to reduce waste, optimize workflows, and improve profitability.

### 5 Profitability Is a Daily Grind

Achieving profitability isn't a one-time milestone; it's an ongoing effort. Efficiency, creativity, and adaptability are your best friends. From rethinking your mise en place to embracing new preservation techniques (hello, dehydration and pickling!), every little adjustment can make a difference.

It might be a challenge, but for those who do it right, the rewards of running a profitable restaurant—financial and otherwise—are oh-so-satisfying.







# GAGGAN

RESTAURANT GAGGAN TAKES  
*experience* DINING TO THE  
NEXT LEVEL.

# ANAND





India’s Gaggan Anand is Asia’s most awarded chef. In his restaurant, Gaggan in Bangkok, which opened in 2019, he shows his rebellious and experimental side even more than in his previous restaurant. In Gaggan the guests dance, sing, and eat grilled Thai street rat. Whether the latter is actually true? On that subject, the chef leaves his guests guessing. “We are an extremely radical restaurant,” Gaggan says in a personal interview.

At Gaggan—ranked number nine on The World’s 50 Best Restaurants and number three on Asia’s 50 Best Restaurants—guests must abandon their ideas of fine dining. Experience is taken to the next level. It’s like visiting the theater, with two different performances. The restaurant has 14 seats. Guests sit next to each other in two lines that flank the sides of the kitchen, with a direct view of the action. Dishes are accompanied by music, there is a light show, and singing and dancing by the kitchen team as well as the guests.

**22 dishes**  
 “I created the dishes and came up with the concept,” says Gaggan. The show is like a movie that you think you know the end of, but then it turns out completely different. The only predictable thing is the fact that the 22 dishes that are served do not disappoint. They still form the biggest wow factor.

Gaggan previously made a name for himself by presenting traditional Indian dishes in a completely new way. Instead of classic approaches, he combined the flavors and spices of India with modern cooking techniques, leading to surprising and unusual taste experiences. “In today’s Gaggan, guests taste my memories,” he says. Memories from India, but also from his visits to countries around the world. From a broccoli cookie melting in your mouth to—in the middle of dinner—a dessert waffle, with foie gras and coffee.



**Street rat and brains with beet juice**  
 The culinary experience at Gaggan also includes humor. For example, Gaggan says he serves his guests Thai street rats. “We catch them, feed them every six hours, for 21 days, with grass. We bleach them, then steam them. We serve the brain of the rat with beet juice. From street to table.”

Gaggan’s “yogurt explosion” is also served. This masterpiece consists of a bubble of yogurt filled with intense flavors. When you place the bubble in your mouth, it explodes, creating a flavorful experience. “Whenever I have traveled somewhere, I know my experiences will be reflected in my new menu.”

The top chef learned a lot about molecular gastronomy from Ferran Adrià at El Bulli restaurant, which was voted best restaurant in the world several times. “Adrià is a great example for me, but most of my inspiration comes from life. By traveling, by meeting people and by learning about different cultures.”







# SHORT RIB SATAY

## WITH TRIO OF SAUCES, PICKLED CUCUMBER & CRISPY BLACK RICE

WITH DANA COHEN



**"GIVING THE DINER PART OF THE CREATIVE *freedom* ELEVATES THE ENTIRE EXPERIENCE, AND THESE SKEWERS ARE AS FUN TO LOOK AT AS THEY ARE TO EAT."**

— **DANA COHEN**  
Marketing Chef  
**Unilever Food Solutions**

Tender, smoky short rib skewers are marinated and grilled, then served with 3 sauces of different flavor profiles and unique garnishes to create a one-of-a-kind experience with every bite.



### Knorr Professional Chipotle Barbeque Sauce

Great as both a grill sauce or meat marinade, this barbeque sauce delivers a unique smoky taste, accented with chipotle and other Mexican-style peppers for just the right amount of spice.

### INGREDIENTS (SERVES 10)

#### Short Rib Skewers

2 lbs Thin Sliced Short Ribs (Kalbi)  
1 cup Pineapple Juice  
⅓ cup Soy Sauce  
¼ cup Rice Vinegar  
1 TBSP Ginger Juice  
⅓ cup Dark Brown Sugar  
2 cloves Garlic, minced  
1 White Onion, minced  
1-2 Jalapeno Peppers, sliced thin

#### Pickled Cucumbers

12 oz Cucumbers, small diced  
2 TBSP Salt  
1 cup Rice Vinegar  
2 TBSP Soy Sauce  
2 TBSP Sesame Oil  
1½ TBSP Agave Syrup  
1 TBSP Ginger Juice  
3 cloves Garlic, smashed  
½ tsp Red Pepper Flakes  
½ to 1 cup Cold Water

#### Crispy Black Rice

1 cup Short Grain Black Rice  
Oil, for frying

#### Kimchi BBQ Sauce

2 cups **Knorr Professional Chipotle BBQ Sauce**  
1 cup Kimchi  
2 tsp Toasted Sesame Oil  
2 tsp Ginger Juice

#### Smoked Cashew Cream

2 cups Cashews  
1½ cups Cater  
2 cloves Garlic  
1 tsp Smoked Salt  
2 TBSP Lemon Juice

#### Chimichurri Aioli

2 cloves Garlic  
3 cups Parsley  
2 cups Cilantro  
1 tsp Red Wine Vinegar  
¼ tsp Dried Oregano  
¼ tsp Red Pepper Flakes  
2 cups **Hellmann's Real Mayonnaise**

#### Plating

6 oz Marinated Short Ribs  
4 Wooden or Metal Skewers  
2 oz Kimchi BBQ Sauce  
2 oz Smoked Cashew Cream  
2 oz Chimichurri Aioli  
2 TBSP Pickled Cucumbers  
2 TBSP Crispy Black Rice  
1 tsp Thinly Sliced Scallions  
1½ tsp Chili Crunch

### METHOD

#### Short Rib Skewers

Combine all ingredients for the marinade and mix well. Marinate the Short Ribs for about 4 hours.

#### Pickled Cucumbers

Combine all ingredients for the marinade (except the Water) in a container.

Salt the Cucumbers for 15-20 minutes.

Place the salted Cucumbers in the marinade. Pour just enough Water over the cucumbers so they are completely submerged. Seal the container and refrigerate overnight.

#### Crispy Black Rice

Fry the raw Rice in Oil until it puffs and you can see the inner white part of the grain and it becomes crisp. Drain and set aside.

#### Kimchi BBQ Sauce

Combine all ingredients in a blender and puree until smooth.

Set aside.

#### Smoked Cashew Cream

Soak the Cashews in Water overnight.

Drain the Cashews and save the liquid. Combine the Cashews, Garlic, Smoked Salt and Lemon Juice in a blender. Puree until smooth and creamy, adding enough soaking water until desired consistency is reached. Season to taste with additional Salt and Lemon Juice as needed.

#### Chimichurri Aioli

Combine all ingredients in a blender and puree until smooth. Set aside.

#### Plating

Thread the short ribs onto the skewers. Grill over high heat on both sides until slightly charred. Place on a plate.

Top the Skewers with Chili Crunch, pickled cucumbers, crispy black rice and sliced scallions.

Place the 3 sauces into ramekins and serve on the side.





“A GUEST NEW TO THE CUISINE CAN BUILD THEIR MAKI AS SAFE OR *wild* AS THEY’RE COMFORTABLE WITH.”

— **BRITNEY JEROME**  
Corporate Chef  
*Unilever Food Solutions*

A playful, diner designed, hand roll platter.



**Hellmann’s Real Mayonnaise**

As America’s favorite mayonnaise, Hellmann’s real mayo delivers a smooth texture, balanced flavor, excellent hold, and quality to your signature dishes that your customers will love.

**INGREDIENTS**  
(SERVES 4)

**Sushi Rice**

- 1 cup Sushi Rice
- 1 cup Water
- 1 TBSP Rice Wine Vinegar
- ½ TBSP Mirin
- Kosher Salt to taste

**Spicy Tuna**

- ½ lb Fresh Tuna, medium dice
- Hellmann’s Real Mayonnaise**
- 1 TBSP Soy Sauce
- 2 tsp Kashmiri Chili Powder
- ¼ tsp Szechuan Chili Powder

**Hot and Sour Jackfruit**

- 8 oz Canned Jackfruit in Syrup
- 3 TBSP Lime Juice
- 1½ TBSP Fish Sauce
- 1 Red Birds Eye Chili, sliced thin
- 1 tsp Dried Shrimp Paste or Powder
- 1 clove Garlic, minced
- 1 piece Star Anise

**Grilled Maitake Mushrooms**

- 4 oz Fresh Maitake Mushroom, torn into large pieces
- Toasted Sesame Oil
- Kosher Salt

**Candied Sweet Potato**

- 1 Purple Sweet Potato, peeled, large dice
- ¼ cup Mirin
- ¼ Rice Wine Vinegar
- 1 TBSP Kosher Salt
- Water as needed

**Assembly**

- ¼ cup Prepared Kimchi
- 2 oz Japanese Cucumber, sliced lengthwise
- Green Onion, split lengthwise
- Large Bonito Flakes
- Nori Squares for Maki Rolls
- Strong Leaf Lettuce or Cabbage, for Lettuce Wraps
- Cuttlefish Crackers
- Furikake, for Rice Garnish

**METHOD**

**Sushi Rice**

Wash rice in Cold Water. Drain and repeat until the Water remains clear.

Drain Rice very well.

Cook Rice in a Rice cooker, following cooker instructions. If you do not have a Rice cooker, bring the Water and Rice to a boil together. Reduce the heat to low, cover with a tight lid, and cook for 15 minutes. Then turn off the heat, and allow the rice to rest for 15 minutes before removing the lid.

Spread the cooked Rice out, over a sheet pan. Evenly sprinkle the Vinegar, Mirin, and Salt over the Rice.

Gently toss the Rice to distribute the flavors.

**Spicy Tuna**

Combine all ingredients.

Refrigerate for at least 1 hour before use.

**Hot and Sour Jackfruit**

Tear the Jackfruit into bite size pieces, whatever that looks like for you.

Combine all ingredients.

Allow Jackfruit to marinate for at least 1 hour before use.

**Grilled Maitake Mushrooms**

Preheat a grill or grill pan, until very hot, near smoking.

Toss the Mushrooms in juts enough Oil to coat, then season with Salt.

Quickly grill Mushrooms until charred all over but retaining their shape. Allow Mushrooms to cool.

**Candied Sweet Potato**

Preheat an oven to 350 degrees.

Arrange a single layer of sweet potato in a shallow baking dish. Add remaining ingredients to the pan.

Add just enough Water to the pan to cover the Potatoes.

Bake Potatoes in oven until the liquid has evaporated and the Potatoes are smashable soft and sticky.

Smash Potatoes with a fork. Taste and add Salt if desired.

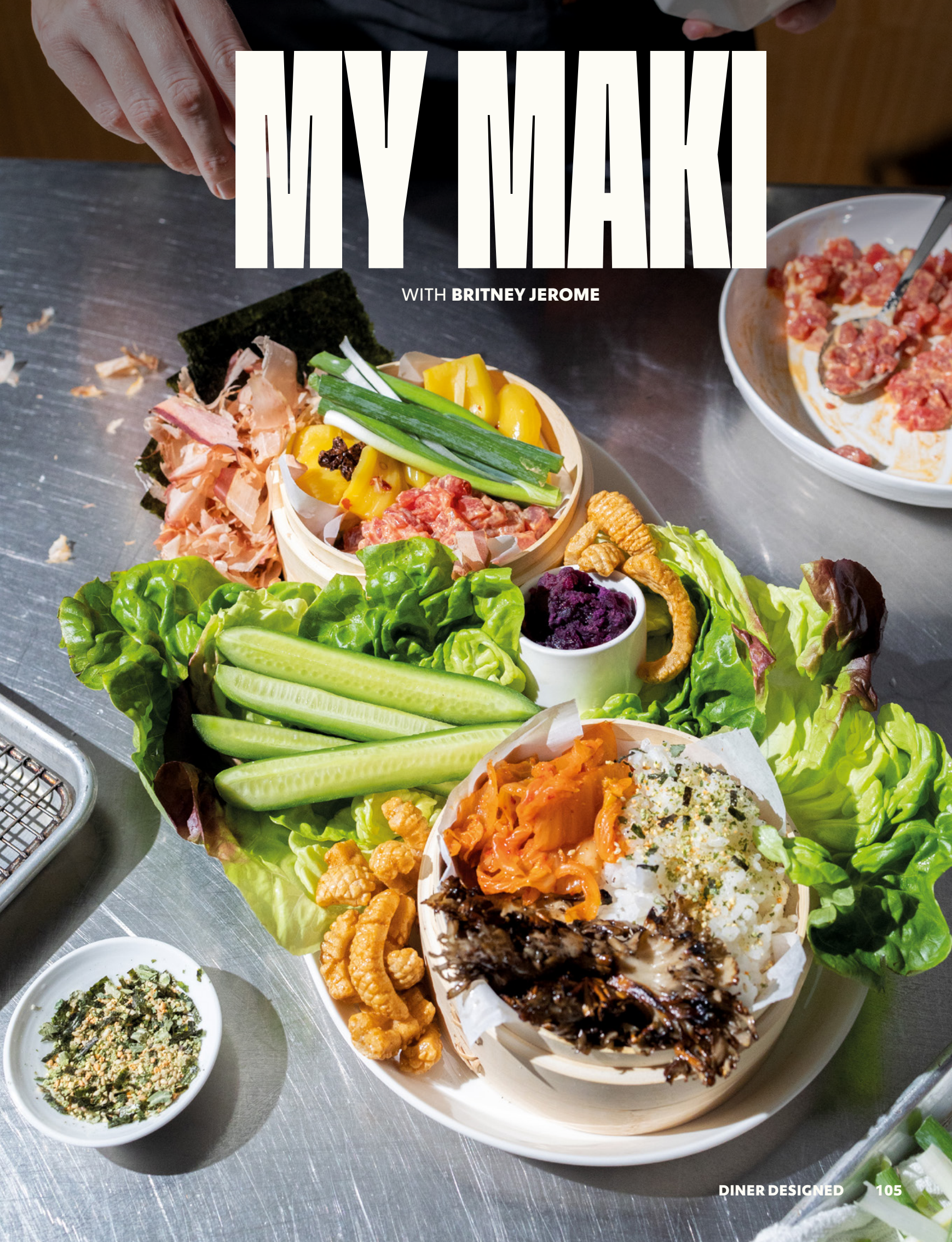
**Assembly**

Line two bamboo steamer shelves with parchment paper.

Arrange all the elements of the dish, using the bamboo rounds and platter.

# MY MAKI

WITH **BRITNEY JEROME**





HERO INGREDIENT

# INTRODUCTION TO FERMENTATION

CHAMPIONED BY CHEFS INCLUDING DAVID ZILBER  
AND SAM BLACK, FERMENTATION IS MUCH MORE  
THAN JUST THE *future* OF FLAVOR...



Imagine transforming simple ingredients into culinary masterpieces that burst with flavors you haven't experienced before—that's fermentation. In chemistry, fermentation is defined as the transformation of sugar into other substances by microorganisms in the absence of oxygen. But in the kitchen, fermentation is an artful skill that, when harnessed, helps propel foods and their flavors into the culinary stratosphere. "It allows us to experiment and channel our inner child as it can be very personalized and creative," notes Unilever's Research and Development Director, Sarah Lieder. Though there isn't one simple recipe for fermenting, some hero ingredients to include are water, salt, yeast, and sugars, which help create an environment that allows the key element to evolve. Beyond these conditions, the most important component of fermentation is time.

The history of fermentation goes thousands of years back and has roots in cultures across the world—from ancient China to North Africa and Greece. Initially though, fermentation was used as a form of preserving foods with short natural expiry dates, like milk, fish, or meat. But as early as 7000 BC, people began using the process for creating new drinks or dishes. However, the health benefits of fermentation weren't properly understood until the 1900s, when scientists discovered the positive impact of good bacteria in fermented milk on the human digestive system.

Since then, fermented dishes have become embraced not only for their flavors but also for the fact that they can make certain ingredients, such as fibrous vegetables, easier for the human body to digest. Kimchi, sauerkraut, miso, sourdough, yogurt, and cheese—all of these kitchen staples are the result of fermentation and the same goes for many popular alcoholic drinks, as the process breaks down glucose found in fruits and vegetables to form a natural source of the alcohol ethanol.

Though part of the mass food production industry for decades, the popularity of home fermentation has been on a steady incline over the past decade as wider audiences started valuing the active probiotic cultures in fermented foods.

Coincidentally, the complex flavors crafted by this process began penetrating even the most prestigious culinary circles. Not only does it make food more nutritious, but fermentation also has the job of elevating the aroma and pushing the boundaries of what a certain ingredient can taste like. "The sensation and new flavor profiles, but also textures—they trigger interest and curiosity. We know how something tastes, but how are we going to bring fermentation in the kitchen? That's where I see it evolving," explains Evert Vermandel, Unilever Food Solutions' Global Lead Innovation Chef. Both Vermandel and Lieder are excited about the prospects of fermentation in battling food waste, too. With products like vinegars and fermented sauces, the process offers a possibility of extracting good flavors from ingredients that are past their prime and building personalized flavors on top of it. "The possibilities are almost limitless," says Lieder.

Something that started as a means of survival is today a tool in crafting new pathways in both haute cuisine and home cooking, connecting the past, present, and future of food. More than just a trend, fermentation is an exciting way of pushing culinary boundaries into uncharted territories.



# AN EVOLVING PROCESS

Before there was cooking, there was fermentation. In fact, before there were people, there was fermentation! This biochemical process is rooted in history, having been an important part of global cuisines for thousands of years. But prior to humans harnessing its power for expanding flavors and longevity of ingredients, fermentation was merely a natural accident that happened with time and transformed foods when they came into contact with bacteria. Wonder how it all started?









# THE FUTURE OF FLAVOR

Taking the art of fermentation one step further, the culinary world has recently started embracing a new take on traditional methods. Using advanced tools and knowledge from food and biological sciences, we can step up from traditional methods and get (safely) access to the full potential of nature's texture and flavor diversity. Scientists search for new cultures that generate desired flavor and textures. Balancing the contribution of different microbes in a culture blend and finding optimal process conditions is the key to generating new fermented food concepts. Fermentation is turning into a creative tool. It allows chefs to create exciting textures, flavor profiles and give access to alternative protein sources, making it easier to serve customers with delicious textures and flavors.

Though still very much in the process of discovery, there is great potential in precision fermentation becoming part of the patchwork of gastronomy. The final products of this technique include proteins and fats with both a positive impact on both the body and the environment, making them a solid alternative to animal products. On the one hand, they can have higher amounts of protein and other nutrients. On the other, the excessive agricultural footprint of traditional ingredients can be relieved across the world.

Just like some of the other advanced culinary methods that were once considered revolutionary, it changes the way people look at ingredients and questions the impact of food on both the individual and their community. And just like the original mission of fermentation, its main goal is preservation—of food, of us, of the planet.

From left: Chef Philip Li and  
Chef Chris Zhong, *UFS China*.





# TOP TIPS!



Whether you're an expert with fermentation or just beginning your journey with this magical process, here are some top tips that will ensure both success and safety when experimenting with different ingredients. No lab coat required!

## 1 QUALITY INGREDIENTS

Using fresh and organic raw vegetables ensures the best results, as they have natural yeasts that encourage the natural fermentation process.

## 2 STRONG HYGIENE

Always use clean vessels and utensils to avoid contamination of bacteria. Simple yet efficient, classic Mason jars are a great option for home fermentation, as glass doesn't stain or include any chemicals.

## 3 NON-IODIZED SALT

Non-iodized salts, such as sea salt, are a crucial component for fermentation because they don't contain additives that could potentially inhibit the process.

## 4 UNIFORMITY IS KEY

When cutting your vegetables, make sure to stick to uniform sizes to guarantee even fermentation and consistent results.

## 5 STARTER BRINE

For beginners, using a starter brine like salt, whey, or vinegar can help kickstart the fermentation process. This is especially useful for dishes like sauerkraut and kimchi.

## 6 STAY BELOW THE BRINE

All ingredients should be submerged below the brine to prevent mold growth and ensure proper fermentation.

## 7 NOT TOO HOT, NOT TOO COLD

Monitoring temperature is important, as fermentation works best at room temperature. Excessive heat or cold as well as temperature fluctuations can affect the process and the final product by preventing microbial growth.

## 8 WAIT IT OUT

Fermentation is a slow process, which means patience is of the essence. Allow enough time for the flavors to fully develop—rushing the process will lead to disappointing results.

Happy fermenting!





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