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MAY 2024

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volume 19, issue 5

THE WILDFLOWER

Unapologetic and Wild Spirited. Chef **Andrea** is living the most unorthodox chef story with a recipe that has led to her success as an entrepreneur, creative culinary developer, and charismatic host

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COMPLETE LISTING OF
RULES AND
REGULATIONS FOR
**SALON
2024**

A DRIZZLE OF OIL

The era of AltEdible oils has arrived, offering the best options for both the dish and the environment, writes **Shreya Asopa**



BAKING BREAKAWAY

Chef **Chanaka Peiris** of Pullman Dubai Creek City Center is this month's competitor for the Arla Pro Pastry Mastery Chef of the Year Competition



MEET THE JUDGES

A diverse panel of international and local judges are set to bring their unique perspectives at the upcoming Expo Culinare





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Dear Members and Partners,

I sincerely hope all of our members, partners, and friends have been spared from the damaging floods we experienced in our country in April and that business has returned to normal for all.

As we enter our busiest month of the Emirates Culinary Guild, I extend my best wishes to all competitors for the upcoming Salon Culinaire, to be held from May 20th to 22nd, 2024, in conjunction with our home event, Expoculinaire, once again. With over 800 competitors going head-to-head for gold in the three-day extravaganza of culinary excellence, this year's Salon will be the largest since 2018.

This year, we see the return of the Alen Thong Golden Coffee Pot Challenge. Eight international teams, including South Africa, South Korea, Wales, China, Hong Kong, Azerbaijan, Sri Lanka, and the United Arab Emirates, will compete for the coveted Golden Coffee Pot Trophy. Once again, this competition has been made possible thanks to the tremendous support of JM Foods.

This year's Salon features a new addition - the Sounbula Artisan Bakery Arena Class. In this class, teams will prepare their dough from scratch on day one and finish the baking process on day two. We would like to express our gratitude to Sounbula Mills for their gracious support in bringing this class to the event, which will showcase the incredible skill of bakers from across the country and abroad. Do not miss to read about the classes inside this issue and watch out our chefs in action during the event. The EXPOCULINAIRE is the only truly all-inclusive food and hospitality industry exhibition in the country where cooks, chefs, pastry chefs, and bakers can participate in culinary competitions, and we have HORECA and



education, all rolled into one great space at the EXPO Centre Sharjah. We thank Joanne Cook, our partner and exhibition organizer of Purple Kitchen events, for putting up the show and giving the chefs a platform to showcase their best creations to the industry and their peers.

We thank all our partners who have once again responded to our call for support and sponsored the Salon Culinaire. I call on all members to thank our corporate and Salon partners for making it possible for us to do what we love.

As we move through the year, we see and hear trends evolving in the industry. At the same time, we have a solid focus on sustainability throughout the business, with discussions on the future of food security and food safety, feeding the planet in the future, and many other aspects. We will look at articles that can inspire and provoke discussion for us all. Another topic that is now building momentum is the "fair kitchen" movement, where we see ourselves in the industry questioning and highlighting whether we are as inclusive as we should be and whether our kitchens and workplaces are fair places for all to work in. Over the coming months, we have tasked one

of our feature writers to study this for us to give us a global pulse check and perspective of the state of this area. Along with the sustainability of the food, we need to look at our industry's workforce sustainability to make it an encouraging environment to work in for the future from all walks of life.

An essential part of the Guild's purpose is the development of the chefs and the opportunities we give. This year, we are running the ARLA PRO Pastry Chef of the Year. I want to call on our senior chefs in the pastry field to put forward yourselves and your teams for the opportunity of a lifetime. By joining this competition, you stand a chance to win a fantastic education trip next year and, enhance your skills, gain recognition, and network with industry leaders. Contact us at the Guild office for more details and read inside this issue, about ARLA PRO Pastry Mastery to see what we are doing together with our partner for you.

We will have our Africa and Middle East Presidents meeting during the Salon Culinaire. We are inviting our country presidents to join us there and we are thrilled to host them and showcase our chefs' exceptional performances in the Salon Culinaire.

In closing, I wish the very best of luck to all our competitors. I encourage the senior chefs to guide their competitors in their competitions to get the best opportunity to win a medal and to encourage them to try again if they don't. The opportunity to compete in competition is all about learning, and with the field of International judges that we are flying in this year to judge our chefs, the opportunity to learn and listen to their feedback is a golden moment in a young chef's career. The judges will be ready to give honest, professional feedback and will be ready to guide our competitors in the future. Good luck, chefs.

With Regards,
Andy Cuthbert
President and Editor



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A Culinary Journey: From Passionate Beginnings and Beyond

Culinary school may have taught Chef **Helen** how to cook, but it did not prepare her for the real-world challenges of job hunting and interviews

The days of culinary college were a mixture of unforgettable moments, like a well-seasoned stew but with more laughter and fewer carrots. Those were the days when my two-year culinary adventure was slowly simmering to a close, and it was about time to peek into the oven of my future. Gone were the blissful Fridays, where skipping class was as tempting as a flaky croissant to lounge by the boathouse, sipping something cold with my fellow comrades, swapping tales of our nightclub adventures and culinary catastrophes. The vast, unforgiving kitchen of the real world was preheating, ready for me.

And what was my grand plan, you wonder, as you lean in, expecting tales of Michelin stars or gourmet glories? To chase the mystical tall hats aboard a cruise liner. Having watched Cunard chefs waltz around their kitchens on TV, I was spellbound, ready to sail the seven seas, armed with nothing but a spatula and a dream. The allure of tax-free dough (and I'm not talking about bread) combined with my wanderlust made it seem like the perfect job. A flawless recipe for happiness, right?

But alas, the path to nautical gastronomic glory was more slippery than an oiled-up zucchini. Despite my enthusiastic efforts, sending out CVs with the hopefulness of a chef trying a new recipe, the responses I got were the equivalent of a soufflé collapsing. "Thank you for your interest, but..." became the chorus of my job hunt saga. It seemed my culinary ship was destined never to embark. Or perhaps my tender age of 18, still more a kitchen kitten than a seasoned lion? The reasons mattered not, for the cruise ship dream remained just that—a dream.

Who said every dish turns out perfect on the first try? The quest for my dream job



was more like trying to flip an omelette without breaking it: a bit messy, but a learning experience. Ah, the job hunt—where hope springs eternal, only to often get deep-fried in the reality of rejection. And though I never made it to those cruising kitchens, I picked up a few recipes for resilience and optimism along the way. After all, I knew the kitchen awaited, and with it, endless tales would yet to be plated.

With a freshly minted CV and a dream, I ventured into the heart of the urban jungle: London. The destination? The Mayfair, a place so swanky, practically demanded a top hat and monocle at the door. Here I was, a chef in the making, stepping into the culinary Colosseum, ready to do battle with the finest.

As I entered the arena, surrounded by a dozen or so fellow gladiators—I mean, applicants—I couldn't help but notice the gender ratio. It seemed the culinary world hadn't gotten the memo about equality just yet. There I was, one of the few women ready to prove that yes, we too can wield a chef's knife with the best of them. The tour around The Mayfair was an eye-opener. It was the kind of

place where the back of the house was a maze, and the kitchens were so shiny you could see your reflection in a frying pan. My jaw was practically on the floor the whole time; I'm pretty sure I walked into a couple of walls while trying to absorb the opulence.

Did I snag the job? Spoiler alert: It turns out, for someone who could whip up a storm in the kitchen, I was surprisingly mute when it came to selling myself. Who knew being a culinary enthusiast required the gift of gab? Not I, apparently. For a girl who could make a meringue weep, my interview skills were more soggy soufflé than crispy crème brûlée. You see, I was the quiet type - I know, I know, for those who know me have question marks above their heads or just laughing and saying really, really! But remember, at that time, I was a quiet teenage country girl, more at ease with a whisk than words, at least until I warmed up to you. Then, I'd chatter away like a sous chef on a caffeine buzz.

Reflecting on those days, I can't help but wonder: why on earth didn't culinary school serve up a side dish of interview skills alongside the main course of kitchen wizardry? A crucial ingredient was missing from the curriculum. Every part-time job before that had been easy—a casual chat here, a friendly nod there, and voila, I was in the kitchen, apron on and ready to roll. But Mayfair? That was a whole different recipe, one I hadn't quite mastered yet.

So, you're curious about the origins of my culinary adventure? Buckle up because the next chapter of my gastronomic voyage is just around the corner. Stay tuned for more flavorsome tales.

With savory wishes,
• **Chef Helen**

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newsbites



Memorable Iftar Experience at Shees Rest Area

Last month, the Guild members had a chance to partake in a unique Eid celebration at the traditional village of Shees in the Kalba region. The Sharjah Tourism invited the members to experience the culture and heritage of this new rest area, nestled in the foothills of the Hajar mountains.

"It was a rare opportunity for us to experience the traditional breaking of the fast ceremony with the family members of the village of Shees and get close to the traditional heritage of the country, especially at such a special time of the year. I am deeply grateful to Chef Robin Gomes for

organizing this trip for us," said Guild President Andy Cuthbert.

The members were humbled by the experience and left with a deeper appreciation of the Shees village's rich culture.

Iftar Get-together



Members of the Emirates Culinary Guild gathered for an extraordinary Iftar hosted by Andy Cuthbert, President of the ECG, at the Al Majlis on April 1, 2024

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Meet the Judges

The upcoming Expoculinaire promises to be an exciting event with an experienced panel of judges who will be gracing their presence to judge culinary competitions. Along with the veteran judges, there will also be rookie judges who will bring fresh perspectives

to the competition. Both local and international judges will be evaluating the dishes at a variety of competitions, including the bakery competition and the Allen Thong Golden Coffee Pot Young Chefs Challenge, where young and aspiring chefs will showcase their skills and creativity.

**Rick Stephen****Paulo Chen****Colin Gray****Trevor Boyd**

BAKERY JUDGES



Gunther Koerffer



Atim Suyatim



Romel Hernandez



Peter Boos



Jurgen Ellenbeck



Bernard Charles

INTERNATIONAL & LOCAL JUDGES



Uwe Micheel



Otto Weibel



Amro Al Yassin



Atim Suyatim



Ann Brown



Alain Hostert



Dilantha Fernando



Dimuthu Kumarasinghe



Elsaid Eldimiry



K.A.C Prasad

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Evagoras Hadjipavlou



Iztok Crtomir Legat



Jake Kim



Jennifer Salbrecht



Kristine Hartviksen



Karlheinz Haase



Karl Heinz



Jugesh Arora



Lim Kim Wah



Tarek Mouriees



Rabeh Amer



Manjula Kumara



Eric Low



Suresh Babu



Rami Al Jebrael



Manzoor Al Bhalgari



Martin Kobald



Vivek Huria



Wayne Gebhardt

ROOKIE JUDGES



Dammika Herath



Dwarika Bhatt



Fadi Mallouhi



Randel Elsirusa



Ilkin Hanifa



Mohammad Al Banna



Prashant Aripirala



Mahlomola Thamae



Roderick Hinampas



Sanjeewa Chamil



Shaun Leonard



Sarkhan Mammadov



Pieter Malan

THE WILDFLOWER

She does not pretend to be one-of-a-kind; instead, she is the way she is, taking life with her wild spirit. In a candid chat with **Shreya Asopa**, Chef **Andrea Karidis** shares her adventurous travel stories, the growing trend of making food Instagram-friendly, and the importance of finding authentic taste by respecting the efforts that go into creating the dish

It is the most unorthodox chef story," affirms Chef Andrea Karidis, her countenance beaming with joy as she recounts her 25 years in the industry. Her extensive experience in the hospitality industry, meandering from 5-star boutique hotels, cruises, restaurants, VIP homes, and supper clubs across Canada, Greece, and Dubai, paints a clear picture of her as a culinary creator who goes beyond titles to create dining experiences and all things hospitality.

Many projects befell her due to her adventurous, unpredictable, and creative lifestyle. However, when prodded about her seemingly waterproof approach to obstacles, it becomes apparent that her Greek-Canadian heritage has played a climactic role in shaping her outlook towards life.

The Greeks have left an indelible mark on the world, leaving behind Corinthians, early cartography and maritime routes, Socrates's philosophy, and a love for rational arguments. While Hellenic culture has influenced many aspects of our lives, Chef Andrea Karidis brings it to Canadian multiculturalism with her free-spirited, unapologetic demeanour.

Olive Branch Meets Maple Leaf

Unlike most chefs who draw inspiration from their mothers, her culinary background was non-existent. Growing



My mom was good at developing restaurant concepts, and my dad had a natural talent for hospitality and knew how to create a welcoming atmosphere that kept people coming back

up in Ottawa, her grandmother disliked cooking, and her mother only cooked to feed the family. However, the male figures in her life, her father and grandfather, introduced her to the world of cooking.

It was the swinging 60s when Chef Andrea's father made his way to Ottawa. For her father, Ottawa was a land of opportunity, where you could be anything if you were prepared to put in the effort, which is precisely what the family did.

"My mom was good at developing restaurant concepts, and my dad had a natural talent for hospitality and knew how to create a welcoming

atmosphere that kept people coming back. So the restaurant was a family affair, with extended relatives and cousins assuming the roles of wait staff and cooks, 70-year-old Uncle Angelo manning the grill, and the entire family working tirelessly to serve 200 patrons daily," recounts Chef Andrea.

At 13, while her peers basked in the frivolities of youth, she assisted in her family business as a busser every weekend and celebrated family milestones, from birthdays to engagements and baptisms at the restaurant. What started as a 200-capacity restaurant saw tables run out and become inundated with eager patrons. "And my father was true to hospitality, personally taking bites and serving drinks to guests waiting outside in the frigid winter chill as they braved the queue to enjoy Greek cuisine," she describes.

Looking for a path that would take her around the world, allow her to meet new people, and equip her with skills that could be valuable anywhere, Chef Andrea decided to enrol in a culinary school program. She acquired knowledge in two ways: the first involved working part-time at various restaurants to finance her education, and the second involved attending school on weekdays.

Not until she completed her course



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did the Greek spirit in her veins flow, signalling her to travel across Europe and absorb different cultural experiences." Following that, I went to Greece to reconnect with my heritage and explore Greek culture while earning sustenance by working in top supper clubs in Mykonos and Athens." The year 2004 was golden for Athens. Bestowed with an opportunity to host the Summer Olympics, the country was ablaze with economic prosperity. Spending a year in the heart of the enthusiasm surrounding the Olympics prepared Chef Andrea to deal with massive food orders.

Child of the Wind

Soon, she returned to Canada with a job at a five-star Boutique Hotel. After a couple of years of working there, the cold Canadian breeze no longer had the same charm. She yearned to feel the sun's warmth on her skin, which led her to secure a job on a cruise ship. Thus began her six-month adventure at sea.

"Picture Dubai, but on the sea. It was the same: the cultural diversity, close-knit groups, and hierarchy in the kitchen," she says. Chef Andrea initially considered working in the kitchen, but the prospect of never seeing daylight deterred her. Kitchens can be mentally taxing, so she found her calling at the cruise's supper club.

The treacherous waters of workplace politics reared their ugly heads, with those of similar cultures forming cliques that left her feeling excluded. But rather than succumbing to this exclusion, she chose to lead by example and form a group that welcomed individuals from all backgrounds and cultures. Greek shipping captains, engineers, and chefs were part of her team. The result? A better schedule, newfound friendships, and a richer experience overall.

The cruise experience ended when she started working for Fairmont Hotels back in Canada, but her spirit of adventure remained unquenched. "In 2011, I was initially offered the position of restaurant



I'm a woman of the world with a multicultural background and know-how of the Panama scene. And the Spanish-speaking skills also help

manager at Fairmont Dubai. However, with the restructuring of the establishment, I chose to accept a role in the Front Office, and I came to Dubai," she explains.

Adapting has become a reasonable argument for those who estrange themselves from addressing core issues and finding solutions. While this may seem like an easy way out, for Chef Andrea, confronting challenges head-on is essential to growing. Unfazed by the unfamiliar environment and its concomitant challenges, she quickly adapted herself, handling issues through her convincing skills and upselling rooms.

Feeling stifled by the corporate aspect of the hospitality industry in Dubai, which reshaped her perspective on her career trajectory and upon recognizing the distinct differences between hotels in Dubai and those in Europe, she realized it was time for a change of scenery to broaden her horizons. Putting together a game plan for a new perspective, she switched to part-time real estate. Shortly after that, she became a recognized face in the field, culminating in an invitation to host the international TV show *Househunters in Dubai*. Transitioning her emcee talents into the culinary world, she also served as a host and a food critic for *What's Cooking UAE*, a miniseries on restaurants across the UAE.

"I also had the honour of acting as the emcee and presenter for several renowned

international exhibitions, such as Top Table, Gulf Host, Abu Dhabi International Food Festival, Pizza Hub, The Hotel Show, Gulfood, and Salon Culinare. These were some great events that got my mind rolling about events and demonstrations and reignited my inclination towards the F&B industry," she states.

While at it, she takes back to the fortuitous turn of events when she was conducting food demonstrations for an equipment company at Gulfood and encountered the Hospitality Consultancy & Technical Services (HCTS) team. Twenty minutes into the discourse with the company's founder, delving into her skills and understanding of the company's services, ranging from kitchen design, F&B concepts, and value engineering, she was extended the role of Culinary Director.

It was a progression, explains Chef Andrea, which differed from working in hotels. Collaborating with architects, optimizing kitchen designs, and crafting menus, the experience diverged significantly from her past roles. "Then I got bored with limited projects," she jests with a witty smile, "so I decided to work as a private chef, cooking for an upmarket clientele, doing private dinners and events, crafting bespoke culinary experiences, recipe developments, providing quality service and everything with food," she adds, noting about finding an antidote to her boredom.

Panama & Pinsa

The bridge between the continents of North and South America, Panama, runs on a harmonious blend of freedom and authenticity. The fluidity of Panama's lifestyle, which allows creativity without constraints and surrendering to the rhythms of life, deeply resonated with Chef Andrea's kindred nature. The stable environment for business development made it an ideal location for her culinary venture.

The pleasant play of glistening waves and the country's tropical climate led her to ponder the idea of a limited-seating



restaurant where one can peruse the menu, enjoy the view of the Pacific Ocean, and bite into Pinsa—a concept with finite archives in Panama's culinary scene." The dough is made with a unique blend of three flavours, resulting in a super light texture. It undergoes a long fermentation process of over 36 hours to get a crunchy texture on the outside and fluffy on the inside. The dough is then topped with high-quality fresh ingredients and served hot, straight out of the oven," she explains.

Currently in Panama, she is set to launch her venture within the next three months—sourcing top-of-the-line equipment, hiring a seasoned consultant, and lining up suppliers. For her, Pinsa is not a fly-by-night operation but a passion project. "It is not like I am some wide-eyed entrepreneur setting up shop in India, like curry in a hurry, without a clue about local culture and cuisine. No, I'm a woman of the world with a multicultural background and know-how of the Panama scene. And the Spanish-speaking skills also help," she says without an iota of doubt in her voice. Her end goal with Pinsa involves franchises, "but focused on local ingredients," she highlights. "The restaurant is a sustainable and zero-waste project, so we do not use plastic plates and use recyclable packaging."

Something special is also brewing. Chef Andrea has joined hands in bringing



Some days are tiring, but I understand we are all different. I try to be there for the kids, work on passion projects, be there for the family, and keep rolling

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Panama Blue Water to the Middle East. In early 2024, she gained the Sole Brand Executive and distribution rights for the rainforest spring water brand from the mountains of Cerro Azul. "The water factory is in the middle of the mountains, with the local villagers involved in every step of the production process. It's an initiative that no one takes on; amid truffles and sauces on the market, no one considers water. I am introducing this to the MENA region."

A Lodestar

Taking a pause from Panama, she takes us back to Dubai, where she oversees the creative culinary operations for multiple local brands as their Creative Culinary Developer. As a Canadian, she also works closely with the Canadian Council in the UAE to promote Canadian culture and conduct many culinary events to support the Canadian Lobster and Beef Community.

In between our conversations, her phone buzzed. She quickly glanced at the screen, her expression revealing a conflict of sorts. "I'm sorry, but I need to pick up my kids," she excuses, her maternal instincts taking precedence.



Women are different, not equal to men. When people say we're equal, they fail to acknowledge the different sets of skills that women have

When we reconvened for the second leg of our discussion, she returned with a focus on how she prioritizes her family.

Chef Andrea's perfect match turned out to be a Greek plastic surgeon whom she met through mutual friends. They fell in love and tied the knot in Zanzibar. Now, with two lovely daughters aged three and five, Chef Andrea feels grateful to see her children grow as independent thinkers, making their own mistakes and preparing for life's challenges.

"Some days are tiring, but I understand we are all different. I try to be there for

the kids, work on passion projects, be there for the family, and keep rolling."

The challenges of working mothers have compounded, making it difficult for mothers to balance their professional and personal lives. As a mother of two, Chef Andrea boldly defies society's raised eyebrows, encouraging other mothers to pursue their passions and dreams without guilt.

This is why the initiative of the Emirates Culinary Guild to be more diverse and inclusive has also piqued her interest. Joining the Guild may have seemed like an unlikely decision for Chef Andrea, but as she attended more Guild events, she realized that her initial reservations were unwarranted. "It seemed a little too exclusive for my liking. But that all changed when I hosted Salon Culinaire and met the senior and young chefs during the Guild's meeting."

Recently, Chef Andrea was invited to speak for the Women's Chapter of the Guild. On the ground, opinions on the initiative varied among individuals; some view it as a feminist movement, while others see it as promoting gender equality. Not another frivolous pursuit, Chef Tarryn's inclusivity and diversity initiative is about the recognition and celebration of the unique strengths of women in the hospitality industry.

"Women are different, not equal to men. When people say we're equal, they fail to acknowledge the different sets of skills that women have. Women have the superpower of handling multiple things, such as family and work, which can be helpful to achieve great success," she says, underscoring a process screaming out equality in all spheres may not be within the discourse as it overlooks the inherent differences between genders.

Talking about the industry's future, Chef Andrea foresees an absurd shift towards outsourcing that portrays the poignancy of automation in the industry. "For instance, at a steakhouse, the





bread, dips, and sauces are outsourced to streamline the process. By doing so, the restaurant ensures consistency and minimizes expenses against astronomical rent prices," she elaborates.

However, this shift towards outsourcing has its challenges. Customers now have high expectations, and any deviation from what they perceive as perfection leads to negative reviews and complaints. "You would receive a one-star review if a chocolate chip cookie had only five chocolate chips instead of six. The demand for super consumption and the high expectations of customers had put immense pressure on chefs and management alike."

According to Chef Andrea, a burgeoning trend taking over people's smartphones instead of their appetites is making food more Instagrammable than concentrating on its actual taste. Rather than succumbing to the allure of fancy garnishes and picture-perfect trends, she encourages educating customers as a means of mitigating

customer frustration towards the cost of maintaining quality standards.

"Customers should understand why the price of a restaurant burger is on a different level. Because the beef is sourced from a particular place, the sauce is homemade, and the produce is bought through local vendors," she argues.

Debating the trends, Chef Andrea explains that the multifarious roles that chefs undertake will become increasingly pronounced. A future characterized by a delegation of managers and staff and an influx of consultants is not too far-fetched. For young chefs starting the industry, she has some unconventional advice: don't limit yourself to just being a chef. With a variety of options available in the hospitality industry, it's all about gaining as much experience in different skills and roles.

"Don't get disappointed with the ups and downs of the process. When beginning in the industry, do the groundwork,

including washing the dishes, chopping, cleaning, and supporting your colleagues. You can only expect to be the owner if you have put in the necessary work that helps you earn the respect of your team. It applies to women as well. We don't get any special privileges just because we're women," she notes.

Hitting the road and meeting new people are other pearls of wisdom she drops. She underlines that making connections, attending events, learning different languages, and exploring other cultures is incredibly helpful unless the motto is ignorance is bliss. "In connecting with people, you will encounter good and bad experiences. But remember that everything happens for a reason, and even negative experiences can turn into great stories. Instead of brooding over the negative, focus on the positive outcome and take life as it comes," she says.

A little Andrea's world used to revolve around the hustle and bustle of the kitchen, but now she has broadened her horizons to encompass an adventurous family affair. With her husband and two children, their love for globetrotting has taken them on a wild ride. Passing her legacy of exploration and learning to her children, Chef Andrea is writing her definition of a family affair—a trip filled with wonder at every turn.



Don't get disappointed with the ups and downs of the process. When beginning in the industry, do the groundwork, including washing the dishes, chopping, cleaning, and supporting your colleagues

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May 2024 **Gulf Gourmet**

The Guild Meet

The May guild meeting was hosted by the Jumeirah Creekside Hotel on Friday, 26th of April, 2024. We thank Andy Cuthbert, Chef Ramola and his team for hosting the meeting





*Latteria
Sorrentina Cheese*

*Cà Foresto
Olives*

*Le 5 Stagioni
Flour*

Mutti Pizza Sauce

RUSTIC ELEGANCE PIZZA

SAVOR THE CLASSIC ITALIAN PIZZA WITH CREAMY LATTERIA SORRENTINA CHEESE, AROMATIC LE 5 STAGIONI CRUST, TANGY CÀ FORESTO OLIVES, AND RICH MUTTI SAUCE. AN AUTHENTIC TASTE OF ITALY CRAFTED FOR CULINARY CONNOISSEURS.

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Tasteful

A Drizzle of Oil

AltEdible Oil Options is here to put an end to the greasy palm

By **Shreya Asopa**

Every culinary masterpiece begins with the selection of the perfect oil. The pantry shelves are stocked with a variety of oils, each one promising to elevate the dish's flavour. Using too little oil can prevent ingredients from absorbing flavours, leaving your dish with an underwhelming taste. Conversely, excessive oil can overpower the dish, resulting in a greasy residue.

Picking the correct oil in the comprehensive cooking process can often be overlooked when finding the right balance for the dish. The increasing global palm oil production behoves us to be conscious of our choices. Statista states global palm oil production increased from 73 million metric tons in 2021-22 to 78 million metric tons in 2022-23.

A ubiquitous ingredient in a plethora of packaged products is taking a toll on biodiversity. The World Wildlife Foundation has reported that the high demand for palm oil has caused extensive deforestation and pollution.

We can't jump from the frying pan into the fire, and the case against seed oils and olive oil is also becoming more substantial. Seed oils, such as sunflower, sesame, and groundnut oil, might not be as harmful as palm oil, but they still have various environmental impacts. And even though Spain leads the world in olive oil production, there are still concerns about the ecological effects of its expansion. A report published in The Olive Oil Times suggests that researchers caution about the growth of olive oil production that might disrupt soil biology and water cycles and further highlight the need for investigation into



Every culinary masterpiece begins with the selection of the perfect oil

the ecological effects, desertification, and use of intensive farming methods in olive oil cultivation.

Considering the environmental impact of every drop of oil we use in the dish, the new age of edible oil offers a glimmer of hope. Companies are brewing options using precision fermentation, and some are turning to natural alternatives like microalgae.

One deep-tech company driven to find sustainable solutions to the current practices around palm oil is ÄIO. Founded in 2022 by Petri-Jaan Lahtvee and Nemailla Bonturi, the Estonian company uses red bug, a proprietary yeast strain created and patented by Nemailla Bonturi that can upcycle agricultural and wood industry side streams into fats and oils. Consider it a biodesigned oil cooked up in a lab, just like your favourite brewskies.

"ÄIO's edible oil has been used in patties, spreads, sauces, bakery products, and confectionery. My favourite so far was a delicious muffin that showed the versatility of our ingredients, working both as fat and cacao powder alternatives," says Nemailla Bonturi, co-founder and co-CEO at ÄIO.

The company's approach to circular economy processes, using side streams

such as sawdust, a typical production waste in Estonia, to create three products: encapsulated oils, RedOil, and Buttery Fat, has proven to be an innovative strategy that benefits the environment and offers nutritional benefits.

"Safety-wise, we have conducted a very detailed pre-investigation, and so far, no concerns have been detected regarding our products. We aim to submit the Novel Food Permit dossiers by Q1/25 in the EU, US, and Singapore. Encapsulated oils offer additional nutritional benefits like proteins, fibres, glucans, and antioxidants. RedOil and Buttery Fats offer antioxidants and omega-3 and do not possess trans fats," explains Bonturi.

Another standout feature that sets ÄIO edible oils apart is their carotenoid-rich content, which lends them a natural red/orange hue.

"For the encapsulated oils, we have a harvesting and drying step. For RedOil and Buttery Fats, we perform an extraction step similar to that done for vegetable oils. The production process is very versatile; you can have fats and oils in powder, liquid, or solid form, and so is the application. For example, encapsulated oils (powder) can replace animal fats and vegetable oils but also provide nice emulsification, umami, or a cocoa-roasted flavour," says Bonturi.

Despite all its potential gravy, getting a Novel Food Permit is still a significant bottleneck for food-tech start-ups. In the EU, it's a long and winding road, taking anywhere from a year to several years to get the green light. However, the process can be completed in just about a year in countries like Singapore and the US. With this scenario, explains Neamilla, food-techs in the EU must



Encapsulated oils (powder) can replace animal fats and vegetable oils but also provide nice emulsification, umami, or a cocoa-roasted flavour

have understanding investors and have different go-to-market strategies, such as applying for permits in Singapore and the US or having products that can be used in various verticals, such as cosmetics, feed and chemicals.

Surprisingly, the company hasn't encountered any obstacles to acceptance. "Of course, as a novel ingredient, it requires some adjustments to conventional recipes, but we have been able to co-develop new recipes with several companies," adds Nemailla. Besides that, we are backed up by the amazing Chef Hiro Takeda, who is taking our ingredients to the next level of applications."

When it comes to cooking, chefs have to stay on their toes and keep up with



the latest food trends. Consequently, Neamailla suggests that by incorporating sustainable ingredients such as AIO's edible oils and fats into their menus, chefs can demonstrate their commitment to environmentally friendly practices while offering delicious and innovative dishes to their customers.

"With this in mind, we create products that can be added to various foods and dishes, either as a substitute for unsustainable fats and oils or to enhance their colour and flavour. We also aim to produce tailor-made fats and oils for customers using synthetic biology and precision fermentation. For example, if a specific melting profile, aroma, or other characteristic is desirable, we can produce it on demand. We can tailor it to a more salty, umami, or roasted flavour during production. RedOil can be a replacement for palm oil. ButteryFats can replace coconut oil and animal fats."

With traditional oils on the market's shelves, it can be difficult for new products to find a place. However, AIO offers a price competitive plan with its RedOil and Buttery Fats to be significantly cheaper than coconut oil due to their versatile process of using low-value side-streams as substrates for the fermentation.

Gazing at the crammed shelves of the market, where every product clamours for attention, many alternative food products often suffer from a dearth of proper labelling, leading to confusion among consumers. Just like plant-based food, if they are not labelled accurately, they may struggle to carve out their niche in the market. However, Professor William Chen, DSc, Director of Nanyang Technological University (NTU) Food Science and Technology Program, offers a unique perspective on microalgae oil. He suggests microalgae oil can be wedged right next to the olive oil as the colour looks similar. "In fact, if I were to use microalgae oil, I would add some herbs and garlic, like olive oil, and



The key is to go to nature and introduce a minimum level of modification to get the best, maximum amount of oil out of nature

apply it to the bread or maybe use it to stir-fry some fish."

In 2022, Professor Chen and his team developed a green processing technology to extract microalgae-derived plant oils. Professor Chen, who is currently using *Chromochloris zofingiensis*, over a million species of algae, shares that his approach is nature-based. Simply put, instead of picking any species and hoping for the best, considering the regulatory approval and GRAS, which is not an overnight process, he chooses to look for GRAS species in the existing research that are enriched in protein and lipid content.

"The key is to go to nature and introduce a minimum level of modification to get the best, maximum amount of oil out of nature. That is why I say that the selection of species is critical," he adds.

This, in turn, addresses the issue of changing consumer habits. Rather than forcing microbes to produce substances they don't naturally produce using synthetic biology, Professor Chen highlights the solution in nature. "Any alterations made to the species, no matter how well-justified, will be viewed by consumers as genetically modified," he says, adding that the vast range of species in nature offers a wide array of possibilities.

• Another way he is working to give

back to nature and the food chain is through the innovative circular economy principles that utilize food processing side streams. For instance, they have repurposed soybean residue and barley sprout green as sources of nutrients for microbiology. The fermentation process breaks down the macromolecules, rendering them as building blocks and nutrients for the microbiology to thrive. By replacing the cultural medium of microbiology with their fermented side streams, they have achieved a 9-fold improvement, 6-fold in terms of better growth rate, and 3-fold cost-cutting."

"We have shown that fermented soybean residue can replace animal-based components, such as the fetal bovine serum, in the cultivation of meat. This was demonstrated a few years ago, and it was surprising to see the replacement of animal-based materials with plant-based ones. It may seem counterintuitive, but plants have an immune system that can protect them from animal interference. This property can help animal cells grow, and we have used plant-based materials to replace animal serum. It is a natural solution that can benefit the cultivated meat industry."

As Professor Chen has further explored the versatility of microalgae, it becomes apparent that it is not limited to just cooking. They are also working with a company to establish this microalgae farm in Southeast Asia to produce sustainable aviation fuel.

As chefs who are all for getting back to basics and connecting with roots, Professor Chen believes that we need to have a solid understanding of nature and connect the dots between the animal and plant kingdoms to find alternative edible oil solutions.

With nature's bounty and lab innovation, edible oil alternatives are making their way to the Chef's kitchen. Are you ready to try them out? After all, we scout the oil that is best for the dish, consumer, and earth.

Meat With Sulemana

By **Abubakari Sadik Sulemana**
(A Seasoned Protein & Livestock
Agriculture Specialist)

What is Red Meat?

Red meat contains a high protein called myoglobin, which gives the meat a red colour when it binds with oxygen.

I work closely with business owners, chefs of all ranks, butchers, procurement managers, and key stakeholders in the HORECA food service sector to create a better understanding of the requirements for red meat and lamb and its cooking application. I have a good

knowledge of beef, lamb, and livestock, different farming methods, and, most importantly, dietary information.

Why red meat & lamb?

I chose this industry mainly because of my background as a Ghanaian, where the meat of choice is predominantly red, and because of the passion I cultivated for the category when I started my career.

Red meat is a nutrient-dense food essential for maintaining good health and performing vital body functions.

Having good product knowledge is



crucial for providing excellent customer service. It helps build trust between you and your customers, creates more positive customer service experiences, and allows you to provide accurate and helpful product information over time.

Further, I embarked on extensive product knowledge training that gave me the confidence and expertise to highlight the products' advantages. This enhanced my competitive edge, reputation, and career growth.

I have extensive experience working in the meat industry. I served in various roles, including Head of Category & Business Development Foodservice, Head of Sales, Sales Manager, and new product sourcing and development. My roles involved introducing various initiatives to promote beef and lamb as versatile and convenient products to consumers in our industry across the UAE.

I also collaborate with farmers, producers, suppliers, manufacturers and Halal certification bodies to understand the requirements of the major export cuts to facilitate the export of beef and lamb to the market to serve my clients, with particular focus on the Middle Eastern and Sub-Saharan African markets.

I previously worked as a Radio Anchor in Ghana. I have also made a significant contribution to our industry, HORECA food service, through my educative videos, which focus on red meat and lamb.

These are posted on my social media handles: LinkedIn, Facebook, & Instagram.

In my following publication on Gulf Gourmet, we shall elaborate on beef parts, including hindquarter and forequarter cuts. This is essential, as it is often said, 'every cut of beef isn't a steak.'

About Me

I am Abubakari Sadik Sulemana, a young, passionate man with a knack for food and the 'frozen meat industry.' I was brought up with strict family values, which taught me so much about respect for others and myself. I have a great passion for meeting new people and networking.

I am from the Northern Region of Ghana, where livestock farming is a passion and hobby. Traditionally, Ghana's livestock sector mainly comprises cattle, sheep and goats. Pigs and poultry enterprises primarily exist in the middle belt and southern regions. Rabbits, grass cutters, guinea pigs, and African giant snails are also kept and promoted as non-traditional livestock in Ghana.

I have lived and worked in Dubai, UAE, for over 12 years. I am happily married and feel blessed to have four beautiful children. The UAE is a destination to live, work, and nurse visions. In essence, anyone can live their most successful Gulf dream in the UAE, all

because of the rulers and authorities the nation is privileged to have. Remember, "everything rises and falls on leadership"—John C. Maxwell.

I am excited about the prospects of working with Gulf Gourmet to bring and share information with readers, clients, and related stakeholders. This project is a significant opportunity for everyone as it seeks to solve our client's biggest challenges.

My background is in Meat, Lamb, and Livestock. I've been at this for over a decade. I have had many accomplishments in the industry here in the UAE, and many seasoned and highly distinguished leaders have relished the opportunity to work with me. They have so much praise for my personality and humility, leaving me with an impressive track record and about 12 years of experience across the UAE Food and beverage industry. I know products and what to look for in them.

How to Get Ready for a Cooking Competition and The True Value of Culinary Competitions

Chef **Tarek Mourieess** shares a comprehensive list of tips to help aspiring chefs stand out from the competition

My dear chefs, I wanted to take this opportunity to share my thoughts on the significance of participating in prestigious competitions such as the upcoming event you are participating in.

Firstly, I want to commend you for your dedication and commitment to honing your culinary skills. Your participation in this competition is a testament to your passion and drive for excellence. As an observer and admirer of the culinary world, it is crucial to recognize that winning a prize is just one aspect of the learning process that accompanies such events.

While the thrill of victory and the recognition it brings are undoubtedly gratifying, it is essential to remember that the actual value of these competitions lies in the knowledge and personal growth they offer. Competitions provide a platform for chefs, both novice and seasoned, to challenge themselves, expand their horizons, and push the boundaries of their abilities.

A successful chef is not solely defined by their accolades but by their continuous pursuit of knowledge and self-improvement. These competitions serve as catalysts for personal development, allowing participants to refine their skills, experiment with new techniques, and discover their culinary identity. The journey towards becoming a proficient culinary artist involves not only mastering the craft but also becoming a well-rounded individual.



In the pursuit of excellence, it is crucial to preserve the authenticity of food while showcasing your unique chef character. Striking a balance between innovation and tradition is an art in itself. The ability to present dishes in a manner that reflects your culinary philosophy and evokes a sense of awe in others is a testament to your creativity and skill.

Moreover, the significance of these competitions extends beyond the individual participants. They create a vibrant community where chefs can come together, share their knowledge and experiences, and inspire one another. This feast-day event, in particular, provides a remarkable opportunity for a group of talented chefs to gather, exchange ideas, and showcase their culinary prowess. The camaraderie

and support within the culinary community contribute immensely to the growth of each participant and the industry as a whole.

Getting ready for a cooking competition requires careful preparation and a thorough understanding of your culinary abilities. To ensure success, it is essential to pay attention to the entry rules and characteristics of judging and focus on food presentation that is both creative and practical while reflecting your unique ideas and skills.

Here are some steps to consider when preparing for a cooking competition:

Read and Understand the Entry Rules:

Thoroughly read and comprehend all the details and requirements outlined in the

entry rules. Pay close attention to aspects such as portion size, whether the entry should be served hot or cold, and any specific judging criteria. Understanding these rules is crucial for competitors to tailor their dishes accordingly.

Choose a Theme for Your Entry:

Select a theme that you genuinely enjoy creating. It will allow you to demonstrate your true passion and highlight your cooking abilities during the presentation. Whether it's a specific cuisine, a seasonal ingredient, or a culinary concept, a theme helps bring cohesiveness to your dish.

Visualize the Finished Product: During your tray presentation, sketch or take a picture to help you visualize the final dish. It will enable you to determine whether any adjustments or modifications are necessary to achieve the desired results. Visualizing the finished product helps you refine your presentation and make it more visually appealing.

Create a Table of Colors and Food Ingredients: To ensure variety and avoid reusing ingredients, colors, shapes, or cooking methods, create a table that lists the colors and food ingredient elements you plan to use. This will help you keep track of your choices and ensure that each component of your dish offers something unique and distinct.

Avoid Over-Garnishing: When presenting your dish, remember the principle of "less is more." Avoid over-garnishing, as it can distract from the main components of the dish and create a cluttered appearance. Focus on elegant and purposeful garnishes that enhance the overall presentation without overwhelming the plate.

Seek Opinions and Advice: Seek the opinions and advice of individuals who have experience working in competitions or have participated in similar events. Their insights can provide valuable guidance and help you refine your approach. Additionally, explore online



resources to view the work of other competitors and gain inspiration.

Ensure Recipe and Plate Match: It is crucial to ensure that your recipes accurately reflect what you serve on the plate. Any discrepancies between the recipe and the actual presentation can negatively impact your score. Pay attention to details, measurements, and cooking techniques to maintain consistency and accuracy.

Showcase Your Abilities through Presentation: While authenticity in ingredients is essential for your recipe, the presentation is where you can truly showcase your abilities as a chef. Focus on plating techniques, arrangement, and attention to detail. Strive to create a visually appealing and aesthetically balanced presentation that highlights your culinary skills and keep it simple.

Practice and Refine Your Technique: Practice is key when preparing for a cooking competition. Continuously refine your techniques, experiment with flavors, and work on your presentation skills. Seek feedback from professionals or mentors to help you improve and perfect your approach.

Balance Taste and Presentation in Interactive Cooking: Taste and presentation are crucial in interactive cooking competitions. Carefully review the rules to ensure your food is well-balanced in terms of color, taste, texture, and serving size. Pay attention to the

judging criteria and strive to create a harmonious and memorable culinary experience for the judges and audience.

Remember, preparation and practice are essential for success in a cooking competition. By carefully following the entry rules, choosing a theme, visualizing the final product, being mindful of presentation details, seeking advice, maintaining recipe consistency, showcasing your abilities, and practicing your technique, you increase your chances of delivering an exceptional performance that reflects your culinary talents.

Last but not least

Being mentally prepared and focused is indeed crucial for success in any competitive field, including cooking.

Here are some tips to help you get your head in the game as a competitive chef:

Visualize Success and continue

practice: Take some time before the event to visualize yourself presenting your plates very well and achieving your goals of GOLD

Manage Stress: Competitive environments can be intense and stressful. Develop strategies to manage stress, such as deep breathing exercises also stay calm and focused on your progress to achieve the task

Practice Mindfulness: Stay present and focused on the task at hand. Avoid distractions and negative thoughts. Engage all your senses while cooking, paying attention to the smells, colors, textures, and flavors. This will help you stay in the moment and make better decisions

Develop a Routine: Establish a pre-competition routine that helps you get into the right mindset. This could include, reviewing your recipes and techniques, its very important to Stick to this routine to create a sense of familiarity and confidence

Positive Self-Talk: Use positive

affirmations and self-talk to boost your confidence. Replace any self-doubt or negative thoughts with encouraging statements. Remind yourself of your very good skills, accomplishments, and the hard work you've put into your culinary craft.

Embrace Challenges: Competition can bring unexpected challenges and obstacles. Instead of getting flustered, view these challenges as opportunities to showcase your adaptability and problem-solving skills. Stay flexible and be willing to adjust your plans if needed.

Support System: Surround yourself with a supportive network of friends, family, or fellow chefs who believe in you and your cooking abilities. Seek their encouragement and advice when needed. Their positive energy can help you stay motivated and focused.

Remember, mental preparation is just as important as honing your cooking skills. By combining both, you'll be better equipped to perform at your best during competitive food events. Good luck!

Lack of Organization: Disorganization can hinder a competitor's performance. Failing to set up a well-organized workstation, misplacing ingredients or tools, or not having a clear workflow can result in confusion and inefficiency.

Competitors should have everything they need within easy reach and follow a systematic approach to maintain order throughout the competition.

Neglecting to Read and Understand the Rules: Not fully comprehending the competition rules and requirements can be a significant mistake. Failure to adhere to specific guidelines, such as portion sizes, presentation rules, or ingredient restrictions, can lead to point deductions or disqualification. Thoroughly reading and understanding the rules is crucial to ensure compliance.

Overcomplicating Dishes: While creativity is encouraged, overcomplicating dishes can be a common mistake. Competitors may try to incorporate too many elements, flavors, or techniques, resulting in a dish that lacks focus and coherence. It's essential to strike a balance between innovation and simplicity, ensuring that the flavors and components harmonize effectively.

Neglecting Taste and Flavor: In the pursuit of impressive presentation, competitors sometimes overlook the importance of taste and flavor. A visually stunning dish may not succeed if it lacks seasoning, balance, or overall deliciousness. It's crucial to prioritize

taste and flavor while also paying attention to presentation.

Lack of Attention to Detail: Small details can make a significant difference in a cooking competition. Neglecting details such as seasoning, proper plating techniques, temperature control, or garnishing can negatively impact the overall impression of the dish. Competitors should strive for precision and pay attention to every aspect of their dish.

Failure to Adapt to Unexpected Situations: Cooking competitions can present unforeseen challenges, such as limited ingredients, equipment malfunctions, or changes in the competition environment. Competitors who are unable to adapt quickly and find creative solutions may struggle to deliver their best performance. Being flexible and resourceful is essential in such situations.

Neglecting to Taste Throughout the Process: Tasting the food throughout the cooking process is crucial for adjustments and ensuring that the flavors are well-balanced. Competitors who fail to taste their dishes as they progress may end up with a final product that lacks seasoning or other necessary adjustments.

Allowing Nervousness to Affect Performance: Nervousness is natural in cooking competitions, but allowing it to overwhelm can hinder performance. Competitors may become flustered, make mistakes, or lose focus. Managing nerves through practice, breathing techniques, and positive self-talk can help maintain composure and deliver a better performance.

Lack of Practice and Preparation: Insufficient practice and preparation can significantly impact a competitor's performance. Without adequate practice, competitors may struggle with timing, plating techniques, or recipe execution. Regular training, simulation of competition conditions, and refining techniques are essential to build confidence and improve skills.



Navigating Food Safety Regulations, Innovations, and Initiatives in the GCC

A Comprehensive Guide for Food Businesses

By **Soniya Ashar**
(Founder and CEO of NutriCal)

In the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, the quest for food safety isn't just a matter of regulation—it's a multifaceted journey with far-reaching implications for public health, consumer trust, and international trade. As the landscape of food safety regulations continues to evolve, food businesses must navigate through these complexities with agility and foresight.

In recent years, we've witnessed a notable shift in approach—from reactive measures to proactive strategies aimed at prevention rather than mere reaction to foodborne hazards. This paradigm shift has spurred the development of robust food safety systems and risk-based regulations, fostering collaboration between governmental bodies and industry stakeholders alike.

Given that the GCC heavily relies on imports for approximately 85% of its food products, maintaining stringent food safety standards presents unique challenges. Governments have responded by implementing regulations aligned with international standards, like those established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission, to ensure consistency and quality across the region.

Furthermore, the GCC's cultural landscape, influenced by Islamic dietary laws, necessitates additional considerations in food safety practices, including robust Halal certification processes. Accurate labelling in both English and Arabic is mandated to enhance consumer awareness and safety, providing detailed information on ingredients, nutritional content, and expiration dates.

Each GCC country has its regulatory

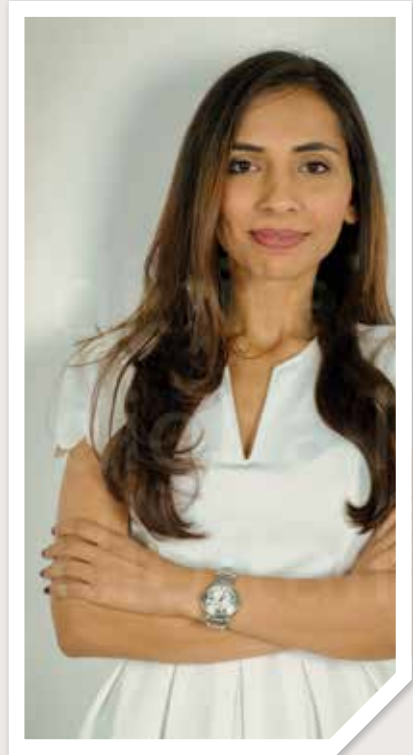
authorities responsible for overseeing food safety and quality standards and ensuring compliance within their respective jurisdictions. For instance, the Saudi Food & Drug Authority (SFDA) and the Emirates Standardisation and Metrology Authority (ESMA) play crucial roles in enforcing regulations, conducting inspections, and imposing penalties for non-compliance.

In recent years, the UAE and KSA have demonstrated proactive efforts to prioritize food safety for consumers. Dubai Municipality's "I pledge to food safety" campaign engages diverse sectors of society, fostering a collective commitment to safe food practices. Meanwhile, renowned chefs leverage social media platforms to advocate for consumer awareness, emphasizing the significance of food safety and informed dining choices.

Dubai Municipality's Foodwatch digital platform epitomizes the region's innovative approach to food safety and nutrition, offering full traceability of foods and real-time assurance.

Additionally, the introduction of 'Zadna Rating' labels by the Abu Dhabi Agriculture and Food Safety Authority (ADAFSA) enhances transparency and consumer confidence by providing assessments of food safety levels in establishments across the Emirates.

Furthermore, Saudi Arabia's mandate for displaying caloric information on menus and food delivery platforms addresses obesity concerns by empowering consumers to make informed dietary choices. This initiative promotes food safety by enhancing transparency and aiding individuals in managing their calorie intake, ultimately contributing to better health outcomes.



To navigate through the complexities of food safety regulations, cultural considerations, and consumer demands, F&B businesses in the GCC are increasingly adopting technology-driven solutions. From Food Safety Management Systems (FSMS) to Traceability Solutions, Digital Labelling and Packaging, Smart Kitchen Technologies, Data Analytics, Mobile Apps and Online Platforms, innovative approaches ensure compliance, enhance efficiency, and maintain consumer confidence in the region's food industry.

In conclusion, navigating food safety regulations, innovations, and initiatives in the GCC requires a holistic approach integrating technology, regulatory compliance, and consumer awareness. By embracing these strategies, food businesses can effectively ensure the health and well-being of consumers while thriving in the dynamic food industry landscape of the GCC region.

Tackling Food Waste: A MULTIFACETED APPROACH

(Part Two) Chef **Carl Shi** elaborates on the drivers of food waste generation in the hospitality sector

Dear Chefs,

Food waste has been a topic of concern in the academic world for the last decade, with research conducted worldwide. Both developed and developing countries have contributed to this field. The second edition of the food waste article will explore the various drivers of food waste generation in the hospitality sector.

Purchasing of Food Ingredients

The purchasing stage is crucial in food waste management (FWM) in the hospitality sector. Food waste (FW) generation increases due to purchasing low-quality food items, buying excessive food ingredients, or bulk buying (Kasavan et al., 2019). Moreover, purchasing food ingredients without checking the expiry date contributes to more FW (Tomaszewska et al., 2021). The longer the food supply chain, for instance, the longer the delivery distance causes the risk of food spoilage and losses, particularly for perishable food (Kasavan et al., 2019). Small businesses often purchase food ingredients themselves, while more prominent hoteliers rely on suppliers. However, damaged or broken raw food ingredients due to suppliers' mishandling can also lead to FW (Okumus, 2019).

Storage of Raw Food Materials

Hoteliers often purchase raw food materials in bulk due to the unpredictable number of guests. Limited storage space can cause difficulties in efficiently arranging and storing various raw food ingredients (Kasavan et al., 2019; Tomaszewska et al., 2021). There needs to be more room to accommodate



“ Chit-Chat with Chef Carl

machinery, such as vacuum sealers and deep freezers, which is another driver of FW (Filimonau & Sulyok, 2021). Improper storage temperature, lack of rotation of stored items, incorrect storage, lack of supervision, and inventory control are common incidents leading to FW (Goh & Jie, 2019; Okumus et al., 2020).

Preparation of Food

Most hospitality operators use fresh ingredients and cook from scratch, generating unavoidable FW mainly during food preparation. This includes inedible parts of food such as peels, fruit skin, seafood shells, bones, and offcuts. In a case study of hotels in Malaysia, around 74% of unavoidable FW and only 26% of avoidable FW were generated at the preparation stage (Papargyropoulou et al., 2016). Inaccurate estimation of the number of guests arriving also contributes to higher leftover FW (Pirani & Arafat, 2015). A lack of communication between staff in various departments within hospitality management also causes FW (Kasavan et al., 2019). Untrained service staff, unplanned meals, and preparing a menu containing a higher proportion of lower-quality

food ingredients can also trigger a large amount of waste (Okumus et al., 2020).

During Service

The hospitality sector often offers three types of food service (a la carte, buffet, and semi-buffet) with three main mealtimes (breakfast, lunch, and dinner). The amount of FW generated can vary daily and is influenced by factors such as the hotel's occupancy rate, the arrival of guests, holiday or festival seasons, and individual events. Buffet-style food service generates more plate waste and buffet leftovers, while a la carte food service generates more preparation FW (Papargyropoulou et al., 2016). Oversized portions or uncontrolled portion sizes are the main reasons for developing high plate waste or unfinished food in 'a la carte' service (Wang et al., 2021). Using larger plates in buffet meals also encourages guests to fill them up, resulting in more plate waste (Leverenz et al., 2021). Poor communication between servers, guests, and chefs about cooking methods and portions served also contributes to FW generation (Goh & Jie, 2019).

Management of Buffet Leftover Food and Plate Waste

Over 90% of buffet leftover and plate waste is mainly edible, with an avoidable fraction (Papargyropoulou et al., 2016). The internal hotel management system creates FW in hotels and guests' food consumption habits (Wang et al., 2021). Hotel guests' expectations for variety and maximum satisfaction at buffet meals lead to hoteliers cooking more food varieties, but wasteful food consumption habits create higher plate waste (Kasavan et al., 2019). Guests'

psychographic profiles, cultures, and lifestyles also influence their eating habits and FW generation (Juvan et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2021). Food prices at hotels also influence guests' food consumption behaviour, with lower prices often leading to more plate waste (Kasavan et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2021).

Hoteliers need help minimizing excess FW due to a lack of concern about hotel policy and food safety standards (Mabaso & Hewson, 2018; Okumus, 2019). Hotel policies often dictate that food items should be kept on the buffet table for at most 4 hours and must be discarded even if still of good quality as per food safety practice requirements (Goh & Jie, 2019; Papargyropoulou et al., 2016). Food donations to charities can utilize untouched leftover food, but hoteliers face problems due to a lack of awareness of such programs, insufficient resources, and concerns with food safety standards (Filimonau & Sulyok, 2021; Filimonau & Tochukwu, 2020).

Disposal of Food Waste

Separating waste types is a primary point for hospitality operators' internal waste collection systems. A lack of waste separation in the hotel sector has become a significant challenge for moving from conventional FW disposal (landfill) to sustainable food waste management (SFWM). Food businesses face various challenges during FW



collection, particularly storage and redistribution, due to a lack of time, support from hotel staff, and high costs (Sullivan & Smith, 2014). Insufficient bins for waste disposal, limited waste storage, and a lack of FW technology, facilities, and human resources also affect composting FW on-site (Kasavan et al., 2019; Mak et al., 2021; Pirani & Arafat, 2015). High capital costs and operation and maintenance costs of on-site recycling equipment strongly influence hoteliers' lack of participation in FW recycling (Mak et al., 2018; Filimonau & Tochukwu, 2020).

• The drivers of food waste generation in

• the hospitality sector are multifaceted and complex. Various factors contribute to food waste generation, from purchasing and storage to preparation, serving, and disposal. Addressing these issues requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders, including hotel management, staff, suppliers, and guests. By understanding the drivers of food waste generation, we can develop targeted strategies to minimize waste, reduce environmental impact, and improve the sustainability of the hospitality sector.

Chef Carl

• From Sydney

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Baking Breakaway

From growing up in Colombo without any culinary mentors in his family to weathering the challenges of being on the streets of Dubai and rebuilding his life, Chef **Chanaka Peiris** is doing everything he can to achieve his dream

Long before he became a first commis in Pullman Dubai Creek City Centre, it was a tough scrum for the 23-year-old Chef Chanaka.

With no roof over his head when he first came to Dubai, a little penny to his name, and no connections to turn to help, he knew he would have to put on his game face to make it to the top and not let the circumstances define him.

"When I came to Dubai, I had nowhere to sleep, and for two days, I slept on the road near the airport. A benevolent Pakistani man approached me and helped me find a place. It was tough, but I applied to many places and improved my English," he says, adding that he never gave up on his dream despite the challenges.

Things took a turn for the better when his friend connected him with Chef Dammika. "Chef Dammika is a true inspiration. He is a mentor who believed in me. I was called for an interview at the Pullman Hotel, and I completed the trials and got the job," he says.

Born in the busy capital of Sri Lanka, Chef Chanaka would often run away from his books straight to the playground. He dreamed of becoming a rugby player and would spend his days weightlifting and training in the gym. However, reality soon set in, and he realized he couldn't keep weightlifting daily.

With no chefs in his family to inspire



When I came to Dubai, I had nowhere to sleep, and for two days, I slept on the road near the airport. A benevolent Pakistani man approached me and helped me find a place

him, food was only a minor part of his life. However, he had a strange, nagging feeling that the world of cooking was his calling, so he decided that the discipline and pressure he learned from pumping iron could translate smoothly into the kitchen.

When he was barely 18 years old, he completed his three-month hospitality certificate course and landed a gig as a training chef at the Cinnamon Lakeside Hotel. "I was entering the kitchen without any knowledge of the necessary machinery or cooking techniques," he recalls, explaining that he frequently ended up in hot water due to overcooking or undercooking the dish.

Even so, he remained all ears to learn everything there, which helped him continue preparing food according to recipes and creating food displays in the hotel's cold kitchen for the next six months.

"Then I moved on to work at a bakery called Wishque, where I spent a year mastering everything from the buffet, a la carte, baking cakes and decorating them fondant," he says.

In 2021, he headed to the culinary oasis, a dream for every chef—Dubai. "For the last two years, I have been working as a commis at the Pullman Dubai Deira Creek. With six team members, we take care of VIP orders, prepare desserts, support head chefs, and look after lunch, dinner, and breakfast operations," he shares.

Besides living and breathing the life of a chef, he is pursuing the ICCA scholarship diploma program, keeping himself occupied with work every day. He hits the books at school, even on his days off.

Chef Chanaka is a fresh face in the Dubai landscape but has already clinched several medals at competitions. He bagged the bronze medal in his debut at the Salon Culinaire in 2022. The following year, he upped his game and scooped a gold and a silver. "In the second competition, Chef Dammika mentored me. The first competition caught me off guard, but I

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prepared well for the second one. This year, I'm aiming for three excellent golds," he states confidently.

Last year, Chef Chanaka repeated his competitive side at the Al Wathba Date Festival and Auction. "It was an unforgettable experience, even though the windy conditions made it challenging to keep my setup intact. It was my first time working outdoors, and I won second place. I am grateful to Chef Damika for motivating me to put my best foot forward daily," he says with a smile.

Talking about the Arla Pro Pastry Mastery competition, he notes that he utilized various Arla Pro products to create his signature dish, comprising a cheese cherry dome, cream chocolate fudge cake, and cheese tuile. "I wanted to create a plate that blended colours and flavour amalgamation of cherry, cheese, and citrus."

Unlike other chefs who sketch dishes for inspiration, Chef Chanaka's creative process starts with putting his thinking cap on visualizing the dish and its

flavour profile. "I go through a colour palette, test out different trends, and create a 3D version of the dish. It takes around two to three hours to make a mould, find the complementing flavour, and prepare the first batch. For example, I experimented with mango cheese in this dish, but it lacked depth, so I added a hint of sourness and created lemon chocolate cheese. I refined this recipe three times to achieve the current vision for the dish."

Next month, he is about to wrap up his ICCA Professional Diploma Course, which he describes as an unmatched learning experience. "I've developed a grasp of ingredients, cooking techniques, kitchen management, and food storage. The mentors have been incredible, teaching me the finer details that I missed out on in Sri Lanka."

Ask him if he's looking forward to entering the upcoming Salon Culinaire, and he'll be eager to tell you about competing in categories like the Chocolate Showpiece and Tartlette.

Looking into the future, Chef Chanaka is set on winning the Young Pastry Chef crown at the Salon Culinaire. He also hopes to achieve a world record and make it to the big leagues by competing in the Culinary Olympics.

The adage goes, "When the going gets tough, the tough get going." Chef Chanaka's never-give-up attitude has brought him far, and he will not quit until he scores the winning touchdown.



I've developed a grasp of ingredients, cooking techniques, kitchen management, and food storage



Cheese Cherry Dome and Creamy Chocolate Fudge Cake with Lime Butter Quenelle

CHOCOLATE CAKE

Arla Pro Butter	150g
Sugar	100g
Cocoa Powder	50g
Eggs	5
Baking Powder	8g
Baking Soda	6g

Method

- ♦ Mix the butter and sugar using a creaming method. Add eggs and the remaining dry ingredients.
- ♦ Then bake the mixture at 180 °C for 20 minutes.

CHEESE CHERRY MOUSSE

Cherry Purée	200g
Fresh Cherry	100g
Arla Pro High Stability Cream 35%	80g
White chocolate	100g
Gelatin	6pc

Method

- ♦ Boil the cherry purée. In the mixture add the chocolate and then cream. Add the gelatin at the end.
- ♦ Keep it inside the chiller for two hours to set

VANILLA MOUSSE ROLL

Arla Pro High Stability Cream 35%	100g
Vanilla custard	50g
Gelatin	5pc
Vanilla beans	1 pc

Method

- ♦ Mix the cream and custard with vanilla beans and then add the gelatin.
- ♦ Keep it inside the chiller for half an hour

LIME BUTTER QUENELLE

Lime	1pc
Arla Pro Butter	50g
Icing Sugar	10g

Method

- ♦ Mix all the ingredients together to make a Quenelle

Garnish

- ♦ Mint Caviar
- ♦ Crumble
- ♦ Edible flowers
- ♦ Sugar Isomalt

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THE CULINARY UNITY

From IKA with Love

A Peek at the UAE team creations at the IKA Culinary Olympics 2024



Bernard Charles



Dammika Herath



May 2024 **Gulf Gourmet**



Dilan Asanka Arachchige



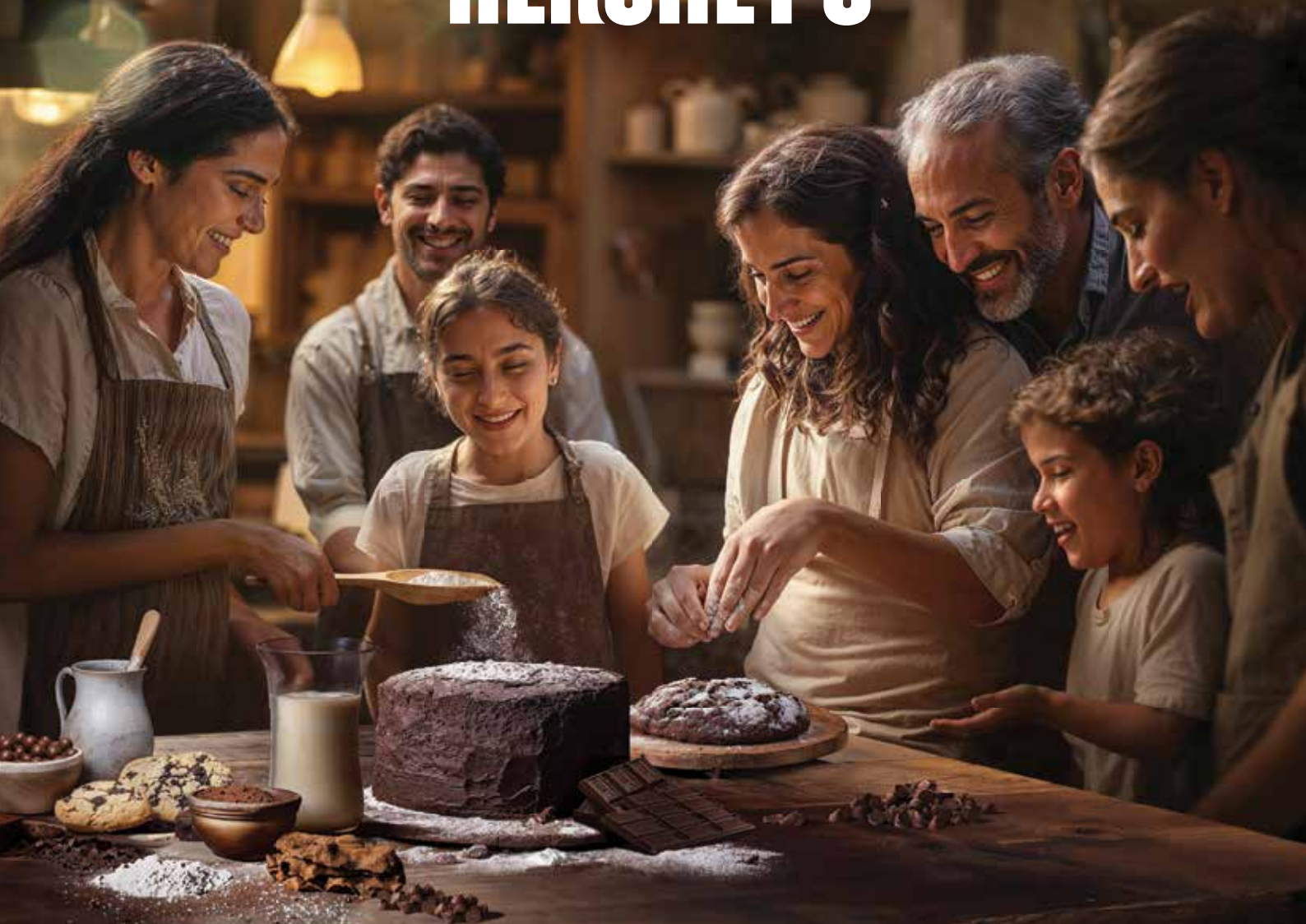
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FEATURING THE 27TH EMIRATES INTERNATIONAL SALON CULINAIRE
 20-22 MAY 2024 | EXPO CENTRE SHARJAH, UAE

AN OVERVIEW OF THE THE EMIRATES INTERNATIONAL SALON CULINAIRE 2024

May 20th till May 22nd 2024
Expo Centre, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

The Emirates Culinary Guild (ECG) (www.emiratesculinaryguild.net) is the association of professional chefs of the UAE. It is a non-profit-making organisation, organised by volunteers dedicated solely to the advancement of culinary art in the UAE.

The aims of the ECG, broadly, are:

- To encourage and inspire young chefs through training and competition.
- To enhance internationally the culinary prestige of the UAE.
- To encourage UAE nationals to consider a career within the hospitality industry.

The Emirates International Salon Culinaire (ESC) is a series of practical and display-based culinary competitions; entry to which is open to professional chefs, pastry chefs, cooks and bakers and culinary students.

Some of the competitions are designed for entry by a single competitor; others are designed as team events. Each competition is called a class.

The ESC shall take place in during the Expo Culinaire exhibition for Chefs,

Bakers, Pastry chefs and cooks and which will once again be the home of the Emirates Salon Culinaire and is a fully endorsed competition from Worldchefs. To exhibit or sponsor at Expo Culinaire please visit <https://www.expo culinaire.com/>, All this - coupled with three days of real-time, hectic, and thrilling cookery competitions - fought against the constraints of time, makes the salon a stimulating event that will become a major attraction at the Expo Culinaire exhibition for Chefs, Bakers, Pastry chefs and cooks. This year the education arena is not to be missed as a special feature of the exhibition. Demonstrations and interactive sessions will be another highlight of the Expo Culinaire exhibition.

Social media plays a large part in the Guilds self-promotion and the *Gulf Gourmet* magazine drive awareness around the globe. www.emiratesculinaryguild.net/, www.facebook.com/Emirates-Culinary-Guild-763644223697376/timeline/, www.facebook.com/gulfgourmet?fref=ts, follow these links for more information on the Emirates Culinary Guild.

In 2024 the Emirates International

Salon Culinaire and Expo Culinaire exhibition shall run alongside the Alen Thong Golden Coffee Pot Challenge for International teams of young chefs which shall take place with teams from around the world competing. All this activity will make this the chefs event of the year.

Membership of the ECG is open to all of those professionally and solely involved in the preparation of food.

Anyone interested in the Emirates Salon Culinaire to compete or sponsor, please contact us below.

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Briefs of the Classes for Entry

Resume Of Classes for Entry

Class No. - Class Description

Pastry and Bakery

- 01 Cake Decoration – Practical
Powered by Felchlin Switzerland
- 02 Wedding Cake Three-Tier-
Powered by Pristine
- 03 Four Plates of Dessert –
Powered by Arla Pro
- 04 Pastry Showpiece
- 05 Bread Loaves and Showpiece
Powered by CSM ingredients &
Schapfen Muehle Germany
- 06 Petites Fours, Pralines Powered
by Marguerite & Candia
Professional France

Showpiece Artistic Displays

- 07 Chocolate Carving Showpiece
Powered by Veliche Chocolate
Belgium
- 08 Fruit & Vegetable Carving
Showpiece Powered by Barakat
- 09 Open Show Piece

Gourmet Static Display

- 10 Five-Course Gourmet Dinner
Menu Powered by USMEF
- 11 Sustainable Three-Course
Vegetarian Lunch Menu
- 13 Four Plated USAPEEC Chicken
Dishes –Powered by USAPEEC
- 23 Savory tartelette Creations
Powered by HUG
- 24 Sweet tartelette Creations
Powered by HUG
- 28 Four Plates Vegan dishes
- Powered by Violife 100%
Vegan
- 34 Sweet Creations Powered by
Potatoes USA

Practical Artistic Carving

- 15 Individual Ice Carving
- 16 Ice Carving Team Event
- 17 Practical Fruit & Vegetable
Carving Powered by Barakat

Practical Cookery

- 19 Arabic Mezzeh - Practical
Cookery Powered by Rahma
- 20 Fish & Seafood - Practical

- Cookery Powered by The Deep
Seafood Company
- 21 Beef - Practical Cookery Powered
by USMEF
- 22 Emirati Cuisine – Practical
Cookery
- 25 Dressed Chicken & Dressed Fish
Practical Butchery
- 33 Savory Potato Creations
Practical Cookery Powered by
Potatoes USA
- 27 Chicken - Practical Cookery –
Powered by USAPEEC
- 30 The Student Challenge Powered
by THRYVEPlant BasedOpen
to Culinary school students
and kitchen trainees/interns
only Classes 35 and 36 only
competitors must enter both
classesEntry to the class must
be accompanied by a current
student card issued by a
recognized culinary school or
letter from Human resource
department stating trainee or
culinary intern.
- 35 Plant based Practical cookery
appetizer and main course
- 36 Soup and Sandwich Practical
cookery Powered by Chefs Palette
- 37 Lamb Primal Cuts Practical
Butchery TBC
- 38: Syrian Cuisine Modern Main
courses Practical cookery
Powered by Boody's
- 39 Syrian Three Plates of Kibbeh
Plated display Powered by
Boody's
- 40 Sounbula Mills Artisan Bakery
Arena Practical Cookery

ADDENDUM – The Emirates Salon Culinaire 2024

VENUE & ENTRY FEES

- 1. The Emirates Salon Culinaire
will be held during the Expo
Culinaire 2024 from May 20th
till 22nd May 2024.
- 2. The venue is at the Sharjah
National Exhibition Centre
- 3. The entrance fee for all single
entries is Dhs.100 (AED. One
Hundred) per person per class,

unless otherwise stated in the
Rules and Regulations or the
Class Briefs.

- 4. The fee for entry to the trophy
classes is as follows:
 - i. **Best Cuisinier – The Emirates
Salon Culinaire- Dubai 2024
AED:500/- per person**
 - ii. **Best Pastry Chef – The
Emirates Salon Culinaire-
Dubai 2024 AED:400/- per
person**
 - iii. **Best Artist – The Emirates
Salon Culinaire- Dubai 2024
AED:500/- per person**
 - iv. **Best Arab National – The
Emirates Salon Culinaire-
Dubai 2024 AED:300/- per
person**
 - v. **Young Chef of the Year – The
Emirates Salon Culinaire
Dubai 2024 AED: 300/- per
person**

CLOSING DATE:

- 5. Closing date for entries is April
28th 2024 However, many are
often fully subscribed and closed
well before the closing date.

TROPHY ENTRY:

Entrants to a trophy class must
enter and finish in all and only those
classes that pertain to the trophy for
which they are entering. No other
classes may be entered into by a
trophy entrant.

Trophies are awarded on the highest
aggregate judging points from all
classes pertaining to the trophy
being awarded.

The required classes are:

BEST CUISINIER:

- i. **Class #10. Five-Course
Dinner Menu**
- ii. **Class # 21. Beef Practical
Cookery**
- i. **Class # 27. Chicken Practical
Cookery**

In order to qualify for inclusion in

May 2024 **Gulf Gourmet**

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the points tally for Best Cuisinier Trophy a competitor must win three medals, at least one of which must be a gold medal.

BEST PASTRY CHEF:

- i. Class # 01. Practical Cake Decoration
- ii. Class # 03. Four Plates of Desserts
- iii. Class # 06. Friandises, Petites Four

In order to qualify for inclusion in the points tally for Best Pastry Chef Trophy a competitor must win at least two medals one of which must be a gold medal.

BEST ARTIST:

- i. Class # 07. Chocolate Showpiece
- ii. Class # 09. Open Showpiece
- iii. Class # 15. Individual Ice Carving
- iv. Class # 17. Practical Fruit & Vegetable Carving

In order to qualify for inclusion in the points tally for Best Artist Trophy a competitor must win at least three medals one of which must be a gold medal.

BEST ARAB NATIONAL CUISINIER:

- i. Class # 27. Chicken – Practical Cookery Arabic Style
- ii. Class # 19. Arabic Mezzeh - Practical Cookery
- iii. Class 22: Emirati Cuisine - Practical Cookery

iv. In order to qualify for inclusion in the points tally for Best Arab National Trophy a competitor must win at least one Gold medal and be an Arab National.

BEST BAKERY TEAM

1. Class 40 Sounbula Artisan Bakery Arena Class "The SOUNBULA UAE Bakery team of 2024"

YOUNG CHEF OF THE YEAR

See Classes for Entry Document. Classes

JUDGING AND THE AWARDS SYSTEM

A team of WorldChefs (The World Association of Chefs Societies) approved international Judges will adjudicate at all classes of the competition: using Worldchefs-approved methods, criteria and documents www.worldchefs.org After each judging session, the judges will hold a debriefing session at which each competitor attending may learn something of the thinking behind the judges' decision. Competitors will not be competing against each other: rather, they will be striving to reach the best possible standard. The judges will then apportion marks that accord with their perception of the standard reached. The competitor will then receive an award commensurate with his/her points tally for the class.

In theory, therefore, everyone in a particular class could be awarded a gold medal. Conversely, it could be possible that no awards at all are made.

The scaling for awards in all classes is as follows:

Points	
100	Gold Medal with Distinction with Certificate.
99 – 90	Gold Medal with Certificate.
89 – 80	Silver Medal with Certificate.
79 – 70	Bronze Medal with Certificate
60 – 69	Certificate of Merit
Thereafter	Certificate of Participation

Corporate and Establishment Trophies

The corporate and establishment trophies available are:

Best Effort by an Individual Establishment – The Emirates**Salon Culinaire**

This trophy is awarded to the establishment whose competitors gain the highest total combined points from the medals won from all of their entries.

Best Effort by a Corporation – The Emirates Salon Culinaire

This trophy is awarded to the corporation whose competitors gain the highest total combined points from the medals won from all of their entries.

Point Value of each Medal Won:

Gold Medal with Distinction	6 Points
Gold Medal	5 Points
Silver Medal	3 Points
Bronze Medal	1 Point

Winners where a sponsored trip is awarded are restricted to winning the trip once per life time. In a case where the overall winner has participated in a sponsored trip previously the trip shall be awarded to the 2nd place winner.

If no Gold Medals are awarded to competitors in the trophy classes then there shall be no trophy given at the competition.

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THE EMIRATES CULINARY GUILD APPLICATION FORM

Date of Application:

Family Name:	First Name/s:	Ms/ Mrs/ Mr/ Other:
Nationality:	Civil Status:	Date of Birth: dd/mm/yyyy
Employee/ Business Owner:	Name of Business:	Designation:
Work Address:	Email Address:	Contact Number:

Type of Membership: (please tick)		
SENIOR: (Above the rank of chef de partie/ senior chef de partie on executive chef's recommendation).	AED350 joining fee/ AED150 renewal fee Includes certificate; member-pin, member medal and ECG ceremonial collar	
MEMBER: (Below the rank of chef de partie 29 years old and over).	AED150 joining fee/AED75 renewal fee Includes certificate; member-pin, member medal and ECG ceremonial collar	
YOUNG MEMBER: (under 28 years)	Free Includes certificate; member-pin	

Declaration to be Signed by Applicant:

I wish to join The Emirates Culinary Guild in collaboration with The Women's Culinary Chapter.

I have read the ECG Constitution and By-laws. I agree to be bound by the requirements of the constitution.
If elected, I promise to support the Guild and its' endeavours to the best of my abilities.

Signature:

Proposed By:	Signature:
Seconded By:	Signature:

For Official Use Only

Remarks:

Payment Received?

Certificate Given	Pin Given	Medal & Collar Given
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Approved by President: Signature:

Approved by Chairman: Signature:

Note: The membership is only applicable to those who are working in the UAE as professional chef or with a background related as Chef in the hotel and restaurant industry.

The WCC is in collaboration with the Emirates Culinary Guild, which is a member of the World Association of Chef's Societies

newmembers



Team JM Foods receive the corporate membership from Chef Andy Cuthbert, President of the ECG.

JM Foods: Elevating Culinary Excellence Worldwide

JM Food has emerged as a beacon of culinary excellence in the heart of Dubai, UAE. With a steadfast commitment and ethos of "Quality promised, Quality delivered," the company has redefined the standards of food export, offering a diverse and unparalleled range of premium products sourced from across the globe. We humbly extend our sincerest appreciation to our invaluable clients who have graciously allowed us the privilege to provide them with top-quality food and related products since our inception. The unwavering trust and loyalty over the years has been the driving force behind our commitment to excellence.

JM Food carry an extensive product range that caters to the discerning needs of its clientele. From fresh seafood and shellfish to a variety of meats, game, pork, and poultry, the company ensures a diverse selection to meet every culinary need. Moreover, their portfolio includes gourmet cheeses, appetizers, frozen retail items, beverages, and a wide array of gluten-free and vegan products



sourced from renowned suppliers in countries such as the UK, France, Italy, Holland, Germany, Australia, New Zealand, and Asia. Furthermore, many of their premium brands are celebrated, each adorned with accolades and honors for their exceptional quality and tantalising flavour profiles.

The company's innovative spirit shines through its unique production house, JMM, where gourmet products are crafted in-house under the distinguished brand name 'Rayants.' This capability allows JM Foods to not only ensure the freshness and authenticity of their products but also enables precise portion control and repackaging, setting them apart as leaders in the industry.

JM Foods' reach extends far beyond

the borders of the UAE, with exports spanning the entire GCC region, Africa, Maldives, Georgia, and Sri Lanka. Their esteemed clientele includes leading airlines such as Etihad, Emirates, Qatar, and Ethiopian, as well as renowned fine dining establishments and esteemed hotel chains like Hilton, Radisson, Jumeirah, and Marriott to name a few. JM Foods has established itself as a trusted partner in the culinary industry.

Central to JM Foods' operations is its state-of-the-art warehouse and logistics infrastructure, facilitating seamless delivery across all seven emirates. Equipped with a temperature-controlled fleet of trucks, the company ensures the freshness and integrity of its products with round-the-clock service, meeting the demands of its clientele efficiently and reliably.

As JM Foods continues to uphold its commitment to quality and innovation, it remains a beacon of excellence in the global gastronomic landscape, setting the standard for premium food export services in the Middle East & globally.

newmembers



Rafael Herrera - UAE Distribution Head, Seara Food Europe (DMCC Branch) receiving the Membership Certificate from the ECG team.

As the latest proud member of the Emirates Culinary Guild, **Seara** is excited to introduce itself through this special editorial feature in the guild's esteemed magazine. With a rich history spanning over 60 years, Seara has established itself as a beacon of practicality, confidence, and innovation in the global food industry. Our commitment to bringing flavors and quality that amaze, coupled with relentless investment in technology and quality assurance, has positioned us as one of the leading food producers not only in Brazil but across the world. Every product in Seara's diverse portfolio, from family lunch essentials to quick snacks, adheres to the highest standards of quality and origin.

Seara, a major brand under JBS Foods, distinguishes itself through its dedication to crafting delightful products that resonate with customers globally. Our presence in the Middle East region is marked by strategic acquisitions and expansions, including



top-certified factories in Ras Al Khaimah and Dammam, and the largest factory undertaking in Jeddah. This not only solidifies our position as a significant player in the region but enhances our capability to serve our growing customer base with a wide range of exceptional products. Our selection spans from Seara Grillers & Parts, Turkey Whole & Parts, to Friboi Brazilian Beef and Pilgrim's chicken parts; our expanded selection also embraces Belgium & Egyptian French Fries, alongside a rich variety of cold cuts and a comprehensive FPP lineup, including nuggets, burgers, hotdogs, and oriental specialties, designed to satisfy all culinary preferences.

Our partnership with the Emirates Culinary Guild opens a new chapter

of opportunity and collaboration. The International Food Company Seara LLC (IFCS), serving as the distribution hub for Seara and other JBS brands in the region, is dedicated to delivering unparalleled quality and fostering profound connections within the food service channel. This collaboration not only amplifies our commitment to culinary excellence but also heralds a future where innovation, quality, and taste converge to create unforgettable dining experiences.

Seara looks forward to a fruitful partnership with the Emirates Culinary Guild, marked by mutual growth, shared values, and a passion for celebrating the art of cooking. Together, we aspire to set new benchmarks in the culinary world and bring the best of global flavors to the UAE.



Janitha Panapitiya, Head Chef and Nada, co-founder of Sweet Connection, receiving the Membership Certificate from Chef Harald Oberender, VP Corporate, Emirates Culinary Guild

Introducing Sweet Connection:

Dubai's premier gluten-free production facility established in 2012. Located in Dubai Investment Park 1, we craft delicious treats for all dietary needs. From our certified facility, we offer a range of gluten-free goodies, including crackers, brownies, and breads, all meeting HACCP, UK Celiac, ISO 9001, ISO 22000, and Halal standards. With a commitment to quality and safety, we're your go-to for guilt-free indulgence. Join us today for a taste of Sweet Connection magic.

Sweet Connection, nestled in Dubai Investment Park 1 (DIP1), is an esteemed UAE-based Gluten-free certified production facility established in 2012. Dedicated to crafting delicious gluten-free treats, we prioritize inclusivity,



ensuring exceptional products for all dietary needs. From our certified facility, we offer a diverse range of gluten-free delights, including award-winning crackers, sugar-free chocolate brownies, and proprietary flour blend breads, meticulously prepared with expertise. Committed to safety and quality, we adhere to stringent HACCP regulations and international standards, boasting certifications including HACCP, UK Celiac, ISO 9001, ISO 22000, and Halal.

Sweet Connection transcends being merely a gluten-free production facility; it's a haven for guilt-free indulgence. Whether you're in hospitality, catering, or simply seeking wholesome treats, we're here to cater to your needs. Join us on a journey of taste and quality, and experience the enchantment of Sweet Connection today.



“
**Chef
Simon
says...**

Culinary Trends Express

Simon Martin, Executive Chef at Kerry Taste & Nutrition (Food Service), has been sharing trends for our region since 2016

Welcome back to Trends Express. Without further ado, let's jump on board the "Trends Express" and see what's hot and appearing in our region. Remember, **"LIKE IT, BUY IT, SNAP IT, SHARE IT."**

They're not complicated, but just a few simple ingredients will rock your culinary planet

There is a lot to be said with the hybridization of breakfast breads emerging in 2013 when "Ansel" bought the world the cronut. The sticky, sweet doughnut glaze over buttery, flaky laminated enriched pastry.... What's not to like? I hear you ask!! "Mr. Holmes Bakery" introduced the global audience to the Cruffin, closely followed by the British retailer "Marks & Spencer" rolling out the Croloaf. We have seen Tracos, Croissants shaped similar to tacos and filled with spiced pulled meats, Cretzels (croissants crossed with salted pretzels, spiral croissants from Italy, and even the croffel, croissant pastry cooked in a waffle press from Asia. This is a trend that's forever evolving. I am waiting to see our local versions evolve, maybe the Croff-Kanaf or Cro Maamoul. This region is creating trends. I am salivating at the thought of a Crokhubz or a Cropida filled with spiced meat, oozing with salty cheese and dusted with pomegranate seeds popping like jewels of sharp, sweet juice. **OH BOY, I AM GOING TO KEEP THIS TREND GOING AND MAKE SOME NOW...**

Things are magical with the new trend coming to the region: SOLIEN....**WHAT?** Well, if I told you it's a new protein that is made from Air and electricity, you might say I am too late for an April's fool joke. However, I am not joking; It is not from a vegetable or animal, yet it is entirely natural Protein with amino acids very similar to soy. **Hold on now, we get technical**, so water is divided with electricity into bases of hydrogen and oxygen, which are fed hydrogen, minerals, and CO2. With a wave of a magic wand, we have a natural protein with umami notes, and the texture is silky smooth. It is added to sweet and savoury dishes to enhance notes and help layer flavours in meats, gravies, vegetables, and desserts. Used as a cheese or egg replacement, even in noodles. **IT IS UNBELIEVABLE...** like we are living in a Sci-fi movie. However, our industry is breaking the mould and pushing the boundaries for sustainable solutions as the planet becomes more crowded.

Finally, as it starts to warm up this month, we are seeing the trend returning to our region of Sando's. No longer just Wagyu



beef or chicken, we are witnessing pastrami, truffle, or as a breakfast version....this week, I even saw an ice cream sando... wow, it was amazing. Fish or shrimp Sandos are appearing more. The soft white milk bread will almost melt in your mouth, and it's only toasted on one side, so it almost bonds with the filling to give the customer an exquisite experience that will leave them wanting more. It's appearing in casual, fast, and fine dining across the region. Have you seen the popping into menus near you yet?

This month has been full of culinary surprises for me. I am always looking for new experiences to try, new flavors, and new textures; well, I tried avocado leaves.... these leaves have a very strong flavor. It tastes like a combination of liquorice, toasted hazelnut, and a tinge of green plantain rind. Cooking beans with these leaves make them taste amazing; it's the perfect pairing... **GO ON TRY IT, IT MIGHT SURPRISE YOU**

Finally, our corporate partners at the Emirates Culinary Guild are also helping define the landscape of trends with their visions. Their foresight to avail their latest products to us at our monthly meetings, reflects both innovation and current market trends. Stay ahead of the curve, talk to them, and try their products. Join them and us in driving the trends in our region.

Kerry Foodservice provides custom-made solutions (coatings, sauces, beverages, etc.) and branded solutions such as Chef's Palette and DaVinci Gourmet to global and regional chains, QSRs, and casual diners across the region.

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