

THE FLAVOR BIBLE

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO CULINARY CREATIVITY, BASED
ON THE WISDOM OF AMERICA'S MOST IMAGINATIVE CHEFS



KAREN PAGE AND ANDREW DORNBURG

IACP Award-Winning Authors of *What to Drink with What You Eat*

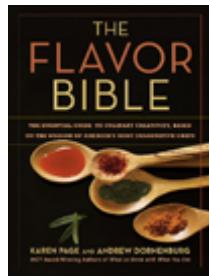
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KAREN PAGE AND ANDREW DORNBURG
PHOTOGRAPHS BY BARRY SALZMAN



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At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.

—ALBERT SCHWEITZER

To Daniel Boulud, Patrick O'Connell, and Jean-Georges Vongerichten—the leading lights of culinary creativity of their generation—whose sparks always rekindle our flame

Gastronomy is the rational study of all related to man as he is eating. Its purpose is to keep humankind alive with the best possible food.

—JEAN-ANTHELME BRILLAT-SAVARIN (1755–1826)

In what art or science could improvements be made that would more powerfully contribute to increase the comforts and enjoyments of mankind?

—SIR BENJAMIN THOMPSON, COUNT RUMFORD (IN A 1794 ESSAY ON THE ART OF COOKERY)

PREFACE

“When we no longer have good cooking in the world, we will have no literature, nor high and sharp intelligence, nor friendly gatherings, nor social harmony.”

—MARIE-ANTOINE CARÊME, CHEF (1784–1833)

“Good cooking is an art, as well as a form of intense pleasure.... A recipe is only a theme, which an intelligent cook can play each time with a variation.”

—MADAME JEHANE BENOÎT, CHEF (1904–1987)

“You have to love either what you are going to eat, or the person you are cooking for. Then you have to give yourself up to cooking. Cuisine is an act of love.”

—ALAIN CHAPEL, CHEF (1937–1990)

The first quotation suggests why we do what we do, while the others suggest how. We published our first book in 1995, and it is exciting as we approach the publication of *The Flavor Bible* in 2008 to witness the realm of good cooking as it reaches a new “tipping point.”

No longer content simply to replicate others’ recipes, today’s cooks—professionals and amateurs alike—increasingly seek to create their own dishes. In doing so, they celebrate the creative *process* of cooking as much as the finished *product*.

Cooking at its most basic level is a creative act, one of transforming food through the application of heat and the incorporation of other ingredients. But there are different orders of creativity, and merely following a recipe is a creative act of the most basic order, like painting by numbers.

When accomplished cooks grow restless, they start to analyze instructions before following them to see if they can improve upon the results, thus raising the act of cooking to a creative act of a higher order. As their experience grows, cooks are able to bring greater intuition and even inspiration to their cooking.

Traditional cookbooks are aimed at first-order cooks. Every cook owes a debt of gratitude to those who have brought progress to cuisine throughout history—those who famously codified classic cuisines through the painstaking chronicling of recipes, from

Auguste Escoffier in France to others around the globe. Appreciation is also due to those who have elevated and expanded the range of available ingredients and techniques, the essential building blocks of cooking.

Over the years, cookbooks have come to dictate precise measurement of ingredients along with instructions for their preparation and assembly, which has done much to improve the general accessibility of recipes. However, they also have come to provide a false sense of security for which the unsuspecting cook pays a price. When a recipe is rigidly scripted and blindly followed, it negates the cook's own creative instincts and good judgment—not to mention much of the pleasure of truly “being” in the moment.

“Great cooks rarely bother to consult cookbooks.”

—CHARLES SIMIC, U.S. POET LAUREATE

Those with the urge to innovate had long been on their own in the kitchen until many adopted our 1996 book, *Culinary Artistry*, as their muse. That book sought to break the mold of contemporary prescriptive cookbooks and to restore the creative instinct to chefs. Drawing on classic flavor combinations and preparations, it put the wisdom of history at cooks’ fingertips for the first time—and with the same ease with which writers consulted a thesaurus.

As time passed, it became clear that chefs were thinking of flavors and their combination in new ways, beyond the classics chronicled in *Culinary Artistry*. Meanwhile, the gap between professionals and amateur cooks narrowed, as the latter installed Viking ranges at home to prepare a burgeoning array of new ingredients, with their TVs transformed into virtual twenty-four-hour cooking schools, given the advent of culinary programming.

“Food without wine is a corpse; wine without food is a ghost. United and well matched, they are as body and soul: living partners.”

—ANDRÉ SIMON, CHEF (1877–1970)

Since the year 2000 we have been studying the new ways in which flavors are being combined. It has been a privilege to interview many of the country’s most imaginative chefs and other food and drink experts (turning to an entirely different lineup from those we spoke to for *Culinary Artistry*). Some are well-established industry pioneers, while others have risen on the scene in recent years. All have wowed us with their savory

cuisines and/or desserts, and often in spots less traveled, from Dallas to New Orleans to Hoboken. We've also combed the most recent culinary literature published in 2000 or later.

The first result was our 2006 book, *What to Drink with What You Eat*, which celebrated the harmonious combination of food and drink and, indeed, their inseparability, as suggested by the André Simon quotation.

The second result is *The Flavor Bible*, which, like *Culinary Artistry*, is not intended to be prescriptive; rather, it is an empowerment tool. *The Flavor Bible* is a comprehensive, easy-to-use single-volume reference of more than six hundred alphabetical entries listing modern-day compatible flavors, chronicling new flavor synergies in the new millennium.

Our books *Culinary Artistry* (classic flavor combinations before 1996), *The Flavor Bible* (modern flavor combinations since 2000), and *What to Drink with What You Eat* (classic and modern food and drink combinations) are essential to use in concert, as each covers different aspects of food and drink flavor harmony.



We believe cooking will continue to evolve, and not only as a means of “doing” (i.e., putting dinner on the table, or “problem-solving” by “following a recipe”). Over time, we believe more people—including, perhaps, yourself—will have discovered it as a way of “being” in the world. We have learned enough over the past decade or two to question why cooking is done one way versus another. This thoughtful sensory engagement leads to a store of experiences that allow us to bring more intuition to the cooking process, synthesizing what we’ve done before into innovative approaches to creating a dish. Ultimately, cooking offers the opportunity to be immersed in one’s senses and in the moment like no other activity, uniting the inner and outer selves. At these times, cooking transcends drudgery and becomes a means of meditation and even healing.

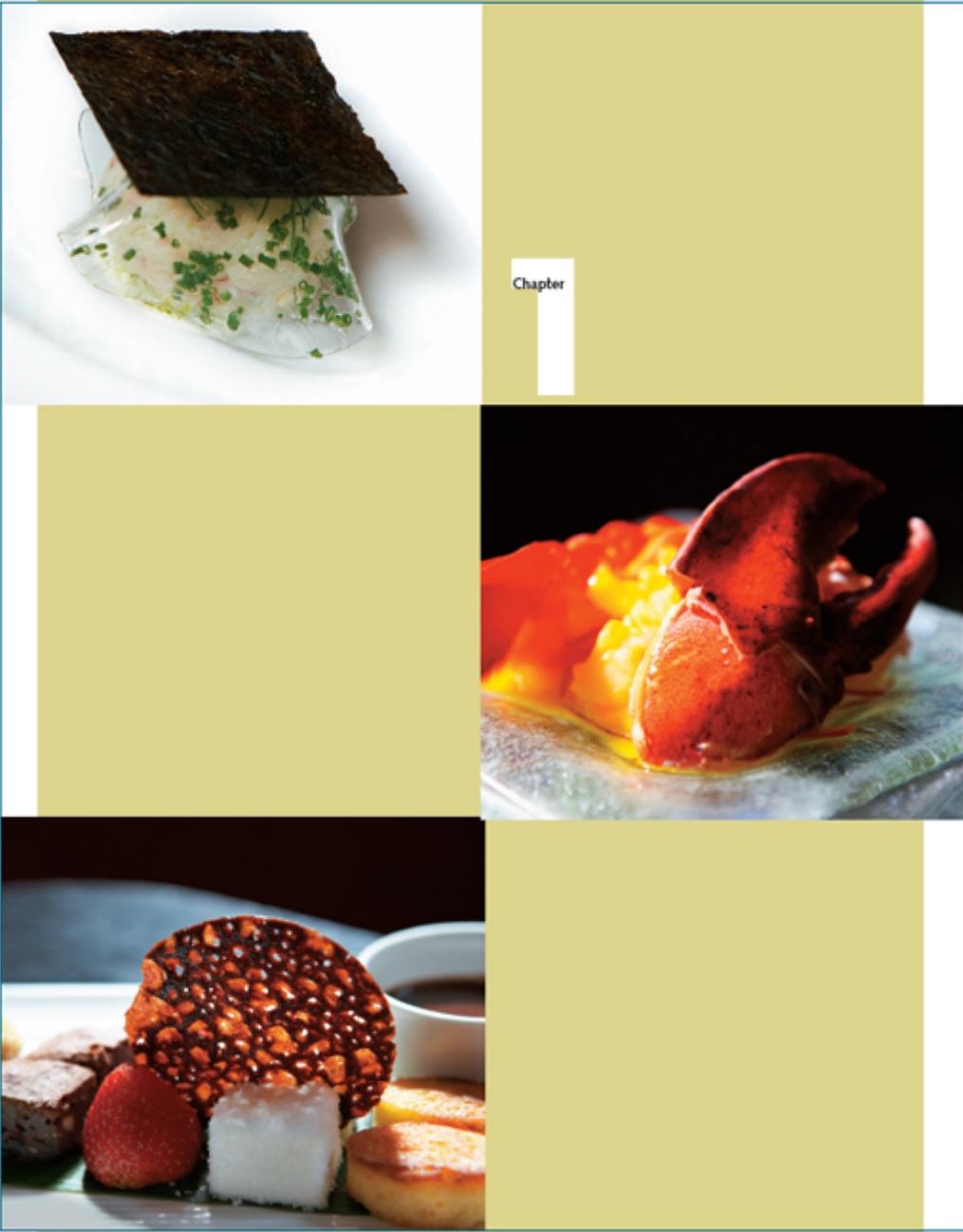
It is little surprise to us, then, that when U.S. Poet Laureate Charles Simic was asked by the *New York Times Magazine*'s Deborah Solomon earlier this year, “What advice would you give to people who are looking to be happy?” his response was “For starters, learn how to cook.”

We hope this book makes you happy—literally.

—KAREN PAGE AND ANDREW DORNBURG

New York City

April 2008



FLAVOR = TASTE + MOUTHFEEL + AROMA + “THE X FACTOR”: LEARNING TO RECOGNIZE THE LANGUAGE OF FOOD

Magical dishes, magical words: A great cook is, when all is said and done, a great poet. . . . For was it not a visit from the Muses that inspired the person who first had the idea of marrying rice and chicken, grape and thrush, potatoes and entrecôte, Parmesan and pasta, eggplant and tomato, Chambertin and cockerel, liqueur brandy and woodcock, onion and tripe?

—MARCEL E. GRANCHER, *CINQUANTE ANS À TABLE* (1953)

FLAVOR = TASTE + MOUTHFEEL + AROMA + “THE X FACTOR”

Taste = What is perceived by the taste buds

Mouthfeel = What is perceived by the rest of the mouth

Aroma = What is perceived by the nose

“The X Factor” = What is perceived by the other senses—plus the heart, mind, and spirit

Our taste buds can perceive only four basic tastes: sweet, salty, sour, and bitter. The essence of great cooking is to bring these four tastes into balanced harmony to create deliciousness. It’s that simple—and that difficult. After all, flavor is a function not only of taste, but also of smell, touch, sight, and sound. Because we’re human beings, other nonphysical factors come into play, including our emotions, thoughts, and spirits.

Learning to recognize as well as manipulate both the obvious and subtle components of flavor will make you a much better cook. This book will be your companion in the kitchen whenever you wish to create deliciousness.

Learning to cook like a great chef is within the realm of possibility. However, it is something that is rarely taught; it must be “caught.”

Everyone who cooks—or even merely seasons their food at the table before eating—can benefit from mastering the basic principles of making food taste great. This complex subject is simplified by one thing: while the universe may contain a vast

number of ingredients and a virtually infinite number of ingredient combinations, the palate can register only the four basic tastes.

Great food balances these tastes beautifully. A great cook knows how to taste, to discern what is needed, and to make adjustments. Once you learn how to season and how to balance tastes, a whole new world opens up to you in cooking. Of course, several factors conspire against your ever doing so—not the least of which is a culture that sees the publication of thousands of new cookbooks annually featuring recipes that promise to dazzle you and your guests if you follow them to the letter. And yet you’re often left wondering why the results aren’t as delicious as promised. That’s because great cooking is never as simple as merely following a recipe. The best cooking requires a discerning palate to know when a dish needs a little something or other—and what to add or do to elevate its flavor.

WHAT IS PERCEIVED BY THE MOUTH

Taste Buds

Sweetness. Saltiness. Sourness. Bitterness. Every delicious bite you’ve ever tasted has been a result of these four tastes coming together on your taste buds. We taste them as individual notes, and in concert. Each taste affects the other. For example, bitterness suppresses sweetness. In addition, different tastes affect us in different ways. Saltiness stimulates the appetite, while sweetness satiates it. Take the time to explore the four basic tastes.

Sweetness

It takes the greatest quantity of a substance that is sweet (versus salty, sour, or bitter) to register on our taste buds. However, we can appreciate the balance and “roundness” that even otherwise imperceptible sweetness adds to savory dishes. Sweetness can work with bitterness, sourness—even saltiness. Sweetness can also bring out the flavors of other ingredients, from fruits to mint.

Saltiness

When we banished more than thirty of America’s leading chefs to their own desert islands with only ten ingredients to cook with for the rest of their lives (*Culinary Artistry*, 1996), the number-one ingredient they chose was salt. Salt is nature’s flavor

enhancer. It is the single most important taste for making savory food delicious. (Sweetness, by the way, plays the same role in desserts.)

Sourness

Sourness is second only to salt in savory food and sugar in sweet food in its importance as a flavor enhancer. Sour notes—whether a squeeze of lemon or a drizzle of vinegar—add sparkle and brightness to a dish. Balancing a dish’s acidity with its other tastes is critical to the dish’s ultimate success.

Bitterness

Humans are most sensitive to bitterness, and our survival wiring allows us to recognize it in even relatively tiny amounts. Bitterness balances sweetness, and can also play a vital role in cutting richness in a dish. While bitterness is more important to certain people than to others, some chefs see it as an indispensable “cleansing” taste—one that makes you want to take the next bite, and the next.

Umami (Savoriness)

In addition to the four basic tastes, there is growing evidence of a fifth taste, *umami*, which we first wrote about in 1996 in *Culinary Artistry*. It is often described as the savory or meaty “mouth-filling” taste that is noticeable in such ingredients as anchovies, blue cheese, mushrooms, and green tea, and in such flavorings as monosodium glutamate (MSG), which is the primary component of branded seasonings such as Ac’cent.

Mouthfeel

In addition to its sense of taste, the mouth has a sense of “touch” and can register other sensations, such as temperature and texture, that all play a role in flavor. These aspects of food, generally characterized as mouthfeel, help to bring food into alignment with our bodies, and bring some of a dish’s greatest interest and pleasure. The crunchiness and crispiness of a dish contribute sound as well as textural appeal.

Temperature

I always pay attention to temperature. I look at what I feel like eating now. If it is cold and rainy outside, I make sure that soup is on the menu. If it is hot outside, I make sure there are lots of salads on the menu.
—ANDREW CARMELLINI, A VOCE (NEW YORK CITY)

Temperature is one of the foremost among the other sensations that can be perceived by the mouth. The temperature of our food even affects our perception of its taste; for example, coldness suppresses sweetness. Boston pastry chef Rick Katz, with whom Andrew cooked at Lydia Shire's restaurant Biba, first taught him the lesson of pulling out the ice cream a few minutes before serving so that the slight rise in temperature could maximize its flavor.

A food's temperature can affect both the perception and enjoyment of a dish. A chilled carrot soup on a hot summer day—and hot roasted carrots on a cold winter day—could be said to be “healing” through their ability to bring our bodies into greater alignment with our environment.



Texture

I would never serve pike on a base of chowder, because balance and texture are so important when it comes to creating a dish. Is there a rich component, a lean component, a crunchy component, and a cleansing component? Are all the taste sensors activated so that you want to go back for a second bite? Cod works better over a richer preparation like chowder. I would also make sure to choose the right technique for the cod: I would not poach it, because if it is poached it would be silky on silky. If it is seared, it is crunchy on silky—which is more appealing because of the contrast.

—SHARON HAGE, YORK STREET (DALLAS)

A food's texture is central to its ability to captivate and to please. We value pureed and/or creamy foods (such as soups and mashed potatoes) as "comfort" foods, and crunchiness and crispiness (such as nachos and caramel corn) as "fun" foods. We enjoy texture as it activates our other senses, including touch, sight, and sound.

While babies by necessity eat pureed foods, most adults enjoy a variety of textures, particularly crispiness and crunchiness, which break up the smoothness of texture—or even the simple monotony—of dishes.

Piquancy

Our mouths can also sense what we often incorrectly refer to as "hotness," meaning piquancy's "sharpness" and/or "spiciness"—whether boldly as in chile peppers, or more subtly as in a sprinkle of cayenne pepper. Some people find the experience of these *picante* (as the Spanish refer to it, or *piccante* as the Italians do) tastes more pleasurable than others.

Astringency

Our mouths "pucker" to register astringency. This is a drying sensation caused by the tannins in red wine or strong tea, and occasionally in foods such as walnuts, cranberries, and unripe persimmons.

WHAT IS PERCEIVED BY THE NOSE

Aroma

Aroma is thought to be responsible for as much as 80 percent or more of flavor. This helps to explain the popularity of aromatic ingredients, from fresh herbs and spices to grated lemon zest. Incorporating aromatic ingredients can enhance the aroma of your dish and, in turn, its flavor.

Some qualities are perceived through both the sense of taste and smell, such as:

Pungency

Pungency refers to the taste and aroma of such ingredients as horseradish and mustard that are as irritating—albeit often pleasantly—to the nose as they are to the palate.

Chemesthesia

Chemesthesia refers to other sensations that tickle (e.g., the tingle of carbonated beverages) or play tricks on (e.g., the false perception of “heat” from chile peppers, or “cold” from peppermint) our gustatory senses.

WHAT IS PERCEIVED BY THE HEART, MIND, AND SPIRIT

“The X Factor”

When we are present to what we are eating, food has the power to affect our entire selves. We experience food not only through our five physical senses—including our sense of sight, which we address first below—but also emotionally, mentally, and even spiritually.



Heightening Flavor with Dominique and Cindy Duby of Wild Sweets

We believe that food preparation is 60 percent ingredients and 40 percent technique.

—DOMINIQUE AND CINDY DUBY, WILD SWEETS (VANCOUVER)

Flavor is the combination of the taste you experience on your tongue and the aroma you experience through your nose. We believe that as much as 90 percent of what we perceive as

taste is actually aroma. When you eat a pineapple, the flavor really comes through the nose. So, if your pineapple is not ripe, it won't have much aroma. It may taste sweet, but it won't taste like pineapple.

There are two ways to bring flavor to a dish, through aroma or through chemical reaction. We always say that cooking is no different from doing a lab experiment: The minute you add heat to a raw product, you are changing the status of that product. When you use the Maillard reaction—which is what happens when you sear a piece of meat—you are getting a reaction of caramelization from the carbohydrates and amino acids. This chemical reaction creates flavor.

To add aroma to a dish, think of a piece of fish cooked in broth with herbs or lemon. The problem is that the flavor escapes into the air. If you walk into a room and it smells great, that means there is not much flavor left in the dish. The aroma has escaped. So, if you want to add aroma to a dish, the best way is through *sous-vide* cooking [which cooks encased food at long, slow temperatures]. This method traps the aroma into what you are cooking without letting it escape.

The problem is that *sous vide* is not available for home cooks. What a home cook can do is "sealed cooking," where you take a heavy-duty freezer ziplock bag, put in what you want to cook with the liquid, then cook it over a steady heat on your stove. Another method that works is putting the bag in a pot with a single-cup water heater that goes to about 140 degrees Fahrenheit and, from time to time, stirring the water. [Note: Care must be taken with this low-temperature method of cooking to avoid food poisoning.]

This is a way to put—and keep—a lot of flavor in whatever you are cooking.

The Visual

The visual presentation of a dish can greatly enhance the pleasure we derive from it. Just a few decades ago, it was still possible to taste a dish with the eyes, but only those who'd spent time in worldclass kitchens knew the tricks of such artistic plate presentation. Since the advent of *Art Culinaire* and the Web, it's become easier to reproduce a great dish's elaborate form than its exquisite flavor.

How a dish looks can also affect our perception of its flavor in more direct ways; for example, the deeper the color of a berry sorbet, the more berry flavor is perceived. The stronger the connection between a particular food and a particular color, the stronger the flavor impact—such as berries with red, lemon with yellow, and lime with green.

Compatible Flavors

An essential aspect of great cooking is harnessing compatible flavors—which involves knowing which herbs, spices, and other flavorings best accentuate particular ingredients.

A process of trial and error over centuries resulted in classic cuisines and dishes, some of which feature timeless combinations of beloved flavor pairings—for example, basil with tomatoes, rosemary with lamb, and tarragon with lobster.

However, today it's possible to use scientific techniques to analyze similar molecular structures to come up with new, compatible pairing possibilities, as odd as some might sound—such as jasmine with pork liver, parsley with banana, or white chocolate with caviar.

The Emotional

I say all the time that [my mother's Spanish potato and egg tortilla] is my favorite because it conveys a point: that sentimental value comes above all else.

—FERRAN ADRIA, EL BULLI (SPAIN)

We taste with our hearts as much as with our tongues. What else could explain adult preferences for one's mother's dishes over those prepared by a great chef? This also helps to explain the lasting appeal of traditional dishes and cuisines of countries around the globe, which stem from our love for their cultures, their people, and the deeply rooted culinary traditions that have sustained them over centuries.



Choosing a Cooking Technique with Michael Anthony of Gramercy Tavern in New York City

When we look at an ingredient, we ask, "How can we maximize the inherent flavor or quality of what this is?" As in any other progressive modern kitchen, there is a fascination with examining all the new techniques we can get our hands on. We have used *sous vide* [i.e., cooking vacuum-packed ingredients at low temperatures for long periods of time], but we are far from letting any technique drive a dish.

Alice Waters described something cooked via *sous vide* as "dead" food. I can understand her opinion because she is all about inflecting that "freshcut crunch" feeling into her food. *Sous vide* is all about a long, slow cooking process—and those products calling for that [such as tougher cuts of meat] will be awesome.

Why we choose any specialized piece of equipment for a dish always gets back to good oldfashioned cooking principles: What is the best way of capturing flavors?

That is how choosing a technique fits into my cooking.

I'm excited to eat in restaurants that are pushing the boundaries of presentation and technique. Yet my personal take on food that is too technically driven is that technique comes first and taste comes second. I feel the meals that hit home are ones where the flavor is there and you are eating

a meal in a distinct time and place. I love it when people look back on a meal, and the time of year is what made it special. The ingredients they tasted seemed naturally a part of that moment because that is what is available then.

Sometimes straightforward flavors are the ones people can latch on to, even though the ingredients can be very sophisticated behind the scenes. If, ultimately, the flavor combination is one that is simple and straightforward, with an impressive balance of acidity and bitterness, and you remember it, then you win as a diner. Sometimes the meals that hit home are not the ones that were the most complicated.

The Mental

If we ate only for sustenance, we could probably survive on nutritive pills and water. But we also eat for pleasure. Because we typically eat three times a day, 365 days a year, we enjoy novelty, such as a twist on the traditional construct of a dish.

Increasingly, since the 1980s and the advent of “tall” food, chefs have played with the presentation of their ingredients. Since the 1990s, the advent of avant-garde cuisine and so-called molecular gastronomy has seen chefs experiment more and more with both the chemical composition and presentation of dishes as well.

The Spiritual

The preparation, cooking, and eating of food is a sacrament. Treating it as such has the potential to elevate the quality of our daily lives like nothing else. Several of the world’s leading chefs have worked to perfect each aspect of the dining encounter—from the food and drink to the ambiance to the service—to raise the overall experience to a new level imbued not only with pleasure, comfort, and interest, but also with meaning.

FLAVOR FROM THE INSIDE OUT

America’s foremost chefs reached the pinnacle of their profession through their painstaking attention to every aspect of their cuisine and the restaurant experience. Chefs bring their own unique approaches to their cuisines, which are arguably rooted in either the physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual—although they can span two, three, or even all of them.

Chefs whose focus celebrates the **physical** realm include **Alice Waters** of Chez Panisse in Berkeley, California, with her pathbreaking focus on the quality of ingredients sourced and served, and **Dan Barber** of Blue Hill at Stone Barns in Pocantico Hills, New York, whose on-premises greenhouse, gardens, and pastures grow and raise much of what the restaurant serves.

Celebrating the **emotional** realm are those chefs whose cuisines are closely tied to a specific culture, its people, and their traditions. It includes chefs such as **Rick Bayless**, whose Frontera Grill and Topolobampo in Chicago elevate Mexican cuisine, and **Vikram Vij** and **Meeru Dhalwala**, whose Vij's and Rangoli restaurants in Vancouver honor and celebrate the cooking of India and tap Indian women exclusively to staff their kitchens.

Easily identifiable as part of the **mental** realm are chefs whose efforts are reconceptualizing how food can be manipulated and presented, such as Chicago's **Grant Achatz** of Alinea (with signature dishes such as bacon on a clothesline) and **Homaro Cantu** of Moto (whose dishes include incorporating edible paper printed with soy-based inks, and a doughnut soup that looks like eggnog and tastes just like a doughnut).

Through the elevation not only of their cuisines but of the creation and orchestration of ambiance and service as well, chefs such as **Daniel Boulud** of New York's Restaurant Daniel and **Patrick O'Connell** of The Inn at Little Washington in Virginia transcend the prior three categories to bring the dining experience to another level in the **spiritual** realm.

In the pages that follow, we'll share chefs' reflections on working in the first three realms. (As for their thoughts on the fourth, we invite you to visit or revisit our book *Culinary Artistry*.)

The Physical Realm

My motto has always been: Find the best ingredients possible, and listen to what they tell you about how they want to be prepared. Mess with them as little as you can. Keep their integrity, but at the same time, focus their flavor, which is where creativity comes in.

—VITALY PALEY, PALEY'S PLACE (PORTLAND, OREGON)

The best chefs work with the best ingredients available to them. The *very* best chefs don't settle for this, and seek out even better ingredients through working with foragers, developing relationships with farmers and other purveyors, and even growing their own produce and raising their own animals.

Monica Pope of T'afia in Houston

My cooking changed radically when we started hosting a farmers' market [located at T'afia]. I remember when I was cooking in California, and chefs would be waiting for an ingredient to come into season. When it arrived, their philosophy would be "Let's just slice it and not screw it up." I thought, "That is just not the way restaurants work." It's hard to believe that now I am saying the same thing that they used to say.

Since the advent of the farmers' market, when I get a product, it is phenomenal—because it was picked at the right time and has never even been refrigerated before it comes to my door. Sometimes I feel guilty because people will love something, and ask what I did to it. Often the answer is “Very little.”

Our zucchini salad is a perfect example of celebrating what comes to our door. We get baby zucchini and we shave them raw. Then we add a flavored pecan oil, raw local pecan halves, shaved pecorino cheese, Mexican marigold, and a pinch of salt.

We also think a lot about the best way to present these ingredients. The salad has to be interesting the whole way through, and I want the customer to have the experience of interacting with it themselves. I want them to have the experience of lifting a shaved piece of cheese after their bite of crunchy yellow or light-green squash. They will see that the salad is dressed with oil, but then have to search and realize that it is pecan oil. Then they will take the next bite and get the herb that has a minty note to it. To achieve this, I will taste a dish night after night to make sure it is “eating” the way I want it to eat.

Michael Anthony of Gramercy Tavern in New York City

You want to have an infatuation with the ingredients you cook with. You want to tap all the hopes and dreams that went into producing that ingredient. You need to think, “Is this ingredient not only up to par, but is it brilliant?” When it is cooked, you want whoever bites into what you made to think that the flavor is bright, interesting, and delicious.

I take a simple approach to my food, but simple food does not mean unmanipulated food. Sometimes simple food is simply boring.

When I cook, I am looking to pull myself back from a dish rather than add to a dish. I would rather a dish feel too simple than too fussy. So, sticking to my core principles, I never want to overload a dish with too many ingredients. But cooking is not always one-two-three. Sometimes you need some extra ingredients as long as they work dynamically.

Dan Barber of Blue Hill at Stone Barns in Pocantico Hills, New York

Our pork dish starts not at the table with the cut of pork on the plate, but in the field with what kind of pork we choose to raise for our restaurant. I make a lot of decisions to get the most “pigness” out of our pork dish. We raise Berkshire pigs, which have a great flavor. They are an older breed that has a flavor profile that newer breeds don’t have. The pig has a great intramuscular profile that allows it to develop a better flavor.



We feed our pigs organic grains and that makes a huge difference. We feed them a wide variety of grains and they forage as well. We are also careful of how much corn the pigs eat. I proved unequivocally this summer the difference feed makes. We had a problem getting organic grain for about eight weeks and had to use conventional grain that has more corn in it because it is cheap to use in the feed. I tasted our pork that was raised exactly the same way side by side with the only change being the feed, and the flavor was as different as night and day. The flavor of the two was so different that a child could tell them apart.

We also make sure our pigs are slaughtered in a less stressful way. This makes for a calmer pig, and you can see a difference in the meat and taste the difference [in the texture] on the plate.

At Blue Hill when you order the pork at our restaurant, you don't know what cut you will be getting. We serve leg, shoulder, rack, loin, and belly; it is a mix on the plate. This makes for a more interesting experience, because you get a variety of flavors and textures. We keep the dish pretty straightforward. We will serve it with Brussels sprout leaves and chickpeas.

We don't want to do anything to hide the flavor. We make a pork stock, infuse it with more roasted scraps and bones to make a pork second [also known as a *remoulage*], then do one more pass with more pork and very little wine. This is water that has been infused with pork three times.

Depending on the season, I will make an infusion with herbs like a tea and add a little to the sauce if I want to add more flavor. The reason I do an infusion is to make sure the flavor is so light that you don't even know it is there.

The Emotional Realm

I have no professional cooking training. My starting point was, What do I know? I know Indian spices and flavors.

—MEERU DHALWALA, VIJ'S (VANCOUVER)

There are many emotional connections to draw from when creating dishes—from the bounty of a particular country and its historic evolution into a national cuisine, to the classic dishes of that culture, and of the families and even individual cooks within it—as each might bring a unique twist to the standards.

Maricel Presilla of Cucharamama and Zafra in Hoboken, New Jersey

I'm Cuban—but whether you are Cuban, Venezuelan, Chilean [or another nationality], there is an enormous pride in the flavors of your region and of your childhood. It is like mother's milk, your first compass. It doesn't matter how much you travel or how much

you expand your palate: You always come back to this notion of basic flavors and ingredients, time and again.

For me, being a Cuban from eastern Cuba is my anchor. I am from Santiago, which has a very defined cuisine. It is more influenced by the neighboring islands such as Jamaica and Haiti, which both have European influences as well. The cooks from those islands brought flavors with them like allspice, which is not used in the rest of Cuba. My family uses allspice lavishly in our adobo and in other dishes. I use it a lot as well—and it is one of my favorite spices. Our cooking has more complexity than the food of Havana because of these influences.

We have the most interesting cuisine in the world—and I am not kidding. I have traveled throughout South America, cooking with chefs as well as elderly women, not to mention studying the history of our cuisine from pre-Columbian cooking through the influence of Spanish medieval cooking.

What is fascinating is that there is a lot of structure to our cooking and clearly defined rules to our seasoning.

I have learned how all these flavors work in their nationalities and regions, making Latin America my “backyard” of flavor. I am like a painter, and every painter has his or her own palette. I use this analogy because my father was a painter, and there are colors that he would never use that would not be on his palette.

When I want to be creative, I am comfortable reaching across topographical boundaries. However, I do so with an understanding of all the basic elements of flavor in South American cuisine because I have studied them, eaten them, and lived them!

Vikram Vij of Vij's and Rangoli in Vancouver

The three secrets to my cooking? Number one, my wife, Meelu. Number two, treating the spices with integrity. And number three, using local produce as much as possible.

My own mother is from the northern part of India, so my style and flavors are a combination of different whole and ground spices. I love fenugreek and cinnamon and other aromatics. But one of my [signature dishes] is actually called Mother-in-Law's Pork Curry, because it is based on a recipe my mother-in-law gave me for stewed meat.

I wanted to make something new and was talking to Meelu, who told me her mother used to make a curry with lamb, cream, masala, and some other spices and that they loved it. I decided to try it with pork instead of lamb. It was vindaloo style with vinegar, and green onions added right at the end so that they stayed really fresh. There were too many spices in it to list on the menu so it just made sense to name the dish after her instead.

When I opened my first restaurant, I didn't have a liquor license and did not want to serve [soda] pop or anything with artificial ingredients or preservatives. I remembered

growing up in India and having lemon water with a hint of salt and pepper as a homemade lemonade. [At Vij's,] we made some lemonade and added a little ginger, a pinch of salt, and sparkling water to give the refreshing effervescence of [soda] pop. We started out serving it with pepper as well, but customers couldn't get used to seeing black pepper in a drink.

It is wonderful at the beginning of the meal to refresh your palate.

Meeru Dhalwala Vij of Vij's and Rangoli in Vancouver

While working in India for eleven months, I visited Gujarat. Having been raised in the United States, to me “Indian food” was what my mom cooked. I had no idea there were other kinds!

If you watch a Bollywood movie, you see that the Punjabis and the Gujaratis make a lot of fun of each other. The Gujaratis find us Punjabis very volatile and show-offy. They will say, “Just like your cuisine, you are all fiery and hot!” We Punjabis, on the other hand, think the Gujaratis are quiet and dull. Of course, for me, that has all changed—I love all Indians.

In Gujarat, at the end of cooking a curry, they would add a teaspoon of sugar and a half a lime. The first time I tasted this, it was awful—but then I found out that the cook of the house was a crappy cook! When I had it done correctly, it was delicious, and had a nice, mellow aftertaste. So, I incorporated lime into my cooking after eating Gujarati food in India.

My kitchen is staffed by Punjabi women, who had a hard time using lime because it was not part of their cooking in Punjab. When they tasted it, they thought, “Yuck! What’s the point?” Since my Punjabi cooks don’t like lime, this led me to start using kaffir lime. I had more control over the recipes’ flavor because I could just say, “Add 15 leaves to the recipe.” And I learned that turmeric and lime leaf are wonderful together, by the way.

The Mental Realm

My menu may read as unusual, but everything is really just a slight flip on a traditional flavor profile. If I pull out one acid, I replace it with another. If I make a tagine traditionally, it will have preserved lemon. Then I'll ask, "Would it work with lime or orange juice?" It is still the same flavor profile in that it will still have a cutting acid—just maybe not the one that would be used traditionally.

—BRAD FARMERIE, PUBLIC (NEW YORK CITY)

In modern architecture and design, form is said to follow function. In the cutting-edge world of avant-garde cuisine, which turns classic dishes inside out for the sake of argument or even simple amusement, form follows flavor.

Homaro Cantu of Moto in Chicago

Moto is not meant to be an everyday experience. Neither is Charlie Trotter's [also in Chicago] or Daniel [in New York City]. Someone could say that these chefs are just cooking for themselves, and that is true to a certain extent. I am doing this style of [avant-garde] cooking because I am bored with other dishes. If I was all about the customer and just wanted to make people happy, I would cook paella, pizza, and burgers all day. Everyone would have smiles on their faces!

There is a little bit of selfishness, but there is also playfulness. We have to make sure guests are happy, and that our dishes are both inventive and seasonal. What is happening [in the world] right now is that we are expanding our repertoire of what good food is.



At Moto, when we start out with a concept, flavor is the most important thing but also the last thing we think about. Something might taste great, but who cares? What are we going to do with it? As it pertains to us, we look at a concept. Then it evolves into something where we tweak the flavor a little bit to make it taste more like it "should." For example, once we wanted to make a cookie with a really concentrated flavor. So, we threw cookies into the dehydrator, and turned them into powder. This created a new building block for flavor. [Instead of the flour you would normally use in your dough,] you weigh the powdered cookies out as your starch in your normal cookie recipe. But this starch is now a carrier of flavor for the end product—so the resulting cookie now tastes more like it "should" than it would have just using regular flour.

A lot of our food is rooted in classic combinations—and it has to be. Why? The process by which we go about creating is so foreign that we have to make something that you are familiar with eating. In a tapas restaurant, you have had generations of trial and error to create a dish through local ingredients and techniques that have evolved into something that tastes good. For example, olives marinated with garlic and parsley has been around for a hundred years. Now, there is nothing wrong with that. But, for us, the idea of marinating olives with garlic and parsley is not fun. So, we are going to make a dish where the olives are actually the parsley and the garlic is the olives and so on. But it tastes like something you'd want.

What's in a Pancake? Yes, we do serve real food. We got some BLiS syrup [handcrafted aged maple syrup] in the kitchen which is used by other top chefs around the country. This stuff is liquid gold! This syrup is aged in small bourbon barrels in Canada and is \$20 for a small [375 ml] bottle. The maker even handstamps each bottle with wax and writes the label by hand. When we got it in, we knew we had to do something with it.

We decided to make a pancake dish. We started with the question “How can we make this dish taste more like pancakes than pancakes?” So, we pureed cooked pancakes, then adjusted the liquid with milk. The cool thing about making a pancake puree out of cooked pancakes is that you can alter the concentration levels. You can't alter the concentration levels when you are making straight pancakes.

We wanted to trick the customer into thinking that they were going to eat a hot pancake topped with this syrup. Believability is so important in the process, so we even execute the dish in front of them [in the dining room]. We bring out a metal plate that looks hot [but is frozen and steaming from being immersed in nitrogen]. The pancake batter is then shot from a syringe. The batter freezes when it hits the metal. When we serve it, we top it with the BLiS syrup. Ninety-nine percent of the people who were served this dish swore they were getting a hot flapjack, and it was only when they tasted it that they learned it was cold.

Contrarian by Nature People want to say that wine is natural and has been around a thousand years. But is it natural or unnatural? We don't know. You have people in a foreign country stepping all over these grapes, putting foot fungus in there, and then creating a fermented thing that is controlled. I don't think that wine is all that natural! Every time you turn on the blender and puree something, you are crossing the line of natural versus unnatural. Nature did not intend for an electric motor to spin a blade and turn a solid into a liquid.

If you think an unripe green tomato tastes better than a ripe heirloom red tomato picked off the vine in August, then by all means eat the green tomato. That is flavor preference. What if I feed you an unripe green tomato but alter its taste so it tastes *better* than a vine-ripened red tomato? When we pick it off the vine earlier, it has a different quality—it is sharper. So, we will pair something that maybe should not go with it, like Parmesan cheese pureed with butter. This will make it a little richer and compensate for the overtannic, overacidic qualities of the tomato. [If you enjoy it,] then you have succumbed to not following the seasons.

In the same manner, we'll serve a dish of unripe things that taste ripe because they are together! What do I prefer? Of course I prefer the vine-ripened tomato at the end of August. We would make the other dish just to ask the question.

Creating New Flavors I disagree with the notion that there are no new flavors. Maybe there are no new products, even though we don't know everything that exists in the sea. To create a new flavor, all you have to do is dissect an ingredient. For example, if I take an avocado and put it into a centrifuge, we would separate the fat and the water. The water will carry the avocado taste. If I take that water and create a snow with it or make it into a pill, it will have a much different taste than avocado, because avocado is thought of as something that is rich. But there would be no richness here; it is a completely different product. We just made up a new flavor.

How to Lengthen Flavors

Think of something in its pure form like passion fruit puree: It is strong, vibrant, and when it touches your tongue, you taste it [all at once]. I learned from Heston Blumenthal [chef of The Fat Duck, the Michelin three-star restaurant in England] that if you take that same passion fruit and make it into a gelée and cube it, then you will get the flavor little by little as the cube melts on your palate. The flavor release takes longer and lasts longer in your mouth.

—JOHNNY IUZZINI, PASTRY CHEF, JEAN GEORGES (NEW YORK CITY)

Sometimes we try to lengthen flavors, like you have with some wines [e.g., wines that are said to have “a long finish” that you taste long after swallowing]. I will think, “How long do I want a flavor to last? Do I want a blast, or do I want it to linger?”

We make a dish of a fried oyster with shiso and a wasabi, yuzu, and sancho pepper [also known as Szechuan pepper] sauce. That is a great way to experience length of flavor. The shiso wraps around the oyster like a taco shell. When you take a bite, you get the herbaceous punch from the shiso, then richness from the fried oyster that coats your tongue. Then you get the acid from the yuzu on the sides of your tongue. When you swallow the bite, the wasabi comes up the back of your nose. Then you get a small surprise because the pepper gives you a numbing effect across your palate. This is not a “two seconds of heaven” bite; we are talking about a twenty-second experience. We have orchestrated this not in a crazy chemical way, but just by playing with an oyster.

The cues come from the wine world: Sometimes you want bright and spritzy high-acid flavor, and other times you want something rich and long.

—BRAD FARMERIE, PUBLIC (NEW YORK CITY)

So now if I want to mimic an avocado, I would have to serve something rich with it. I could serve something dairy with it, like brown butter. I now have something that would go with a classical turbot dish with brown butter and capers, whereas fresh avocado would not have paired up with that dish very well.

Katsuya Fukushima of minibar in Washington, DC

I like to work with classic, preexisting flavor combinations that people can recognize. They may not recognize anything from the textures I use, but they will find recognition in the flavors.

To make our “Philly Cheesesteak,” we start with the bread. We put pita dough through a pasta machine so that it gets really thin, but puffs way up when you cook it. For the cheese element, we use a Vermont and Wisconsin cheddar cheese mousse that we pipe into the pita. For the beef, we serve seared Kobe beef. For the onions, we spread on caramelized onion puree. We then top that with truffles. So you have bread, cheese, beef, and onion, just like a Philly cheesesteak. We add the truffles just to push it over the top.

CHEFS’ STRATEGIES FOR BALANCING FLAVORS

On every forkful—regardless of what’s on the fork—there has to be salt, acid, and heat.... However, unless you are serving a peppercrusted dish, or a lemon or vinegar dish, your seasoning should never be detected. Instead, your beans should taste like beans, and your rabbit should taste like rabbit. Diners don’t need to know how much salt, acid, and heat are in the dish—and none should be obvious. You’ll also have minor supporting players in a dish, such as the aromatic or picante levels that might come from your mirepoix or sofrito [a well-cooked sauce of tomatoes, garlic, onions, and herbs] or whatever else went in there. But when a diner tastes your dishes, all you want them to be thinking about is those beans, or that rabbit.

—SHARON HAGE, YORK STREET (DALLAS)

Over the past fifteen years, we have interviewed many chefs in an effort to understand how some of America’s best chefs approach creating great food. What we learned is that there are as many approaches as chefs themselves. While some strategies overlap,

others are unique and display strong self-knowledge as to what makes their individual cuisines so original and compelling.

Traci Des Jardins of Jardinière in San Francisco

The most important aspect of any dish is balance—between acid, fat, salt, and sweetness. It is the key to making food taste good.

The same is true in pastry. I am constantly working with my pastry chef when I taste desserts with her. I will taste something and say it is too sweet—that it is missing the acid balance, and needs some fat and a little salt. Using salt in pastry brings out the flavor, just as it does in savory food. When it comes to dessert, people think more in a “monochromatic” sweet fashion. But sweets need balance, too.

My favorite flavor is the harmony of these elements working together, whether it is sweet or savory.

Marcel Desaulniers of The Trellis in Williamsburg, Virginia

My cooking philosophy has always been simple: Don’t complicate things, and let the food speak for itself. I want the food to leave a clean taste in your mouth, and that goes for savory food as well as desserts.

We don’t use a lot of spices because they can have an intensity of flavor that can overwhelm other flavors. People can’t restrain themselves with certain ingredients—and, often, it’s garlic. At The Trellis, we use garlic in only one recipe: a dressing that has been on the menu for twenty-six years. Herbs can be overused as well, too. Rosemary and basil, which I love, are constantly overused, which results in a bitter flavor.

I tell cooks, “When in doubt, don’t use it.” The food you are starting with already has its own intrinsic flavor, whether it is a scallop or a filet of beef. Whatever you do to embellish the flavor should be a very minor part of the relationship, rather than sharing the stage fifty-fifty.

I thought of myself as a saucier from my days in New York, yet when I opened this restaurant in Williamsburg, it was not the way I wanted to present the food. Rather than sauces, I wanted to use vegetables and fruits as the accompaniments. They provide moisture as a natural component and they work on the plate, but not as a fifty-fifty partner.

An example of where fruit works great as a component is on our pork dish: We serve pork loin medallions, grilled sausage, sweet potatoes, tender cooked string beans, and bourbon-glazed peaches. So this is a dish with no sauce, except the juice from the peaches.

Carrie Nahabedian of Naha in Chicago

You should always season something right from the start, and not just at the end. If you just add salt and pepper at the end, you are not doing a soup justice. You want those flavors to blossom.

Take our butternut squash soup as an example. We start our soup with hefty pieces of slab bacon, so we are already starting off with a lot of flavor. From there, we add the mirepoix and make sure it gets nice and caramelized. Then we start adding our salt, fresh-cracked pepper, and thyme sprig.

Next, we add roasted squash. The reason we roast it before it goes in the soup is because you can taste what state the squash is in. It may need a little help because it needed to age a couple more weeks in the cellar before we got it, so we may add a garnet yam. Now, we taste the soup and decide what kind of sweetness to add. That could be honey, molasses, or maple sugar—not just [white] sugar.

Next, we puree the soup and pass it [through a fine-mesh strainer] to achieve its smooth texture.

To the soup base, we add the garnishes. We already have bacon, but some smoked duck will be good, too. We add spaghetti squash and fried parsnips for additional texture and, in the case of the parsnips, sweetness as well. For a last note, we add a drizzle of maple syrup or barrel-aged sherry. These things just seal the soup so that the flavors all escalate. It is important to not rush things so that your flavors come together.



Andrew Carmellini of A Voce in New York City

Any kind of sauce boils down to acid, salt, sweetness, and two kinds of spice: savory spice, meaning cumin- or coriander-type spices, and heat spice, meaning chiles or pepper flakes. You can be making a vinaigrette or a Thai curry or a bouillabaisse, but its seasoning involves the same principles on the palate. As long as you can manipulate those things, you can get your palate excited.

If something is heavy or fatty on the tongue, add some vinegar or lemon or another type of acid. If you were making a Thai-style coconut curry that is too fatty and rich from the coconut milk, you would add some grated lime zest, lime juice, and a splash of fish sauce to cut the richness.

When you are adjusting the seasoning of a dish, you need to think about its origin. That is why traveling is so important. For example, you wouldn't use rice wine vinegar in a French bouillabaisse, but you might use a little bit of chili flakes. You must understand the historical context of a dish, which is why you wouldn't thicken an Indian curry with strawberries.

Sharon Hage of York Street in Dallas

When I am building a dish, I use a tray we call “the four seasons,” which is *fleur de sel* [salt]; red pepper flakes, the ultimate marriage of heat and fruit; dry mustard, which I use all the time; and sumac, which is an acidic component.

When I make a dish, it starts with the dry ingredients first, and the salt is the first dry ingredient. Then I add the heat layer, such as a jalapeño or horseradish. Then I add acid: lemon juice, vinegar, *verjus*, or all three. Then, at the last second, I add the fat component—the oil or butter—to the sauce, which brings it all together.

Brad Farmerie of Public in New York City

When I come up with a new dish, I am looking at two things: The first is building up the richness, and the second is cutting that richness with acidity, spice, or herbaceousness.

I start by thinking, What is the rich component? How can I build richness? If it is a protein, we may cure the meat or fry the fish. If it is a vegetarian dish, I may start with eggplant, which is meaty, so I will build it up with miso or tahini, which will make it even richer and meatier. This is really important in a vegetarian dish, because I hate those flimsy veg plates of grilled vegetables and a lot of salad!

Texture is another way of building richness. If you add miso or tahini, that adds richness and texture. An emulsification also gives a sense of richness in your mind and across your palate. One way to add rich texture in a “fakey-jakey” way is to add palm sugar. It is [a less] sweet sugar, and we will shave it into a dish halfway through the cooking and temper it with tamarind. We use it so subtly that you don’t even know it is there.

Now that I have my richness, the question becomes, “How can we cut that richness so it is light on the palate and in the belly?” We use a tremendous amount of acid, but it is always in check with what is on the plate. Choosing the right acid or herb will leave a light feeling on the palate and cut a rich dish.

With any fried food, you need a big zap of acidity to get through it. With fried fish, we will use preserved lemon, yogurt, or yuzu with a white soy dipping sauce.

Cured meat is almost the epitome of richness. Cured meats have a salinity to them, and quite often there is sugar to balance the salt as well. You need some punchy flavors to cut the meat, or it will just be heavy on the palate. Traditionally, you would use capers or caper berries. Mustard fruits [known in Italy as *mostarda*, these are fruits preserved in mustard-flavored sweet syrup] are another traditional approach. I like them because you have the added element of spice. We make our own mustard fruits and bastardize them a little by using kumquats, baby apricots, and gooseberries, which are not traditional in Italy. These fruits simply have beautiful flavor and color. The other

thing we do is use whole mustard seeds. Mustard fruits are typically [made through] a refined process in that they become like a clear jam. We leave ours a little rougher and fold in a little dry mustard in the end to make the colors of the citrus fruits really pop.

Another way we cut richness is by using sweet-and-sour poached vegetables and fruit. We'll poach fennel or pearl onions in a sweet-sour liquid with licorice and star anise. The family of apples, pears, and quince also holds up very well, as do sour poached plums.

I like aromatic spices [for their ability to cut richness]. If I'm working on a dish inspired by India, my inspirations are the flavors of clove, cardamom, and coriander seed. They are aromatic spices that really cut the fat of a dish, so the dish is not big, fat, and flabby on the palate. Fresh turmeric gives you fruitiness and upfront flavor with a touch of acid that perks up a dish. If you add fresh turmeric to your curry, you will make a world of difference by adding this one small thing.

If I'm working on a dish inspired by Southeast Asia, I like galangal, lemongrass, and ginger. They all have natural acidity and zingy spice that will perk up anything. Even if you are not adding acid to coconut milk but just adding aromatics, it won't taste heavy.

Emily Luchetti, pastry chef at Farallon in San Francisco

I want my flavors to be clean, crisp, accentuated, and distinguished. From there, I look at what I feel like making. If I have peaches, do I want to make a trifle or a napoleon or something else? What is the star of the plate? Is it one thing and everything else is going to be showing it off? Or are there two main flavors that are both going to have equal billing? I make a peach-blueberry trifle that has a mascarpone cream and is pretty intense. It is one of my favorite summer things to make. The peaches and blueberries are both the stars. If you make a pumpkin-cranberry upside-down cake, the pumpkin is the star and the cranberry is an accent.



You have to look at the ingredient and ask, “How am I going to bring out the best of its flavors? Do I cook it, or leave it alone? Does this piece of fruit need to be intensified because it wants to be the star, or is it not good enough on its own?” When you are working with fresh or dried fruit, the most important thing is the balance of sugar, salt, and lemon. If I am mixing fresh fruit for a shortcake or crisp, I always add some lemon juice and salt, because—just like in savory cooking—it helps bring out the flavor. We are talking a half teaspoon to a teaspoon of lemon and a large pinch of kosher salt.

Whenever you are cooking fruit with sugar to serve with something, taste the fruit first. If it is the peak of summer, that fruit may not need sugar. If you added some anyway, it would dull the flavors and make it taste too sweet. So, taste your fruit—and trust your palate! People trust their palates for savory food all the time. They’ll taste a tomato sauce and know it needs some salt. You need to trust your palate for sugar as well. You know when something is too sugary or salty.

When you are working with fresh fruit, the fruit has to be the guide. If you eat a piece of fresh fruit by itself, it is a dessert. So you want the dessert, in the end, to taste better than the fruit itself. To do that, you need to add things that go naturally. Blueberries and peaches go well together. Vanilla goes with practically any fruit. Almonds go with most fruits because they are light nuts that have a lot of flavor but not a lot of fat. Just starting with things that naturally go together, you will have a greater rate of success.

People will read that I think three flavors work in a dessert—then they’ll say, “Well, you used *four*....” That is not the point—the point is knowing when to stop! Too many

chefs start adding things that in the end all taste muddled, because nothing can stand out on its own. When you are more restrictive, each thing tastes good on its own—and the dessert becomes more than the sum of its parts. It is hard to know when to stop. Many chefs seem to think, “Oh, I’ll just add this dot of mango....” Well, the taste of that one acidic dot can set the whole dessert off.

Flavor is a “language” that anyone who loves the pleasures of the palate will find to be well worth mastering. Once you master the language of flavor, you can use it to communicate—and become a better cook.



2

Chapter



GREAT COOKING = MAXIMIZING FLAVOR + PLEASURE BY TAPPING BODY + HEART + MIND + SPIRIT: COMMUNICATING VIA THE LANGUAGE OF FOOD

Happy and successful cooking doesn't rely only on knowhow. It comes from the heart, makes great demands on the palate, and needs enthusiasm and a deep love of food to bring it to life.

—GEORGES BLANC, MICHELIN THREE-STAR CHEF IN VONNAS, FRANCE

The defining trait of a great cook is more than a great palate, and more than great technique; it is sound judgment. It is not only knowing what to do with ingredients, but also when, where, why, and how to serve them. Cooking involves the thoughtful combination and manipulation of ingredients. Good cooking results in those ingredients tasting even better. Great cooking not only celebrates the ingredients, but also celebrates the moment.

Recipes evolved as a way to teach less experienced cooks how to prepare particular dishes, by providing specific proportions of compatible ingredients along with step-by-step instructions. However, anyone who believes that every recipe followed verbatim will always produce consistent results is kidding themselves, given the diversity within individual ingredients, whether the sweetness of fruit or the thickness of a fish fillet. Slavish followers of recipes, who treat them as gospel instead of guidelines, make the mistake of putting more faith in someone else's instructions than they do in themselves. Many people would do better in the kitchen if they *didn't* blindly follow recipes. In fact, following recipes may be holding *you* back from achieving your potential as a cook.

Take the time to learn and master some of the general principles of how to make food taste great—such as what to pair with various ingredients, and how to prepare them—which is the subject of this book. After all, more than a dozen years after the advent of the Food Network turned every TV set in this country into a virtual 24/7 cooking school, supplementing the burgeoning food programming on many of the other major channels, Americans are better-trained cooks than at

any previous point in history. Most of us can now whip up a dish with our general knowledge of how to boil pasta, sauté an onion, or grill a steak. Today, long, detailed recipes are rarely needed for most cooking (with the exception of baking, whose chemistry requires precise measurements).

Training wheels can be useful when first learning to ride a bike, as can “painting by numbers” when first learning to paint. Likewise, following a recipe can be useful when first learning to cook—for understanding the order of completing certain steps, and internalizing their intrinsic logic. But great cooking should be more akin to meditation: you—and all of your senses—are in the moment, and fully awake and aware. You can taste the ingredients, and know what you need to do to make them taste their best. You know, as chef Judy Rodgers famously told us for our book *Becoming a Chef*, to “look out the window and see what the weather is and decide what the soup wants to be.” Be fully grounded in the moment that is part of that second, that minute, that hour, that day, that month, that season, that year of your life—all at once.

To elevate your cooking to a whole new level, develop a better appreciation for the essence of ingredients, which provides insight into when and how to best use them. Celebrating the essence of ingredients allows you to work with them more intuitively and effectively. This book will help you decide what ingredients to reach for in the kitchen, and why, and what to do with them when you do.

HOW TO MAKE FOOD TASTE GREAT

A great cook is able to make food taste great by doing two basic things:

1. Understanding the essence of the **moment**, which comprises everything from the meal’s driving force to the occasion, to the weather, to the available time, budget, and/or other resources (for example, ingredients, equipment, etc.).
2. Understanding the essence of the **ingredients**, which comprises their season, regionality, weight and volume, function, flavor, and/or flavor affinities.

The deeper your understanding of both, the greater your ability to bring them together into a dish that is the perfect expression of the ingredients and the moment.

Understanding the Essence of the Moment

Why do you need or want to cook in the first place? In a day and age when more of the meals we consume are prepared *outside* the home than *at home*, cooking has become relatively infrequent. So, what’s driving *you*?

Always keep in mind your starting point in the kitchen, the reference point serving as the inspiration for your cooking—which can be virtually anything. Following its

essence logically or intuitively will lead you to each subsequent step toward creating something delicious. Your starting point is your initial desire. It may be an ingredient, or a dish, or a country: you're excited to prepare the first

heirloom tomatoes of summer; you're craving your grandmother's cheesecake; or you want a dish that will take you to Italy to relive the flavors you enjoyed on your last vacation.

Other factors provide the parameters of how you'll act on that desire. They might be time ("I want to spend the day cooking for pleasure" versus "I have only fifteen minutes to get something on the table"), budget (\$5/person versus "money is no object, so bring on the truffles"), occasion (dinner on a Tuesday night, or someone's birthday), availability of ingredients (your neighbors just gave you fresh vegetables from their garden), season (the arrival of the first asparagus of spring, or the last corn of Indian summer), weather (wanting a chilled lunch to help you cool off on a hot summer day), or something else.

Your starting point, whatever it is, has an essence: Your desire to host a barbecue to celebrate the beautiful summer weather will bring up associations that will in turn bring up other associations, until you have a long list of associations, for example:

- Desire to enjoy the 80-degree sunny summer day (starting point: season, weather)
 - Have a summer barbecue (craving)
 - Invite friends over to enjoy it, too
- Prefer to cool down (function)
 - Serve cold drinks
 - Serve at least some chilled dishes
- Serve corn bought at the market this morning (available resources)
 - Serve corn salsa on grilled chicken or fish
 - Serve corn on the cob
- Have best friends over for dinner (guests)
 - Everyone eats chicken
 - One of them is from New England and can bring lobster
- Avoid turning the oven on (temperature)
 - Cook outside → fire up the grill
 - Cook on the stovetop only → boil water

So, starting with your driving factor and its essence, you can follow these associations to their logical conclusion and come up with the perfect meal. For one person, it might be serving grilled chicken with a corn salsa in the backyard. For another, it might be hosting a lobster and corn boil in an air-conditioned dining room.

It's all about taking everything into consideration at once, and using sound judgment to determine how to proceed.

Occasion

Even if it wasn't the driving force behind why you're cooking in the first place, you'll still want to consider the importance and significance of the meal. A quick dinner on a time-pressed weeknight will be different from a dinner made on the weekend when there is more time to enjoy the sensual process of cooking. Keep

the occasion in mind when planning your meal, with the knowledge that any meal can be elevated to a special occasion—or simplified in a crunch. The elements of breakfast take on a different level of importance when they are used for a special brunch. A quick fried egg and a toasted English muffin on a Tuesday can morph into poached eggs with Canadian bacon with hollandaise sauce on an English muffin for a weekend brunch, or vice versa.

But a true special occasion—a birthday, anniversary, or holiday—definitely calls for something equally special to celebrate it. If lack of time is a factor, a birthday isn't the time to undertake making and decorating a cake from scratch. However, it might inspire you to pick up a half gallon of the birthday boy or girl's favorite ice cream, toast some pecans, and whip up some homemade chocolate sauce—which would take only minutes, as opposed to hours.



Weather

While seasonality will drive your choice of ingredients, the weather will drive your decision as to how to prepare and serve them. On the coldest days, you'll want to warm your home as well as your body with slow-braised dishes, soups, and stews, and on warmer days, you'll want to keep your home (and yourself) cooler by doing more grilling or on the hottest days serving quick-cooked or even chilled dishes—no matter what season those days may fall in.

Some cooks believe you can serve anything at any time of the year. Our eyebrows have raised upon seeing heavy braised dishes on restaurant menus in August. However, chefs have defended them by arguing that once someone is seated in an air-conditioned dining room, they forget what it's like outside! Those chefs may be giving customers what they want while they are at the table... but what happens when those same customers leave the restaurant after finishing their braised short ribs and walk out into the heat and humidity? They might feel as out of sorts as they would wearing long wool overcoats on such a night! A lighter meal on a hot night won't sap your energy in the same way. Even in the middle of summer, there will be unseasonably cool days that might suggest a warm dish that would offend the sensibilities on the season's hottest, most sweltering day. Even during the dead of winter, the sun can break through and

create an unseasonably warm day on which hot, slow-cooked braised dishes would not be appealing.

Considering the weather means taking into consideration the natural rhythms of nature. One of the easiest clues available to inform your cooking is to look out the window, and ask yourself what you feel like eating. If you look out the window on a sunny summer morning, are you more tempted by hot oatmeal—or by granola and yogurt? That afternoon, as the temperature rises, does your mouth water thinking of hot tomato soup—or chilled gazpacho? That night, does the temperature fall enough to make you want to turn on the oven to roast a chicken—or would you rather grill it on your stovetop?

On our first visit to a certain New York City restaurant on one of the hottest nights of summer, we were surprised to be sent an *amuse-bouche* from the kitchen that was a tall glass of hot yellow pepper soup. While the soup itself might have been made from seasonal ingredients and tasty in a vacuum, unfortunately what we remember even more vividly was how unappealing we found it, especially as our first taste after a sweltering taxi ride to the restaurant. If the same soup had been served to us cold, we expect it would have been more successful as the welcoming gesture it was intended to be.

Understanding the Essence of the Ingredients

Once you're clear about “the problem” of what to cook, the right ingredients, well prepared, provide the ideal “solution.” To prepare any ingredients well, it's vital to understand and respect their essence.

What do we mean when we talk about an ingredient's “essence”? Every ingredient has associations with it, and the sum total of those associations comprises its essence. An ingredient's essence is more than its flavor. Take two sample ingredients, both salty:



- What comes to mind when you think of soy sauce? Common associations besides its saltiness might include Asia (region), rice (as a common flavoring for), and/or scallions (compatible ingredient).
- What comes to mind when you think of Parmesan cheese? Aside from saltiness (flavor), its common associations might include Italy (region), pasta or pizza (which it is a common flavoring for), and/or basil and tomatoes (compatible ingredients).

While certain other ingredients—such as chicken, garlic, and onions, which are all used around the world—may be neutral in their universality, many ingredients are rooted in distinct associations.

Some of the primary aspects of any ingredient's essence include its **seasonality**, its **taste**, its **volume**, its **function**, its **regionality**, its **weight**, and its **flavor affinities**. While the importance of each factor varies, depending on the dish, the goal when cooking is to ensure that all of these factors are respected in the ingredient's use.

Seasonality

It is almost a cliché to talk about seasonality if you are a New American chef. You are cooking that way naturally. I had a customer complain that his favorite pea ravioli was not on the menu. I explained that peas were not very good at the time, so that we were featuring corn ravioli. I don't focus on making an ingredient that is not at its peak taste better; I simply take it off the menu. Chefs still pay more attention to seasonality than customers do. We still have diners who want berries in the middle of February!

—ANDREW CARMELLINI, A VOCE (NEW YORK CITY)

Cooking with ingredients at their seasonal peak is such a central tenet of good cooking that it bears constant repeating. In stores across the country, you can find almost any ingredient at almost any time of year. However, an ingredient's mere availability offers no assurances of its quality.

Each season suggests a different palette of ingredients, and different ways of preparing and serving them. Classic holiday dishes represent time-tested ways of celebrating the season: Picture a grilled hamburger followed by a red, white, and blue strawberry shortcake accented with blueberries and whipped cream served on the Fourth of July, or roasted turkey with stuffing, cranberry sauce, and pumpkin pie on Thanksgiving. (If you're not convinced of the perfection of each dish's expression of the season and occasion, just imagine eating each menu on the *other* holiday!) Each season

also suggests its own beverages; for example, summer calls more often for lighter-bodied white and rosé wines, just as winter calls for fuller-bodied reds.

Taste

Every ingredient has its *stereotypical* taste (bananas are sweet), plus its *actual* taste, which may be a function of its age or ripeness. For example, a banana may increase noticeably in sweetness as it ripens and its color changes from green to yellow to brown. That is why it's crucial to taste your ingredients when cooking. If you don't—and, as a result, don't end up making other adjustments (for example, slightly decreasing the amount of sugar used when using very ripe bananas)—you'll find your dishes to be out of balance. Even seemingly similar ingredients (such as regular versus aged balsamic vinegar, or Italian versus Thai basil) can vary dramatically.

Weight

It was through our study of wine that we developed an appreciation for the critical role of understanding a wine's body, or weight—and, in turn, the relative weights of various foods. In fact, weight has eclipsed color as the key factor in pairing wine with food.

Weight and season often go hand in hand, as we crave lightness in summer and heavier dishes when temperatures fall. In summer, that craving for lightness could be satisfied with a salad of fresh greens topped with shrimp or chicken and tossed in a vinaigrette. Our winter cravings for more substance and warmth might lead us to a hearty stew made with red meat and root vegetables in their own thick sauce.

There is a spectrum of wine and ingredients that suggests itself for warmer versus cooler seasons or days, as well as for lighter versus heavier appetites:

	<i>Light</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Heavy</i>
<i>White Wines</i>	Riesling	Sauvignon Blanc	Chardonnay
<i>Red Wines</i>	Pinot Noir	Merlot	Cabernet Sauvignon
<i>Vegetables</i>	Bibb lettuce	Carrots	Celery root
<i>Grains</i>	Couscous	Rice	Bulgur wheat
<i>Fruits</i>	Watermelon	Apples	Bananas
<i>Seafood</i>	Shrimp, sole	Salmon, tuna	
<i>White Meat</i>		Chicken, pork, veal	
<i>Red Meat</i>			Beef, lamb, venison

Sauces	Citrus/lemon Vinaigrette	Butter/cream Olive oil	Demi-glace Meat stock
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York Street's Sharon Hage on Classic Flavor Pairings

I try to eat a lot of different foods and read a lot of different types of books to try to break away from classic pairings. I have had a million pork dishes, and I keep thinking that there has to be something else besides pork with sage! I try all these different things then turn to another cook and say, "Got any sage?"

There is a reason for tomatoes with basil, and for lamb with mint. What I don't make is lamb with mint jelly—but there will likely be some mint someplace on the dish.

Roasted beets work with salty cheese, whether it is [Italian] ricotta salata, or [Mexican] queso fresco, or another country's version of salty cheese.

The fun part is to discover what the classic pairing is, then present it to people in a way that makes them think it is different, while still being true to you as a chef. It would be hard to imagine summer tomatoes without the basil component. We might add some chives or mint or sumac, but the dish will still have some basil as well.

Volume

One important aspect of an ingredient's flavor essence is its “volume.” Think of a stereo dial with “1” indicating a “quiet” seasoning of chopped parsley, and “10” suggesting a “loud” mound of freshly chopped habanero chile peppers. You’ll use them very differently to create very different effects, while striving to achieve the same all-important balance in the final dish.

So, is the ingredient you’re working with quiet, moderate, or loud? You need to be aware of an ingredient’s volume whenever combining it with other ingredients. If a dish is overspiced to the point where you can’t taste its essence, it’s wrong. Consider:



Proteins

Light and/or quiet: fish, shellfish, tofu

Medium and/or moderate: white meat (chicken, pork, veal)

Heavy and/or loud: red meat (beef, lamb, venison)

Cooking Techniques

Light and/or quiet: poaching, steaming

Medium and/or moderate: frying, sautéing

Heavy and/or loud: braising, stewing

Herbs

Light and/or quiet: chervil, parsley
Medium and/or moderate: dill, lemon thyme
Heavy and/or loud: rosemary, tarragon

Function

Different tastes serve different functions. Saltiness stimulates thirst (think of all those free salty peanuts in bars!), while sourness quenches it (think lemonade). Saltiness heightens the appetite, making this flavor especially effective in appetizers. Bitterness also stimulates the appetite, and can promote the other tastes with which it is paired while adding a note of lightness to a dish. Sourness is refreshing, and adds a fresh note to any dish to which it is added. Sweetness is famously satiating, making it ideal (not to mention customary) to end a meal with a sweet dessert, or at least a sweet note (such as a cheese course with honey or sweet figs).

Certain foods, such as the spices cinnamon and nutmeg, are thought of as “warming” foods, so their addition to dishes is thought to add a warming quality that might be especially welcomed on a cold day. There are also “cooling” foods (such as cucumber and mint) that can be used just as judiciously.

Keeping an ingredient’s function in mind will help you use it most wisely, and avoid unfortunate mismatches of flavor and function. We still remember an otherwise delicious beet salad we were once served as an appetizer in New Orleans that was so sweet it killed our appetite for the rest of our meal.

Region

Determining the region that will serve as the reference point for whatever you’re cooking is one of the easiest ways to create successful flavor marriages in the kitchen. Thinking regionally is as important to good pairing as thinking seasonally is to good cooking. Many people are familiar with the maxim “If it grows together, it goes together,” and this is still the best place to start as a guide. Knowing what country you want to draw on will narrow your list of ingredient choices, often for the better! For example, as chicken is the world traveler of ingredients, if you’re making a chicken dish, you’ll especially need to decide on a region of inspiration. Are you going to root your dish in Mexico by topping it with salsa, or take it to France by finishing it with a mustard cream sauce? The accompaniments you choose will reinforce the dish’s sense of place. Would rice and beans, or boiled new potatoes, be most appealing served alongside it?

Flavor Affinities

A perfect ingredient served plainly can be an extraordinary thing, whether a perfectly ripe and sweet piece of fruit, or a silky slice of raw fish as sashimi. But in the real world, perfect ingredients are all too rare—and there are few ingredients whose flavors can't be helped along by a pinch of this or a splash of that. A sprinkle of sugar will bring out the flavor of strawberries. A squeeze of lime will bring out a melon's sweetness. A drizzle of vinegar will provide a tasty counterpoint for salty French fries.

Understanding what herbs, spices, and other seasonings will best bring out the flavor of whatever it is you're cooking is some of the most important knowledge any cook can master. The pages that follow emphasize modern-day flavor affinities that have been proved in some of the best-respected kitchens in this country in this millennium.

Studying the language and syntax of ingredients in these pages will allow you access to the collective wisdom—and impeccably sound judgment—of some of America's most imaginative chefs.





FLAVOR MATCHMAKING: THE CHARTS

Good cooking does not depend on whether the dish is large or small, expensive or economical. If one has the art, then a piece of celery or salted cabbage can be made into a marvelous delicacy; whereas if one has not the art, all the greatest delicacies and rarities of land, sea or sky are of no avail.

—YUAN MEI, EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY CHINESE POET

When you're creating in the kitchen, the starting point for a dish or a menu can be literally anything. It can begin with the seasonal availability of a particular ingredient—vegetable, fruit, meat, or seafood—or even a cooking style, such as grilling in the summer or braising in the winter. It can begin with a craving for the flavors of a particular country or region: the garlic and herbs of Provence, or the garlic and ginger of Asia. Or it can begin with simple curiosity, the urge to experiment with a new ingredient or technique.

Recognizing this, we've provided a similarly broad range of starting points in the A-to-Z (achiote seeds to zucchini blossoms) lists that follow: the seasons (with listings for autumn, spring, summer, and winter); an extensive variety of vegetables, fruits, meat, seafood, and other ingredients; dozens of world cuisines; and a broad array of flavorings and seasonings (from avocado oil to fennel pollen to Kaffir lime), including dozens of different salts, peppers, herbs, spices, oils, and vinegars.

Below each, we've distilled and summarized key aspects of an ingredient's essence: its season, taste, weight, volume, and primary function. You'll also find its most recommended cooking techniques and some useful tips to keep in mind when working with it. After all, some ingredients lend themselves to being prepared in a particular manner: While chicken is versatile enough to be cooked in a number of ways, delicate fish beg to be served lightly cooked or even raw, while tougher cuts of meat beg to be braised or stewed.

When perusing the listings of compatible flavors, readers of our book *What to Drink with What You Eat* will recognize our ranking system to let you know which pairings are truly stellar. Those ingredients that appear in **BOLD CAPS** with an asterisk (*) are ethereal, time-honored classics: these “marriages made in heaven” comprise the top 1 or 2 percent of pairings. Next we have very highly recommended pairings in **BOLD CAPS**. **Bold**, noncapitalized listings are frequently recommended pairings; and plain

text pairings are recommended pairings. But remember: Even when just a single top expert recommends a flavor combination, it's very high praise indeed.

In some cases, we've also noted flavor pairings to **AVOID** or steer clear of, to prevent overpowering or clashing with your star ingredient.

For many listings, we've also indicated "flavor trios" and other "flavor cliques" to get you started on compound flavor combinations. In other cases, you'll find some of America's most creative chefs' signature dishes, so you can gain inspiration from some of the most celebrated restaurant kitchens across the country.

Throughout these pages, you'll also find several insightful sidebars on cooking with herbs, mushrooms, pastas, steaks, and more. They'll serve to help you learn not only the "whats" of combining flavors, but also the "whys" and "hows."

Keep an eye out for the distinctions being made among ingredients. After all, not even all salts are created equal. As you hone your selections, you'll hone the quality of the flavors you're able to create.

Since the turn of the new millennium, we have traveled throughout the United States and Canada, spending thousands of hours interviewing dozens of the most creative chefs and other experts on their most recommended flavor pairings. We've scoured these experts' memories—along with their post-1999 restaurant menus, Web sites, cookbooks, and other highly recommended books—for pairing insights. Then we synthesized their advice into the comprehensive, easy-to-use listings that follow. These listings represent a treasure trove of pairing ideas for you to put to work in your own kitchen.

Armed with the extensive information that follows, you'll learn how to better show off virtually any ingredient, or to recreate the flavors of any world cuisine, you can think of. From here on out, you'll have the expert advice of some of America's most imaginative culinarians at your disposal when you want to inspire your own creativity. Whether you're exploring a new-to-you ingredient or looking for additional ideas for working with an ingredient you've cooked a thousand times, you'll find insightful tips and a plethora of pairings here.

MATCHING FLAVORS

KEY: Flavors mentioned in regular type are pairings suggested by one or more experts.

Those in **bold** were recommended by a number of experts.

Those in **BOLD CAPS** were very highly recommended by an even greater number of experts.

Those in ***BOLD CAPS** with an asterisk (*) are “Holy Grail” pairings that are the most highly recommended by the greatest number of experts.

SEASON: The ingredient’s seasonal peak(s)

TASTE: The ingredient’s primary taste(s), e.g., bitter, salty, sour, sweet

FUNCTION: The ingredient’s intrinsic property, e.g., cooling vs. warming

WEIGHT: The ingredient’s relative density, e.g., from light to heavy

VOLUME: The ingredient’s relative flavor “loudness,” e.g., from quiet to loud

TECHNIQUES: The most commonly used techniques to prepare the ingredient

TIPS: Suggestions for using the ingredient

FLAVOR AFFINITIES: Compatible flavor groups

AVOID: Incompatible flavors

A to Z Listings

A

ACHIOTE SEEDS

ACIDITY (See Sourness)

AFGHAN CUISINE

AFRICAN CUISINE (See also Ethiopian and Moroccan Cuisines)

AFRICAN CUISINE (NORTH) (See also Moroccan Cuisine)

AFRICAN CUISINE (SOUTH)

AFRICAN CUISINE (WEST)

ALLSPICE

ALMOND OIL (See Oil, Almond)

ALMONDS

AMARETTO (sweet almond liqueur)

ANCHOVIES

ANGELICA

ANISE (See also Anise, Star, and Fennel)

ANISE HYSSOP

ANISE, STAR

APPETIZERS

APPLES

APRICOTS—IN GENERAL

APRICOTS, DRIED

ARGENTINIAN CUISINE (See also Latin American Cuisine)

AROMA

ARTICHOKE

ARTICHOKE, JERUSALEM

ARUGULA (See also Lettuces—Bitter Greens and Chicories)

ASIAN CUISINE (See Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, etc. Cuisines)

ASPARAGUS

ASPARAGUS, WHITE

ASTRINGENCY

AUSTRALIAN CUISINE

AUSTRIAN CUISINE

AUTUMN

AVOCADO OIL (See Oil, Avocado)

AVOCADOS

B

BACON

BALANCE

BALSAMIC VINEGAR

BANANAS

BARLEY

BASIL (See also Basil, Thai, and Lemon Basil)

BASIL, LEMON (See Lemon Basil)

BASIL, THAI

BASS (See also Bass, Sea, and Bass, Striped)

BASS, BLACK

BASS, SEA

BASS, STRIPED

BAY LEAF

BEANS—IN GENERAL (See also specific beans below)

BEANS, BLACK

BEANS, BROAD (See Beans, Fava)

BEANS, BUTTER (See Beans, Lima)

BEANS, CANNELLINI (See also Beans, White)

BEANS, FAVA (aka Broad Beans or Horse Beans)

BEANS, FLAGEOLET

BEANS, GARBANZO

BEANS, GREEN

BEANS, KIDNEY

BEANS, LIMA

BEANS, NAVY

BEANS, PINTO

BEANS, RED

BEANS, WHITE (e.g., Cannellini, Navy)

BEEF—IN GENERAL

BEEF—BRISKET
BEEF—CHEEKS
BEEF—KOBE
BEEF—LOIN (aka shell, sirloin, tenderloin).
BEEF—OXTAILS
BEEF—RIBS
BEEF—ROAST
BEEF—ROUND
BEEF—SHANK
BEEF—SHORT LOIN
BEEF—SHORT RIBS
BEEF—STEAK: IN GENERAL
BEEF—STEAK: CHUCK
BEEF—STEAK: FILET MIGNON (aka Beef Tenderloin).
BEEF—STEAK: FLANK
BEEF—STEAK: HANGER
BEEF—STEAK: RIB EYE
BEEF—STEAK: SKIRT
BEEF—STEAK TARTARE
BEER
BEETS
BELGIAN CUISINE
BELL PEPPERS
BERRIES—IN GENERAL (e.g., Cannellini, Navy)
BITTER DISHES (e.g., greens, barbecue food)
BITTERNESS
BLACKBERRIES
BLACK-EYED PEAS
BLACK PEPPER (See Pepper, Black)
BLUEBERRIES
BLUEFISH
BOK CHOY
BONITO FLAKES, DRIED (See also Tuna)
BOUQUET GARNI
BOURBON (See also Whiskey)
BOYSENBERRIES
BRAISED DISHES

BRAZILIAN CUISINE (See also Latin American Cuisine)

BRINED DISHES

BROCCOLI

BROCCOLINI

BROCCOLI RABE

BRUNCH

BRUSSELS SPROUTS

BULGUR WHEAT

BUTTER, BROWN (aka Beurre Noisette).

BUTTERMILK

BUTTERSCOTCH

C

CABBAGE—IN GENERAL

CABBAGE, NAPA (aka Chinese cabbage).

CABBAGE, RED

CABBAGE, SAVOY

CABERNET SAUVIGNON

CAJUN CUISINE

CALAMARI (See Squid)

CALF'S LIVER (See Liver, Calf's)

CALVADOS

CANADIAN CUISINE

CANTALOUPE

CANTONESE CUISINE (See Chinese Cuisine)

CAPERS

CARAMEL

CARAWAY SEEDS

CARDAMOM

CARIBBEAN CUISINES

CARROTS

CASHEWS

CATFISH

CAULIFLOWER

CAVIAR

CAYENNE, GROUND

CELERY

CELERY ROOT

CELERY SALT

CELERY SEED

CHAMOMILE

CHAMPAGNE

CHARD (aka Swiss chard)

CHARDONNAY

CHEESE—IN GENERAL (See also specific cheeses)

CHEESE, ASIAGO

CHEESE, AZEITAO

CHEESE, BLUE (See also Gorgonzola, Roquefort, Stilton, etc.)

CHEESE, BRIE

CHEESE, BURRATA

CHEESE, CABRALES

CHEESE, CAMEMBERT

CHEESE, CHEDDAR

CHEESE, COLBY

CHEESE, COMTÉ

CHEESE, COW'S MILK—IN GENERAL

CHEESE, CREAM

CHEESE, EMMENTAL

CHEESE, ÉPOISSES

CHEESE, EXPLORATEUR

CHEESE, FETA

CHEESE, FONTINA

CHEESE, FROMAGE BLANC

CHEESE, GARROTXA

CHEESE, GOAT'S MILK—IN GENERAL

CHEESE, GOAT—FRESH

CHEESE, GORGONZOLA

CHEESE, GOUDA

CHEESE, GRUYÈRE

CHEESE, HOJA SANTA

CHEESE, JACK

CHEESE, MAHON (aged Spanish cheese)

CHEESE, MANCHEGO

[CHEESE, MASCARPONE](#) (See Mascarpone)

[CHEESE, MONTEREY JACK](#)

[CHEESE, MOZZARELLA](#)

[CHEESE, MUENSTER](#)

[CHEESE, PARMESAN](#)

[CHEESE, PECORINO](#)

[CHEESE, PIAVE](#)

[CHEESE, PROVOLONE](#)

[CHEESE, REBLOCHON](#)

[CHEESE, RICOTTA](#)

[CHEESE, ROQUEFORT](#)

[CHEESE, SHEEP'S MILK—IN GENERAL](#)

[CHEESE, SPANISH](#) (See Cheese: Cabrales, Manchego)

[CHEESE, STILTON](#)

[CHEESE, SWISS](#)

[CHEESE, TALEGGIO](#)

[CHEESE, TRIPLE CRÈME](#)

[CHEESE, VACHERIN](#)

[CHEESE, VALDEON](#)

[CHEESE, VERMONT SHEPHERD](#)

[CHERRIES—IN GENERAL](#)

[CHERVIL](#)

[CHESTNUTS](#)

[CHICKEN](#)

[CHICKEN LIVERS](#) (See Liver, Chicken)

[CHICKPEAS \(aka garbanzo beans\)](#)

[CHICORY](#) (See also Endive; Lettuces—Bitter Greens and Chicories; and Radicchio)

[CHILE PEPPERS—IN GENERAL](#)

[CHILE PEPPERS, ANAHEIM](#)

[CHILE PEPPERS, ANCHO](#) (dried poblanos)

[CHILE PEPPERS, CHIPOTLE](#)

[CHILE PEPPERS, GUAJILLO](#)

[CHILE PEPPERS, HABANERO](#)

[CHILE PEPPERS, JALAPEÑO](#)

[CHILE PEPPERS, PASILLA](#)

[CHILE PEPPERS, PIMENTS D'ESPELETTE](#)

CHILE PEPPERS, POBLANO

CHILE PEPPERS, SERRANO

CHILEAN CUISINE (See also Latin American Cuisines)

CHILI PASTE

CHILI POWDER

CHINESE CUISINE (See also Szechuan Cuisine)

CHINESE FIVE-SPICE POWDER (See Five-Spice Powder)

CHIVES

CHOCOLATE / COCOA—IN GENERAL

CHOCOLATE, WHITE

CHORIZO (See also Sausages) Taste: salty; spicy

CHRISTMAS

CILANTRO

CINNAMON

CITRUS—IN GENERAL (See also Lemons, Limes, Oranges, etc.)

CLAMS

CLOVES

COCONUT AND COCONUT MILK

COD

COD, BLACK

COD, SALT

COFFEE AND ESPRESSO

COGNAC

COLDNESS (of indoor or outdoor temperature; See also Winter)

COLLARD GREENS (See Greens, Collard)

COOLING

CORIANDER

CORN

CORNED BEEF (See Beef—Brisket)

CORNISH GAME HENS

COUSCOUS

COUSCOUS, ISRAELI

CRAB

CRAB, SOFT-SHELL

CRANBERRIES

CRAYFISH (aka crawfish)

CREAM

CREAM CHEESE

CREAM, SOUR (See Sour Cream)

CRÈME FRAÎCHE

CREOLE CUISINE

CRESS (See Watercress)

CUBAN CUISINE

CUCUMBERS

CUMIN

CURRY LEAVES

CURRY POWDER AND SAUCES

CUSTARDS

D

DAIKON

DANDELION GREENS (See Greens, Dandelion)

DATES

DESSERTS

DILL

DUCK

DUCK CONFIT

E

EASTERN EUROPEAN CUISINES

EGGPLANT

EGGS AND EGGBASED DISHES—IN GENERAL

EGGS, FRITTATA

EGGS, HARD-BOILED

ENDIVE

ENDIVE, CURLY (See Frisée)

ENGLISH CUISINE

EPAZOTE

ESCALAR

ESCAROLE

ETHIOPIAN CUISINE

EUROPEAN, EASTERN CUISINES (See Eastern European Cuisines)

F

FALL (See Autumn)

FENNEL

FENNEL POLLEN

FENNEL SEEDS

FENUGREEK

FETA CHEESE (See Cheese, Feta)

FIDDLEHEAD FERNS

FIGS, DRIED

FIGS, FRESH

FILET MIGNON (See Beef—Steak: Filet Mignon)

FINES HERBES

FISH—IN GENERAL (See individual fish; Seafood)

FISH SAUCE

FIVE-SPICE POWDER

FLounder

FOIE GRAS

FRENCH CUISINE—IN GENERAL

FRENCH CUISINE, NORTHERN

FRENCH CUISINE, SOUTHERN (aka Provençal Cuisine).

FRESHNESS

FRISÉE (a fine-leaved variety of curly endive)

FRUIT, DRIED (See also Dates, Figs, Raisins, etc.)

FRUIT, FRESH (See also specific fruits)

FRUIT, TROPICAL (See also specific fruits, e.g., Mangoes, Papayas, Pineapples, etc.)

G

GAME—IN GENERAL (See also Rabbit, Venison)

GARAM MASALA

GARLIC

GEORGIAN CUISINE (RUSSIAN)

GERMAN CUISINE

GIN

GINGER

GINGER, GROUND

GOAT CHEESE (See Cheese, Goat)

GRAPEFRUIT

GRAPES

GREEK CUISINE (See also Mediterranean Cuisines)

GREEN BEANS (See Beans, Green)

GREENS—IN GENERAL (See also specific greens)

GREENS, COLLARD

GREENS, DANDELION

GREENS, KALE (See Kale)

GREENS, MUSTARD

GREENS, SALAD (See also Lettuce, Sorrel, Watercress, etc.)

GREENS, TURNIP

GRILLED DISHES

GRITS

GROUPER

GUAVAS

H

HADDOCK (See Cod)

HALIBUT

HAM

HAM, IBÉRICO

HAM, SERRANO

HAZELNUT OIL (See Oil, Hazelnut)

HAZELNUTS

HERBES DE PROVENCE

HERBS (See specific herbs)

HONEY

HONEY, BLUEBERRY

HONEY, CHESTNUT

HONEY, RASPBERRY

HONEYDEW

HORSERADISH

HOTNESS (of indoor or outdoor temperature; see also Summer)

HUNGARIAN CUISINE

HYSSOP

I

INDIAN CUISINE

INDONESIAN CUISINE

IRANIAN CUISINE (aka Persian Cuisine)

ITALIAN CUISINE—IN GENERAL

ITALIAN CUISINE, NORTHERN

ITALIAN CUISINE, SOUTHERN

J

JAMAICAN CUISINE (See also Caribbean Cuisines)

JAPANESE CUISINE

JICAMA

JUNIPER BERRIES

K

KAFFIR LIMES AND KAFFIR LIME LEAF (See also Lemons, Limes, etc.)

KALE

KIWI FRUIT

KOHLRABI (See also Rutabagas, Turnips)

KOREAN CUISINE

KUMQUATS

L

LAMB—IN GENERAL

LAMB, CHOPS

LATIN AMERICAN CUISINE

LAVENDER

LEEKES

LEGUMES (See Beans, Lentils, Peas, etc.)

LEMONS

LEMONS, MEYER

LEMONS, PRESERVED

LEMON BALM

LEMON BASIL

LEMONGRASS

LEMON THYME

LEMON VERBENA

LENTILS

LETTUCES—IN GENERAL

LETTUCE, BIBB (aka Boston or butter lettuce)

LETTUCES—BITTER GREENS AND CHICORIES (See Arugula, Escarole, Frisée, Radicchio)

LETTUCES—MESCLUN GREENS

LETTUCE, ROMAINE

LIMES

LIMES AND LIME LEAF, KAFFIR (See Kaffir Limes and Kaffir Lime Leaf)

LIVER, CALF'S

LIVER, CHICKEN

LIVER, DUCK OR GOOSE (See Foie Gras)

LOBSTER

LOTUS ROOT

LOVAGE

LUXURIOUS

LYCHEES

M

MACADAMIA NUT OIL (See Oil, Macadamia Nut)

MACADAMIA NUTS

MACE

MÂCHE

MACKEREL

MAHI MAHI

MALT

MANGOES

MAPLE SYRUP

MARJORAM

MASCARPONE

MEATS

MEDITERRANEAN CUISINES (See also French [southern], Italian, Middle Eastern, Moroccan, and Spanish Cuisines)

MELON/MUSKMELONS—IN GENERAL (See also Cantaloupe, Honeydew, etc.)

MENU

MERLOT

MEXICAN CUISINE

MIDDLE EASTERN CUISINE

MINT—IN GENERAL

MINT, DRIED

MINT, PEPPERMINT

MIREPOIX

MISO AND MISO SOUP

MOLASSES

MONKFISH (See also Fish—In General)

MORELS (See Mushrooms, Morels)

MOROCCAN CUISINE

MUSHROOMS—IN GENERAL (See also specific mushrooms)

MUSHROOMS—CHANTERELLES

MUSHROOMS—CREMINI

MUSHROOMS—MATSUTAKE

MUSHROOMS—MORELS

MUSHROOMS—PORCINI / CEPES / KING BOLETE

MUSHROOMS—PORTOBELLO

MUSHROOMS—SHIITAKE

MUSSELS

MUSTARD

MUSTARD GREENS (See Greens, Mustard)

N

NECTARINES (See also Peaches)

NORTH AFRICAN CUISINE (See also Moroccan Cuisine)

NUTMEG

NUTS—IN GENERAL (See also Pecans, Walnuts, etc.)

O

OATMEAL / OATS

OCTOPUS

OIL, ALMOND

OIL, AVOCADO

OIL, CANOLA

OIL, GRAPESEED

OIL, HAZELNUT

OIL, MACADAMIA NUT

OIL, OLIVE (See Olive Oil)

OIL, PEANUT

OIL, PECAN

OIL, PISTACHIO

OIL, PORCINI

OIL, PUMPKIN SEED

OIL, SESAME

OIL, TRUFFLE

OIL, WALNUT

OKRA

OLIVE OIL

OLIVES

OMELETS (See Eggs and Eggbased Dishes)

ONIONS—IN GENERAL

ONIONS, SWEET (e.g., Vidalia)

ORANGES—IN GENERAL

ORANGES, BLOOD

ORANGES, CLEMENTINE (See Oranges, Mandarin)

ORANGES, MANDARIN (includes Clementines and Tangerines)

OREGANO

OXTAILS (See Beef)

OYSTERS

P

PANCETTA

PAPAYAS

PAPRIKA—IN GENERAL

PAPRIKA, SMOKED

PARSLEY

PARSNIPS

PASSION FRUIT

PASTA

PEACHES

PEANUT OIL (See Oil, Peanut)

PEANUTS AND PEANUT BUTTER (See also Nuts—In General)

PEARS

PEAS—IN GENERAL (See also Snap Peas)

PECAN OIL (See Oil, Pecan)

PECANS (See also Nuts—In General)

PEPPER, BLACK

PEPPER, GREEN (as peppercorns)

PEPPER, PINK

PEPPER, RED (See also Cayenne, Ground)

PEPPER, WHITE

PEPPERS, BELL (See Bell Peppers)

PEPPERS, CHILE (See Chile Peppers)

PEPPERS, PEPPADEW

PEPPERS, PIQUILLO (Spanish peppers)

PEPPERS, SPANISH

PERSIMMONS

PHEASANT

PICKLES

PIMENTON (See also Paprika)

PINEAPPLES

PINE NUTS

PINOT NOIR

PIQUANCY

PISTACHIO OIL (See Oil, Pistachio)

PISTACHIOS (See also Nuts—In General)

PLANTAINS, GREEN

PLANTAINS, SWEET

PLUMS

PLUMS, DRIED (aka prunes)

POLENTA

POMEGRANATES

POMEGRANATE MOLASSES

POMELOS (See also Grapefruit)

PONZU SAUCE

POPPY SEEDS

PORK—IN GENERAL

PORK—BACON (See Bacon)

PORK—BELLY

PORK—CHOPS

PORK—HAM (See Ham)

PORK—LOIN

PORK—RIBS

PORK—SAUSAGE (See Sausages)

PORK—SHOULDER

PORK—TENDERLOIN

PORTUGUESE CUISINE

POTATOES

POTATOES, NEW

POULTRY (See Chicken, Turkey, etc.)

PROSCIUTTO

PRUNES (See Plums, Dried)

PUMPKIN (See also Squashes, Winter)

PUMPKIN SEED OIL (See Oil, Pumpkin Seed)

PUMPKIN SEEDS

PURSLANE

Q

QUAIL

QUATRE ÉPICES

QUINCE

R

RABBIT (See also Game—In General)

RADICCHIO

RADISHES

RAISINS

RAMPS (aka wild leeks; see also Leeks, Onions, and Scallions).

RASPBERRIES

RED SNAPPER (See Snapper)

RHUBARB

RICe, WHITE—IN GENERAL

RICe, ARBORIO OR CARNAROLI (aka risotto).

RICe, BASMATI

RICe, CARNAROLI (See Rice, Arborio)

RICe, JASMINE (See Thai Cuisine)

RICe, WILD

RIESLING

ROASTED DISHES

ROMAINE (See Lettuce, Romaine)

ROSE (Hips, Petals, Water).

ROSEMARY

RUM

RUSSIAN CUISINE

RUTABAGAS

S

SAFFRON

SAGE

SAKE

SALADS (See also Lettuces and other vegetables)

SALMON (See also Fish—In General)

SALMON, CURED

SALMON, SMOKED

SALSIFY

SALT—IN GENERAL

SALT, FLEUR DE SEL

SALT, HAWAIIAN

SALT, JAPANESE

SALT, KOSHER

SALT, MALDON

SALT, SEA—COARSE

SALT, SEA—FINE

SALT, SMOKED

SALT, TRUFFLE

SALT, VANILLA

SALTINESS

SARDINES

SAUERKRAUT

SAUSAGES (See also Chorizo)

SAUVIGNON BLANC

SAVORY

SCALLIONS

SCALLOPS

SCANDINAVIAN CUISINE

SCOTCH

SEAFOOD—IN GENERAL (See also specific fish and Shellfish)

SESAME OIL (See Oil, Sesame)

SESAME SEEDS, BLACK

SESAME SEEDS, WHITE

SHALLOTS

SHELLFISH (See also Crab, Lobster, Scallops, Shrimp, etc.)

SHIITAKE MUSHROOMS (See Mushrooms—Shiitakes)

SHISO LEAF

SHORT RIBS (See Beef—Short Ribs)

SHRIMP (See also Shellfish)

SKATE

SLOW-COOKED

SMOKED SALMON (See Salmon, Smoked)

SMOKINESS

SNAP PEAS (aka sugar snap peas)

SNAPPER (aka red snapper)

SOLE

SORREL

SOUR CREAM

SOURNESS

SOUS-VIDE COOKING

SOUTHEAST ASIAN CUISINES

SOUTHERN CUISINE (AMERICAN)

SOUTHWESTERN CUISINE (AMERICAN)

SOY SAUCE

SPANISH CUISINE

SPICES (See also individual spices)

SPINACH (See also Greens—In General)

SPRING

SPROUTS

SQUAB

SQUASH, ACORN (See also Pumpkin; Squash, Butternut; and Squash, Winter)

SQUASH, BUTTERNUT (See also Pumpkin; Squash, Acorn; and Squash, Winter)

SQUASH, KABOCHA (See also Squash, Winter)

SQUASH, SPAGHETTI (See also Squash, Winter)

SQUASH, SUMMER (See also Zucchini)

SQUASH, WINTER (See also Pumpkin; Squash, Acorn; and Squash, Butternut)

SQUASH BLOSSOMS (See Zucchini Blossoms)

SQUID (aka red snapper)

STAR ANISE (See Anise, Star)

STEAK (See Beef)

STRAWBERRIES

STRIPED BASS (See Bass, Striped)

STUFFING

SUGAR

SUGAR, PALM

SUGAR SNAP PEAS (See Snap Peas)

SUMAC

SUMMER

SUNCHOKES (See Artichokes, Jerusalem)

SWEDISH CUISINE

SWEETBREADS

SWEETNESS

SWEET POTATOES

SWISS CHARD (See Chard)

SWORDFISH

SZECHUAN CUISINE (See also Chinese Cuisine)

SZECHUAN PEPPER

T

TAMARIND

TANGERINES (see Oranges, Mandarin)

TARRAGON

TECHNIQUES

TEQUILA

TEX-MEX CUISINE (See Mexican Cuisine, Southwestern Cuisine)

THAI CUISINE

THYME

THYME, LEMON (See Lemon Thyme)

TOFU

TOMATILLOS

TOMATOES

TROUT

TROUT, SMOKED

TRUFFLES, BLACK

TRUFFLES, PACIFIC NORTHWEST

TRUFFLES, WHITE

TUNA

TURBOT

TURKEY

TURKISH CUISINE

TURMERIC

TURNIP GREENS (See Greens, Turnip)

TURNIPS

U

UMAMI

V

VANILLA

VEAL—IN GENERAL

VEAL—BREAST

VEAL—CHEEKS

VEAL—CHOP

VEAL—LOIN

VEAL—SHANKS

VEAL—TENDERLOIN

VEGETABLES (See specific vegetables)

VEGETABLES, ROOT (See specific root vegetables, e.g., Carrots)

VEGETARIAN DISHES

VENISON

VERJUS

VIETNAMESE CUISINE

VINEGAR—IN GENERAL

VINEGAR, BALSAMIC

VINEGAR, BANYULS

VINEGAR, CABERNET SAUVIGNON

VINEGAR, CHAMPAGNE

VINEGAR, CHARDONNAY

VINEGAR, CIDER

VINEGAR, FRUIT

VINEGAR, ICE WINE

VINEGAR, MALT

VINEGAR, RED WINE

VINEGAR, RICE WINE

VINEGAR, SHERRY

VINEGAR, TARRAGON (herb-flavored vinegar)

VINEGAR, VINCOTTO (Cooked Wine)

VINEGAR, WHITE WINE

VODKA

W

WALNUT OIL (See Oil, Walnut)

WALNUTS (See also Nuts—In General)

WARMING

WASABI

WATER CHESTNUTS

WATERCRESS

WATERMELON

WHISKEY (See also Bourbon)

WILD RICE (See Rice, Wild)

WINE (See individual varietals)

WINTER

Y

YAMS (See Sweet Potatoes)

YOGURT

YUZU FRUIT

Z

ZUCCHINI (See also Summer Squash)

ZUCCHINI BLOSSOMS (See also Zucchini)

ACHIOTE SEEDS

beef
chicken
chiles
citrus (e.g., sour orange)
fish
game birds (e.g., duck, quail)
garlic

Mexican cuisine, esp. Yucatán oil

pork

shellfish, e.g., lobster, shrimp
shrimp

Flavor Affinities

achiote + pork + sour orange

ACIDITY

(See Sourness)

AFGHAN CUISINE

almonds
barley
breads
cardamom
chile pepper
cinnamon
cloves
coriander
cucumber
cumin
dill
fennel
fruits, esp. dried
ginger

grapes
kebabs
lamb
mint
mushrooms
nuts, e.g., almonds
pasta
rice, basmati
sesame
tomatoes and tomato sauce
turmeric
yogurt

Flavor Affinities

almonds + cardamom + sugar
cucumber + mint + yogurt

AFRICAN CUISINE

(See also Ethiopian and Moroccan Cuisines)

bananas
bell peppers
braised dishes
chicken
chile peppers, esp. West African
coconuts
corn
fish, esp. coastal
fruits, esp. tropical
garlic
goat
greens, esp. steamed or stewed
mangoes
melons
okra
onions
papayas
peanuts

peas, esp. black-eyed
plantains
soups
stews, esp. meat or vegetable
sweet potatoes
tomatoes
watermelon
yams, esp. West African

AFRICAN CUISINE (NORTH)

(See also Moroccan Cuisine)

bell peppers
braised dishes
chicken
chickpeas
couscous
cucumbers
cumin
eggplant
fish
garlic
lamb
mint
parsley
rice
stewed dishes
tomatoes
wheat

Flavor Affinities

cumin + garlic + mint, esp. Northeast Africa

AFRICAN CUISINE (SOUTH)

beans
carrots
chile peppers

cinnamon
cloves
fenugreek
garlic
ginger
lamb
onions
peas
pumpkin
stews
tomatoes
turmeric

Flavor Affinities

lamb + chile peppers + garlic + onions

AFRICAN CUISINE (WEST)

bananas
bell peppers
braised dishes
chicken
chile peppers
corn
goat
mangoes
okra
papayas
peanuts
plantains
rice
soups
stewed dishes
sweet potatoes
tomatoes
wheat
yams

Flavor Affinities

chile peppers + peanuts + tomatoes

ALLSPICE

Season: autumn–winter

Taste: sweet

Weight: medium

Volume: loud

Tips: Add early in cooking.

apples

baked goods

beans

BEEF, esp. braised, corned, grilled, ground, raw, roasted, or stewed
beets

breads, esp. breakfast

cabbage

cakes

Caribbean cuisine

carrots

chicken (e.g., Jamaican style)

chickpeas

chile peppers

cinnamon

cloves

cookies

coriander

currants, esp. black

curries and curry powder

Eastern Mediterranean cuisine

eggplant

English cuisine

fish, esp. grilled

fruits, fruit compotes, and jams

game and game birds (e.g., quail)

garlic

ginger

goat
grains
ham
herring, pickled

Indian cuisine

JAMAICAN CUISINE (e.g., jerk dishes)

ketchup
lamb
mace

MEATS, red, esp. braised, grilled, or roasted

Mexican cuisine
Middle Eastern cuisine
mushrooms
mustard
North American cuisine
nutmeg
nuts
onions
pepper, black
pies
pineapple
pork

PUMPKIN

rabbit
rice
rosemary
salsas and sauces
sauerkraut
sausages
soups
spiced cakes
spinach
squash, winter
stews
stocks and broths, chicken
sweet potatoes
thyme
tomatoes
turnips

vegetables, esp. root
West Indies cuisine

Flavor Affinities

allspice + beef + onions
allspice + garlic + pork

In Jamaica, **allspice** is their pepper. It's fruitier than black peppercorns. I think it's especially nice with braised and roasted meats.

—BRADFORD THOMPSON, MARY ELAINE'S AT THE PHOENICIAN (SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA)

ALMOND OIL

(See Oil, Almond)

ALMONDS

Taste: sweet

Botanical relatives: peaches

Function: warming

Weight: medium

Volume: quiet

amaretto

anise, esp. green

apples

apricots

beans

blackberries

brandy

BUTTER, UNSALTED

butterscotch

caramel

cardamom

cayenne

cheese: goat, manchego, ricotta

cherries, esp. sour

chicken

CHOCOLATE: DARK, MILK

chocolate, white

cinnamon

coconut

coffee

cornmeal

corn syrup

crab

cranberries

CREAM

cream cheese

crème fraîche

crust: pastry, pie

currants

figs

fish

French pastries

fruits, most

garlic

grapes

Greek cuisine

greens, salad

hazelnuts

HONEY

ice cream

Indian cuisine

Italian sauces

lamb

lavender

lemon: juice, zest

liqueurs, fruit (including orange)

mascarpone

Mediterranean cuisine

Mexican beverages and mole sauces

milk, sweetened condensed

molasses

Moroccan cuisine

nectarines

oats

olive oil
olives
orange: juice, zest
paprika
passion fruit
peaches
pears
pecans
pepper, ground
pine nuts
plums
praline
prunes
quince
raisins, esp. white
raspberries
rhubarb
rice
rosemary
rum
salt: kosher, sea
shellfish
sherry
Spanish cuisine, esp. sauces
strawberries
sugar: brown, white
tea
Turkish cuisine
VANILLA
walnuts

Almonds are fairly versatile in that their flavor is not very specific. When they are manufactured, then they have a distinct flavor: think of Frangelico, almond oil, or marzipan in dessert. In these cases, the almond has a very distinct flavor.

—MARCEL DESAULNIERS, THE TRELLIS (WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA)

If you have some beautiful **almonds**, there are so many things you can do. You can grind them and make a frangipane and put it in puff pastry. You can put them into

biscotti, a cake, or almond ice cream.

—EMILY LUCHETTI, FARALLON (SAN FRANCISCO)

Flavor Affinities

almonds + chocolate + coconut
almonds + coffee + orange
almonds + green anise + figs
almonds + honey + orange zest + raisins

AMARETTO

(sweet almond liqueur)

almonds
apricots
butter
cherries
chocolate
coffee
cream
hazelnuts
Italian cuisine
peaches
pork
sugar

ANCHOVIES

Taste: salty
Weight: light
Volume: loud

almonds
basil
beans, green
bell peppers, esp. roasted
capers
carrots
cauliflower

celery

cheese: manchego, mozzarella, **Parmesan**

chives

eggs, hard-boiled

fennel

GARLIC

lemon, juice

lobster

mayonnaise

Mediterranean cuisine

mustard (e.g., Dijon)

nectarines

OLIVE OIL

olives (e.g., black, green, niçoise)

onions

orange, zest

parsley, flat-leaf

pasta

pepper: black, white

No country in the world has **anchovies** like Spain. They are sophisticated, and the ones from the north of Spain are best because they are bigger. Spanish anchovies are not salty, either. Once you eat one, your life changes forever! I pay a lot for my anchovies—up to seventy-five cents per fillet—and will have to charge \$9 for a plate. My customers will say that is too much to pay, and I agree—but if you don't pay, you don't taste. Lately, I have been combining anchovies with nectarines, which I love. I will make a vinaigrette with Pedro Ximénez [i.e., PX sherry], sherry vinegar, and olive oil and it is the perfect dressing—and unique.

—JOSÉ ANDRÉS, CAFÉ ATLÁNTICO (WASHINGTON, DC)



peppers, piquillo
pizza
potatoes
puttanesca sauce (key ingredient)
red pepper flakes
romaine lettuce
rosemary
salads, esp. Caesar (key ingredient)
salmon
salt: kosher, sea
shallots
sherry, PX
tapenade (key ingredient)
thyme
tomatoes
tuna
vinegar: champagne, red wine, sherry

Flavor Affinities

anchovies + lemon + olive oil + rosemary

ANGELICA

Taste: bitter, sweet

Volume: loud

Tips: Add late in cooking; use in baking.

Use to balance high-acid fruit, to reduce the need for sweeteners.

almonds

anise

apricots

candy

cream and ice cream

custards

desserts

fish

fruits

ginger: fresh, candied

hazelnuts

juniper berries

lavender

lemon balm

liqueurs

mushrooms

Angelica pairs well with fresh or candied ginger. And angelica with rhubarb really intensifies the flavor of the rhubarb.

—JERRY TRAUNFELD, THE HERBFARM (WOODINVILLE, WASHINGTON)

nutmeg

oranges

pepper, black

plums

***RHUBARB**

salads

shellfish

strawberries

Flavor Affinities

angelica + cream + rhubarb

ANISE

(See also Anise, Star, and Fennel)

Function: warming

Weight: light–medium

Volume: moderate–loud

Tips: Add early in cooking.

allspice

almonds

apples

baked goods, esp. cakes, cookies

beets

breads, esp. rye

cabbage

Cakes

cardamom

carrots

cauliflower

cheese, esp. goat and ricotta

chestnuts

Chinese cuisine

cinnamon

cloves

coffee

cookies

crab

cream

cumin

dates

desserts

duck

fennel seeds

figs

FISH

fruit

garlic

ginger

hazelnuts

lemon
lentils
mayonnaise
Mediterranean cuisine
melon
Middle Eastern cuisine
mole sauce
Moroccan cuisine
mussels
nutmeg
nuts
orange
parsnips
peaches
pears
pepper
pickles
pineapple
plums
pork
Portuguese cuisine
Provençal cuisine (French)
prunes
pumpkin
quince
raisins
rhubarb
salumi

Anise seeds and fennel are used for braising our pork belly. Fennel and pork is a natural, just like in Italian sausage.

—CARRIE NAHABEDIAN, NAHA (CHICAGO)

sauerkraut
Scandinavian cuisine
shellfish
soups, esp. fish
star anise

STEWs, ESP. FISH

strawberries

sugar

sweet potatoes

tea

vanilla

vegetables, root

Vietnamese cuisine

walnuts

ANISE HYSSOP

Season: late spring–summer

Taste: sweet

Weight: light–medium

Volume: quiet–moderate

apricots

basil

beans, green

beets

berries, esp. blueberries

beverages

carrots

cherries

chervil

chicken cream and ice cream

currants

custards

desserts

fennel bulb

fish

FRUITS, ESP. SUMMER

honey

lavender

lemon

lychees

marjoram

melons

mint

nectarines

oranges

parsley

parsnips

peaches

pears

plums

pork

raspberries

rice

salads: fruit, green

shellfish (e.g., shrimp)

shrimp

spinach

squash, winter

stone fruits (e.g., peaches)

sweet potatoes

tarragon

teas

tomatoes

vegetables, root

watermelon

zucchini

ANISE, STAR

Taste: sweet, bitter

Weight: medium

Volume: moderate–loud

Tips: Add at the beginning of the cooking process. Use in stir-fries.

allspice

baked goods (e.g., breads, pastries)

beef

beverages

cardamom

chestnuts

chicken

chile peppers

chili powder

CHINESE CUISINE

chocolate, esp. milk

cinnamon

citrus zest

cloves

coriander

cumin

curry powder (ingredient)

duck

eggs

fennel seeds

figs

fish

FIVE-SPICE POWDER

fruits, esp. tropical

garlic

ginger

Indian cuisine

kumquats

leeks

lemongrass

lime, zest

liqueurs

mace

Malaysian cuisine

mangoes

maple syrup

meats, esp. fatty

nutmeg

orange, zest

oxtails

pears, esp. poached

As a kid, I hated black jelly beans. But I have grown to like all the various forms of anise, and **star anise** is one of my favorites. My favorite application is when it is

infused with milk chocolate. It then has an almost malty-caramely quality to it. It adds that little something that people can't quite identify. I also love pears with anise, which works well with roasted or poached pears.

—MICHAEL LAISKONIS, LE BERNARDIN (NEW YORK CITY)

I love using **star anise** in dishes from meats to desserts. I love how it can be kind of meaty in a stew, or kind of sweet, adding bright, warm notes to a pumpkin dessert.

—TONY LIU, AUGUST (NEW YORK CITY)

pepper: black, Szechuan

pineapple

plums, esp. poached

pork

poultry

pumpkin

raspberries

root vegetables

salmon

sauces

scallions

scallops

shellfish

shrimp

soups

soy sauce

stews

stocks: beef, chicken

sweet potatoes

tamarind

teas

tuna

turmeric

vanilla

vegetables, esp. root

Vietnamese cuisine (e.g., pho)

wine, rice

Flavor Affinities

star anise + cream + maple
star anise + milk + milk chocolate + orange zest + sugar
star anise + pork + soy sauce + sugar

APPETIZERS

Tips: Saltiness stimulates appetite.

Serve small portions so as not to satiate the appetite too early in a meal.
Accompany appetizers with light-bodied wines.

Dishes

Insalata A Voce: Green Apple, Marcona Almonds, Watercress, Pecorino

—Andrew Carmellini, A Voce (New York City)

Apple and Eggplant Croûte with Apple Butter, Cranberry Compote, and Lemon-Poached Apples

—Dominique and Cindy Duby, Wild Sweets (Vancouver)

Apple Softcake with Dark Chocolate and Cinnamon Soup

—Dominique and Cindy Duby, Wild Sweets (Vancouver)

Sautéed Apples, Olive Oil Sponge, Maple–Brown Butter Ice Cream

—Johnny Iuzzini, pastry chef, Jean Georges (New York City)

Poached Granny Smith Apples, Wildflower Honey, and Belgian Endive Leaves

—Thomas Keller, The French Laundry (Yountville, California)

Apple-Lychee Sorbet

—Michael Laiskonis, pastry chef, Le Bernardin (New York City)

Caramelized Apple Sundae with Butter Pecan Ice Cream

—Emily Luchetti, Farallon (San Francisco)

Warm Granny Smith Apple Tart with Buttermilk Ice Cream

—Patrick O'Connell, The Inn at Little Washington (Washington, Virginia)

APPLES

Season: autumn

Taste: sweet, astringent

Function: cooling

Weight: medium

Volume: quiet-moderate

Techniques: bake, caramelize, deep-fry (e.g., as fritters), grill, poach, raw, sauté, stew

allspice

almonds



The combination of **apple** and celery works. A tart green apple sorbet is not going to knock your socks off, because you are programmed to know it. When you add the flavor of celery, you get something new. I also love the flavors of apple and fennel together, especially in sorbet.

—MICHAEL LAISKONIS, LE BERNARDIN (NEW YORK CITY)

I make an **apple** confit of thinly sliced apples with cinnamon caramel powder layered between the apples and baked slowly. When the dish is served, next to the apples is a small pile of dates poached in syrup with vanilla. The other flavors on the plate are lemon confit, quince, raw apple with apple cider gelée, and *ras el hanout* (a Moroccan spice blend).

For this dish you need a contrast for the sweetness, so the role of the lemon confit is to cleanse and refresh. If the confit was not there, you would have a bite of the

sweet date and be done. The date and lemon is like a salad. The line drawing this together is the quince and dates that come from the Middle East and that was the line to *ras el hanout*.

—MICHAEL LISKONIS, LE BERNARDIN (NEW YORK CITY)

If you cook **apples** on top of the stove, some varieties will have a lot of juice while others will have none at all. Fuji, Gala, and Golden Delicious apples tend to be juicy, while Granny Smith apples are often drier. With different types of apples, you often don't know exactly what they will do. So if I'm going to serve apples with gingerbread, I will sauté them in a little sugar and see what happens. If they are letting out a bunch of juice, I won't add much sugar. If they are dry, I'll add some apple juice or Calvados.

—EMILY LUCHETTI, FARALLON (SAN FRANCISCO)

When I make an **apple pie**, I won't use any fewer than three different kinds of apples for their different textures and sweetenesses, which ensures that every single bite is interesting. I'll use Galas or Golden Delicious apples for their sweetness in the middle of the pie, and soft Jonathans or McIntoshes on top for their ability to melt into the others, and Braeburns or Granny Smiths on the bottom for their ability to stay firm.... I can't imagine an apple pie without cinnamon, a splash of lemon juice, and a pinch of salt.

—SHARON HAGE, YORK STREET (DALLAS)

Apples and caramel are a wonderful combination and depending on what nut you add it will take the combination in very different directions. If you add pecans, it would make the combination a heavier winter dessert, versus adding almonds, which would keep it lighter. Both work; you just need to decide how heavy you want the dish.

—EMILY LUCHETTI, FARALLON (SAN FRANCISCO)

apple cider or juice

applejack

apricots: dried, jam, puree

Armagnac

bacon

bay leaf

beef

blackberries

bourbon

brandy, esp. apple

brioche

BUTTER, UNSALTED

butterscotch

cabbage, red

CALVADOS

CARAMEL

cardamom

celery

celery root

cheese: **Camembert**, cheddar, goat, Gruyère

cherries: dried, fresh

chestnuts

chicken

chives

cider

***CINNAMON**

cloves

cognac

Cointreau

coriander

cranberries

CREAM AND ICE CREAM

crème anglaise (sauce)

crème fraîche

crust: pastry, pie

cumin

currants, esp. black, and currant jelly

curry powder

custards

dates

duck

eggplant

fennel

French cuisine, esp. from Normandy

frisée

ginger

goose

hazelnuts

honey, esp. chestnut, wildflower

horseradish

ice cream

Kirsch

lavender

LEMON: JUICE, ZEST

lemon thyme

lychees

Madeira

maple syrup

mayonnaise

meringue

molasses

mustard

nutmeg

nuts

oatmeal and oats

oil: canola, hazelnut, walnut

olive oil

onions, esp. green, red

orange: juice, zest

parsley

peanuts and peanut butter

pears

pecans

pepper, black

pies

pineapple

pine nuts

pistachios

plums

pomegranates

pork

poultry

prunes

puff pastry

pumpkin

quince

raisins, esp. seedless, white

rhubarb

rice and rice pudding

rosemary

RUM: DARK, LIGHT

salads: fruit, green

salt, kosher

sauerkraut

sherry

Apple and shiso work well together. I especially like them together in a sorbet. I will use a Granny Smith apple that has a nice tartness combined with a little sugar, lemon, and then the shiso. The shiso has a cumin and cinnamon flavor that is a natural with **apple**.

—JERRY TRAUNFELD, THE HERBFARM (WOODINVILLE, WASHINGTON)

If you stay in the boundaries of what people think a dessert should be it gets very hard to do something new. We explain that they already eat carrot cake. We think parsnip will work instead of carrot and that kabocha squash will work instead of pumpkin in a pie.

When people see eggplant in a dessert they automatically think it will not work. You have to hide the unusual element and play up what people know already. The boundaries are limitless when you think of all the crossovers between sweet and savory. Duck à l'orange is a fruit and meat combined, so why not use bacon in a dessert? A pancake with maple syrup and bacon on the plate is really sweet and savory. So people already eat these combinations unconsciously.

For our apple-eggplant dessert, we start with a *choux* dough piecrust. Then we layer an almond cream-like custard. Then we alternate **apple** and eggplant slices side by side. We use baby eggplant because it has a spongy texture and sucks up moisture from the cream that can otherwise make the crust soggy and absorb the juice and flavor from the apples that would normally just evaporate. So when you eat the eggplant and apples, the eggplant tastes like apples.

—DOMINIQUE AND CINDY DUBY, WILD SWEETS (VANCOUVER)

I have always been very fond of chef Frédy Girardet [who earned three Michelin stars at his restaurant in Switzerland before retiring in 1996]. When I was young, I cooked almost every recipe from his book and visited his restaurant. One of his most interesting desserts was an **apple** dessert made of apples in the shape of little balls. The dessert broke away from cooking apples whole in the traditional way, which alone inspired me. He cooked them over a very high heat for two minutes and put them into a red wine reduction that had cinnamon, orange peel, and sugar. This was put onto

a sheet tray that needed to be shaken for an hour so the apples would not dry out. The apples would absorb these flavors like a sponge and would then be served with vanilla ice cream.

In that spirit, we transformed this dessert. We transformed the wine by “espheration” so that it creates a bubble of liquid that explodes in your mouth. We cut apples with a melon baller, then vacuum-packed the apples with the wine but cooked it in such a way that the apples stayed hard and absorbed the wine flavor.

—JOSE ANDRÉS, CAFÉ ATLÁNTICO (WASHINGTON, DC)

We serve a dish of smoked oysters with **apples**. We smoke the oysters over applewood, and so it seemed logical to add apple to the dish. We serve it with a puree of apple with juniper that just plays beautifully off the oyster.

—KATSUYA FUKUSHIMA, MINIBAR (WASHINGTON, DC)

soups

sour cream

star anise

SUGAR: BROWN, WHITE

sweet potatoes

tarragon

tarts

thyme

vanilla

verjus

vermouth

vinegar: apple cider, raspberry

WALNUTS

wine: red, dry white

yogurt

Flavor Affinities

apples + almonds + caramel

apples + almonds + Armagnac + crème fraîche + raisins

apples + apricots + pine nuts + rosemary

apples + brown sugar + cream + walnuts

apples + Calvados + cranberries + maple syrup

apples + caramel + cinnamon

apples + caramel + cinnamon + dates + lemon confit + quince + *ras el hanout* + vanilla

apples + caramel + peanuts
apples + caramel + pecans
apples + caramel + pistachios + vanilla
apples + celery + walnuts
apples + cinnamon + cranberries
apples + cinnamon + dark chocolate + yams
apples + cream + ginger
apples + ginger + hazelnuts
apples + ginger + lemon + quince + sugar
apples + honey + lemon thyme
apples + raisins + rum
apples + red cabbage + cinnamon

APRICOTS—IN GENERAL

Season: summer
Taste: sweet
Weight: medium
Volume: moderate
Techniques: bake, grill, poach, raw, stew
allspice

ALMONDS

amaretto
anise
apples
apricot
brandy
bananas
blackberries
blueberries
brandy
butter, unsalted
caramel

cardamom

cayenne
cheese (e.g., Brie, Reblochon, ricotta)
cheesecake

cherries

chicken

chocolate, white

cinnamon

coconut

coffee and espresso

cognac

coriander

cranberries

CREAM AND ICE CREAM

crème anglaise

custards (e.g., crème brûlée)

duck

foie gras

game

garlic

ginger

hazelnuts

honey

ice cream, esp. vanilla

Kirsch

lamb

LEMON: juice, zest

lemon verbena

liqueurs: apricot, nut

maple syrup

mascarpone

Mediterranean cuisine

meringue

Middle Eastern stews

mint (garnish)

Moroccan cuisine

nectarines

nutmeg

nuts

oats and oatmeal

onions, esp. yellow

orange: juice, zest

orange liqueur

peaches

pepper, black

pineapple
pine nuts
pistachios
plums
pork
poultry
praline
prunes
raisins
raspberries
rice pudding
rosemary
rum
saffron salads, esp. fruit, green
Sauternes
sour cream
strawberries
SUGAR: brown, white
tea: apple, apricot, Earl Grey
***VANILLA**
vinegar, red wine
walnuts
wine: sweet, white
yogurt

Flavor Affinities

apricots + almonds + cream + sugar
apricots + almonds + meringue + Moscato d'Asti
apricots + apples + pine nuts + rosemary
apricots + cranberries + white chocolate
apricots + oranges + sugar + vanilla + walnuts

APRICOTS, DRIED

Techniques: poach, stew

allspice
cherries, dried

cinnamon
currants
custard
French toast
ginger
hazelnuts
honey
ice cream
lemon: juice, zest
Madeira
Moroccan
cuisine
orange: juice, zest
pancakes/crepes
pistachios
pork
prunes
pumpkin seeds
raisins
rice pudding
sugar
tamarind paste
vanilla
wine, sweet white (e.g., Muscat)

Flavor Affinities

dried apricots + dried cherries + ginger + orange + pistachios

ARGENTINIAN CUISINE

(See also Latin American Cuisine)

beef
corn
peaches
pumpkin
sweet potatoes

AROMA

When looking to make a big impact with aroma, turn to:

- chocolate
- cinnamon
- herbs
- pineapple
- sous-vide* cooking
- spices
- star anise
- truffles
- vanilla

Apricots are much better cooked than raw. It is rare that you find a fruit that reaches its full potential as cooked rather than raw, but an apricot is one. A so-so apricot poached will turn into heaven. They are great with either chamomile or lavender.

—GINA DEPALMA, BABBO (NEW YORK CITY)

Apricot is a fruit you need to cook to help unleash its flavors. A bite of raw apricot is kind of bland and doesn't excite very much. If you throw that same apricot into the oven and heat it up a bit, it turns into a whole different fruit. Apricot with vanilla is a match made in heaven.

—EMILY LUCHETTI, FARALLON (SAN FRANCISCO)

We believe as much as 90 percent of flavor is due to **aroma** as opposed to taste.

—DOMINIQUE AND CINDY DUBY, WILD SWEETS (VANCOUVER)

ARTICHOKEs

Season: spring–early autumn

Weight: medium

Volume: moderate–loud

Techniques: bake, boil, braise, broil, deep-fry, grill, raw, roast, sauté, steam, stew

- aioli

- anchovies**

- arugula

- bacon

- basil

bay leaf

beans, fava

beets

bell peppers, esp. roasted

bread crumbs

butter

capers

carrots

Dishes

Fettuccine with House-Made Pancetta, Artichokes, Lemon, and Hot Chiles

—Mario Batali, Babbo (New York City)

Spring Artichoke Fritto with Yogurt, Mint, and Lemon Aioli

—Andrew Carmellini, A Voce (New York City)

My mom made **artichokes** that we dipped in mayonnaise, so I tweaked that idea for the stuffed artichoke we serve here. *Panko* bread crumbs are mixed with chopped mint, salted, and stuffed into the artichoke cavity. The homemade mayonnaise I serve is made with eggs and just a little olive oil but mostly melted butter, which makes it richer and more flavorful—which is based on how it is made for the Chinese dish of shrimp and walnuts. The mayonnaise is then seasoned with anchovies, red pepper flakes, and onion confit.

—TONY LIU, AUGUST (NEW YORK CITY)

cashews

celery

cheese: Emmental, goat, Gruyère, Parmesan

chervil

chicken

chives

coriander

cream

crème fraîche

eggs: yolk, hard-boiled

French cuisine

GARLIC

grapefruit

ham (e.g., Serrano)

hazelnuts

hollandaise sauce

Italian cuisine

leeks

LEMON: confit, juice, zest

lobster

mayonnaise

Mediterranean cuisine

MINT

Moroccan cuisine

mushrooms

mustard, Dijon

nuts: cashews, hazelnuts, walnuts

oil: hazelnut, peanut

OLIVE OIL

olives: black, niçoise

ONIONS, ESP. SWEET AND YELLOW

orange

pancetta

PARSLEY, FLAT-LEAF PEPPER: BLACK, WHITE

pesto

piquillo peppers

potatoes

prosciutto

radicchio

Flavor Affinities

artichokes + butter + garlic + lemon + parsley

artichokes + cream + Parmesan cheese + thyme

artichokes + garlic + lemon

artichokes + garlic + lemon + mint

artichokes + garlic + lemon + olive oil

artichokes + garlic + lemon + olive oil + thyme

artichokes + garlic + mint

artichokes + garlic + Parmesan cheese + thyme
artichokes + garlic + sage
artichokes + lemon + mint + yogurt
artichokes + lemon + onions
artichokes + mushrooms + onions + sausage
artichokes + olive oil + Parmesan cheese + white truffles
red pepper flakes
rice
risotto
rosemary
saffron
sage
salads

SALT, KOSHER

savory
shallots
shellfish (e.g., crab)
sherry, dry
shrimp
soy sauce
Spanish cuisine
spinach
stock, chicken
sugar (pinch)
tapenade
tarragon, fresh

THYME, FRESH

TOMATOES

truffles, black
tuna
vinaigrette
vinegar: balsamic, rice, sherry, white wine
walnuts

WINE, DRYWHITE

yogurt

ARTICHOKEs, JERUSALEM

Season: autumn–spring

Weight: medium

Volume: moderate

Techniques: bake, blanche, cream, fry, roast, sauté

anise

bacon

bay leaf

butter

celery

cheese, goat

chervil

chives

coriander

cream

cumin

dill

fennel leaves

fennel seeds

garlic

ginger

hazelnuts

leeks

lemon, juice

mace

meats, esp. roasted

morels

nutmeg

oil: nut, sunflower seed

olive oil

onions

parsley, flat-leaf

pepper, black

potatoes

rosemary

sage

salmon

salt, sea

shallots

stock, chicken

tarragon
thyme
vinegar
wine, dry white

Flavor Affinities

Jerusalem artichoke + goat cheese + hazelnuts
Jerusalem artichoke + lemon + morels

ARUGULA

(See also Lettuces—Bitter Greens and Chicories)

Season: spring–summer

Taste: bitter

Weight: light–medium

Volume: moderate–loud

Techniques: braise, raw (salads), sauté, soups, wilt

almonds
basil
beans, white
bell peppers, esp. red
cheese: Cabrales, feta, **goat**, mozzarella, Parmesan
chicken
cilantro
clams
corn
cucumbers
dill
eggs, esp. hard-boiled
endive
fennel
fish (e.g., salmon, tuna)
garlic
grapes
Italian cuisine
lemon juice
lettuces

lovage
Mediterranean cuisine
mesclun salad greens (key ingredient)
mint
mushrooms
mussels
nuts
olive oil
olives, black
oranges, esp. blood
pancetta
parsley
pasta
pears
pesto
pine nuts
potatoes
prosciutto
radicchio
radishes
risotto
salads and salad greens

Dishes

Jerusalem Artichoke Soup, Sweet Garlic Flan, “Sockeye” Salmon Tartare, Poached Quail Egg, and Crisp Sunchoke

—Carrie Nahabedian, Naha (Chicago)

Dishes

Arugula Risotto with Roquefort and Pignoli Nuts

—Gabriel Kreuther, The Modern (New York City)

Arugula Salad with Cucumber, Mt. Vikos Feta, Mint, Coriander Vinaigrette, and Niçoise Olives

—Judy Rodgers, Zuni Café (San Francisco)

Sautéed Arugula with Paneer Cheese and Roasted Cashews

—Vikram Vij and Meelu Dhalwala, Vij's (Vancouver)

salt, esp. sea

shallots

shellfish (e.g., shrimp)

tomatoes

tuna

vinaigrettes

vinegar: balsamic, champagne, red wine, sherry, white wine

watercress

Flavor Affinities

arugula + balsamic vinegar + lemon + olive oil + Parmesan cheese

arugula + Cabrales cheese + endive + grapes

arugula + cucumber + feta cheese + mint

arugula + endive + radicchio

arugula + fennel + pears

arugula + pears + prosciutto

ASIAN CUISINE

(See Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, etc. Cuisines)

ASPARAGUS

Season: spring

Weight: light–medium

Volume: moderate

Techniques: blanch, boil, deepfry, grill, pan roast, simmer, steam, stir-fry

almonds

anchovies

artichokes

basil
bay leaf
beets
bread crumbs
butter, brown

BUTTER, UNSALTED

capers
caraway seeds
carrots
cayenne

CHEESE: chèvre, Fontina, goat, Muenster, PARMESAN, PECORINO, ricotta, Romano

chervil
chives
crab
cream, heavy
crème fraîche
dill

EGGS AND EGG DISHES (e.g., coddled, hard-boiled omelets)

fava beans
French cuisine
garlic
ginger
ham

hollandaise sauce

Italian cuisine

leeks

LEMON: JUICE, ZEST

lemon thyme
lime, juice
lobster
Marsala wine
mascarpone
mayonnaise

mushrooms, esp. cremini, **morels**, shiitakes

mustard, Dijon

oil: hazelnut, peanut, sesame, truffle

OLIVE OIL

onions, esp. spring, yellow

orange
oysters
pancetta
parsley, flat-leaf

pasta

peas

PEPPER: BLACK, WHITE

peppers, piquillo

Dishes

Ricotta Gnocchi with Asparagus, Morels, and Pine Nuts

—Dan Barber, Blue Hill at Stone Barns (Pocantico Hills, New York)

Asparagus and Ricotta “Mezzalune” with Spring Onion Butter

—Mario Batali, Babbo (New York City)

Salad of Sacramento Delta Green Asparagus, Spring Garlic, Marinated Sweet Peppers, with Young Arugula and Yellow Pepper Gastrique

—Thomas Keller, The French Laundry (Yountville, California)

Warm Salad of Sacramento Delta Green Asparagus, Melted Cipollini Onion Rings, Soft-Boiled Hen Egg, and Country Bread Croutons

—Thomas Keller, The French Laundry (Yountville, California)

Green Asparagus Soup with Gyromitre Mushrooms and Soft-Poached Farm Egg

—Gabriel Kreuther, The Modern (New York City)

Warm Salad of Grilled Asparagus and Prawns with a Sherry Vinaigrette

—Patrick O’Connell, The Inn at Little Washington (Washington, Virginia)

Vegetarian Sushi: Asparagus and Roasted Bell Pepper Roll

—Kaz Okochi, Kaz Sushi Bistro (Washington, DC)

Asparagus and Morel Mushroom Salad: Pancetta, Fiddlehead Ferns, Vermont Shepherd Cheese, and a Mushroom Reduction

—Alfred Portale, Gotham Bar and Grill (New York City)

Terrine of Green and White Asparagus, Roasted Beet Root Salad, Asparagus Juices

—Rick Tramonto, Tru (Chicago)

pistachios

potatoes

prosciutto

ramps

rice and risotto

saffron

sage

salmon

SALT: KOSHER, SEA

sauce: béchamel, brown butter, Mornay

savory

scallions

sesame seeds

shallots

shrimp

soups

sour cream

soy sauce

spinach

stocks: chicken, vegetable

tarragon

thyme, fresh

tomatoes

turnips

vermouth

vinaigrette: mustard, sherry

vinegar: champagne, red wine, sherry, white wine

wine, dry white (e.g., Muscat)

yogurt

Flavor Affinities

asparagus + capers + ham + shrimp

asparagus + cayenne + lime

asparagus + chervil + chives + garlic + morel mushrooms + shallots

asparagus + crab + morel mushrooms + ramps

asparagus + garlic + ginger + sesame

asparagus + garlic + leeks + onions + potatoes

asparagus + goat cheese + mascarpone + thyme

asparagus + ham + morel mushrooms + Parmesan cheese

asparagus + lemon + olive oil + black pepper

asparagus + morel mushrooms + ramps

asparagus + Parmesan cheese + eggs

asparagus + Parmesan cheese + pancetta + vinaigrette

asparagus + prosciutto + goat cheese + chervil

Daniel Humm of New York's Eleven Madison Park on Making Asparagus Soup

Making and seasoning soup is one of the best ways to learn about flavor. Let's make asparagus soup:

- You need a lot of asparagus flavor.
- You need acidity.
- You need sweetness that will come from the asparagus.
- You need the right amount of salt.
- You need just the right amount of spice, so that it doesn't actually taste spicy. We use a lot of cayenne, but you would never know it is there; it is just an accent.
- You need fresh lime juice to finish.

Soup is a play of balance when you have a lot of flavor. You can add a lot of salt and it won't taste salty. You can add a lot of acid and it won't taste acidic. But you still have a bold-flavored soup. It's like winemaking; at some point, there is a balance of all the flavors.

The first thing you need to do is get all the asparagus flavor into the soup at the start. We save our asparagus liquid from all the asparagus we cook to use for asparagus stock.

Making the soup: We sweat the asparagus [that is, cook it over low heat in a little fat, generally in a covered pot or pan] very slowly. When we add wine, we do it multiple times, adding a little at a time and reducing it, then repeating the process. What this does is concentrate the flavor at each step. It makes a big difference [before adding the asparagus liquid].

Finishing the soup: A soup may taste seasoned, but it still needs to be "woken up." You taste the asparagus, but maybe it doesn't blow you away at first. To do that, you need acid and cayenne. We season the soup with lime because it is a stronger acid and yet has less flavor than lemon. If I use lemon to get as much acid as I need for the soup, I will need to use so much that the soup will taste lemony instead.

ASPARAGUS, WHITE

Season: spring

Weight: light

Volume: quiet–moderate

Techniques: blanch, boil, sauté, steam

Tips: Covered to deprive it of sunlight while growing, white asparagus is lighter in flavor and texture than green asparagus.

butter

cheese, Parmesan

chicken

crab

eggs: whole, yolks

ham

hazelnuts

lemon

mushrooms (e.g., cepes, morels, porcini)

mustard

oil, truffle

olive oil

parsley

pepper, black

salt, sea

sauces: hollandaise, mayonnaise, romesco

shallots

shrimp

stock, chicken

sugar (pinch)

tarragon

vinaigrette

vinegar: champagne, white

wine, Riesling

Flavor Affinities

white asparagus + hazelnuts + Parmesan cheese + truffle oil

white asparagus + lemon + cepes mushrooms + parsley

white asparagus + mustard + olive oil + vinegar

ASTRINGENCY

Taste: astringent

Function: cooling

apples (astringent-sweet)

artichokes

asparagus

bananas, unripe (astringentsweet)

basil

beans

berries

broccoli

buckwheat

cashews

cauliflower

coffee

cranberries

figs (astringent-sweet)

fruits: dried, raw, unripe

grapes (astringent-sour-sweet)

hazelnuts

herbs

honey

legumes

lentils

lettuce

mace

marjoram

okra

parsley

peaches (astringent-sweet)

pears (astringent-sweet)

persimmons

plums (astringent-sweet)

pomegranates (astringent-soursweet)

quinoa

rhubarb

rye

saffron
sprouts
tea
turmeric
turnips
vegetables, raw
walnuts

AUSTRALIAN CUISINE

barbecued foods
beef
cheese
fish
fruits, fresh
lamb
nuts, macadamia
seafood
shellfish, esp. shrimp
vegetables, fresh
wines
yabbies

NOTE: Akin to the “New American” cuisine that incorporates ingredients and techniques from around the world, “Mod Oz” (modern Australian) cuisine combines its British heritage with influences from other parts of Europe as well as Asia.

AUSTRIAN CUISINE

beer
cinnamon
coffee
cream
desserts
dumplings
goulash
marjoram
meat, esp. beef or pork

paprika
parsley
pastries
potatoes
schnitzel
soups, esp. with dumplings or noodles
stews
strudel
wine

AUTUMN

Weather: typically cool
Techniques: braise, glaze, roast

almonds (peak: October)
apples (peak: September–November)
artichokes (peak: September–October)
basil (peak: September)
beans (peak: September)
bell peppers (peak: September)
broccoli
broccoli rabe (peak: July–December)
Brussels sprouts (peak: November–February)
cakes, esp. served warm
cantaloupe (peak: June–September)
caramel
cardoons (peak: October)
cauliflower
celery root (peak: October–November)
chard (peak: June–December)
chestnuts (peak: October–November)
chile peppers
coconut (peak: October–November)
corn (peak: September)
cranberries (peak: September–December)
cucumbers (peak: September)
dates

duck
eggplant (peak: August–November)
fennel
figs (peak: September–October)
foie gras
garlic (peak: September)
gooseberries (peak: June–September)
grains
grapes (peak: September)
heavier dishes
huckleberries (peak: August–September)
kale (peak: November–January)
kohlrabi (peak: September–November)
lentils
lovage (peak: September–October)
lychee nuts (peak: September–November)
mushrooms: chanterelles (peak: April–October), porcini (peak: September–October)
nectarines (peak: July–September)
nuts
okra (peak: July–September)
oranges, blood (peak: November–February)
oysters (peak: September–April)
partridge (peak: November–December)
passion fruit (peak: November–February)
pears (peak: July–October)
peas (peak: June–September)
persimmons (peak: October–January)
pheasant (peak: October–December)
pistachios (peak: September)
plums (peak: July–October)
polenta
pomegranates (peak: October–December)
pumpkins (peak: September–December)
quinces (peak: October–December)
salsify (peak: November–January)
scallops
seeds, sunflower
spices, warming (e.g., black peppercorns, cayenne, cinnamon, chili powder, clove, cumin, mustard, etc.)

squash, winter (peak: October–December)

stuffing

sweetbreads

sweet potatoes (peak: November–January)

tomatoes (peak: September)

turkey

vinegar, red wine

walnuts

watermelon (peak: July–September)

yams (peak: November)

zucchini (peak: June–October)

The earthy flavors of **autumn** come together in our chanterelle mushroom and lentil soup with sautéed foie gras.

—HIRO SONE AND LISSA DOUMANI, TERRA (ST. HELENA, CALIFORNIA)

In the **autumn**, I use walnut vinegar, which is red wine vinegar with macerated walnuts in it. It is great on a dish of sweetbreads and hazelnuts.

—ANDREW CARMELLINI, A VOCE (NEW YORK CITY)

When I think of autumn, I think of apples, pears, quince—which is so underrated—figs, and pumpkins.

I work with apples and pears, which you can start using in September, especially with the early apples like Gravenstein in the Bay Area. I try not to use pumpkin until close to Halloween, because no matter what you do with it, it will still taste like pumpkin. It's not like berries or apples that you can do a thousand things with. As a pastry chef, if I serve pumpkin too soon, people will get sick of it—and if I take it off the menu, there is nothing to replace it with. So I try to wait so I don't peak too early.

Figs are great for fall. The problem with figs is that there are not that many fig lovers out there. There are a lot more peach, chocolate, and apple lovers than there are fig lovers. When I make a fig dessert, I'll pair it with a raspberry or late summer fruit so it's more likely to meet with customer acceptance.

In the fall, I'll make more cakes. Fall also turns into caramel season, and fall fruits work so well with caramel. I keep a lighter hand with caramel in the fall because it is being combined with fruit versus chocolate.

—EMILY LUCHETTI, FARALLON (SAN FRANCISCO)

Dishes

Avocado and Grapefruit with Poppy Seed Dressing

—Ann Cashion, Cashion's Eat Place (Washington, DC)

Creamy Avocado Pudding with Pink Grapefruit Reduction and Candied Zest

—Dominique and Cindy Duby, Wild Sweets (Vancouver)

AVOCADO OIL

(See Oil, Avocado)

AVOCADOS

Season: spring–summer

Botanical relatives: allspice, bay leaf

Weight: medium–heavy

Volume: quiet

Techniques: raw

Tips: Use to add richness to a dish.

arugula

bacon

basil and Thai basil

beans, black

bell peppers, esp. red

butter, unsalted

Central American cuisine

chayote

chervil

chicken

chile peppers: chipotle, jalapeño, serrano

chives

cilantro

corn and masa

crab

cream, heavy

crème fraîche

cucumbers

cumin
dashi
endive, esp. Belgian
fennel
fish
frisée
fruits, esp. tropical
garlic
grapefruit
guacamole (key ingredient)
jicama
lemon: juice, zest
LIME, JUICE
lobster
mangoes
mayonnaise
Mexican cuisine
oil, canola
olive oil
ONIONS, ESP. RED, spring, white
orange
parsley, flat-leaf
pepper: black, white
radishes
rocket
sake
salads, esp. green, seafood
salsa
SALT: KOSHER, SEA
sandwiches
scallions
shellfish (e.g., shrimp)
shrimp
smoked fish (e.g., trout)
soups
sour cream
Southwestern cuisine
soy sauce
spinach

stocks: chicken, vegetable
Tabasco sauce
tarragon
tequila
tomatillos
tomatoes
vinaigrette
VINEGAR: balsamic, cider, tarragon, white wine
walnuts, oil
yogurt

Flavor Affinities

avocado + bacon + scallions + tomatoes
avocado + basil + red onions + tomatoes + balsamic vinegar
avocado + chiles + cilantro + lime + black pepper + salt + scallions
avocado + cilantro + lime juice
avocado + crab + grapefruit + tomato
avocado + crème fraîche + grapefruit
avocado + endive + frisée + lemon juice + sea salt
avocado + jalapeño chiles + cilantro + cumin + garlic + lime + onion
avocado + lemon + smoked trout

Avocados are so rich that we always season them with a lot of *fleur de sel* and lemon juice, and toss them with frisée and endive. Avocados need something bitter for balance.

—SHARON HAGE, YORK STREET (DALLAS)

BACON

Taste: salty
Weight: medium
Volume: moderate
Techniques: broil, roast, sauté

aioli
avocados
beans (e.g., black, fava, green)
breakfast

butter, unsalted
celery
chervil
chicken
eggs
French cuisine
frisée
greens (e.g., arugula)
Italian cuisine
lentils
lettuce
maple syrup
mayonnaise
mushrooms, esp. chanterelles
olive oil
onions
parsnips
peas
pepper, black
potatoes
risotto
salads
salmon
salt
scallops
shallots
spinach
squash, winter
stews
stock, chicken
tomatoes
vinegar

Flavor Affinities

bacon + arugula + egg + pork belly
bacon + chanterelle mushrooms + chicken + potatoes
bacon + chanterelle mushrooms + salmon + shallots
bacon + hard-boiled eggs + spinach + balsamic vinegar

bacon + lettuce + tomatoes
bacon + onions + vinegar
bacon + shallots + vinegar
bacon + spinach + winter squash

Bacon can be salt, fat, and/or smoke, depending on the bacon you choose. You can also play with its texture, depending on whether you are using pork belly or crispy bacon. It is wonderful with vegetables. The fat is delicious, so if you are braising onions in bacon fat, reduce that down, and add a little onion *jus* and vinegar, you have a great sauce. Bacon just brings another layer of flavor to the vegetables. My dish of Berkshire pork chop with scarlet turnips, roasted rhubarb, and smoked bacon with cherry-almond salsa seca represents the relationship between fat, salt, sugar, and acid; they are all there. The bacon brings complexity to the pork; the cherry brings acid balance; and the almond brings a different kind of fat with crunch. The almonds in the dish are marcona, and every tenth one is extremely bitter, which adds another layer of complexity.

—TRACI DES JARDINS, JARDINIÈRE (SAN FRANCISCO)

Dishes

Braised Bacon with Spring Vegetables and White Horseradish Broth

—Dan Barber, Blue Hill at Stone Barns (Pocantico Hills, New York)

Smoked Bacon and Egg Ice Cream with Pain Perdu, Tea Jelly

—Heston Blumenthal, The Fat Duck (England)

Berkshire Pork Chop with Scarlet Turnips, Roasted Rhubarb, and Smoked Bacon with Cherry-Almond Salsa Seca

—Traci Des Jardins, Jardinière (San Francisco)

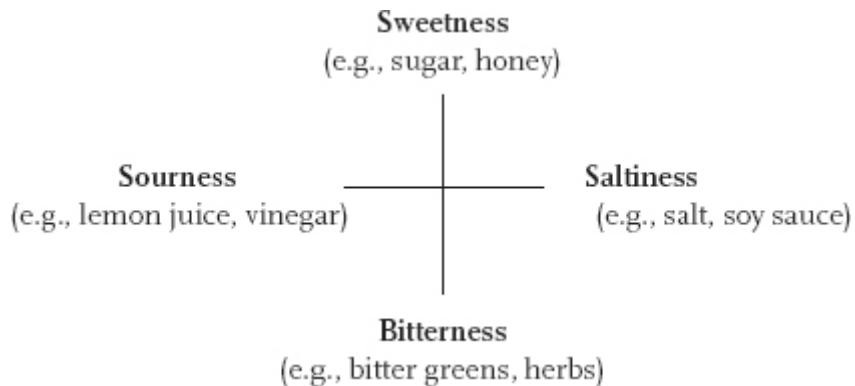
BALANCE

Tips: Seek balance in every dish you make:

- tastes (e.g., sourness vs. saltiness; sweetness vs. bitterness)
- richness (e.g., fat) vs. relief (e.g., acidity, bitterness)
- temperatures (e.g., hot vs. cold)

- textures (e.g., creamy vs. crunchy)

Balance taste by adding its opposite or its complement.



BALSAMIC VINEGAR

(See **Vinegar, Balsamic**)

Dishes

Chocolate-Banana Flan, Exotic Fruit Jelly, Spiced Fritters, Faux Foie Gras Emulsion, and Cumin Gel

—Dominique and Cindy Duby, Wild Sweets (Vancouver)

Sticky Toffee Pudding with Bananas, Medjool Dates, Oatmeal Ice Cream, Root Beer Reduction

—Gale Gand, pastry chef, Tru (Chicago)

Banana-Coconut Split with Vanilla Ice Cream, Candied Coconut, Dulce de Leche, Fudge Sauce

—Emily Luchetti, pastry chef, Farallon (San Francisco)

Caramelized Banana Tart with Coconut Ice Cream

—Patrick O'Connell, The Inn at Little Washington (Washington, Virginia)

Banana Tempura with Black Raspberry Ice Cream

—Kaz Okochi, Kaz Sushi Bistro (Washington, DC)

Macadamia Nut Tart with Banana-Rum Ice Cream

—Hiro Sone and Lissa Doumani, Terra (St. Helena, California)

Banana-Toffee Tart

—Sandy D'Amato, Sanford (Milwaukee)

Banana Tempura with Mango Ice Cream

—Sushi-Ko (Washington, DC)

Banana Crème Brûlée, Citrus-Pistachio Biscuit, Beurre Noisette Ice Cream, Peanut Caramel

—Michael Laiskonis, pastry chef, Le Bernardin (New York City)

Caramelized Banana, Smoked Chocolate Ice Cream, Stout

—Sam Mason, wd-50 (New York City)

Dover Sole with “Mostly Traditional Flavors” and Sliced Banana

—Grant Achatz, Alinea (Chicago)

BANANAS

Season: winter

Taste: sweet, astringent

Function: cooling

Weight: medium

Volume: quiet

Techniques: bake, broil, caramelize, deep-fry, grill, poach, raw, sauté

Tips: Sugar enhances the flavor of bananas.

allspice

almonds

apricots

Armagnac

baked goods (e.g., muffins, quick breads)

banana liqueur

blackberries
blueberries
brandy
breakfast
butter, unsalted
buttermilk
butterscotch
cakes
Calvados
CARAMEL
cardamom
cashews
cherries
chile peppers: habanero, jalapeño, serrano
CHOCOLATE: dark, white
cinnamon
cloves
COCONUT AND COCONUT MILK
coffee
cognac
CREAM AND ICE CREAM
cream cheese
crème anglaise
crème fraîche
curries
custard
dates
desserts
figs, dried
ginger
guava
hazelnuts
honey
Kirsch
LEMON, JUICE
lemongrass
lime, juice
macadamia
mangoes: green, ripe

maple syrup

meringue

nutmeg

oats and oatmeal

oil, vegetable

orange

pancakes

papaya

parsley

passion fruit

peanuts and peanut butter

pecans

pepper, black

pineapple

pistachios

pomegranate

puddings

raisins

raspberries: red, black

rice

RUM

salads, fruit

sesame seeds

smoothies and shakes

sour cream

strawberries

SUGAR: BROWN, WHITE

sweet potatoes

Tabasco sauce

vanilla

vinegar, white

walnuts

yogurt

A **banana** in a dessert is an instant sell. Everyone loves caramelized bananas!

—GINA DEPALMA, BABBO (NEW YORK CITY)

I hate overripe **bananas**. We'll actually freeze whole, unpeeled bananas, which will continue to ripen in the freezer and turn black. When we want bananas to use as a

puree, we'll pull them out and let them thaw before pureeing, and then add them to a cake or mousse. The flavor is much better this way.

—DOMINIQUE DUBY, WILD SWEETS (VANCOUVER)

I serve a **banana** crème brûlée that is not made in ramekins (the usual individual serving cups) but cut out of a sheet pan and caramelized. I serve this set up in a grid with two squares of crème brûlée, one topped with a little citrus, the other with caramelized bananas—alternated with citrus biscuit, one topped with a brown butter ice cream, and the other with caramelized banana. So I have these three flavors—banana, citrus, and brown butter—tied together with a salted peanut-caramel sauce.

—MICHAEL LAISKONIS, LE BERNARDIN (NEW YORK CITY)

A **banana**'s ripeness will determine what you do with it. I like my bananas yellow and firm. If you are going to make a bananas Foster and your bananas are very yellow, you can cook them longer and they won't fall apart or turn to mush. If you start with a banana that is pretty brown, the second you add heat, it falls apart. A brown banana gives me shivers!

—EMILY LUCHETTI, FARALLON (SAN FRANCISCO)

Flavor Affinities

banana + blackberries + cream

banana + brown butter + caramel + citrus + peanuts

banana + caramel + chocolate

banana + caramel + crème fraîche + lemongrass

banana + coconut + cream

banana + cream + honey + macadamia nuts + vanilla

banana + cream + mango

banana + dates + oatmeal

banana + honey + sesame seeds

banana + macadamia nuts + rum

banana + oats + pecans

BARLEY

Taste: sweet, astringent

Function: cooling

Techniques: simmer

beef
butter
garlic
lemon thyme
mirepoix (carrots, celery, onions)
mushrooms: cultivated, wild (e.g., shiitakes)
olive oil
onions
oregano
parsley, flat-leaf
pepper, white
sage
salt, kosher
savory
scallions
soups
stocks: chicken, vegetable
thyme
tomatoes
vinegar, sherry

I use **basil** a lot. I will add it at the very end of cooking a dish, and it will totally change where the dish is going. Added at the last second, it gives a minty freshness that was not there before. Basil says “fresh” and “alive” to me. And although you can get it year-round, I associate it with summer.

I think particularly of fish and shellfish with basil. I cook a lobster with a sauce of sweet Muscat or Sauternes, curry, and lime. This is a dish that has been played with. The shells have been chopped up, added to mirepoix, and turned into sauce. Then there’s wine. So when the basil hits, you have this whole new thing going on. It opens up the dish and makes it light. It goes against the “worked-on” aspect of the dish.

In Thai cooking, you will find coconut milk-based curry that will have whole leaves of basil in it. Basil becomes something of a vegetable served this way.

—DAVID WALTUCK, CHANTERELLE (NEW YORK CITY)

I love **basil** in syrups. It works with strawberries and any citrus fruit. The trio I use the most for summer fruits like berries is basil, lemon, and vanilla. I have even macerated cherry tomatoes in this combination and made them into a fruit crisp.

—MICHAEL LAISKONIS, LE BERNARDIN (NEW YORK CITY)

I love **basil**. It is more familiar than cilantro, and more people like it. I use it in ceviche instead of cilantro because it is not as pungent. I combine hamachi tuna with **tomato, watermelon, yuzu, and sesame seeds with fresh basil and basil oil.**

—KATSUYA FUKUSHIMA, MINIBAR (WASHINGTON, DC)

BASIL

(See also **Basil, Thai, and Lemon Basil**)

Season: summer

Taste: sweet

Weight: light, soft-leaved

Volume: mild–moderate

Tips: Add just before serving. Use to add a note of freshness to a dish.

apricots

Asian cuisine

beans: green, white

bell peppers, esp. red, roasted

berries

blueberries

breads

broccoli

Cambodian cuisine

capers

carrots

CHEESE: feta, goat, MOZZARELLA, PARMESAN, PECORINO, RICOTTA

chicken

chile peppers

chives

chocolate, white

cilantro

cinnamon

coconut milk

corn

crab

cream and ice cream

cucumber

custards

duck

eggplant

EGGS AND EGG DISHES (e.g., omelets)

fennel

fish, esp. grilled or poached

French cuisine

***GARLIC**

ginger, fresh

honey

ITALIAN CUISINE

lamb

lemon, juice

lemon verbena

lime, juice

liver

marjoram

meats

Mediterranean cuisine

mint

mussels

mustard: powder, seeds

nectarines

OLIVE OIL

olives

onions

orange

oregano

Parmesan cheese

parsley, flat-leaf

PASTA DISHES AND SAUCES

peaches

peas

pepper: black, white

PESTO (key ingredient)

pineapple

pine nuts

pizza

pork

potatoes

poultry

rabbit
raspberries
rice
rosemary
salads and salad dressings
salmon
salt: kosher, sea
sauces
scallops
sea bass
shellfish
shrimp
soups, esp. Asian, bean, chowder, vegetable
soy sauce
spinach
squash, summer
summer vegetables
Thai cuisine (e.g., green curries)
thyme
***TOMATOES and tomato sauces**
tuna
vanilla
veal
vegetables, esp. summer
Vietnamese cuisine
vinaigrettes
vinegar: balsamic, sherry
watermelon
ZUCCHINI

AVOID

tarragon

Flavor Affinities

basil + coconut + curry
basil + garlic + olive oil + salt
basil + garlic + olive oil + Parmesan cheese + pine nuts
basil + hamachi tuna + tomatoes + watermelon

basil + lemon + vanilla
basil + mozzarella cheese + tomatoes
basil + olive oil + Parmesan cheese

BASIL, LEMON

(See Lemon Basil)

BASIL, THAI

Taste: anise- or licorice-like

Asian cuisines
beef
coconut milk
curries
ginger
lemongrass
noodles and noodle dishes
oils, esp. pumpkin seed
salads
seafood
soups, esp. Asian
Thai cuisine
vegetarian dishes
venison

I use this in lots of vegetarian dishes because it gives them some oomph. It also works well with meat dishes, from beef to carpaccio to venison. I make a **Thai basil** pesto but make a few adjustments to the recipe or else it can look bruised and take on a funky color. We will add a little pumpkin seed oil to keep it a deep, rich green.

—BRAD FARMERIE, PUBLIC (NEW YORK CITY)

Flavor Affinities

Thai basil + beef + pumpkin seed oil
Thai basil + coconut milk + ginger

BASS

(See also Bass, Sea, and Bass, Striped)

Weight: light

Volume: quiet

Techniques: bake, broil, deepfry, poach, roast, sauté, steam

artichoke

bay leaf

carrots

cayenne

celery

chervil

fennel

garlic

lemon

olive oil

onions

orange: juice, zest

parsley, flat-leaf

pepper: black, white

saffron

salmon

salt, sea

shallots

sole

star anise

stock, fish

tarragon

tomatoes and tomato paste

vanilla

wine, white

Black bass is a fish that can go with the most exotic flavors. We serve black bass with Peking duck, green papaya salad, and a very light, thin chutney sauce. I love Peking duck and find the flavor very soft and not “duck-y” or aggressive.

—ERIC RIPERT, LE BERNARDIN (NEW YORK CITY)

BASS, BLACK

Weight: medium

Volume: quiet

asparagus

basil

beets

butter

cabbage, savoy

carrots

celery

chestnuts

chile peppers, jalapeño

chives

chutney

cilantro

coriander

duck, Peking

endive

fennel

garlic

ginger

ham

honey

leeks

lemon

lemon, preserved

lime

marjoram

mint

mushrooms, porcini

mustard

olive oil

onions

orange, juice

oregano

papaya

parsley, flat-leaf

parsnips
peas
pepper, white
raisins
saffron
salt, sea
scallions
scallops
shallots
shrimp
squash: hubbard, yellow
stock, chicken
tarragon
thyme
tomatoes
tuna
turnips
vinegar: champagne, red wine
wine: red, white
zucchini

Flavor Affinities

black bass + chutney + papaya
black bass + new potatoes + shrimp

In my **black sea bass** in a tamarind-ginger sauce with minted baby onions dish, the tamarind is acidic, and ginger is a nice flavor bridge. I put mint in the onions to cut their sweetness.

—GABRIEL KREUTHER, THE MODERN (NEW YORK CITY)

Dishes

Paupiette of Black Sea Bass in a Crisp Potato Shell, with Tender Leeks and Syrah Sauce

—Daniel Boulud, Daniel (New York City)

Sesame-Crusted Chilean Sea Bass with Baby Shrimp, Clams, and Artichokes

—Patrick O'Connell, The Inn at Little Washington (Washington, Virginia)

Black Bass with Porcini Mushrooms, Braised Parsnips, and Chestnuts

—David Pasternak, Esca (New York City)

Grilled Pacific Sea Bass for Two with Marinated Blood Orange and Lime

—David Pasternak, Esca (New York City)

Crisp Black Sea Bass with Olive-Caper Emulsion

—Alfred Portale, Gotham Bar and Grill (New York City)

Spice-Crusted Black Sea Bass in Sweet and Sour Jus

—Jean-Georges Vongerichten, Jean Georges (New York City)

BASS, SEA

Season: winter–spring

Weight: medium

Volume: quiet

Techniques: bake, broil, ceviche, deep-fry, grill, pan roast, poach, roast, sauté, steam

almonds

anchovies

artichokes

bacon

basil

bay leaf

beans, esp. green or white

beets

bell peppers: red, green

bread crumbs

BUTTER: clarified, salted, unsalted

capers

cardamom

carrots

cayenne
celery
chervil
chives
cilantro
citrus
coriander
corn
cream
crème fraîche
fennel
garlic, fresh
ginger, fresh
hazelnuts
honey
leeks
lemon: juice, zest
lemon, preserved
lentils
lime, juice
marjoram
mayonnaise
mint
mirepoix (carrots, celery, onions)
mirin
MUSHROOMS, esp. button, porcini, or shiitake
mustard, Dijon
new potatoes
oil: canola, peanut, sesame
olive oil
olives, black
onions: pearl, yellow
oregano
parsley, flat-leaf
PEPPER: black, white
potatoes, esp. as a crust, mashed
radishes
rhubarb
saffron

sake
salmon roe
SALT, KOSHER
sauces: beurre blanc, brown butter
scallops
sesame seeds
shallots
shiso
shrimp
soy sauce
spearmint
spinach, esp. baby
star anise
stocks: chicken, fish, vegetable
sugar
tamarind
tarragon
thyme, fresh
TOMATOES: cherry, grape, juice, roasted
vanilla
vermouth
VINEGAR: champagne, red wine, rice, **sherry**, white wine
wine, dry white
yuzu juice
zucchini

Flavor Affinities

sea bass + artichokes + basil + chives + green beans + lemon + new potatoes
sea bass + bacon + corn + fava beans
sea bass + mushrooms + sesame seeds + shrimp

Striped bass is a hearty fish and is one of my favorites. I love roasting it with the skin on to a crisp, and finishing it with butter, garlic, and thyme. It's a fish that pairs well with meat, whether bacon, sweetbreads, or braised pork.

—BRADFORD THOMPSON, MARY ELAINE'S AT THE PHOENICIAN (SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA)

Dishes

Wild Carolina Coast Striped Bass “Riviera” with a Salad of Shaved Fennel, Arugula, and Babaganoush, Cured Tomatoes, Spanish Olives, and Yellow Pepper Broth

—Carrie Nahabedian, Naha (Chicago)

Roasted Local Wild Striped Bass with Hubbard Squash, Caramelized Apple, and Wild Mushrooms

—David Pasternak, Esca (New York City)

Poached Atlantic Striped Bass, Pasilla Chili, Cocoa, Duck Consommé

—Rick Tramonto, Tru (Chicago)

BASS, STRIPED

Weight: medium

Volume: quiet

Techniques: bake, braise, broil, deep-fry, grill, pan roast, poach, raw, roast, sauté, sear, steam

artichokes

bacon

bay leaf

beets

bell peppers: red, yellow

bok choy

butter: clarified, unsalted

buttermilk

calamari

carrots

cauliflower

cayenne

celery

chanterelles

chervil

chile peppers: dried, fresh (e.g., jalapeño)

chives

cilantro

clams

corn
cream
cucumber
curries and curry powder

dill
fava beans
fennel
fish sauce

garlic

ginger
hollandaise sauce
horseradish
leeks

lemon: juice, zest

lemon verbena
lime, juice
mint
monkfish
mushrooms, shiitake

mustard, Dijon

OIL: canola, peanut, sesame, vegetable

olive oil
olives, picholine

onions: pearl, red

orange
paprika, sweet

parsley, flat-leaf

PEPPER: BLACK, GREEN, WHITE

potatoes

prosciutto
rosemary

sage

SALT: KOSHER, SEA

sauerkraut

scallions

sesame seeds

shallots

sour cream

soy sauce

squid
squid ink
stocks: fish, shellfish
Tabasco sauce
thyme, fresh
tomatoes
truffles, black
VINEGAR: champagne, red wine, sherry, white wine
walnuts
wine: port, dry white, Riesling
zucchini

Flavor Affinities

striped bass + bacon + sauerkraut
striped bass + bok choy + fish sauce
striped bass + clam broth + marjoram + spinach
striped bass + curry + sour cream
striped bass + fennel + olives + tomatoes
striped bass + garlic + lemon + thyme
striped bass + leeks + lemon juice + Dijon mustard
striped bass + leeks + shiitake mushrooms

I am a little too fond of **bay leaf**. I use it a lot. I probably have a fondness for it because I associate it with so many childhood flavors, like pot roast. It has a hearty quality to it and I associate it with stocks and big flavors. I will use fresh or dried bay leaf. Fresh bay leaf has fresher flavor and is surprisingly more intense than dried bay leaf, but it's still not as dramatic a difference as you can find with other herbs when it comes to fresh versus dried.

—DAVID WALTUCK, CHANTERELLE (NEW YORK CITY)

Inexperienced cooks will throw a handful of **bay leaves** into 40 gallons of veal stock. What happens next is they go to make a sauce and can't figure out what to do about the medicinal taste. It's the bay leaf! I'll explain they only need two or three at the most.

—CARRIE NAHABEDIAN, NAHA (CHICAGO)

BAY LEAF

Taste: sweet, bitter

Weight: light, tough-leaved

Volume: quiet–loud, depending on quantity used

Techniques: can stand up to cooking (e.g., simmer, stew)

allspice

apples

beans: dried, white

beef

braised dishes

caramel

cauliflower

celery leaf

cheese dishes

chestnuts

chicken

corn

cream and ice cream

custards

dates

desserts

duck

figs

fish

French cuisine

game

game birds

garlic

grains

juniper berries

lamb

lemon, juice

lentils

marinades

marjoram

meats

Mediterranean cuisine

mole sauce

Moroccan cuisine

onions

parsley

pâté

pears

pepper, black

polenta

pork

pot roast

potatoes

poultry

prunes

pumpkin

quail

rice (e.g., rice pudding) and risotto

rosemary

sage

salmon

sauces

sausage

savory

shellfish, shrimp

SOUPS

spinach

squash: summer, winter

STEWs

STOCKS AND BROTHS

strawberries

swordfish

thyme

tomatoes and tomato sauces

tuna

turkey

Turkish cuisine

vanilla

veal

venison

vinegar

BEANS—IN GENERAL

(See also specific beans below)

carrots
celery
garlic
lemon
marjoram
mint
onions
PARSLEY
rosemary
sage
salt
***SAVORY**
thyme
vinegar

BEANS, BLACK

Weight: medium-heavy

Volume: moderate

Techniques: simmer

allspice
apples
avocado
bacon
bay leaf
beer
bell peppers: green, red
butter
Caribbean cuisine
carrots
cayenne
celery
celery root
Central American cuisine
cheese: cheddar, dry feta, farmer's, Parmesan, queso fresco, smoked
CHILE PEPPERS: ancho, cachupa, chipotle, jalapeño

chili powder, ancho

chives

CILANTRO

cream

crème fraîche

CUMIN

duck

egg, esp. hard-boiled

epazote

fennel seeds

GARLIC

ginger

ham and ham hocks

lemon

lime, juice

maple syrup

Mexican cuisine, esp. in the South

OIL: canola, olive, peanut, safflower, vegetable

olive oil

ONIONS: red, white, yellow

orange: fruit, juice, zest

oregano, dried

PARSLEY, FLAT-LEAF

pepper: black, white

red pepper flakes

rice

rosemary

salsa

SALT, ESP. KOSHER

salt pork

sausage

SAVORY

scallions

shallots

sherry

shrimp

soups

SOUR CREAM

South American cuisine

Southwestern cuisine
spinach

STOCKS: BEEF, CHICKEN, VEGETABLE

sugar: brown, white

Tabasco sauce

thyme

tomatoes and tomato paste

vinegar: cider, red wine, sherry, white wine

wine: Madeira, sherry

yogurt

Dishes

Black Bean Soup Flavored with Grilled Wild Ramps, Avocado Leaf, and Cilantro, Studded with Sweet Roasted Chayote and Corn, Topped with Green Chile Salsa and Crispy Tortilla Strips

—Rick Bayless, Frontera Grill (Chicago)

Black Bean Tamales Filled with Homemade Goat Cheese in “Guisado” of Wild and Woodland Mushrooms, Organic Roasted Tomatoes, Green Chile, and Mint; Watercress Salad

—Rick Bayless, Frontera Grill (Chicago)

Black Beans Fried with Garlic, Onion, and Epazote, Topped with Mexican Fresh Cheese

—Rick Bayless, Frontera Grill (Chicago)

Flavor Affinities

black beans + cumin + green bell peppers + oregano

black beans + lemon + sherry

BEANS, BROAD

(See Beans, Fava)

BEANS, BUTTER

(See Beans, Lima)

BEANS, CANNELLINI

(See also Beans, White)

Weight: medium

Volume: quiet-moderate

Techniques: braise, puree, simmer

bacon

carrots

celery

clams

garlic

Italian cuisine

lamb

lemon

olive oil

onions, esp. Spanish

paprika, sweet

PARSLEY, FLAT-LEAF

pepper, black

saffron

salads

salt, kosher

sausages (e.g., chorizo)

SAVORY

soups

stock, chicken

tarragon

thyme

tomatoes, esp. plum

Dishes

Cannellini Bean Soup with Smoked Trout Croquette and Pumpkin Seed Oil

—Gabriel Kreuther, The Modern (New York City)



BEANS, FAVA

(aka Broad Beans or Horse Beans)

Season: spring–summer

Taste: bitter

Weight: light–medium

Volume: moderate

Techniques: boil, puree, simmer

Asian cuisine

bacon

basil butter, unsalted

CHEESE: dry feta, manchego, Parmesan, pecorino, ricotta, sheep's milk

chile peppers

chives, fresh

cilantro

corn

cream

cumin

curry

dill

duck

falafel (key ingredient)

fennel
fish (e.g., salmon)

garlic

gnocchi
greens, bitter
ham
herbs

Italian cuisine

lamb

leeks

lemon, juice

lentils

lobster

Mediterranean cuisine

Mexican cuisine

Middle Eastern cuisine

mint (e.g., Italian cuisine)

Moroccan cuisine

OIL, walnut

OLIVE OIL

onions, esp. spring

orange, zest

oregano

PARSLEY, FLAT-LEAF

pasta

peas

pepper, black

poultry (e.g., turkey)

prosciutto

rabbit

radishes

rice and risotto

rosemary

sage, fresh

salads

salt: kosher, sea

SAVORY (e.g., as in French cuisine)

shellfish (e.g., lobster)

shallots

soups
spinach
steak
stir-fries
stock, chicken
thyme
tomatoes
vinaigrette
vinegar, cider
walnuts
yogurt

Fava beans have a great flavor. Cooks in the past would blanch them, and the flavor would be left in the water. Today, what I like to do with favas and other vegetables is to put them in a pan with a little water, olive oil, or butter, and to cover them while they cook. That way, all the flavor stays in the vegetables. If I could cook for my customers the way I like to cook and eat at home, I would sweat some spring onions in a pan with butter or oil, covered, to keep in the flavor. Then I'd add the shucked fava beans and let them cook with a little water. At the last second, I'd toss in some chopped parsley or basil, and there's your sauce. This would be great under some fish. If you added some thyme and maybe a little lamb *jus*, it would also work with lamb.

—TRACI DES JARDINS, JARDINIERE (SAN FRANCISCO)

Fava beans have a very delicate flavor, I like them raw and tender by themselves—or combined with sheep's milk cheese and olive oil. However, I wouldn't use an olive oil that's too peppery or spicy, because it would overwhelm them.

—TONY LIU, AUGUST (NEW YORK CITY)

Flavor Affinities

fava beans + basil + spring onions
fava beans + garlic + olive oil + rosemary
fava beans + lamb + thyme
fava beans + olive oil + pecorino cheese + prosciutto
fava beans + olive oil + thyme
fava beans + sheep's milk cheese + olive oil

BEANS, FLAGEOLET

Weight: light–medium

Volume: quiet

Techniques: simmer

apples

arugula

basil

bay leaf

butter

carrots

cassoulet

celery

cheese, esp. manchego or pecorino

chicken

cream

fines herbes

fish (e.g., cod)

French cuisine, esp. Provençal

garlic

***LAMB**

lemon, juice

lime

marjoram

olive oil

onions, esp. red, sweet, yellow

orange

PARSLEY

pasta

pepper, black

pork, esp. roasted

poultry

salads

salt

SAVORY

shallots

soups

stocks: chicken, vegetable

tarragon

thyme

tomatoes and tomato sauces

vinegar, red wine

wine, dry white

Flavor Affinities

flageolet beans + garlic + thyme

Dishes

Pasta with Basil Pesto, Green Beans, and Potatoes

—Lidia Bastianich, Felidia (New York City)

BEANS, GARBANZO

(See Chickpeas)

BEANS, GREEN

Season: summer–autumn

Weight: light–medium

Volume: moderate

Techniques: boil, grill, sauté, steam, stir-fry

almonds

anchovies

bacon

BASIL

bay leaf

beans, shell

bell pepper, red

bread crumbs

butter, unsalted

capers

carrots

cayenne

CHEESE: Asiago, blue, feta, goat, **PARMESAN**

chervil

chickpeas

chile peppers

chives

cilantro

coconut

corn

cream

crème fraîche

cumin

curry leaves

dill

eggs, esp. hard-boiled

fennel

French cuisine

garlic

ginger, fresh

ham (e.g., Serrano)

lemon, juice

lemon balm

lime, juice

lovage

marjoram

Mediterranean cuisine

mint

mushrooms

mustard, Dijon

mustard seeds, black

nuts

OIL: peanut, sesame

OLIVE OIL

olives: black, niçoise

ONIONS, esp. green, pearl, or red

oregano

pancetta

paprika: smoked, sweet

PARSLEY

peanuts

pepper: black, white

Pernod

pork

potatoes

prosciutto

red pepper flakes

rosemary

sage

salt, kosher

SAVORY, SUMMER

shallots

shrimp

soy sauce

stock, chicken

sugar

tamari

tarragon

thyme

TOMATOES

vinaigrettes

VINEGAR: red wine, rice wine, sherry, tarragon, white wine

walnuts

yogurt

Flavor Affinities

green beans + anchovies + garlic + Parmesan cheese + walnuts

green beans + mustard + prosciutto + vinaigrette + walnuts

BEANS, KIDNEY

Taste: sweet-astringent

Function: cooling

Weight: medium

Volume: moderate

Techniques: boil, simmer

bacon

bay leaf

bell pepper, esp. red
cardamom
carrots
cayenne
chile peppers: dried red, fresh green
chili
chorizo
cinnamon
cloves
coriander
cumin
curry leaves
garam masala
garlic
ginger
Indian cuisine
Italian cuisine, esp. Tuscan
olive oil
onions, esp. red, sweet, white
PARSLEY
pepper, black
pork
potatoes
saffron
salt
sauerkraut
SAVORY
thyme
tomatoes
turmeric
wine, red

BEANS, LIMA

Season: summer
Taste: bitter
Weight: medium
Volume: moderate
Techniques: simmer, steam

bacon

bay leaf

butter

Central American cuisine

chile peppers

cilantro

cream

cumin

curries

dill

fish

garlic

greens, bitter

ham and ham hocks

herbs

leeks

lemon, juice

mint

New England cuisine (e.g., succotash)

olive oil

onions

oregano

PARSLEY, FLAT-LEAF

pepper, ground

poultry, esp. chicken

rosemary

sage

salt, kosher

savory

shallots

shellfish (e.g., shrimp)

sorrel

soul food cuisine

Southern cuisine (American)

spinach

steak

succotash (key ingredient)

thyme

tomatoes and tomato sauce

tuna
vinegar

BEANS, NAVY

Weight: medium
Volume: moderate
Techniques: simmer

bacon

baked beans
basil
bay leaf
cayenne
cheese: Parmesan, ricotta
chili powder
garlic

ketchup

molasses

mustard: Dijon, yellow
olive oil

ONIONS, ESP. YELLOW

PARSLEY

pasta
pepper
salads

salt, kosher

SAVORY

soups
sugar, brown
thyme
tomatoes
vinegar, red wine

BEANS, PINTO

Season: winter
Weight: medium

Volume: moderate

Techniques: refry, simmer

bacon

cheese: feta, queso fresco

chile peppers: chipotle, jalapeño, poblano, serrano

chili

cilantro

cumin

epazote

garlic

Mexican cuisine, esp. northern

mint

oil: safflower, vegetable

onions, white

oregano, dried

paprika

PARSLEY

pork

refried beans (key ingredient)

SALT

SAVORY

scallions

sour cream

Southwestern cuisine

tequila

tomatoes

Flavor Affinities

pinto beans + bacon + poblano chiles + tomatoes

BEANS, RED

Weight: medium

Volume: moderate

Techniques: simmer

bell peppers, esp. green

chile peppers

chili (key ingredient)

chorizo

garlic

Mexican cuisine

olive oil

onions

PARSLEY

pork

sausage

SAVORY

Southwestern cuisine

stews

Dishes

A Latin Cassoulet of White Beans, Sausages, Smoked Bacon, and Kale Braised Slowly in the Wood-Burning Oven, with Spicy Sauce and Rice

—Maricel Presilla, Cucharamama (Hoboken, New Jersey)

Soup: White Bean Puree with Rosemary Oil

—Judy Rodgers, Zuni Café (San Francisco)

BEANS, WHITE

(e.g., Cannellini, Navy)

Season: winter

Weight: medium

Volume: moderate

ale or beer, dark

ancho chili powder

apricots, dried

arugula

bacon

basil
bay leaf
bouquet garni
bourbon
broccoli rabe
butter, unsalted
carrots
celery
cheese: manchego, **Parmesan**, Pecorino Romano
chile peppers, dried
chives
cloves
cream
fennel
GARLIC
ginger, ground
Italian cuisine
ham
lamb
lemon, juice
maple syrup
mirepoix (carrots, celery, onions)
molasses
mushrooms, wild
mustard, dry
OIL, peanut
OLIVE OIL
ONIONS (e.g., cipollini, red, sweet)
PARSLEY, FLAT-LEAF
pasta
PEPPER: black, white
pork
prosciutto
red pepper flakes
rosemary
rum, dark
sage
SALT: KOSHER, SEA
SAVORY

shallots
soups
squash, winter
stocks: chicken, vegetable
sugar, brown

tarragon

thyme

tomatoes and tomato paste

truffles

vinegar: balsamic, cider, red wine

wine, dry white

Flavor Affinities

white beans + olive oil + pecorino cheese

white beans + olive oil + rosemary + balsamic vinegar

white beans + broccoli rabe + wild mushrooms

Dishes

“Brasato al Barolo” Braised Beef with Porcini Mushrooms

—Mario Batali, Babbo (New York City)

Mochomos: Crispy, Crunchy Shredded Montana Natural Beef with Crispy White Onion Strings, Guacamole, Spicy Chile Salsa, and Warm Tortillas for Making Soft Tacos

—Rick Bayless, Topolobampo (Chicago)

Balsamic-Caramel Beef Cubes with Sticky Rice and Toasted Coconut

—Monica Pope, T’afia (Houston)

Chateaubriand, Wild Mushrooms, Porcini-Flavored Diced Yukon Gold Potatoes, Syrah Sauce

—Michel Richard, Citronelle (Washington, DC)

Ground Beef with Cream and Fenugreek on Yucca

—Vikram Vij and Meelu Dhalwala, Vij’s (Vancouver)

BEEF—IN GENERAL

Taste: sweet

Function: heating

Weight: medium-heavy

Volume: moderate

Techniques: See also individual cuts of beef.

Tips: Clove adds richness to beef.

allspice

bacon

basil

bay leaf

beans, green

béarnaise sauce

beer

bouquet garni

brandy

butter, unsalted

capers

carrots

cayenne

celery

cheese, blue (e.g., Cabrales)

chiles, esp. dried and pasilla

chives

chocolate and cocoa powder

cilantro

cinnamon

cloves

coffee and espresso

cognac

coriander

corn

cornichons

cream

cumin

curry

fat: chicken, goose

foie gras
GARLIC
ginger
herbs
horseradish
hyssop
leeks
marrow, beef

mint
miso, red
mushrooms, esp. porcini or shiitake
mustard, Dijon
oil: canola, sesame
olive oil
ONIONS: green, red, Spanish, yellow

orange
oregano
parsley, flat-leaf

PEPPER: BLACK, white

potatoes
red pepper flakes

rosemary
saffron

salt: fleur de sel, kosher

shallots
soy sauce

spinach (accompaniment)
stocks: beef, chicken, veal
sugar (pinch)

tarragon
thyme
tomatoes and tomato paste

truffles
turnips
vinaigrette

vinegar: cider, red wine, rice wine, sherry, tarragon
wine: red (e.g., Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot), Madeira
zucchini

Flavor Affinities

beef + beer + onions
beef + garlic + ginger
beef + garlic + tomatoes
beef + mushrooms + potatoes
beef + mushrooms + red wine
beef + porcini mushrooms + red wine

I love blue cheese with **beef**. We make a dish with blue cheese sauce that has chicken stock, Dijon mustard, truffle juice, and fresh truffle. This is a sauce that has many layers of flavor. The mustard is barely there but adds much more flavor to the sauce than vinegar or lemon would. The sauce is served on a [beef] filet that has been poached in spiced red wine. The poaching liquid is made with Cabernet Sauvignon that has been reduced for 25 minutes to concentrate its flavor, juniper berries, pepper, star anise, fennel seeds, and cloves. The cooked tannin in the wine really brings up the meaty flavor of the beef.

—GABRIEL KREUTHER, THE MODERN (NEW YORK CITY)

All cuts of **beef** have a different flavor profile: There is the big beefy flavor of the strip steak, the luxurious tenderness of filet mignon, and the juicy, fatty mouthfeel of a great rib eye. Skirt steak is a juicy cut that is great served as an open-faced sandwich. Hanger steak has an offal quality to it and is different from all the others. Braised short ribs pick up all of the flavors of what they are cooked with, developing layers of deep, dark beef flavor after being cooked on the bone for hours.

—MICHAEL LOMONACO, PORTER HOUSE NEW YORK (NEW YORK CITY)

We make a wood-grilled 18-ounce “prime” rib eye of **beef** with a gratin of macaroni and goat cheese, glazed shallots, oxtail red wine sauce, and *fleur de sel*. This dish is meat on meat on meat! We have the steak, oxtail sauce, and shallots braised in veal stock. This dish has so much flavor. You have the richness and fattiness of the rib eye, and we grill it over a wood fire that takes it to a whole other place. Top it with a drizzle of olive oil, the *fleur de sel*, cracked pepper, and then add rich oxtail sauce to it. People go crazy for it.

—CARRIE NAHABEDIAN, NAHA (CHICAGO)

You can braise **brisket** for hours, and it still tastes like brisket, making it ideal to prepare for large parties. Nothing is better than what the Texans do with brisket, and that is barbecue. I also noticed that Texans get the fattiest brisket I have ever seen, so the fat just melts away and the meat is self-basting. My favorite barbecued brisket is

from Mueller's outside of Austin. He cooks it about twenty hours and then wraps it in brown butcher paper to let it rest—which I think is the key to his barbecue.

—MICHAEL LOMONACO, PORTER HOUSE NEW YORK (NEW YORK CITY)

BEEF—BRISKET

Techniques: barbecue, braise, corn, roast, simmer, smoke

barbecue rub

barbecue sauce

bay leaf

beer

cabbage, with corned beef brisket

chili powder

cinnamon

cumin

fennel seeds

garlic

horseradish

maple syrup

mirepoix

mustard

olive oil

onions

pasilla peppers

pepper, black

potatoes

rosemary

salt

soups

star anise

stews

stock, beef

sugar, brown

thyme

tomatoes and tomato paste

vinegar: sherry, wine

wine, red

Dishes

Kobe Beef, Sautéed Foie Gras, Shaved Black Truffle, Madeira Sauce on an Onion Bun

—Hubert Keller, Burger Bar (Las Vegas)

Kobe Beef Carpaccio, Shaved Parmesan, Arugula, and Horseradish Sauce

—Frank Stitt, Highlands Bar and Grill (Birmingham, Alabama)

BEEF—CHEEKS

Techniques: braise

apples
bay leaf
butter, unsalted
carrots
celery
celery root
chives
cinnamon
cloves
garlic
horseradish
leeks
mustard
oil, peanut
onions
pasta (e.g., gnocchi, ravioli)
pepper, black
potatoes, esp. mashed and/or new
risotto
rosemary
salt, kosher
stock, chicken
tarragon

thyme, fresh
tomatoes
vegetables, root
vinegar, balsamic
wine, red (e.g., Burgundy)

BEEF—KOBE

arugula
cheese, Parmesan
chives
garlic
ginger
horseradish
Japanese cuisine
Madeira
mushrooms
oil, sesame
olive oil
onions
pepper, black
salt, sea
sesame seeds
soy sauce
truffles, black
yuzu juice

BEEF—LOIN

(aka shell, sirloin, tenderloin)
Techniques: pan roast, roast

butter, unsalted
five-spice powder
ginger
oil, peanut
paprika
pepper: black, white

rosemary, fresh
salt: kosher, sea
sauces
soy sauce
thyme, fresh
wasabi

BEEF—OXTAILS

Techniques: braise, stew

allspice
anise
basil
bay leaf
beans, esp. white
beer
bell peppers
cheese: Asiago, pecorino
garlic
ginger
gnocchi
leeks
Madeira
mushrooms
mustard
olive oil
ONIONS
orange
parsley, flat-leaf
parsnips
pasta (e.g., ravioli, tortellini)
pepper, black
potatoes, esp. mashed risotto
salt
scallops
shallots
soups

stews

stocks: beef, chicken

thyme

tomatoes and tomato sauce

WINE, RED

wine, white

Dishes

Cream of Sweet Onion, Braised Beef Oxtail, Aged Parmesan Tuile

—Jean Joho, Everest (Chicago)

Flavor Affinities

oxtails + parsnips + red wine

oxtails + red wine + thyme + tomatoes

BEEF—RIBS

Techniques: barbecue, braise, (dry) roast

barbecue sauce

spice rub

BEEF—ROAST

Techniques: roast

brandy

chocolate

coffee

garlic

horseradish

mushrooms, wild

rosemary

sauces: béarnaise, red wine (esp. Madeira or port)

soy sauce
thyme
wine, red

BEEF—ROUND

Techniques: grill, sauté, stir-fry

bell peppers: red, green
chili powder
cilantro
cumin
garlic
lime, juice
olive oil
onions, red
parsley
radishes
Tabasco sauce

BEEF—SHANK

Techniques: braise

garlic
ginger
lemon
onions, green
paprika
pepper, black
sesame oil
soy sauce
sugar

BEEF—SHORT LOIN

This is the T-bone steak. When it is cut double cut [that is, twice as thick], that is when it is a porterhouse. The story goes that it was first served in Lower Manhattan in 1815

at a porter house. The owner ran out of his usual cut of meat, and when a customer asked for something to go with his porter [beer], the owner cut him this huge piece of meat. It became known as a “porterhouse” steak. The porterhouse steak is part filet mignon and part strip steak. It is the perfect grilling steak. You get the tenderness of the filet, and the big beefy chewiness of the strip steak.

—MICHAEL LOMONACO, PORTER HOUSE NEW YORK (NEW YORK CITY)

Vikram Vij of Vancouver's Vij's on Beef Short Ribs in Cinnamon

For braising, I prefer to use cinnamon bark. Cinnamon stick is pretty, but it is steamed and rolled and a little too manipulated. In this dish, cinnamon bark is big and intense and not needed for presentation. At the end of the braise, you pull it out and throw it away. This dish is cooked for four hours and the cinnamon flavor does not cook out. In the end, the cinnamon imparts a delicate, sweet, aromatic flavor. It adds contrast to the chile flavor from the curry. If this dish ever has too much cinnamon flavor, you can counterbalance it with rice or yogurt that has a little salt and pepper in it.

—VIKRAM VIJ, VIJ'S (VANCOUVER)

BEEF—SHORT RIBS

Techniques: barbecue, braise, stew

bacon

basil

bay leaf

beer or ale

butter, unsalted

carrots

celery: stalk, leaves

celery root

chervil

chile peppers, esp. hot cherry

chives

cilantro

cinnamon

coriander

garam masala (Indian cuisine)

GARLIC

ginger

gremolata

grits

horseradish

leeks

lemon: juice, zest

lime

mirepoix

mushrooms: porcini, wild

mustard: Dijon, Meaux

molasses

OIL: canola, corn, grapeseed, hazelnut, peanut, sesame, vegetable, walnut
olive oil

ONIONS, esp. green, pearl, white, or yellow

orange: juice, zest

oregano

parsley, flat-leaf

parsnips

peas

PEPPER: black, Szechuan, white

potatoes, esp. mashed

prosciutto

rosemary

sage

salt, kosher

savory

shallots

sherry, dry

soy sauce

star anise

STOCK: BEEF, CHICKEN, VEAL

sugar: brown, white (pinch)

tamarind

tarragon

THYME, FRESH

tomatoes, tomato paste, and tomato sauce

turnips (accompaniment)

vinegar: balsamic, sherry

WINE, DRY RED (e.g., Barolo, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Zinfandel)

wine, white, esp. fruity

Worcestershire sauce



Dishes

Short Ribs with Braised Boston Lettuce, Peppered Shallot Confit

—Daniel Boulud, Daniel (New York City)

Braised Short Ribs with Parsnip Puree, Porcini Mushrooms, and Barolo

—Scott Bryan, Veritas (New York City)

Slow-Roasted Short Ribs with Stone-Ground Grits

—Cesare Casella, Maremma (New York City)

Garlic Braised Short Ribs with Parsnip Puree, Baby Round Carrots in Carrot Butter, Haricots Verts, and Cabernet Sauce

—Bob Kinkead, Colvin Run (Vienna, Virginia)

Braised Short Ribs of Beef with Soft Grits and Meaux Mustard Sauce

—Gray Kunz, Café Gray (New York City)

Braised Short Ribs of Beef, Wild Boar Bacon, and Cauliflower Puree with Roasted Winter Root Vegetables and Cipollini Onions, Smoked “Manuka” Sea Salt, and Herb Salad

—Carrie Nahabedian, Naha (Chicago)

Short Ribs Braised and Then Caramelized on the Grill with Ginger and Soy

—Kaz Okochi, Kaz Sushi Bistro (Washington, DC)

Braised Short Ribs in Red Wine Sauce, Brown Loaf Sugar and Mustard Crust, Stir-Fried Quinoa and Swiss Chard

—Maricel Presilla, Cucharamama (Hoboken, New Jersey)

Beef Short Ribs in Cinnamon and Red Wine Curry

—Vikram Vij and Meeru Dhalwala, Vij's (Vancouver)

Short ribs are a luxurious cut of meat, because they are braised for three to three and a half hours. We don't braise our ribs in red wine, but in Yuengling Porter, which has ethereal chocolate notes in the aroma. In the sauce with the beer is mirepoix, a sachet of herbs, lots of peppercorns, and chiles. I went to a charity event where they served short ribs for six hundred guests, and one reason it worked is because it is a cut that allows for a great margin of error. You cook it until it is well done and falling-off-the-bone tender. Falling-offthe-bone tender is one of the appeals of a braised dish. It is sensual. Get yourself a glass of good spicy Syrah with that short rib dish and think great thoughts!

—MICHAEL LOMONACO, PORTER HOUSE NEW YORK (NEW YORK CITY)

Flavor Affinities

short ribs + bay leaf + beer + mushrooms + mustard

short ribs + beer + garlic + horseradish + onions + potatoes + tomatoes

short ribs + carrots + mushrooms + parsnips

short ribs + celery root + horseradish

short ribs + cinnamon + tomatoes + red wine

short ribs + horseradish + lemon + parsley

short ribs + onions + potatoes + red wine

short ribs + potatoes + root vegetables

BEEF—STEAK: IN GENERAL

Techniques: broil, grill, sauté

aligot (French garlic-cheesy pureed potatoes)

allspice

arugula

basil

bay leaf

béarnaise sauce

brandy

butter, unsalted

capers

cayenne

celery root

chard

cheese, Parmesan

chile peppers

chives

cilantro

cloves

cognac

coriander

cream

cumin

five-spice powder

fish sauce, Thai

GARLIC

ginger, fresh

herbs, esp. *herbes de Provence*

honey

horseradish

juniper berries

lemon: juice, zest

lemongrass

lime, juice

marrow

mushrooms (e.g., chanterelles, cremini, shiitake)

mustard, Dijon

oil: canola, grapeseed, sesame, vegetable
olive oil
onions: red, white
parsley, flat-leaf
PEPPER: black, green, pink, Szechuan, white
port
potatoes, French fries
red pepper flakes
rice
rosemary
salt, kosher
scallions
shallots
sherry, dry
soy sauce
stocks: beef, veal
sugar (pinch)
tamarind
tarragon
thyme
vinegar: balsamic, champagne, Chinese black, cider, red wine, rice wine, sherry, white wine
watercress
WINE, DRY RED (e.g., Beaujolais, Chianti)

I like to keep it simple and serve **steak au poivre** with a peppercorn crust and deglazed with bourbon or even good ole American rye, which has more flavor. I also like steak with a margarita sauce, which is a good, zingy sauce made with tequila, orange, and lemon zest, and finished with roasted chile peppers.

—MICHAEL LOMONACO, PORTER HOUSE NEW YORK (NEW YORK CITY)

Flavor Affinities

steak + arugula + Parmesan cheese + balsamic vinegar
steak + bacon + potatoes + red wine
steak + Chianti + lemon + salt
steak + cremini mushrooms + watercress
steak + horseradish + mustard + potatoes
steak + shallots + red wine

BEEF—STEAK: CHUCK

Techniques: braise, grill, stew

This cut is really beefy, flavorful, and fatty, but tough. **Chuck steak** can be grilled, but it also works well for braising. A chuck also makes a good cut for stew because it has nice fat. When I was growing up, a “steak Episole” was chuck steak that had good fat, was seared well, and then cooked slowly with tomatoes, onions, and fresh oregano. You may not see chuck steak a lot on menus, but you see it a lot in burgers. In fact, this is my favorite meat for a burger. I like my mix to be 75 to 80 percent lean and 20 to 25 percent fat.

—MICHAEL LOMONACO, PORTER HOUSE NEW YORK (NEW YORK CITY)

BEEF—STEAK: FILET MIGNON

(aka Beef Tenderloin)

Techniques: broil, grill, sauté

bacon

butter, unsalted

cognac

cream

foie gras

garlic

leeks

mushrooms, esp. morels, porcini

oil, peanut

olive oil

onions

pepper: black, green

port

potatoes

rosemary

salt

shallots

sherry

stocks: beef, mushroom, veal

thyme

vinegar, balsamic

wine: dry red, Madeira

Dishes

Seared Rib Eye, Caramelized Yukon Gold Potatoes, and Chanterelles

—Daniel Boulud, Daniel (New York City)

Strip Loin Poached in Butter and Roasted with Sea Salt, Short Ribs Stuffed in Cremini Mushrooms with Potato Boulangère, Spinach Puree, and Foie Gras Hollandaise

—Jeffrey Buben, Vidalia (Washington, DC)

Dry-Aged New York Steak with Slow-Cooked Broccoli, Garlic, and Lemon, Fingerling Potatoes, Niçoise Olive Jus

—Traci Des Jardins, Jardinière (San Francisco)

Skirt Steak Marinated in Seville Oranges and Lime Juice

—Maricel Presilla, Zafra (Hoboken, New Jersey)

Strawberry Mountain New York Strip, Grilled Lettuce, Olive Oil–Poached Tomato, and Lemon Cream

—Cory Schreiber, Wildwood (Portland, Oregon)

Cast Iron–Seared Porcini-Crusted New York Sirloin Steak, Roasted Garlic Mash Potatoes, Black Trumpet Ragout, Braised Kale, Rum au Poivre

—Allen Susser, Chef Allen's (Aventura, Florida)

BEEF—STEAK: FLANK

Techniques: broil, grill, sauté, stir-fry

chile peppers, esp. chipotle or jalapeño

cilantro

cumin

garlic

hoisin sauce

honey
lime, juice
molasses
mustard, brown
oil: peanut, sesame
olive oil
oregano
salsa, esp. tomato
salt
soy sauce
sugar
thyme
vinegar, balsamic

Filet mignon gets no respect from many chefs because it doesn't have much beef flavor, but it is still the most popular cut in restaurants. I like to sear it and pan roast it with a little olive oil or an olive oil and butter combination. It is not a well-used muscle on the inside of the short loin, so filet is always tender. On the other side of the bone from the more worked side of the strip steak is the tail end of the filet. Béarnaise sauce [i.e., vinegar, shallots, egg yolks, butter, etc.] is a classic accompaniment to filet mignon.

—MICHAEL LOMONACO, PORTER HOUSE NEW YORK (NEW YORK CITY)

Dishes

Grilled Filet Mignon, Crisp Potatoes, Spinach, and Roasted Garlic Custard

—Alfred Portale, Gotham Bar and Grill (New York City)

Tournedos of Beef Tenderloin Worthy of a Splurge: Twin Filets of Beef Tenderloin Set on Brioche Toast, Slathered with Foie Gras Butter, and Served with Truffle Sauce, Port Braised Cipollini Onions, Fingerling Potatoes, Spring Mushrooms, and Leek Puree

—Janos Wilder, Janos (Tucson)

Dishes

Flank Steak with Marinated Mushrooms, Artichokes, Tomatoes, Summer Squash, Whipple Farm Greens, Yellow Taxi Tomato Vinaigrette, and Basil-Garlic Aioli

—Jeffrey Buben, Vidalia (Washington, DC)

Green Peppercorn Marinated Flank Steak with Balsamic Roasted Onions, Tomatoes, and Thai Barbecue Sauce

—Charlie Trotter, Trotter's to Go (Chicago)

Miso-marinated grilled **steak** will help to release the flavors of everything else you pair with it. Use red miso alone, or in combination with garlic, ginger, mirin [sweet rice wine], sesame oil, soy sauce, and/or sugar.

—HIRO SONE, TERRA (ST. HELENA, CALIFORNIA)

BEEF—STEAK: HANGER

Techniques: broil, grill, sauté

bell peppers
brandy
celery root
ginger
mushrooms
mustard
onions
parsnips
pepper, black
salsa verde
scallions
soy sauce
thyme
wine, red

Dishes

Hanger Steak Pizzaiola with Local Peppers, Salsa Verde, Natural Juices

—Andrew Carmellini, A Voce (New York City)

BEEF—STEAK: RIB EYE

Techniques: broil, grill, sauté, stir-fry

garlic

mushrooms, porcini (dried)

olive oil

oregano

pepper, black

red pepper flakes

rosemary

vinegar: balsamic, red wine

BEEF—STEAK: SKIRT

Techniques: broil, grill, sauté

allspice

anchovies

butter

capers

chile peppers, ancho

cinnamon

cumin

endive, Belgian

garlic

lime: juice, zest

mustard

oil, canola

olive oil

onions, red

oregano

paprika

parsley, flat-leaf

red pepper flakes

rosemary

salt: kosher, sea

scallions
soy sauce
thyme
vinegar, balsamic

BEEF—STEAK TARTARE

We make **tartare** from filet mignon and hand-chop it to order, which I like so that I don't feel like I'm just eating ground beef. I season our tartare with mustard, capers, and anchovies, which I am not shy about. You want the texture of the beef to be a counterpoint.

—MICHAEL LOMONACO, PORTER HOUSE NEW YORK (NEW YORK CITY)

Skirt steak comes in a long strip and looks like a belt—it's about two feet long and a couple of inches wide. This is an incredibly flavorful cut and delicious. It is very reasonably priced as well. It is very popular in the Latin community, especially with Argentinians. You often see it flattened with a mallet to tenderize it [by breaking the meat fibers] and used in fajitas. This, along with the hanger steak, is the beefiest flavored cut of beef. We serve it in a chimichurri sauce, which is a classic Argentinian sauce made of chopped garlic, onion, and parsley, plus white [we use champagne] vinegar, red pepper flakes, and a little olive oil. It grills really well.

—MICHAEL LOMONACO, PORTER HOUSE NEW YORK (NEW YORK CITY)

Michael Lomonaco of Porter House New York on Cooking Steak

Aging: Aging is important because it tenderizes the steak. The aging process breaks down the fibers and dehydrates the steak, concentrating its flavor. A dryaged steak has a more minerally and sharp edge to it, versus fresh meat that tastes sweeter. It is critical to the flavor and adds to the cost because it takes four weeks of aging to achieve it.

Seasoning: All our steaks are seasoned with coarse kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper just prior to cooking, which draws out the flavor while they cook. A squeeze of lemon makes a good Tuscan steak taste even better. If you are in Italy and eating “bistecca Fiorentina,” what you are having is an Italian porterhouse. The steak is grilled over dried grape vines and served with a drizzle of green olive oil from the first pressing of the new harvest and lemons on the side.

Cooking: A steak should be cooked rare to medium rare. “Rare” is a little cool inside and hot on the exterior. “Medium rare” is just a shade past, and only warm in the middle. Cooking a steak beyond that point, it starts to toughen up and the fat oozes out, making it increasingly dry and tough.

Saucing: Part of looking forward is looking back. Sauces provide the connection to historical French and Italian cooking. In the gastronomic world, the saucier was the top cook in the kitchen. It is all about building layer upon layer of complexity in a sauce. It is most often sweet and sour, to cut through the richness of the fat of the steak. Red wine sauce has the acidity to cut richness,

with sweetness from caramelized shallots, and it enhances the beef flavor. We also make a homemade barbecue sauce as our steak sauce, which is sweet from light brown sugar and molasses, tart from red wine vinegar, and smoky from chipotle peppers.

Hanger steak is known as an *onglet* in French and is found on bistro menus. It is also a great value, which is why you see it on menus in smaller restaurants. A hanger steak is incredibly flavorful. There is only one per carcass, and it comes from the area close to the kidneys, so it has almost an offal flavor to the beef. It has become popular because it is different and not a typical-tasting steak. I like a hanger steak grilled and served rare to medium rare. Slicing is also important, because you have to cut it on the bias so that it is tender. I like a hanger steak served with a traditional sauce, such as a caramelized shallot and red wine sauce or a bourbon peppercorn sauce. It is important to caramelize the shallots so they get sweet and offset the gaminess of the steak. I use bourbon instead of cognac because it has more punch to it, and I'll use four different peppercorns—white, black, pink, and green—with the last two modulating the flavor. Green peppercorns have the sharpness to cut through the richness.

—MICHAEL LOMONACO, PORTER HOUSE NEW YORK (NEW YORK CITY)

Rib steak is the most popular cut next to filet mignon. The cut comes from the rib roast, where one end meets the chuck at the fattier end and the other meets the short loin at the leaner end. The rib steak that meets the chuck end is the most popular and can even have a big knot of fat in it. This is one of my favorite steaks. A big, fatty, juicy rib steak can't be beat on the grill. I cook these bone-on because it gives more beef flavor. We do a Brandt Ranch cut that comes from California just north of Mexico. That area has lots of flavor influences, so I choose to do a chili rub on the steak. The cut is Holstein, which has a sweeter edge to its meat. We grill it so that fat melts away and bastes it as it cooks. At the end, we brush it with a blend of ancho chili, light brown sugar, toasted ground cumin seeds, chipotle chile, and a pinch of cayenne. Then we char it one more time, so that is like reseasoning the meat.

—MICHAEL LOMONACO, PORTER HOUSE NEW YORK (NEW YORK CITY)

The **sirloin** is a good, beefy-flavored high-quality cut. It is a cut toward the back of the animal that gets more work, so it is a little chewy, but it is a good-quality steak for barbecuing. If this cut is quickly cooked over high heat on a grill, not overcooked, and sliced correctly on the bias, you are going to get the most out of it.

—MICHAEL LOMONACO, PORTER HOUSE NEW YORK (NEW YORK CITY)

When you see rare roast beef, it is **top round**. It is a little tough, and that is why you see roast beef always sliced so thin. Nothing beats top round for a good old-fashioned

roast beef sandwich because it doesn't have any gristle or fat—just good, beefy flavor.

—MICHAEL LOMONACO, PORTER HOUSE NEW YORK (NEW YORK CITY)

When I was in Ireland, I swilled Guinness [stout] and ate bangers and mash, which was essentially sausage with caramelized onions on top. It was so good that when I came back to the U.S., I started experimenting with Guinness. That's how I came up with a dish of braised short ribs that had been marinated in Guinness. The problem you often have cooking with beer is that sometimes the dish gets bitter. So, to counteract that naturally without using sugar, I choose to use onions. I marinate the ribs in the beer, then braise them, and finish the dish with a puree of roasted onions for balance.

—ANDREW CARMELLINI, A VOCE (NEW YORK CITY)

BEER

Taste: varies, from bitter to sweet

Weight: medium-heavy

Volume: quiet-loud

beef

cheese, cheddar ham marinades meats

onions

pork

sauces sauerkraut sausages shrimp

stews

BEETS

Season: year-round

Taste: sweet

Function: heating

Weight: medium

Volume: moderate

Techniques: bake, boil, carpaccio, chips, roast, soup, steam

apples

arugula

avocado

basil

beans, green

beef

beet greens

BUTTER, UNSALTED

cabbage

capers

caraway seeds

carrots

caviar

celery

CHEESE: blue, cambozola, cheddar, **GOAT, PARMESAN, ROQUEFORT, SALTY chervil**

chicory

chiles

chives

cilantro

citrus

coriander

cream

crème fraîche

cumin

curry

dill

eggs, hard-boiled

endive

escarole

fennel

fennel seeds

fish

French cuisine

frisée

garlic

ginger

herbs

honey

herring

horseradish

leeks

LEMON: juice, zest

lemon balm

lemon thyme

lemon verbena

lime

maple syrup

milk

mint

mushrooms (e.g., shiitake)

MUSTARD, DIJON

mustard oil

nutmeg

oil: canola, peanut, vegetable, **walnut**

OLIVE OIL

olives, esp. niçoise

onions: red, white, yellow **ORANGE: JUICE, ZEST**

parsley, flat-leaf

pasta

pears

PEPPER: BLACK, WHITE pistachios

potatoes

radishes

rosemary

Russian cuisine

salads, esp. green

SALT: kosher, sea

scallions

SHALLOTS

sherry

soups, esp. borscht

sour cream

spinach

stocks: chicken, veal, vegetable

sugar: brown, white

TARRAGON

thyme

vinaigrette, mustard

VINEGAR: balsamic, champagne, cider, raspberry, red wine, sherry, tarragon, white

wine

vodka

WALNUTS AND WALNUT OIL

wine, white
yogurt

Flavor Affinities

beets + chives + orange + tarragon
beets + citrus + goat cheese + olive oil + shallots
beets + crème fraîche + orange + tarragon
beets + dill + sour cream
beets + endive + goat cheese + pistachios
beets + endive + orange + walnuts
beets + goat cheese + walnuts
beets + Gorgonzola cheese + hazelnuts + vinegar
beets + honey + tarragon
beets + mint + yogurt
beets + olive oil + Parmesan cheese + balsamic vinegar
beets + orange + walnuts
beets + potatoes + balsamic vinegar
beets + shallots + vinegar + walnuts

Beets are especially delicious when accented by a salty cheese, whether queso fresco or ricotta salata.

—SHARON HAGE, YORK STREET (DALLAS)

People love fresh **beets**. Now I won't lay claim to inventing beet salad with Gorgonzola and hazelnuts, but how our version is different from many others is that we marinate the beets. Overnight, we'll marinate peeled beets in Barolo vinegar, shallots, olive oil, salt, and pepper. Using Russian and Polish cooking principles, marinating the beets ensures that the vinegar is able to penetrate them so that they are sure to be tangy.

—ANDREW CARMELLINI, A VOCE (NEW YORK CITY)

I wanted to take **beets** that are associated with winter and make them into something summery, so I used them for a ceviche. We roasted and pureed them with lime and froze them into a sorbet. We served the beet sorbet flat in a bowl so it looked like soup. From there, we layered thinly sliced raw bay scallops with segments of lime, cilantro, and red onion oil. The dish is very fresh tasting. The other key to this dish was that we had all the flavors of ceviche but did not marinate the scallops in the acid, which makes them rubbery. The scallops treated this way are more delicate, like sushi.

—KATSUYA FUKUSHIMA, MINIBAR (WASHINGTON, DC)



Dishes

Roasted Beet Tartare with Chianti Vinegar and Ricotta Salata

—Mario Batali, Babbo (New York City)

Roasted Beet Salad: Cabrales Blue Cheese, Endive, and Walnuts

—Daniel Boulud/Bertrand Chemel, Café Boulud (New York City)

Roasted Beet Salad with Hazelnut, Gorgonzola, Barolo Vinegar

—Andrew Carmellini, A Voce (New York City)

Squab Borscht with Root Vegetable Pierogi

—Sandy D'Amato, Sanford (Milwaukee)

Roasted Beet Salad with a Warm Farm Egg, Caciocavallo Cheese, and Pickled Spring Onions

—Traci Des Jardins, Jardinière (San Francisco)

Roasted Beet Salad with Shaved Fennel and Chèvre

—Leslie Mackie, Macrina Bakery & Café (Seattle)

Salad of Organic Beets and Gala Apples, “Beauty Heart” Radishes and Upland Cress, Cracked Hazelnuts, Great Hill Blue Cheese, and Quince “Must” Syrup

—Carrie Nahabedian, Naha (Chicago)

Tartare of Yellow Beets with Sturgeon Caviar, and Dashi

—Kaz Okochi, Kaz Sushi Bistro (Washington, DC)

Beets, Frisée, Cambazola, Candied Walnuts, Orange Sauce

—Monica Pope, T'afia (Houston)

Beet, Apple, and Goat Cheese Tartlet with a Hazelnut-Champagne Dressing

—Thierry Rautureau, Rover's (Seattle)

We serve a salad that showcases the classic combination of **beets**, walnuts, and orange. We boil our beets, then slice them thinly on the plate. We add frisée to the salad and, since it is bitter, we mix in Cambozola cheese and candied walnuts. We dress the salad with a sherry-walnut-tarragon vinaigrette, and a mandarin orange sauce. People are surprised when they eat the dish—first, because they find out they like beets, and second, because the frisée is not bitter after being softened by the sweet touches.

—MONICA POPE, T'AFIA (HOUSTON)

I like to intensify the flavor of **beets** by serving them prepared in different ways on the same dish, such as accenting roasted beets with crunchy beet chips and a spiced beet coulis. And I love anything aniseflavored with beets, whether fennel or anise itself.

—BRAD THOMPSON, MARY ELAINE'S AT THE PHOENICIAN(SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA)

The sweetness of red **bell peppers** and the acidity of sherry vinegar make for a perfect combination.

—JOSÉ ANDRÉS, CAFÉ ATLÁNTICO (WASHINGTON, DC)

A lot of people find the skin a turnoff on green **bell peppers**, so I'll peel them and cook them, which releases their juice. They're great cooked down with chorizo, garlic, and onions, which you can serve with shrimp over rice.

—TONY LIU, AUGUST (NEW YORK CITY)

I'll cook red **bell peppers** with onion and garlic on the stove over a low heat for six hours or more, so that they become caramelized and intense. The bell peppers eventually turn into a concentrated red pepper paste. If you have a dish where something is missing, add

a little of this and it will fix it! It is superb. I add it to all sorts of things—even pasta.

—MICHEL RICHARD, CITRONELLE (WASHINGTON, DC)

Green **bell peppers** are used for the equivalent of Spanish mirepoix. In Spain you don't see much celery—but you'll see green pepper, onion, garlic, and leeks.

—ALEXANDRA RAJ, TÍA POL (NEW YORK CITY)

BELGIAN CUISINE

almonds

beef

beer

Brussels sprouts

charcuterie

chocolate

endive, Belgian

game

meats

mussels, steamed

mustard

POTATOES: FRIED, mashed

shallots
soups
stews
vinegar
waffles

Flavor Affinities

beef + bay leaf + beer + thyme + vinegar
endive + béchamel sauce + nutmeg
endive + goat cheese + herbs
mussels + butter + garlic + parsley + shallots

BELL PEPPERS

Season: summer–autumn

Taste: bitter to sweet, from unripe (green) to ripe (yellow to red)

Weight: light–medium

Volume: moderate–loud

Techniques: bake, broil, grill, roast, sauté, steam, stew, stir-fry, stuff

anchovies
anise
arugula
bacon
BASIL
bay leaf
beef
bell peppers
butter
capers, esp. with roasted peppers
cardamom
carrots
cayenne

CHEESE, esp. feta, Fontina, **goat**, mozzarella, Parmesan

chile peppers (e.g., fresh green or poblano)

chives

cilantro

coriander

cream
cumin
curry
eggplant

fennel
fennel seeds
French cuisine
game
game birds

GARLIC

ginger, fresh
goulash
hazelnuts
honey
Indian cuisine
Italian cuisine
lamb

lemon, juice

lemongrass
lime, juice
lovage
marjoram
Mexican cuisine
mint
mirepoix
mushrooms (e.g., shiitake)
mustard

OIL, CANOLA

OLIVE OIL

olives (e.g., green) **ONIONS, ESP. RED OR YELLOW** oregano paprika, smoked parsley, flat-leaf pasta
peas

pepper, black
peppers, piquillo

pine nuts
pizza
polenta
pork
potatoes (e.g., red)

quail
red pepper flakes
rice
rosemary
saffron
salads
salt: kosher, sea
sausages (e.g., chorizo, Italian)
savory
scallions
sea bass
sesame oil
shallots
squash, esp. summer
stews
stir-fried dishes
stocks: chicken, vegetable
sugar (pinch)
swordfish
Tabasco sauce
THYME
TOMATOES
tuna
VINEGAR: balsamic, champagne, cider, red wine, sherry, white wine
watercress
wine: dry white, sweet sherry
zucchini

Flavor Affinities

bell peppers + basil + currants + garlic + pine nuts + sherry vinegar
bell peppers + garlic + olive oil + onion + thyme + zucchini

Dishes

Berry Crème Fraîche Poppy Seed Cake

—Emily Luchetti, pastry chef, Farallon (San Francisco)

**Fresh Fruit: Black Garnet Cherries, Strawberries, Pistachios, Marshall Farms Honey,
Straus Organic Whole Milk Yogurt**

—Emily Luchetti, pastry chef, Farallon (San Francisco)

Red Berry–White Chocolate Trifles

—Emily Luchetti, pastry chef, Farallon (San Francisco)

BERRIES—IN GENERAL

(See also Raspberries, Strawberries, etc.)

Season: spring–summer

Weight: light

Volume: quiet–moderate

Techniques: poach, raw

cheese, ricotta

chocolate: dark, milk, white

cream

crème de cassis

crème de menthe

crème fraîche

elderflower syrup

game

honey, wildflower

lemon: juice, zest

lime, juice

mint

pepper, black

poppy seeds

salads, fruit

sour cream

sugar: brown, white

yogurt

BITTER DISHES

(e.g., greens, barbecue food)

Tips: Salt suppresses bitterness.

BITTERNESS

Taste: bitter

Function: cooling; stimulates appetite; promotes other tastes

Tips: Bitterness relieves thirst.

When a bitter component is added to a dish, it creates a sense of lightness.

The hotter the food or drink, the less the perception of bitterness.

arugula

baking powder

baking soda

beans, lima

beer, esp. hoppy (e.g., bitter ales)

bell peppers, green

bitters

broccoli rabe

Brussels sprouts

cabbage, green

caffeine (e.g., as in coffee, tea)

chard (e.g., Swiss chard)

chicory

chocolate, dark

cocoa

coffee

cranberries

eggplant

endive

escarole

fenugreek

frisée

grapefruit (bitter-sour)

greens: bitter, dark leafy (e.g., beet, dandelion, mustard, turnip)

herbs, many

horseradish

kale

lettuce, romaine

So many Western cultures don't incorporate **bitterness** into their food. In India and Asia, it is a component of a balanced dish. If you give most of America rice with lime pickle, they will not be thrilled. It will be too sour, bitter, and spicy. To introduce the bitter flavor of lime pickle, we will puree it with yogurt and use it for a marinade for whole prawns. That way, it isn't overwhelming.

—BRAD FARMERIE, PUBLIC (NEW YORK CITY)

I used to love dishes that were rich on rich—but the older I get, the more I look forward to that **bitterness**, the cleansing bite that makes you want to go back for your next forkful of a dish. Almost every dish in our kitchen is finished with some kind of bitter leaf to serve as a balancing component. That's why I serve cress or watercress with a steak and potato dish, and arugula with our seared bluefin tuna on braised veal cheeks, and a bed of bitter greens like watercress, frisée, arugula, and shaved endive as the base for our foie gras dish—to cut the richness.

—SHARON HAGE, YORK STREET (DALLAS)

liver, calf's

melon, bitter

olives (bitter-salty) radicchio

rhubarb

spices, many

spinach

tea

tonic water

turmeric

walnuts, esp. black watercress

wine, red, esp. tannic zest: lemon, orange, etc. zucchini

BLACKBERRIES

Season: summer

Taste: sour

Weight: light–medium

Volume: moderate

Techniques: cooked, raw

almonds

apples

apricots

bananas

blueberries

brandy

butter, unsalted

buttermilk

caramel

cheese, goat

chocolate: dark, white

cinnamon

cloves

cobblers

Cointreau

cornmeal

CREAM AND ICE CREAM

cream cheese

crème de cassis

crème fraîche

custard

ginger

Grand Marnier

hazelnuts

honey

Kirsch

LEMON, JUICE

lime: juice, zest

liqueurs, berry

mango
mascarpone
melons
mint
nectarines
oats
oranges
peaches
pies
pork
raspberries
salads, fruit
salt (pinch)
sour cream
strawberries

SUGAR: BROWN, WHITE

vanilla
watermelon
wine (e.g., Merlot)
yogurt

Flavor Affinities

blackberries + crème de cassis + sugar
blackberries + ginger + peaches blackberries + honey + vanilla + yogurt

Blackberries are only okay raw, but they are really great *cooked*.

—GINA DEPALMA, BABBO (NEW YORK CITY)

Dishes

Blackberry-Almond Tart with Pineapple Carpaccio, Asian Pear, Ginger-Lime Caramel, and Beurre Noisette Ice Cream

—Michael Laiskonis, pastry chef, Le Bernardin (New York City)

Candied Ginger Shortbread Stacks with Peach-Blackberry Compote

—Emily Luchetti, pastry chef, Farallon (San Francisco)

Blackberry Sorbet–Filled Peaches

—Emily Luchetti, pastry chef, Farallon (San Francisco)

BLACK-EYED PEAS

Weight: light–medium

Volume: moderate–loud

Techniques: simmer

African cuisine

bay leaf

cardamom

carrots

cayenne

celery

chile peppers, dried red

cinnamon

cloves

coriander

cumin

garam masala

garlic

ginger, fresh

GREENS (e.g., collard)

HAM HOCKS

Indian cuisine

oil, peanut

onions: red, yellow

pepper, black

pork

red pepper flakes

rice

salt

savory

Southern cuisine (American)

tomatoes

turmeric

vinegar, white wine

yogurt

Flavor Affinities

black-eyed peas + collard greens + ham hocks
black-eyed peas + rice + savory

BLACK PEPPER

(See Pepper, Black)

BLUEBERRIES

Season: spring–summer

Taste: sour–sweet

Botanical relatives: huckleberries

Weight: light

Volume: quiet–moderate

Techniques: cooked, raw

Tips: Can substitute huckleberries.

allspice

almonds

apples

apricots

bananas

blackberries

butter, unsalted

buttermilk

chocolate, white

CINNAMON

cinnamon basil

cloves

cognac

cornmeal

cream and ice cream

cream cheese

crème fraîche

custard

ginger
honey
jams
Kirsch
LEMON: juice, zest
lemon thyme
lime: juice, zest
liqueurs: berry, orange
mace
mangoes
MAPLE SYRUP
MASCARPONE
melon
mint
molasses
muffins
nectarines
nutmeg
oats and oatmeal
orange
PEACHES
pears
pecans

Cinnamon with **blueberries** really intensifies the flavor of the blueberries.

—JERRY TRAUNFELD, THE HERBFARM (WOODINVILLE, WASHINGTON)

If I make a blueberry cobbler, I will macerate the **blueberries** first with maple and lemon zest.

—MICHAEL LAISKONIS, LE BERNARDIN (NEW YORK CITY)

Blueberries and lemon go really well together. **Blueberries** are a thick fruit with a lot of pectin in them, and intensely flavored. You need some lemon to cut through that.

—EMILY LUCHETTI, FARALLON (SAN FRANCISCO)

Dishes

Risotto Fritters with Gingered Blueberries

—Jimmy Bradley, The Red Cat (New York City)

Warm Blueberry Crostata with Crème Fraîche and Cinnamon

—Gina DePalma, pastry chef, Babbo (New York City)

Blueberry-Apple-Lavender Faux Gelato and Anise Tuile

—Dominique and Cindy Duby, Wild Sweets (Vancouver)

pepper, black

pies

pineapple

pine nuts

port

raspberries

rhubarb

ricotta cheese

rum

salads, fruit

sour cream

strawberries

SUGAR: BROWN, WHITE

tarts

Triple Sec

vanilla

walnuts

watermelon

yogurt

Flavor Affinities

blueberries + cinnamon + cream + sugar

blueberries + cream + lemon zest + mascarpone + sugar

blueberries + honey + port + vanilla

blueberries + lemon + lemon thyme

blueberries + lemon zest + maple syrup

blueberries + mascarpone + peaches

BLUEFISH

Season: spring–early autumn

Weight: medium

Volume: loud

Techniques: bake, blacken, braise, broil, grill, pan roast, poach, sauté

chile peppers, chipotle

cilantro

lemon

lime, juice

marjoram

mustard, brown

olive oil

onions, red

rosemary

sugar

thyme

tomatoes

vinegar, cider

wine

BOK CHOY

Season: year-round

Taste: bitter

Weight: light–medium

Volume: quiet

Techniques: boil, braise, raw, stir-fry

asparagus

beef

broccoli

butter

carrots

cashews

celery

chicken

chile peppers

chili powder
cilantro
coconut milk
coriander
duck
fennel
fish
garlic
ginger
hot sauce
lemon, juice
meats
mirin
mushrooms, esp. shiitake
noodles, rice
oil: peanut, sesame, vegetable
peanuts
pork
rice
rosemary
salads
salmon
scallions
sesame: oil, seeds
shallots
shellfish
snow peas
soy sauce
tamari
tarragon
tofu
vinegar, esp. rice
water chestnuts
zucchini

BONITO FLAKES, DRIED

(See also Tuna)

Taste: salty

Weight: light–medium

Volume: moderate–loud

Tips: Use large flakes to make fish stock and small flakes to season dishes.

anchovies

capers

garlic

Japanese cuisine

oil, vegetable

scallions

stock, fish

vinegar

BOUQUET GARNI

Tips: Bundle of herbs is removed after cooking.

French cuisine

soups

stews

stocks

Flavor Affinities

bay leaf + parsley + thyme

BOURBON

(See also Whiskey)

Weight: heavy

Volume: loud

apple

juice

apricot

brandy

barbecue

bitters

butter
butterscotch
cream
desserts
ginger
grapefruit juice
grenadine
honey
ice cream

LEMON JUICE

mint
orange juice
peaches
pecans
pineapple juice
Southern cuisine (American)
SUGAR: BROWN, WHITE
vermouth: dry, sweet

Flavor Affinities

bourbon + grapefruit + honey
bourbon + lemon + peaches
bourbon + lemon + sugar
bourbon + pineapple + sugar

BOYSENBERRIES

Season: summer
Taste: sour–sweet
Weight: light–medium
Volume: quiet–moderate

cream
Kirsch
lemon, juice
nectarines
peaches
sugar

vanilla
wine, esp. dry red

BRAISED DISHES

Season: winter

Tips: Check here for ideas of meats or vegetables to add to a braised dish.

artichokes
beans
beef: brisket, shanks, short ribs, shoulder
cabbage
carrots
celery
chicken: legs, thighs, wings
chili
cod
corned beef and cabbage
duck, legs
endive
fennel
ham hocks
lamb: shanks, shoulder
monkfish
octopus
onions
oxtails
pork: belly, butt, chops, loin, ribs, shank, shoulder
potatoes
pot roast
rabbit
ratatouille
short ribs
skate
stews
tripe
turkey, legs
turnips

veal: breast, rump, shank, shoulder, sirloin, sweetbreads
vegetables, root
venison, shoulder

BRAZILIAN CUISINE

(See also Latin American Cuisine)

beans, black
cardamom
chile peppers
cilantro
cloves
coconut milk
garlic
ginger
greens: collard, kale
grilled dishes
meats
nutmeg
onions
orange
parsley
pepper, black
peppers
pork
pumpkin
rice
saffron
sausages
thyme

Flavor Affinities

cream + egg yolks + sugar
pork + beans + greens + onions + oranges

BRINED DISHES

Taste: salty

Tips: Brining meats (i.e., in salt water) before cooking increases their moistness, juiciness, and flavor.

chicken
game birds
pork
poultry
turkey

I don't **brine** automatically. If I have a chicken that I know will cook up on the dry side, then I will brine it first. If it is a great chicken that will cook up naturally juicy and doesn't need help, then I won't. You can make a pretty strong brine for squab or even chicken—for instance, with thyme or even chile pepper—and the meat will pick up some flavors, but it's still very subtle.

—TRACI DES JARDINS, JARDINIÈRE (SAN FRANCISCO)

Our winter *pistou* features **broccoli**, and we're able to make the broccoli flavor very intense. We use not only broccoli stock, but also broccoli florets and even add broccoli puree. There's both clarity and lightness of flavor that we're able to achieve without butter or cream this way.

—DAN BARBER, BLUE HILL AT STONE BARNs (POCANTICO HILLS, NEW YORK)

BROCCOLI

Season: autumn–winter

Botanical relatives: Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, collard greens, kale, kohlrabi

Function: cooling

Weight: medium

Volume: moderate

Techniques: boil, deep-fry, sauté, steam, stir-fry

almonds
anchovies
basil
bread crumbs
butter, unsalted
caraway seeds

carrots

cauliflower

CHEESE: cheddar, feta, goat, mozzarella, Parmesan, Swiss
chicken

chile peppers (esp. green)

cilantro

coriander

cream

curry and curry leaf

eggs

garlic

ginger, esp. fresh

hollandaise sauce

lemon, juice

lemon balm

mint

mustard and mustard seeds

oil: peanut, sesame

olive oil

olives

onions, esp. green

oregano

parsley

pasta

pepper, ground

red pepper flakes

rice, basmati

salt

scallions

shallots

tarragon

thyme

vinaigrette

vinegar: balsamic, red wine

wine

Flavor Affinities

broccoli + anchovies + capers + red pepper flakes + garlic + olives

broccoli + anchovies + lemon
broccoli + garlic + lemon juice + olive oil
broccoli + garlic + tarragon

BROCCOLINI

Season: year-round
Weight: light–medium
Volume: quiet–moderate
Techniques: blanch, raw, sauté, steam, stir-fry

almonds
basil
cheese: feta, Parmesan
garlic
lemon, juice
olive oil
parsley, flat-leaf
pasta
red pepper flakes
salads
sesame oil
soups
tomatoes

BROCCOLI RABE

Season: late fall–spring
Taste: bitter
Weight: medium–heavy
Volume: moderate–loud
Techniques: boil, sauté, steam, stir-fry

almonds
anchovies
basil
beans, white
butter, unsalted

cheese, Parmesan

chicken

chickpeas

chiles

chives

cream

fish

GARLIC

Italian cuisine

lemon, juice

meats

OLIVE OIL**oregano**

parsley, flat-leaf

pasta, esp. orecchiette

pepper: white, black

piquillo peppers

poultry

prosciutto

red pepper flakes

salt

sausage

stock, chicken

tomatoes

vinegar: balsamic, red wine

Dishes**Orecchiette with Rapini and Sweet Sausage**

—Mario Batali, Babbo (New York City)

Broccoli Rabe with Garlic and Oregano

—Andrew Carmellini, A Voce (New York City)

Flavor Affinities

broccoli rabe + anchovies + red pepper flakes + garlic + olive oil

broccoli rabe + garlic + oregano
broccoli rabe + red pepper flakes + oregano

BRUNCH

Customers are picky at **brunch**. They have all cooked what they think they like, they think they can do it slightly better than we can, and they want it twice as fast. So, we take the classics like pancakes or French toast, use them as building blocks, and push them a little further.

We will offer seasonal pancakes. In the winter, we'll make buckwheat pancakes with cinnamon and glazed oranges. Bridging spring into summer, we'll offer corn and saffron pancakes with a spicy poached pear and fresh ricotta. Saffron and corn work really well together because of the floral nature of the saffron and sweetness of the corn. We will use poached pears on the pancakes until switching to blueberries for the summer, which give a real pop. The pears are poached in a red wine syrup with *aleppo* chile that is a sundried chile with a rich, round, sweet spice to it. The chile is not noticeable, but it acts like an acid by lightening, plus cutting the sugar and richness of, the pancake.

When people eat pancakes, they naturally reach for butter. I don't serve butter with my pancakes and instead serve fresh ricotta. We use ricotta from Anne Saxelby, who supplies us with a fresh, rich, velvety ricotta, and this gives a richness to the dish.

—BRAD FARMERIE, PUBLIC (NEW YORK CITY)

BRUSSELS SPROUTS

Season: autumn–winter

Taste: bitter

Botanical relatives: broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, collard greens, kale, kohlrabi

Weight: moderate–heavy

Volume: moderate–loud

Techniques: boil, braise, sauté, simmer, steam, stew, stir-fry

almonds

apple cider

apples and apple juice or cider

artichokes, Jerusalem

BACON

basil

bay leaf

bread crumbs

BUTTER, unsalted

celery

celery root

CHEESE: blue, cheddar, goat, Parmesan, provolone, ricotta, Swiss

chestnuts

chives

coriander

cream

crème fraîche

dill

eggs, hard-boiled

fennel seeds

garlic

hazelnuts

juniper berries

lemon, juice

marjoram

mustard, Dijon

nutmeg

oil, mustard

olive oil

onions

pancetta

paprika

parsley, flat-leaf

pepper: black, white

potatoes, esp. mashed

salt: kosher, sea

sauces, béchamel

shallots

stock, chicken

sugar

thyme, fresh

turnips

vermouth

vinaigrette

VINEGAR: cider, white wine

water chestnuts

wine, dry white

Flavor Affinities

Brussels sprouts + bacon + garlic + cider vinegar
Brussels sprouts + bacon + onions
Brussels sprouts + cream + nutmeg
Brussels sprouts + lemon juice + thyme
Brussels sprouts + pancetta + thyme

BULGUR WHEAT

Weight: light–medium
Volume: quiet–moderate
Techniques: steam

butter
chicken
chickpeas
dill
fish (e.g., branzino, pike, striped bass)

Dishes

Brussels Sprouts, Cranberry Polenta, and Braised Fennel with a Moroccan Olive Relish

—Thierry Rautureau, Rover's (Seattle)

I love **bulgur** [wheat] salad. In the summer, I'll serve it with greens and tomatoes, while in the fall it's paired with tangerines and pomegranates. I feel the same about it whether it is under branzino or pike or striped bass; it always makes sense.

—SHARON HAGE, YORK STREET (DALLAS)

greens
lamb
lentils
meats

Middle Eastern cuisine
oils, walnut
olive oil
orange
parsley
pilaf (key ingredient)
pine nuts
pomegranates
rice
salads
soups
tabbouleh (key ingredient)
tangerine
tarragon
tomatoes
vegetables
walnuts

BUTTER, BROWN **(aka Beurre Noisette)**

bananas
fish, esp. white: halibut, skate
fruits, esp. richer ones
nuts
pears
scallops
soft-shell crabs
vinegar, esp. balsamic

Flavor Affinities

brown butter + balsamic vinegar + fish
brown butter + banana + nuts

BUTTERMILK

Taste: sour

Weight: medium

Volume: moderate–loud

bananas
blackberries
blueberries
cherries
cinnamon
dates
ginger
herbs
honey
lemon
lime
maple syrup
mayonnaise
mint
nectarines
nutmeg
oats
orange
peaches
plums
raisins
raspberries
rhubarb
sour cream
strawberries
sugar, brown
walnuts

BUTTERSCOTCH

almonds
chocolate
coffee
lemon
praline

rum
vanilla

Dishes

Butterscotch-Praline Ice Cream Parfait

—Rebecca Charles, Pearl Oyster Bar (New York City)

One of my favorite flavors in the world is **brown butter**. A *financier* cake made with brown butter is one of the best things ever. I have been making a brown butter vinaigrette for a jillion years! It is a super-easy pan sauce that I love as a warm sauce: I just brown my butter in a pan until it gets the *noisette* [brown] color, then add some balsamic vinegar. It doesn't even need to be expensive balsamic. You make an emulsification in the pan, and add a little salt and pepper and it's done. The flavor of brown butter, salt, and acid is one of my favorites. It works well on different fish like scallops or halibut or soft-shell crabs.

—TRACI DES JARDINS, JARDINIÈRE (SAN FRANCISCO)

Brown butter is one of my favorite flavors, and it pairs well with anything nutty, as well as richer fruits like bananas. A classic French *financier* is hands-down one of my favorite French pastries [a cookie made with brown butter, egg whites, flour, and powdered sugar].

Butter tastes great on its own, and in making brown butter you are not adding anything to it—just transforming it, so that it becomes more. The process is simple but a little tricky, as it keeps cooking even after it is off the stove. Something you can do to improve it is—halfway through the cooking process—start whisking the butter, because it intensifies the flavor if you keep the particles suspended.

—MICHAEL LAISKONIS, LE BERNARDIN (NEW YORK CITY)

Cabbage often has the connotation of being heavy, but in the fall, we'll make a fine chiffonade of cabbage that's very light. I like to cut cabbage thin and roast it in a pan so that the edges just get brown because that tastes really good. We figured that out by mistake by putting cabbage into too hot a pan. After the chef raised his voice about how that is the wrong way to cook cabbage, we tasted it, and it was good! We now serve a green cabbage dish cooked this way with caraway seeds and walnuts, then deglazed with Calvados. We also add a little cider vinegar and olive oil to finish. It is

a nice, easy marriage. It is not an unpredictable marriage; these things just all work together. We pair this with braised pork belly, but it would also work with a roasted breast of squab with its leg done in a confit.

—MICHAEL ANTHONY, GRAMERCY TAVERN (NEW YORK CITY)

CABBAGE—IN GENERAL

Season: autumn–winter

Botanical relatives: broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, collard greens, kale, kohlrabi

Function: cooling

Weight: medium

Volume: moderate

Techniques: boil, braise, raw, sauté, steam, stir-fry

apples and apple cider

BACON

bay leaf

beef

bell peppers, red

butter, unsalted

CARAWAY SEEDS

carrots

celery: leaves, salt, seeds

Champagne

cheese: cheddar, feta, goat, Parmesan, Swiss, Taleggio, Teleme

chestnuts

chicken

chili sauce

chile peppers: dried red, fresh green (e.g., jalapeño)

cilantro

clove

coconut

coleslaw (key ingredient)

coriander

corned beef

cream

cumin

curry leaves

dill
duck
fat: rendered chicken, duck

fennel
fennel seeds
game birds

garlic

ginger
ham

horseradish

jicama

juniper berries

lemon, juice

lime, juice

marjoram

mayonnaise

meats

mushrooms

mustard, esp. Dijon, dry

mustard oil

mustard seeds, black

oil: peanut, sesame

olive oil

olives

ONIONS, ESP. RED

paprika

parsley

pasta

pecans

pepper: black, white

poppy seeds

pork

potatoes

poultry

prosciutto

red pepper flakes

rice

salmon

salt: kosher, sea

savory
shallots

sour cream

soy sauce
spinach
stock, chicken

sugar

tarragon

thyme

tomatoes

vinaigrettes

VINEGAR: champagne, cider, red wine, sherry, white wine
wine, white (e.g., Riesling)

CABBAGE, NAPA

(aka Chinese cabbage)

Season: year-round

Weight: light

Volume: quiet

Techniques: bake, braise, grill, marinate (e.g., kimchee), raw, sauté, stew, stir-fry

carrots
cashews
chicken

I like coming up with spins using Asian ingredients—such as soaking **napa cabbage** in ice water to crisp it and serving it with a blue cheese dressing as if it were iceberg lettuce.

—TONY LIU, AUGUST (NEW YORK CITY)



chile peppers, jalapeño
Chinese cuisine
cilantro
coleslaw, Asian-style
cucumber
duck
fish, salmon
garlic
ginger
mint
mushrooms (e.g., shiitakes)
oil, sesame
orange, juice
pork
scallions
seafood
sesame seeds
scallops
shellfish: shrimp
soups

soy sauce
stews
stir-fries
Thai basil
tofu
vinegar, rice
wine, rice

CABBAGE, RED

Season: autumn–winter

Techniques: braise, marinate, raw

APPLES: Golden Delicious, Rome, tart

bacon

bay leaf

butter, unsalted

caraway seeds

cheese: blue, goat, Gorgonzola, ricotta salata

Dishes

Pommery Grain Mustard Ice Cream, Red Cabbage Gazpacho

—Heston Blumenthal, The Fat Duck (England)

Dishes

Sautéed Strawberries in Black Pepper–Cabernet Sauvignon Sauce with Vanilla Bean Ice Cream and Sacristan Cookie

—Lissa Doumani and Hiro Sone, Terra (St. Helena, California)

chestnuts

cider, apple

cilantro
cream
cumin
fat: duck, goose
fruit, tart
game: rabbit, venison
game birds, pheasant
garlic
honey
lemon, juice
lime, juice
meats
mustard
nutmeg
oil, peanut
olive oil
onions: red, white
pancetta
parsley, flat-leaf
pepper, black
poultry
red pepper flakes
salt, kosher
scallions
stock, chicken
SUGAR: BROWN, WHITE
VINEGAR: balsamic, cider, red wine, rice wine, sherry, white wine
wine, dry red

Flavor Affinities

red cabbage + apples + cider vinegar
red cabbage + bacon + blue cheese + walnuts
red cabbage + balsamic vinegar + brown sugar
red cabbage + chestnuts + pork
red cabbage + duck fat + goat cheese + red wine vinegar
red cabbage + pancetta + ricotta salata cheese

CABBAGE, SAVOY

Season: autumn–winter

Techniques: boil, braise, raw, roast, steam

apples
bacon
butter, unsalted
carrots
cream
crème fraîche
garlic
leeks
lemon, juice
oil, peanut
olive oil
onions
parsley, flat-leaf
parsnips
pepper, black
potatoes
raisins, golden
salt, kosher
stock
thyme
turnips
vinegar, cider
walnuts

CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Weight: heavy red wine

Volume: loud

beef
cheese, esp. aged, blue, and/or stinky
game
game birds
lamb

meat, red
pepper, black
steak
strawberries

CAJUN CUISINE

cayenne
celery
chiles
crayfish
gumbo
jambalaya
onions
peppers
rice
seafood
tomatoes

CALAMARI

(See Squid)

CALF'S LIVER

(See Liver, Calf's)

CALVADOS

Season: winter
Weight: medium-heavy
Volume: moderate-loud
Tips: Generally an after-dinner drink.

apples
bitters, orange
French cuisine
gin

lemon, juice
orange, juice
pears
rum
sugar
vermouth, sweet

CANADIAN CUISINE

bacon, back (aka Canadian bacon)
beer
berries, esp. wild
cheese
duck
fiddlehead ferns
foie gras
game
game birds
maple syrup
meats, esp. smoked
mushrooms, wild
oysters
rabbit
salmon
seafood
wild rice
wine: ice wine, Riesling

CANTALOUPE

Season: summer
Taste: sweet
Weight: light–medium
Volume: moderate

basil
cilantro
curry powder

ginger
grapefruit
lemon, juice
lemongrass
lime, juice
melon: honeydew, watermelon
mint
pepper: black, white
port
raspberries
star anise
tarragon
wine, esp. sweet
wine, Pinot Blanc (to accompany)
yogurt

CANTONESE CUISINE

(See Chinese Cuisine)

CAPERS

Taste: salty, sour, pungent
Weight: light
Volume: loud

almonds
anchovies
artichokes
arugula
basil
beans, green
butter sauces
celery
chicken
eggplant
eggs
fish

French cuisine, esp. southern
garlic

Italian cuisine, esp. southern
lamb

lemon, juice

lime

marjoram

meats, esp. richer ones, e.g., rib eye steaks

Mediterranean cuisine

mustard

olives

onions

oregano

parsley, flat-leaf

pasta

pork

potatoes

poultry

rabbit

salads

salmon

sauces, esp. Italian cuisine

shellfish, e.g., scallops, shrimp

tapenade (key ingredient)

tarragon

tomatoes

vinaigrettes

vinegar

Flavor Affinities

capers + lemon + marjoram

Dishes

Cantaloupe “Sashimi,” Raspberry Gel, and Star Anise Dust

—Dominique and Cindy Duby, Wild Sweets (Vancouver)

CARAMEL

Taste: sweet

almonds

APPLES

apricots

bananas

bourbon

cherries

chocolate

cinnamon

coffee and espresso

CREAM AND ICE CREAM

cream cheese

cumin

custard

fruits, tropical

lemon, juice

lime, juice

macadamia nuts

mangoes

nutmeg

passion fruit

peaches

peanuts

pears

pecans

plums

raisins

rhubarb

rum

sesame seeds

VANILLA

CARAWAY SEEDS

Taste: sweet, sour

Weight: light

Volume: medium-loud

Tips: Add late in the cooking process.

apples

Austrian cuisine

beef stew

BREADS, esp. pumpernickel, rye

British cuisine

cabbage

cakes

carrots

cheese (e.g., Liptauer, Muenster)

coleslaw

cookies

coriander

corned beef

cumin

desserts

duck

Eastern European cuisine

fruit

garlic

German cuisine

goose

goulash

Hungarian cuisine

juniper berries

lavender (can substitute for caraway)

marinades

meats

Moroccan cuisine

noodles

onions

parsley, flat-leaf

pork

potatoes

sauerkraut

sausages

soups

stews
thyme
tomatoes
turnips vegetables, esp. root

CARDAMOM

Taste: sweet, pungent

Function: heating

Weight: medium

Volume: loud

Tips: Add early when cooking.

anise
apples
apricots
Asian cuisine
baked goods (e.g., breads, cakes, cookies)
bananas
beef
beverages, esp. hot
caraway
carrots
chicken, esp. stewed
chickpeas
chile peppers
chocolate
cinnamon
citrus
cloves
coffee
coriander
cream and ice cream
crème anglaise
cumin
curries
custards
dates

desserts, esp. Indian

duck, esp. roasted

fish, e.g., salmon

garam masala, Indian (key ingredient)

ginger

gingerbread

grapefruit

honey

Indian cuisine

Indonesian cuisine

lamb

legumes

lemon: juice, zest

lentils

lime

meats

North African cuisine

orange: juice, zest

paprika

parsnips

pastries

pears

peas

pepper

pistachios

pork

rice and rice dishes

saffron

salmon

Scandinavian cuisine

squash

stews

sugar

sweet potatoes

tea

vanilla

vegetables, root

walnuts

wine (e.g., mulled)

yogurt

CARIBBEAN CUISINES

allspice
bay leaf chicken
chile peppers
cilantro
cinnamon
cloves
coconut milk
curry
dill
fish
fruits, tropical
garlic
ginger
hot sauce
jerked dishes
lime, juice



molasses
nutmeg
onions
orange
oregano
parsley
pineapple
plantains
rum, esp. dark
shellfish
sugar, brown

tamarind
thyme

Flavor Affinities

cilantro + garlic + onions (aka *sofrito*)
fish + allspice + oil + onions + vinegar (aka *escabèche*)

CARROTS

Season: autumn–spring

Botanical relatives: celery, chervil, dill, fennel, parsley, parsnips

Function: cooling

Weight: medium

Volume: quiet–moderate

Techniques: boil, braise, grill, raw, **roast**, sauté, simmer, steam, stir-fry

allspice

almonds

anise hyssop

apple juice

bacon

basil

bay leaf

beef

brandy

butter, brown

BUTTER, unsalted

carrot juice

celery

chervil

chicken

chile peppers: dried red, fresh green (e.g., jalapeño)

Thumbelina carrots are something I missed when I moved from working in the country [i.e., Pocantico Hills, New York, where Blue Hill at Stone Barns is located] into Manhattan. Luckily, I recently found these short, fat carrots at the green market. We sauté these carrots over an open fire so that they get a little smoky. When they are

cooked, they become soft and creamy. Once cooked, we turn them into a puree with a shot of carrot juice at the last second. We pair this with farro that has been cooked like risotto, then add some pine nuts and more Thumbelina carrots that have been quartered. I don't know what is more seductive: the smooth carrot farro with its light carrot flavor or the carrots themselves that are totally creamy. The dish has no butter or cream but that is not because we are trying to be healthy. The dish just doesn't need it.

—MICHAEL ANTHONY, GRAMERCY TAVERN (NEW YORK CITY)

Juices are a great way to freshen up a dish. If you cook a **carrot**, you lose the "carrotiness" of it. If you make a carrot soup with cooked carrots, it doesn't become bright. So now we do a carrot base with cooked organic carrots with tops, onions, garlic, and maybe some ginger and lemongrass. With that base we make a really thick soup and then add carrot juice to it. In the end you have fresh and cooked carrots for a better flavor profile.

—ANDREW CARMELLINI, A VOCE (NEW YORK CITY)

I had a salad at a restaurant with grated **carrots** and tarragon leaves with pistachios—and I knew the minute I tasted it that I could adapt this salad to be my own. Instead of grating the carrots, I cut them on the bias and roasted them with a little ginger and *juca* [an African mix made of almonds, pistachios, hazelnuts, and spices]. To finish the salad, I added the whole tarragon leaves, great pistachio oil, and a raita of yogurt and golden raisins. The dish has wonderful colors and texture and those beautiful whole leaves of tarragon which I had never thought to do myself.

—MONICA POPE, T'AFIA (HOUSTON)

Carrots—which pair well with allspice, cinnamon, cloves, and cumin—are one of the few vegetables that shine in desserts. When I first came to the U.S. I discovered carrot cake and that you could use carrots for dessert. I have since made carrot ice cream, cookies, and fruit paste. The problem is that most people trust carrot cake but little else. When I am using carrots for dessert, I like to cook them with orange.

—MICHEL RICHARD, CITRONELLE (WASHINGTON, DC)

Carrots and parsnips are similar, and I like the depth of flavor that comes from combining them.

—BRAD THOMPSON, MARY ELAINE'S AT THE PHOENICIAN (SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA)

Dishes

Carrot Cake with Peach-Ginger Cream and Saskatoon Berry Compote

—Dominique and Cindy Duby, Wild Sweets (Vancouver)

Carrot Cake with Vanilla Chantilly, Pecan Praline

—Emily Luchetti, pastry chef, Farallon (San Francisco)

Roasted Carrots and Minted Pea Puree, and Moscato Vinegar

—Cory Schreiber, Wildwood (Portland, Oregon)

chives

cilantro

cinnamon

cloves

cod

coriander

crayfish

cream

crème fraîche

cumin (e.g., Indian cuisine)

curry

curry leaves

dill

fennel

fennel seeds

fish

garlic

GINGER

hazelnuts

honey

lamb

leeks

LEMON, juice

lemon balm

lemon verbena

lime, juice (e.g., Indian cuisine)

lovage

mace

MAPLE SYRUP

mint: spearmint, peppermint

mirepoix (key ingredient)

mustard

mustard seeds, black

nutmeg

oil: peanut, sesame

olive oil

onions, esp. green

ORANGE, juice**PARSLEY, FLAT-LEAF****parsnips**

peas

pecans

pepper: black, white

pistachios

potatoes

raisins: black, white

meats, roasted

rosemary

rum

sage

salsify

salt: fleur de sel, kosher

savory

scallops

shallots

spinach

stocks: chicken, vegetable

SUGAR: brown, white (pinch)

tamarind

tarragon**thyme**

turnips

veal

vegetables, root

vinaigrette

walnuts

wine, white

yogurt

Flavor Affinities

carrots + celery + onions (aka mirepoix)
carrots + cilantro + lime
carrots + cinnamon + raisins + sugar + walnuts
carrots + cumin + orange
carrots + dill + orange
carrots + lemon juice + olive oil + parsley
carrots + maple syrup + orange
carrots + olive oil + turnips
carrots + pistachios + tarragon
carrots + raisins + yogurt

CASHEWS

Taste: sweet, rich

Function: warming

Weight: medium-heavy

Volume: loud

almonds
apricots
bananas
caramel
cheese
chicken (e.g., Indian cuisine)
chocolate, esp. white
cinnamon
coconut (e.g., Indian cuisine)
coffee / espresso
curries
dates
ginger
grapefruit
guava
honey
Indian cuisine

kiwi fruit
lemon
macadamia nuts
mango
mint
nutmeg
oil, vegetable
papaya
passion fruit
persimmon
pineapple
rice
rum
salads
salt
sauces
sugar: brown, white
vanilla
vegetables, esp. Indian

CATFISH

Weight: medium
Volume: quiet
Techniques: broil, deep-fry, grill, poach, sauté, steam, stir-fry

avocados
bacon
basil
butter, unsalted
cabbage (e.g., coleslaw)
capers
cayenne
chile peppers, chipotle
cilantro
cucumbers
garlic
greens, collard

ham
hush puppies
lemon, juice
oil: peanut, vegetable
olive oil
olives, esp. niçoise
parsley, flat-leaf
pepper: black, Szechuan
pine nuts
potatoes
salt, kosher
Southern cuisine (American)
soy sauce
stock, chicken
sugar
tomatillos
tomatoes
vinaigrette
vinegar, cider
wine, dry white

CAULIFLOWER

Season: autumn–winter
Taste: astringent
Botanical relatives: broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, collard greens, kale, kohlrabi
Function: cooling
Weight: medium
Volume: moderate
Techniques: boil, braise, deepfry, gratin, puree, raw, roast, sauté, simmer, steam

anchovies
apples
bay leaf
bell peppers, esp. green (e.g., Indian cuisine)
bread crumbs
broccoli
brown butter

butter, unsalted
capers
cardamom
caviar
celery seeds
CHEESE: blue, cheddar, Comté, Emmental, goat, Gruyère, Parmesan, pecorino
chervil
chile peppers, dried red
chili sauce
chives



Dishes

Variation of Cauliflower with Raisins, Grenobloise Butter, and Fried Pantelleria Capers

—Daniel Boulud, Daniel (New York City)

Cauliflower Panna Cotta Topped with American Paddlefish Caviar and Cockle Emulsion

—Gabriel Kreuther, The Modern (New York City)

Cauliflower Rice Pilaf with Raita

—Vikram Vij and Meera Dhalwala, Vij's (Vancouver)

The first time I had the combination of **cauliflower** and curry was when I worked with Daniel Boulud, and he used them together in a soup. I didn't grow up liking cauliflower, but I do now when it's well roasted or pureed. It has good water content, which makes for a very smooth puree, and it has a subtle yet distinct flavor. Apple combines well with both, as it adds acidity and crunch while cutting the stronger flavors.

—BRADFORD THOMPSON, MARY ELAINE'S AT THE PHOENICIAN (SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA)

Our dish of spicy roasted **cauliflower** with pine nuts and lime is cauliflower with lime supremes [skinless lime sections]. I love lime because it has more character than lemon.

—HOLLY SMITH, CAFÉ JUANITA (SEATTLE)

chocolate and cocoa, when cauliflower is caramelized

cilantro

coriander

CREAM AND MILK

cumin

currants, dried

curry powder

dill

Eastern Mediterranean cuisine

egg, hard-boiled, esp. yolk

French cuisine

garam masala

GARLIC

ginger

greens

hollandaise sauce

Indian cuisine

leeks

lemon: juice, zest

lime

Mediterranean cuisine

mint

mussels

mustard, esp. Dijon

mustard: oil, seeds

nutmeg

OIL: canola, grapeseed, vegetable

olive oil

olives: black, green

ONIONS: green, red

orange: juice, zest

paprika

parsley, flat-leaf

pasta

PEPPER: BLACK, WHITE

pine nuts

poppy seeds

POTATOES, RED (e.g., Indian cuisine)

raisins

red pepper flakes

saffron

SALT: KOSHER, SEA

sauces: béchamel, brown butter, cheese, cream, hollandaise, Mornay

scallions

scallops

shallots

soups

stock, chicken

tarragon

thyme

tomatoes (e.g., Indian cuisine)

truffles, white

turmeric

vinegar: red, white wine

watercress

yogurt (e.g., Indian cuisine)

Flavor Affinities

cauliflower + anchovies + red pepper flakes + garlic + olive oil

cauliflower + bread crumbs + brown butter + parsley

cauliflower + cilantro + cloves + cumin + turmeric

cauliflower + cream + sorrel

cauliflower + curry + apple
cauliflower + curry + vinegar
cauliflower + garlic + mint + pasta
cauliflower + pine nuts + lime

CAVIAR

Season: winter

Taste: salty

Weight: very light

Volume: quiet–loud

blini, esp. whole wheat

bread, esp. toast points

chives

crème fraîche

eggs

French cuisine

lemon

onion, esp. raw

pepper: black, white

potatoes

Russian cuisine

salt

shallots

sour cream

vodka

white chocolate

wine, Champagne

There is an obvious reason why you could argue that white chocolate and **caviar** go together and that is because of the fact that you are pairing fat and salt. The combination, however, runs a lot deeper than that. The amine [organic chemical compounds] levels in caviar and white chocolate are such that the two ingredients almost “melt” together.

—HESTON BLUMENTHAL, THE FAT DUCK (ENGLAND)

Dishes

Yellowtail Tuna with Spinach Puree, Potato Salad, and Osetra Caviar and Vodka Sauce

—David Bouley, Danube (New York City)

Scrambled Egg with Lime Crème Fraîche and Sturgeon Caviar

—Thierry Rautureau, Rover's (Seattle)

Royal Osetra Caviar Served with Warm Crepes, Toast, and Crème Fraîche

—Eric Ripert, Le Bernardin (New York City)

Caviar-Pasta: Osetra on a Nest of Tagliolini, Quail Egg, and Bacon Carbonara Sauce

—Eric Ripert, Le Bernardin (New York City)

CAYENNE, GROUND

Taste: piquant

Function: warming

Weight: light

Volume: loud

Tips: Cayenne tastes hotter the more it cooks.

basil

beans

bell peppers

Cajun cuisine

cheese and cheese sauces

chili

cilantro

coriander

corn

crab

Creole cuisine

cumin

eggplant

fish
garlic
Indian cuisine
Italian cuisine
lemon
lobster
meat
Mexican cuisine
oil
onions
potatoes
rice
sardines
sauces
shellfish
soups
stews
tomatoes

AVOID

caviar
delicate flavors
truffles

Flavor Affinities

cayenne + coriander + cumin + garlic

CELERY

Season: year-round

Taste: astringent

Botanical relatives: carrots

Function: cooling

Weight: light

Volume: moderate–loud

Techniques: boil, braise, cream, gratiné, raw, sauté, steam, stir-fry

basil
bay leaf
beets
butter
capers
carrots
cheese, esp. **blue**, feta, goat, Gruyère, Parmesan, Roquefort
chervil
chicken and other poultry
chickpeas and hummus
chives
cream
cream cheese
curry
dill
eggs, hard-boiled
fish
garlic
legumes
lemon, juice
lovage
mirepoix (key ingredient)
mushrooms, wild
mustard, esp. Dijon

Using a pinch of **cayenne** is like having a turbo versus a regular engine in your car. The cayenne goes into you so fast it is like creating an engine for your flavors. It will create a certain heat and speedy access to your flavors. I use cayenne in everything. However, it has to be done carefully. It has to be just a pinch at the last minute. If you are using basil, it will make the flavor even stronger.

—ERIC RIPERT, LE BERNARDIN (NEW YORK CITY)

Of all vegetables, **celery** has one of the strongest flavors. To me, it is almost like a truffle. In a mirepoix, you need all the vegetables—but if I could have only one, it would be celery. I love its earthy flavor. Celery and black truffles are my favorite combination. They work in part because they come out of the ground at the same time of year. Any root vegetable also works with celery. I enjoy celery root and celery separately as well as together.

—DANIEL HUMM, ELEVEN MADISON PARK (NEW YORK CITY)

olive oil
onions, esp. red
paprika
parsley
peanuts and peanut butter
pepper, white
potatoes
rice
salads: chicken, potato, shrimp, tuna
salt
scallions
shallots
shellfish
stir-fried dishes
stocks: chicken, vegetable
stuffings
tarragon
thyme
tomatoes and tomato juice
truffles, black
turnips
vinegar: tarragon, wine

Flavor Affinities

celery + carrots + onions (aka mirepoix)
celery + tarragon + vinegar

CELERY ROOT

Season: autumn–spring
Weight: medium–heavy
Volume: moderate
Techniques: boil, deep-fry, raw, roast, steam
Tips: Always peel before using.

allspice
apples
basil

bay leaf
beef
beets
brown butter
butter
capers
carrots
celery
celery leaves
cheese: Gruyère, Parmesan, Swiss
chervil
chicken
chives
coriander
cream
crème fraîche
dill
fennel leaves
fennel seeds
garlic
leeks
LEMON, JUICE
lovage
game birds
garlic
hazelnuts
marjoram
MAYONNAISE
mushrooms
MUSTARD, DIJON
nutmeg
oil: peanut, sesame, walnut
olive oil
olives
onions
oregano
paprika
parsley
parsnips

pecans
pepper, black
POTATOES, ESP. MASHED
rice
rutabagas
sage
salads, esp. green, tuna
salt, kosher
seafood
soups
stews
stocks: chicken, vegetable
tarragon
thyme
truffles, esp. black
turnips
veal
vegetables, root
vinaigrette
vinegar: cider, wine
watercress
wild rice

Flavor Affinities

celery root + cream + potatoes + vinegar
celery root + lemon + mayonnaise + mustard

CELERY SALT

Bloody Marys
eggs, hard-boiled
Tabasco sauce

Dishes

Celery Root Soup with Spiced Pumpernickel Bread, Confit Shallot, and Parsley Emulsion

—Charlie Trotter, Charlie Trotter's (Chicago)

CELERY SEED

Taste: bitter, pungent

Function: heating

Weight: light

Volume: moderate

allspice

bay leaf

beef

breads

Cajun/Creole cuisines

cheese, e.g., blue

chervil

chicken

coriander

crab

dill

eggplant

eggs

fennel seeds

fish

German cuisine

ginger

Italian cuisine

mayonnaise

mushrooms

mustard

onions

paprika

peas

pepper

potatoes

Russian cuisine

salads and salad dressings

sauces

shellfish

soups
stews
stuffing
thyme
tomatoes
vegetables and vegetable juices
Worcestershire sauce

CHAMOMILE

Taste: sweet

Asian cuisine
chicken
chocolate, white
desserts
fish (e.g., halibut)
honey
lemon
rice
tea
veal

CHAMPAGNE

Weight: light–medium
Volume: quiet–moderate

blackberries
caviar
cherries
cranberries
lemon
lime
melon
mint
raspberries
strawberries

CHARD

(aka Swiss chard)

Season: year-round

Taste: bitter

Weight: medium-heavy

Volume: moderate-loud

Techniques: boil, braise, parboil, sauté, steam, stir-fry

anchovies

bacon

basil

bay leaf

bread crumbs

butter, unsalted

capers

cheese: Fontina, Gruyère, Parmesan

chickpeas

chile peppers

cilantro

cumin

cured meats

egg dishes

eggs, hard-boiled

***GARLIC**

Italian cuisine, esp. pasta

lamb, esp. chops

leeks

lemon: juice, zest

mushrooms, chanterelle

oil, peanut

olive oil

olives

onions, esp. spring or yellow

orange, zest

oregano

pasta (including using to color green pasta)

pepper: black, white

pine nuts

polenta
potatoes
raisins
red pepper flakes
saffron
salt, kosher
shallots
spinach
stews
stocks: chicken, vegetable
thyme
tomatoes
vinegar: balsamic, red wine

Flavor Affinities

chard + bell peppers + pecorino cheese + eggplant
chard + red pepper flakes + lemon juice

CHARDONNAY

Weight: medium-heavy
Volume: quiet-loud

butter and butter sauces
chicken
crab
cream and cream sauces
fish
lobster
salmon
scallops
shellfish
veal



CHEESE—IN GENERAL

(See also specific cheeses)

Taste: sweet–sour

Function: cooling

apples

breads, esp. neutral-flavored

celery, esp. with cheese sauces and dishes

cherries, esp. with soft cheeses

cured meats, esp. ham

dates, esp. Medjool

dried fruits, esp. dates, figs grapes

nuts, esp. hazelnuts, walnuts

pears

Since **cheese** is a near-perfect food, I sometimes look for the few nutrients missing in cheese that can be found in other foods. The two essential nutrients that cheese does not provide are vitamin C and fiber. This recommends fruits especially—and makes a

great start to the day: cheese, some high-fiber vitamin C-rich fruit, some whole grain organic bread, and coffee. The breads I prefer with cheese are usually neutral flavored, though I fully appreciate the nutty or herbed or fruity breads as natural partners for cheeses. The main reason I prefer neutral flavors in my breads is because I don't want to meddle with the flavors in the cheeses themselves. I'm kind of a purist on that! Usually, the softer the cheese, the harder the bread—to an extent. And high-pectin, high-fiber fruits [e.g., apples, pears, apricots, plums, nectarines, peaches, figs] make natural accompaniments for many, many cheeses.

Which cheeses? My faves with my espresso to which I add a little unfiltered raw honey would be the pressed sheep milk cheeses: Ossau Iraty, Roncal, Zamorano, Berkswell, Spenwood, Trade Lake Cedar, Vermont Shepherd, manchego, or Pecorino Foglie Noce. But I'm happy with whatever is looking good, and preferably the harder aged cheeses: sheep, goat, or cow.

—MAX McCALMAN, ARTISANAL CHEESE CENTER (NEW YORK CITY)

CHEESE, ASIAGO

almonds
bacon
figs
grapes
Italian cuisine
pasta
potatoes
salads

With aged or strong **cheese**, you need something fruity or sweet to contrast with the strong flavor. Pecorino is very strong, so you need something sweet with it. With an aged or hard cheese, I like to serve some chestnut honey, a fruit jam, or watermelon confiture. If I have some aged goat cheese, I like a *mostarda* [Italian mustard fruit]. With sharper cheese, I also like a nice sweet wine, especially an Italian Passito. With fresh young cheese, I simply like some good bread. Chestnut honey, while good with aged cheese, does not work with a young cheese.

—ODETTE FADA, SAN DOMENICO (NEW YORK CITY)

Honey, jam, and *mostarda* go great with **cheese**. Most honey works best with younger cheeses and soft-ripened cheeses, especially if they have a chalky quality to them. I love mountain Gorgonzola with chestnut honey; it is crazy! In Italy, we call jam a *confitura* or *marmalata*. I like it with saltier cheeses like Parmesan, or with more

assertive cheeses. *Mostarda* is made of fruits cooked in a white wine mustard syrup until they are candied. So, you have a sweet candy effect with the spicy mustard. It goes with any savory firm cheese, and particularly well with pecorino and Taleggio.

—GINA DEPALMA, BABBO (NEW YORK CITY)

CHEESE, AZEITAO

foie gras

CHEESE, BLUE

(See also Gorgonzola, Roquefort, Stilton, etc.)

almonds

apples

beef

bread, esp. with nuts and/or raisins

celery

chestnuts, roasted

cream cheese

dill

figs, esp. with Gorgonzola

garlic

hazelnuts

HONEY, esp. chestnut or tupelo

mustard, Dijon

pasta

PEARS, esp. with Stilton

port

potatoes

salt, kosher

sour cream

steaks

vinegar, white wine

walnut bread

walnuts, esp. with Stilton

walnuts, candied

watercress

CHEESE, BRIE

almonds
apples
bread, esp. French
cherries
chicken
crudités (e.g., raw carrots, celery)
dates
fennel
figs
French cuisine
nuts
melon
onions
pears
pistachios
strawberries
white wine

CHEESE, BURRATA

beans, fava
bread
garlic
Italian cuisine
olive oil
peaches
pesto
plums
salt, esp. sea
tomatoes
vincotto (cooked wine)

CHEESE, CABRALES

figs
grapes, esp. red
ham, Serrano

honey
pears
salads
steak

Dishes

Baked Blue Cheesecake Mousse with Rhubarb Compote and Celery Confit

—Dominique and Cindy Duby, Wild Sweets (Vancouver)

Bruschetta with Burrata Cheese, Caponata, and Fava Bean Puree

—Hiro Sone, Terra (St. Helena, California)

CHEESE, CAMEMBERT

arugula
fruit, fresh
grapes
lettuces (e.g., baby greens)
melon
nuts
olive oil
pears
pecans
plums
salads
strawberries
vinegar: balsamic, sherry

A wonderful combination I discovered recently that surprised me was **Azeitao cheese with foie gras**.

—MAX McCALMAN, ARTISANAL CHEESE CENTER (NEW YORK CITY)

I like **blue cheese**, either Roquefort or Stilton, served simply with a walnut bread and a glass of port.

—GABRIEL KREUTHER, THE MODERN (NEW YORK CITY)

In general, the more intense a **blue cheese** is in its own right, the lighter and more delicate the honey you'll want to pair it with. I like Colorado star thistle honey [which is creamy, with cinnamon notes].

—ADRIAN MURCIA, CHANTERELLE (NEW YORK CITY)

CHEESE, CHEDDAR

APPLES

bacon

brandy, apple, e.g., Calvados

bread, esp. French, pumpernickel, or whole wheat

butter, unsalted

cayenne

chutney, Indian

cider

cream

dates

egg dishes

fennel

garlic

grapes

hamburgers

honey, esp. fruit (e.g., blueberry, raspberry)

mirepoix, esp. for soup

mostarda (mustard fruits)

nuts

oil, vegetable

paprika

pasta, esp. macaroni

pears and pear paste

pecans

pepper, black

potatoes

quince paste

stock, chicken

thyme

walnuts

CHEESE, COLBY

apples
bacon
beer
bread, rye
cider, apple
onions
pears
potatoes

CHEESE, COMTÉ

ham
hazelnut oil
greens, salad

CHEESE, COW'S MILK—IN GENERAL

cherries
fruits, stone (e.g., apricots, cherries, nectarines, peaches, plums, etc.)
melons

CHEESE, CREAM

(See Cream Cheese)

CHEESE, EMMENTAL

bacon
bread, rye, esp. lighter
potatoes

CHEESE, ÉPOISSES

cherries
marmalade, citrus
pears

CHEESE, EXPLORATEUR

pomegranate

Cheddar is a particularly friendly **cheese** to food pairing partners.

—ADRIAN MURCIA, CHANTERELLE (NEW YORK CITY)

CHEESE, FETA

bell peppers, red

bread: olive, pita

cheese, ricotta

chickpeas

dill

Eastern Mediterranean cuisine

eggplant

figs

garlic

grapes

Greek cuisine

honey

lamb

lemon

meats, grilled

mint

olive oil

olives: black, Greek

onions, red

pasta

pepper, black

sage

salads

sauces

shrimp

spinach

thyme

vinegar, red wine

walnuts

watermelon

zucchini

Flavor Affinities

feta cheese + chicken + mint
feta cheese + roasted red bell peppers + mint
feta cheese + salad greens + mint

CHEESE, FONTINA

chutney
endive
fondue
fruit, fresh
grapes
mostarda (mustard fruits)
pears
plums
salads
sandwiches
walnuts

CHEESE, FROMAGE BLANC

cranberries, sweetened
figs

CHEESE, GARROTXA

figs

CHEESE, GOAT'S MILK—IN GENERAL

almonds
honey
nuts
oil, walnut
olive oil
olives
pepper, black
pomegranate

thyme

I enjoy the combination of cherries with Lancashire [a premier English cow's milk cheese].

—MAX McCALMAN, ARTISANAL CHEESE CENTER (NEW YORK CITY)

Dishes

Goat Cheese Tortelloni with Dried Orange and Wild Fennel Pollen

—Mario Batali, Babbo (New York City)

Rich Goat's Milk Cheesecake with Blossom Honey Ice Cream, Fuyu Persimmons, and Huckleberries

—Elizabeth Dahl, pastry chef, Naha (Chicago)

Mixed Green Salad with Coach Farm's Triple Crème Goat Cheese, Toasted Pumpkin Seeds, and Apple Cider Vinegar

—Gabriel Kreuther, The Modern (New York City)

Goat Cheese Salad: Braised Fennel, Toasted Hazelnuts, Orange, and Extra-Virgin Olive Oil

—Alfred Portale, Gotham Bar and Grill (New York City)

CHEESE, GOAT—FRESH

(e.g., *chèvre*)

almonds

apples, esp. green

apricots, esp. dried

basil

beets

bell peppers: green, esp. red

blackberries

bread, esp. French or with nuts, olives, and/or raisins, whole wheat

broccoli

butter
cauliflower
cheese: Parmesan, ricotta
cherries, sour or sweet
chervil
chives
cinnamon
cranberries, esp. dried
cream
dates
eggs
fennel
fennel seeds
figs
garlic
grapes
greens, salad, esp. arugula
herbs
honey

I enjoy pomegranate with my Ibores [a Spanish goat's milk **cheese**].

—MAX McCALMAN, ARTISANAL CHEESE CENTER (NEW YORK CITY)

Dishes

Almond-Infused Goat's Milk Cheesecake

—Carrie Nahabedian, Naha (Chicago)

Mediterranean “Greek Salad” of Mt. Vikos Feta, Kalamata Olives, Plum Tomatoes, Cucumbers, Torn Mint and Oregano, Warm Feta Cheese “Turnover”

—Carrie Nahabedian, Naha (Chicago)

I will pair thyme with **goat cheese** and cherries.

—MICHAEL LAISKONIS, LE BERNARDIN (NEW YORK CITY)

If you are going to make a dessert with cheese, you want it to be a softer cheese. I make a **goat cheese** cake with berries and for that I use a milder goat cheese. Goat cheese and lemon work really well together, because the acidity of the lemon juice cuts the fat of the goat cheese.

—EMILY LUCHETTI, FARALLON (SAN FRANCISCO)

I like strawberries with my Loire Valley **chèvres**.

—MAX McCALMAN, ARTISANAL CHEESE CENTER (NEW YORK CITY)

LEMON, juice

milk

mint

nutmeg

nuts

oil, sesame

olive oil

olives

onions, esp. green, Spanish, or Vidalia

orange: juice, zest

parsley, flat-leaf

pasta

pears: dried, fresh

pecans

pepper: black, white

pesto

pine nuts

pistachios

port

potatoes

raspberries

red pepper flakes

rosemary

rum, esp. light

sage

salami

salt, sea

shallots

sour cream

star anise

strawberries

sugar: brown, white

thyme

vegetables, raw

vinegar, cider

tarragon

thyme

tomatoes and tomato jam

vanilla

vinegar: balsamic, sherry

walnuts



Flavor Affinities

goat cheese + almonds + honey + pears

goat cheese + cherries + thyme

goat cheese + fennel seeds + orange zest + pasta

goat cheese + honey + persimmons

goat cheese + pancetta + shallots

Some enjoy the combination of chocolate and cheese. If the idea intrigues you, I recommend trying a good dark chocolate with an aged Alpine cheese [a style native to the French and Swiss Alps, of which **Gruyère** is one of the most famous], such as Hoch Ybrig, Appenzeller, or Prattigauer.

—MAX McCALMAN, ARTISANAL CHEESE CENTER (NEW YORK CITY)

Swiss mountain cheeses [e.g., Appenzeller, Comté, **Gruyère**] are a cheese snob's Holy Grail of cheeses. Their "cooked milk" character makes them great with dark, cooked fruit preserves such as fig preserves. They also go well with oloroso sherry, which has its own dark, cooked fruit flavors.

—ADRIAN MURCIA, CHANTERELLE (NEW YORK CITY)

CHEESE, GORGONZOLA

apples

brandy

cherries: sour, sweet

cognac

corn

cream

dulce de leche

figs

grapes

honey, esp. chestnut

Italian cuisine

mint

nuts

olive oil

pasta

PEARS

pistachios

pomegranate

prosciutto

salads (e.g., spinach)

sugar

thyme

WALNUTS

wine, sweet

Flavor Affinities

Gorgonzola + mint + walnuts

CHEESE, GOUDA

apples, esp. with aged and/or smoked cheese
apricots
cherries, esp. with young cheese
melon
mushrooms
peaches, esp. with young cheese
pears, esp. with aged or smoked cheese
spinach

CHEESE, GRUYÈRE

apples
arugula
bread
cherries
chicken
chocolate, dark, esp. with aged Gruyère
fondues
garlic
ham
hazelnuts
onions
soufflés
soups, esp. onion
spinach
Swiss cuisine
thyme
walnuts

I enjoy raspberries with my **Hoja Santa**, with a little mint thrown in.

—MAX McCALMAN, ARTISANAL CHEESE CENTER (NEW YORK CITY)

CHEESE, HOJA SANTA

mint

raspberries

CHEESE, JACK

almonds
figs
pears
pecans
prunes
quince paste
walnuts

CHEESE, MAHON

(aged Spanish cheese)
quince paste

CHEESE, MANCHEGO

ALMONDS, esp. roasted Spanish
anchovies
bell peppers, roasted
bread, esp. crusty and fig or other fruit bread
figs and fig cake
ham, Serrano
olive oil
olives, green or black Spanish
onions, esp. caramelized
parsley
peppers, piquillo
plum paste
***QUINCE PASTE**
salads
Spanish cuisine
tomatoes

Flavor Affinities

manchego cheese + almonds + quince paste

CHEESE, MASCARPONE

(See **Mascarpone**)

CHEESE, MONTEREY JACK

chicken
enchiladas
fresh fruit

CHEESE, MOZZARELLA

anchovies
BASIL
bell peppers, roasted
garlic
Italian cuisine
meats, cured (e.g., salami)
olive oil
olives
oregano
pancetta
pasta
pepper, black
pizza
prosciutto
radicchio
rosemary
sage
salt: kosher, sea
sopressata
spinach
***TOMATOES**
tomatoes, sun-dried
truffles, black
vinegar: balsamic, red wine

Flavor Affinities

mozzarella cheese + basil + olive oil + tomatoes

mozzarella cheese + olives + prosciutto

Dishes

Mozzarella di Bufala, Eggplant Agrodolce, Artichoke con Pesto

—Andrew Carmellini, A Voce (New York City)



CHEESE, MUENSTER

apples
bread, crusty
caraway seeds
cherries
fennel
grapes

CHEESE, PARMESAN

basil
beans, fava
carpaccio
dates
fennel
figs
fruits, stone
garlic
grapes
honey, esp. chestnut
ITALIAN CUISINE
melon
mushrooms
olive oil
PASTA
pears
pizza
prosciutto
risottos
thyme
vinegar, balsamic, esp. aged
walnuts

CHEESE, PECORINO

bacon
bell peppers, roasted
duck confit
grapes
greens, salad
honey, chestnut
lemon, juice
mostarda (mustard fruits)
olive oil
pasta
pears
pepper, white
prosciutto
ricotta cheese

sopressata
vinegar, balsamic, esp. aged
walnuts

CHEESE, PIAVE

cured meats

CHEESE, PROVOLONE

figs
grapes
Italian cuisine
lime, juice
olive oil
olives
pasta (e.g., lasagna)
pears
pizza
prosciutto

Piave cheese works with an array of different cured meats.

—MAX McCALMAN, ARTISANAL CHEESE CENTER (NEW YORK CITY)

If you open my refrigerator at home, you will always find a piece of cheese! I love many cheeses, but there will definitely be a piece of **Parmigiano-Reggiano**. It never goes bad and is so versatile. I can cut a piece off to go with a glass of Prosecco as an apéritif, serve it after dinner with red wine, slice a piece for a sandwich, or grate it over some pasta.

—ODETTE FADA, SAN DOMENICO (NEW YORK CITY)

I was in Parma, Italy, in a restaurant and out came my glass of Prosecco followed by the server cutting off hunks of **Parmigiano-Reggiano** to serve me. I thought it was a beautiful way to begin! It is a way to leave your world behind, and begin your meal.

—HOLLY SMITH, CAFÉ JUANITA (SEATTLE)

Dishes

Parmesan Broth with Prosciutto and Peas, Scallion Parmesan Flan

—Sanford D'Amato, Sanford (Milwaukee)

CHEESE, REBLOCHON

fennel

panforte (Italian fruit and nut cake)

pistachios

CHEESE, RICOTTA

almonds

apricots

bacon

basil

beans, fava

berries

blueberries

bread

cheese: mozzarella, Parmesan, pecorino

cheesecake

chestnuts

chives

chocolate, dark

cinnamon

coffee / espresso

cream

dates

egg dishes (e.g., frittatas, omelets)

figs, esp. dried

fruits, dried

garlic

hazelnuts

herbs

HONEY, esp. chestnut, eucalyptus, or lavender

Italian cuisine

lemon, esp. juice, zest

mace

mascarpone
nutmeg
olive oil
orange, esp. juice, zest

Gina DePalma of New York's Babbo on Babbo's Cheese Plate

At Babbo, I oversee the cheese selection, which has seven choices. The biggest challenge with Italian cheese is that there are so many “superstars” that you just can’t *not* offer them. So, in the seven slots we have many standard choices but they are amazing:

- **Parmigiano-Reggiano:** This is the “undisputed king of all cheeses” according to Mario [Batali]!
- **Taleggio:** This washed-rind cheese is very wet, has the distinctive orange color, and is gooey. The interior is sweet and the rind is assertive.
- **Gorgonzola Piccante:** This is firmer, bluer, nutty, and just amazing!
- **Coach Farm Goat:** Though it is not from Italy, it is the goat cheese we choose. [Mario Batali’s wife’s family owns the Coach Farm Dairy.]
- **Robiola:** This is a soft-ripened cheese from Piedmont.
- **Pecorino:** This is a sheep’s milk cheese that is nothing like the Pecorino-Romano that you get in your deli to grate over pasta. This is made in many areas around Italy. We may use one from the south or Tuscany or one that is rubbed with tomato or aged underground from another part of the country.
- **The Seventh Cheese:** I play around with the seventh cheese and change it often but a recent favorite is a **Piave**, which is like an English Cheddar. It is from the Veneto along the Piave River.

parsley, flat-leaf

pasta

pepper, black

pine nuts

prosciutto

Prosecco

prunes

raisins

raspberries

rum, esp. dark

salt, kosher

sorrel

spinach

strawberries

sugar

tapenade

tarragon
tomatoes
vanilla
vinegar, balsamic
walnuts, esp. candied or toasted
wine, red, sweet

Flavor Affinities

ricotta + bread + honey + Prosecco

On our brunch menu with our corn and saffron pancakes, we serve fresh **ricotta** to be used instead of butter.

—BRAD FARMERIE, PUBLIC (NEW YORK CITY)

CHEESE, ROQUEFORT

butter, unsalted
cognac
cream
figs
honey
leeks
oil, walnut
pears
pepper
potatoes, creamer
salt
vinaigrette
walnuts
wine: red, **SAUTERNES**

Flavor Affinities

Roquefort cheese + figs + pears

CHEESE, SHEEP'S MILK—IN GENERAL

almonds

apricots
bread, esp. olive
ham, esp. Serrano
honey
nuts
olive oil
olives
panforte
pepper, black
quince paste

Dishes

Bruschetta with Favas and New York State Ricotta

—Mario Batali, Babbo (New York City)

Sheep's Milk Ricotta Ravioli with Heirloom Tomato, Arugula, Vin Cotto

—Andrew Carmellini, A Voce (New York City)

Ricotta and Robiola Cheesecake with Figs and Raspberries

—Gina DePalma, pastry chef, Babbo (New York City)

Corn and Saffron Pancakes with a Spicy Poached Pear and Fresh Ricotta

—Brad Farmerie, Public (New York City)

Bellwether Farms Ricotta Fritters with Cara Cara and Blood Orange Compote, Vanilla Crème Anglaise

—Emily Luchetti, pastry chef, Farallon (San Francisco)

Ricotta Gnocchi with Fava Beans, Sage, and Lemon Oil

—Judy Rodgers, Zuni Café (San Francisco)

I'm a fan of apricot with Berkswell [an English sheep's milk cheese].

—MAX McCALMAN, ARTISANAL CHEESE CENTER (NEW YORK CITY)

CHEESE, SPANISH

(See Cheese: Cabrales, Manchego)

CHEESE, STILTON

apples

dates

honey

pears

pecans

port

salads

sauces

walnuts

CHEESE, SWISS

asparagus

bread, esp. pumpernickel

grapes

ham

pears

CHEESE, TALEGGIO

hazelnuts

mostarda (mustard fruits)

pears

CHEESE, TRIPLE CRÈME

cherries

figs

hazelnuts

herbs

honey

mostarda (mustard fruits)

nut bread

olives
pears
vegetables, roasted
walnuts

CHEESE, VACHERIN

cherries
hazelnuts

CHEESE, VALDEON

meats: cured, smoked
steak

CHEESE, VERMONT SHEPHERD

almonds
apples
fennel

CHERRIES—IN GENERAL

Season: late spring–late summer
Taste: sweet
Weight: light–medium
Volume: moderate
Techniques: flambé, poach, raw, stew

allspice
ALMONDS
amaretto
apricots
Armagnac
bourbon
brandy
butter, unsalted
buttermilk

cake

caramel

cassis

cheese: Brie, goat, ricotta

cherries, dried

CHOCOLATE, ESP. DARK, WHITE

cinnamon

cloves

coconut

coffee / espresso

cognac

coriander

CREAM AND ICE CREAM

cream cheese

crème fraîche

crust: pastry, pie

currants, red

custards (e.g., crème caramel, flan, etc.)

duck

fennel

figs

game birds

garlic

ginger

goose

Grand Marnier

hazelnuts

honey

ice cream, vanilla

***KIRSCH**

LEMON: juice, zest

lime, juice

liqueur: almond, orange

mascarpone

meats, fatty, esp. roasted

melon

meringue

nectarines

nuts

oats
orange: juice, zest
pâté
peaches
pecans
pepper: black, green
pistachios
plums
pork
port, esp. ruby
poultry, fatty, esp. roasted
quince
raspberries
rice pudding
rose hips
rum
sage, esp. with tart cherries
salads
salt

sour cream

stocks: chicken, duck, veal

SUGAR

VANILLA

vermouth, sweet

vinegar: balsamic, ice wine, red wine

vodka

walnuts

WINE: dry red (e.g., Bordeaux, Merlot), sparkling wine/Champagne

yogurt

Flavor Affinities

cherries + almonds + cream + kirsch + vanilla

cherries + chocolate + walnuts

cherries + coconut + custard

cherries + coffee + cream

cherries + goat cheese + ice wine vinegar + black pepper + thyme

cherries + honey + pistachios + yogurt

cherries + mint + vanilla

cherries + orange + sugar + dry red wine
cherries + sweet vermouth + vanilla

Cherries can stand up to a lot of flavors. They have more juice to them as well as complexity. Almonds go with cherries. Dark chocolate actually goes better with cherries than it does raspberries, and white chocolate works with cherries as well.

—EMILY LUCHETTI, FARALLON (SAN FRANCISCO)



If you have perfect ingredients in the summertime, you don't have to do much to them. With our perfect **cherries** [Michigan, while at Tribute restaurant], we halved them, sprinkled them with sugar, and heated them with a blowtorch so that they were just warmed through. The slightly caramelized sugar made a huge difference in the flavor. I used a goat cream cheese worked to a texture similar to mascarpone cheese, which I shaped into quenelles. Served alongside were some ice wine vinegar caramel sauce and a crispy crepe. Before serving, I added individual thyme leaves and a crack of black pepper. These are all really classic flavors, especially the cheese with black pepper and cherries.

—MICHAEL LAISKONIS, LE BERNARDIN (NEW YORK CITY)

I was reading an old Fannie Farmer cookbook from the late 1800s about making **cherry** jam. In the recipe, they would take the cherry pits and crush them. I thought it was crazy but tried it. When you take cherry pits and crush them, it gives you an almond flavor. I made some pickled sour cherries with the crushed pits in cheesecloth with the pickling liquid and I got this great almondy flavor that went deep inside the cherries.

—ANDREW CARMELLINI, A VOCE (NEW YORK CITY)

I like to let them shine on their own. But I do really like **cherries** and grappa. Mario [Batali] has a home in Michigan and he brought me back a case of cherries. They were so perfect I just macerated them in grappa and torn mint leaves. I served them in a bowl with a dollop of mascarpone. Cherries also work well with mint.

—GINA DEPALMA, BABBO (NEW YORK CITY)

I loved **cherries** so much growing up that I would climb up our cherry tree and eat as many as I could. Then I would realize I didn't know how to get back down and would cry until the neighbors would get me down. I still love cherries and especially in cherry pie or a *clafoutis*. Cherries work well with vanilla or poached in red wine, but I like to keep them as simple as possible.

—GABRIEL KREUTHER, THE MODERN (NEW YORK CITY)

Dishes

Cherry-Almond Blancmange over Frangipane and Crème Fraîche Soup

—Dominique and Cindy Duby, Wild Sweets (Vancouver)

Warm Black Garnet Cherry–Rhubarb Pie with Almond Butter Crunch Ice Cream

—Emily Luchetti, pastry chef, Farallon (San Francisco)

Black Garnet Cherries, Strawberries, Pistachios, Marshall Farms Honey, Straus Organic Whole Milk Yogurt

—Emily Luchetti, pastry chef, Farallon (San Francisco)

CHERVIL

Season: spring–autumn

Weight: delicate, soft-leaved

Volume: very quiet

Tips: Always use chervil fresh, not cooked.

asparagus

basil

beans, esp. fava, green

beets

bouquet garni (key ingredient)

carrots

cheese, ricotta

chicken

chives

crab

cream

cream cheese

dill

eggs and egg dishes

fennel

fines herbes (key ingredient, along with chives, parsley, tarragon)

fish

French cuisine

game birds

halibut

herbes de Provence (typical ingredient, along with basil, fennel, marjoram, rosemary, sage, summer savory, and thyme)

leeks

lemon, juice

lemon thyme

lettuce

lobster

marjoram

mint

mushrooms

mustard

parsley

peas

potatoes

poultry

One thing chervil has going for it is its looks. **Chervil** is so cute, it is adorable! You can very carefully make little tiny brushes of them and put them around the plate. Not only does it taste good, but it says to the people eating the dish that you are taking care of them.

—DAVID WALTUCK, CHANTELLE (NEW YORK CITY)

Provençal cuisine

salads, esp. potato, and salad dressings

sauces, esp. creamy scallops

shallots

shellfish

sole

soups, esp. creamy

spinach

squash

tarragon

thyme

tomatoes and tomato sauces

veal

vegetables

venison

vinaigrettes

vinegar

watercress

Flavor Affinities

chervil + chives + fish + parsley

chervil + chives + parsley + tarragon (fines herbes)

CHESTNUTS

Season: autumn–winter

Taste: sweet

Weight: medium–heavy

Volume: quiet–moderate

Techniques: boil, candy, grill, puree, raw, roast

APPLES: CIDER, FRUIT, JUICE

Armagnac

bacon

bay leaf

brandy

Brussels sprouts

butter, unsalted

caramel

cardamom

celery

celery root

celery seeds

cheese, ricotta

chicken (accompaniment)

chocolate, esp. dark or white

cinnamon

cloves

coffee

cognac

CREAM OR MILK

crème fraîche

desserts

duck

fennel

fennel seeds

figs

game (accompaniment)

ginger

ham

honey, esp. chestnut

Italian cuisine, esp. Tuscan

lemon, juice

lentils

maple syrup

mascarpone

meats

mushrooms: cépes/porcini

nutmeg

olive oil

onions

orange
pasta
pears
pepper: black, white
plums
pork (accompaniment)
poultry (e.g., chicken, turkey)
prosciutto
prunes

Dishes

Chestnut Spice Cake with Mascarpone Cream

—Gina DePalma, pastry chef, Babbo (New York City)

Chestnut Sugar Tart, Crème Fraîche

—Johnny Iuzzini, pastry chef, Jean Georges (New York City)

I like to take one ingredient and see how much I can do with it. I made a frozen chestnut semifreddo with bits of candied **chestnuts**. This was then set on an orange-soaked chestnut sponge cake, next to a chestnut wafer and chestnut paste. I needed a complementary flavor, and I have always liked the combination of pear and chestnut. They both have a richness but depending on how the pear is handled, it can add freshness and acidity. I roasted the pear in sugar, butter, and ice wine vinegar and finished it in the oven until soft. The pear was then diced tartare-like and had orange confit added. The juices from the pear were the only sauce.

—MICHAEL LAISKONIS, LE BERNARDIN (NEW YORK CITY)

Chestnuts have a bursty flavor and they work with chocolate and pears. You have to combine them with earthy flavors. If you paired chestnuts with berries, they would just get lost.

—EMILY LUCHETTI, FARALLON (SAN FRANCISCO)

raisins
raspberries
risotto

rum

sage

salt, sea

sauces

sausages

shallots

sherry

stews

STOCK, CHICKEN

stuffing (e.g., for poultry)

sugar: brown, white

sweet potatoes

thyme

vanilla

wine, esp. sweet Marsala or sherry

AVOID

berries

Flavor Affinities

chestnuts + apples + cream

chestnuts + bacon + fennel

chestnuts + crème fraîche + sugar

chestnuts + orange + pear

CHICKEN

Function: heating

Weight: medium

Volume: quiet

Techniques: bake, braise, broil, deep-fry, grill, poach, roast, sauté, steam, stew, stir-fry

allspice

almonds

anise

apples

apricots, dried

artichokes

avocados

bacon

bananas

BASIL: regular, cinnamon

BAY LEAF

beans: red, white

beer

bell peppers: red, green, yellow

bouquet garni

brandy, esp. apple (in sauce)

bread crumbs or *panko*

BUTTER, UNSALTED

buttermilk

Calvados

capers

cardamom

CARROTS

cashews (e.g., Indian cuisine, etc.)

cauliflower

cayenne

celery

celery root

celery seeds

chard

cheese: Asiago, blue, Comté, Emmental, Fontina, Parmesan

chervil

chicken livers

chickpeas

chile peppers: dried red (e.g., chipotle), fresh green (e.g., jalapeño)

chives

cider

cilantro

CINNAMON

cloves

coconut milk (e.g., Indian cuisine, etc.)

coriander

corn

cranberries: dried

cream (e.g., French, Indian cuisine, etc.)

crème fraîche

cumin

currants

curry leaves (e.g., Indian cuisine)

curry powder

curry sauce

daikon

dates

dill

dumplings

endive

escarole

fenugreek

figs

fines herbes (i.e., chervil, chives, parsley, tarragon)

fish sauce, Thai

five-spice powder

galangal

garam masala (e.g., Indian cuisine)

GARLIC

GINGER: fresh, ground

Grand Marnier

grapefruit, juice

grapes and grape juice

greens

guava

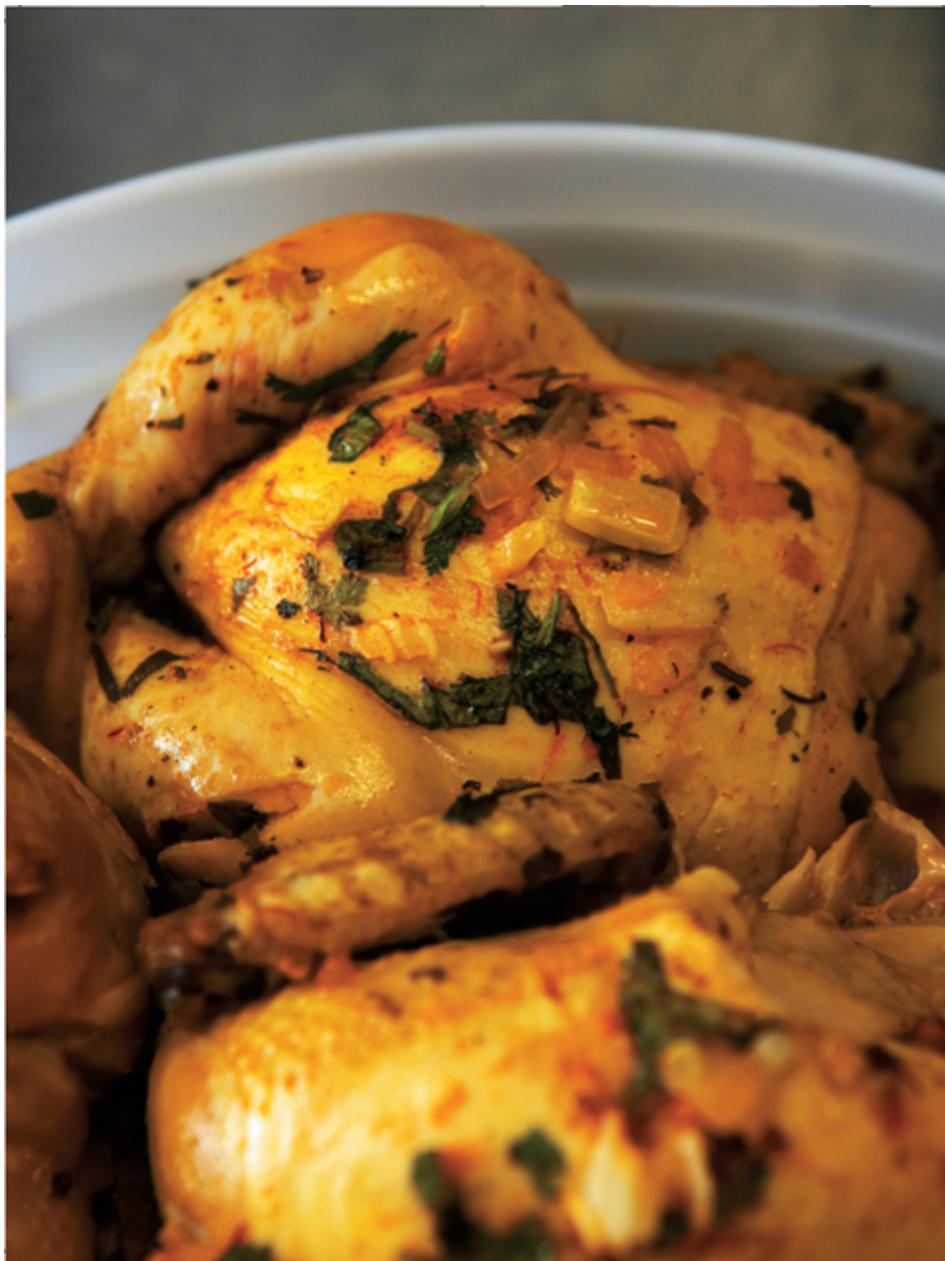
ham

hazelnuts

hoisin sauce

Red beans and rice with andouille sausage is my favorite! When we opened up after the hurricane [Katrina] and were serving on paper plates, I made a roasted Tabasco **chicken** served with dirty rice, with the sausage stuffed in a bell pepper alongside red bean puree. For another dish, I was inspired by a diner down the street from us that had chicken and waffles on the menu, which is an old Southern dish. My take is to make a savory waffle and to add Boursin cheese with lots of herbs. Then I pair it with chicken thighs braised in a *coq au vin blanc* and serve it with spinach. The dish is simple, but I just love the flavors.

—BOB IACOVONE, CUVÉE (NEW ORLEANS)



Dishes

Taquitos de Pollo: Crispy Taquitos Filled with Chicken and Poblanos, with Homemade Sour Cream, Salsa Verde, Añejo Cheese, and Guacamole

—Rick Bayless, Frontera Grill (Chicago)

Chicken Braised in Black Pepper Gravy with Summer Root Vegetables, Hen o' Woods Mushrooms, and Rosemary Cream Biscuits

—Jeffrey Buben, Vidalia (Washington, DC)

Hoffman Ranch Breast of Chicken with Chanterelles and Thyme Jus

—Traci Des Jardins, Jardinière (San Francisco)

Chicken Tagine with Olives, Preserved Lemons, and Green Peas

—Lahsen Ksiyer, Casaville (New York City)

Half a Chicken Cut in Pieces and Braised in a Tequila–White Vinegar Sauce with Green Olives, Golden Raisins, and Almonds

—Zarela Martinez, Zarela (New York City)

“Southern Fried” Chicken Salad, Roasted Sweet Corn, Candied Pecans, Shaved Red Onions, and Buttermilk Ranch Dressing

—Carrie Nahabedian, Naha (Chicago)

Balsamic-Caramel Chicken with Broccoli and Walnuts

—Monica Pope, T’afia (Houston)

Roast Chicken Breast with Wild Mushrooms, Creamy Polenta, and White Truffle Oil

—Alfred Portale, Gotham Bar and Grill (New York City)

Boneless Chicken Breast in Peruvian Adobo Roasted in Our Wood-Burning Oven, Pumpkin and Mango Sauce, Ripe Plantain, and Eggplant Puree

—Maricel Presilla, Cucharamama (Hoboken, New Jersey)

Apricot Curry Chicken Salad with Fennel, Cilantro, and Dried Fruit

—Charlie Trotter, Trotter's to Go (Chicago)

Lemon-Ghee Marinated and Grilled Specialty Chicken Breast with Roasted Garlic and Cashews

—Vikram Vij and Meeru Dhalwala, Vij's (Vancouver)

Roasted Chicken with Green Olive, Coriander, and Ginger Sauce

—Jean-Georges Vongerichten, Jojo (New York City)

honey

kale

leeks

LEMON: juice, zest

lemongrass

lime, juice

mangoes

maple syrup

marjoram

mayonnaise

mint

mirepoix

molasses

MUSHROOMS: cultivated or wild (e.g., cepes, chanterelles, morels, portobello, shiitake, white)

mustard: Dijon, dry, yellow mustard seeds

nutmeg

nuts: cashews, peanuts

OIL: canola, grapeseed, hazelnut, **peanut**, safflower, sesame, vegetable

OLIVE OIL

OLIVES: black, green, kalamata, niçoise

ONIONS: cipollini, pearl, red, Spanish, spring, sweet orange: juice, zest

oregano

pancetta

paprika

PARSLEY, FLAT-LEAF (garnish)

parsnips

peaches

peanuts

pears

peas: black-eyed, green

PEPPER: BLACK, PINK, WHITE

pesto

pine nuts

polenta (accompaniment)

pomegranates and pomegranate molasses

poppy seeds

POTATOES (accompaniment)

prosciutto

prunes

raisins

red pepper flakes

rice

ROSEMARY, fresh

saffron

sage

SALT: *fleur de sel*, kosher, sea

sauces, Mornay

sausages, esp. spicy (e.g., andouille)

savory

scallions

sesame seeds

SHALLOTS

sherry, dry (e.g., manzanilla)

sour cream

soy sauce

spinach

star anise

STOCKS: chicken, veal

sugar: brown, white (pinch)

sweet potatoes

Tabasco sauce

TARRAGON

THYME, FRESH

TOMATOES AND TOMATO PASTE

truffles

turmeric

turnips

vanilla

vermouth

VINEGAR: balsamic, Chinese black, cider, red wine, sherry, tarragon, white wine

waffles

whiskey

WINE: dry to off-dry white (e.g., Riesling), dry red, rice, sweet wine, vermouth

yogurt

Andrew Carmellini of New York's A Voce on Cooking Chicken as a Two-Part Process—and Applying It to Chicken Cacciatore

1. Brining: Sometimes the older techniques inspire me for deeper flavors. Many of these techniques are overlooked. Take brining, for instance. Brining has been done forever with pork chops and chicken, and for the last five years you have heard about it with turkey. The success of brining is more about the salt and it getting in there and softening the protein strands. It is less about all the other flavoring agents.

If you want to get started in your kitchen, start with a skin- and bone-on chicken breast. Grab some kosher salt, sugar, or honey as I do, some water, and brine the breast for 30 minutes. When you pull it out of the brine, rinse it, dry it, and let it sit in the refrigerator for a couple of hours so the moisture comes out. You will notice the difference in the texture. The marinated chicken—even if you overcook it—will not be dry. It is the best.

2. Marinating: The chicken on my menu right now is brined and then marinated for 24 hours. It is crazy how good the chicken becomes. The marinade is made up of roasted garlic, Sicilian oregano, red pepper flakes, lots of lemon, thyme, and olive oil. We joke that it tastes like Zesty Italian Wish-Bone Dressing. It is so delicious.

The finished dish is served with poached and sautéed artichoke, roasted pepper grilled over wood, fennel, and roasted spring onions. These vegetables are all tossed with pesto, and the dish is finished with a tomato sauce made with foamy tomato water and thyme.

Chicken Cacciatore

We opened up A Voce with chicken cacciatore on our menu and when people heard the name of the dish, they'd just yawn. A lot of times, this dish is just chicken scaloppine with peppers and tomatoes. Ours is a whole different dish: the chicken is on the bone, and brined first, which makes it nice and moist. With it, we serve a homemade peperonata with roasted peppers, onions, garlic, red pepper flakes, rosemary, fresh bay leaf, fresh thyme, and *piment d'Espelette* [a pepper from France with a smoky flavor]. Here is a place where technique plays a role in the flavor: When you roast peppers, the best way to get the skin off is to put them in a bowl covered with plastic wrap and let them steam. When they are done, you are left with the pepper liquid. What we do is cook with that liquid.

To finish this dish, we put a big scoop of the pepper mixture, tomato sauce, garlic puree, onion, red wine vinegar, and fresh bay leaf on the chicken and put it in the oven to roast. The chicken cooks in its own juice then is served with roasted potatoes. It is delicious.

What we are doing is layering the flavors. You have the technique of brining the chicken, elevating the flavor profile of the peppers with the sweetness of the onions and herbs, adding a little heat from the *piment d'Espelette*, and giving body to the sauce from the pepper juice, which is distilled pepper brandy.

Flavor Affinities

chicken + andouille sausage + red beans + rice

chicken + apples + endive + walnuts

chicken + asparagus + ginger

chicken + avocado + bacon + garlic + mayonnaise + tarragon

chicken + basil + cinnamon

chicken + chanterelle mushrooms + rosemary

chicken + cloves + rosemary + yogurt
chicken + coconut + galangal + shiitake mushrooms
chicken + coriander + cumin + garlic
chicken + cream + grapefruit + pink peppercorns
chicken + cream + morels
chicken + cumin + garlic + lemon
chicken + figs + honey + thyme + dry white wine
chicken + fines herbes + mushrooms + spring onions
chicken + garlic + lemon
chicken + garlic + pancetta + sage + thyme
chicken + mustard + thyme

CHICKEN LIVERS

(See Liver, Chicken)

CHICKPEAS

(aka garbanzo beans)

Season: summer

Function: cooling

Techniques: simmer

apple cider or juice
basil
bay leaf
bell peppers, esp. red
bread
butter, unsalted
cardamom
carrots
cayenne
cheese, feta
chicken
chile peppers: dried red, fresh green (e.g., jalapeño)
chives
cilantro
cinnamon

cloves
coriander
couscous
cumin, esp. toasted (e.g., Indian cuisine, etc.)
curry leaves
curry powder
fennel
fennel seeds
garam masala (e.g., Indian cuisine)

GARLIC

ginger

greens (e.g., chard, spinach) ham, Serrano
hummus (key ingredient) Indian cuisine
Italian cuisine (as garbanzo beans)

leeks

LEMON: juice, zest

lemon, preserved

lemon thyme

Mediterranean cuisine

Mexican cuisine

Middle Eastern cuisine

mint

OLIVE OIL

olives, black

ONIONS: RED, YELLOW

paprika, esp. smoked or sweet

parsley, flat-leaf

pasta

pepper: black, white

pork

potatoes

prosciutto

raisins

red pepper flakes

rice, esp. basmati (accompaniment)

rosemary

saffron

sage

salads

SALT, KOSHER

scallions

sesame seeds

shrimp

soups

spinach

squash, winter

stews

stocks: chicken, vegetable

tabbouleh (key ingredient)

tahini

tamarind

thyme

tomatoes

turmeric

vinegar, esp. balsamic, red wine, sherry

walnuts and walnut oil

yogurt (e.g., Indian cuisine)

Flavor Affinities

chickpeas + cayenne + garlic + lemon juice + olive oil + salt + tahini

chickpeas + cilantro + cumin

chickpeas + garlic + lemon juice + olive oil + thyme

chickpeas + garlic + mint

chickpeas + garlic + olive oil + parsley

CHICORY

(See also Endive; Lettuces—Bitter Greens and Chicories; and Radicchio)

Season: autumn–spring

Weight: medium

Volume: moderate

Techniques: grill, raw

apples

bacon

capers

cheese, esp. Gruyère and/or fresh

cilantro
crème fraîche
cumin
figs
fish, smoked
garlic
ham, Serrano
lemon
lettuces
meats and poultry, richer
nuts
olive oil
paprika, smoked
parsley
prosciutto
salads
salmon, smoked
watercress

Dishes

Preserved Lemon Hummus; Roasted Red Pepper and Walnut Puree

—Monica Pope, T'afia (Houston)

Dishes

Chicory Salad with Fall Root Vegetables, Shaved Pear, and Rapeseed-Mustard Vinaigrette

—Daniel Boulud, Daniel (New York City)

CHILE PEPPERS—IN GENERAL

Season: summer

Taste: hot

Weight: light–medium (from fresh to dried)
Volume: moderate–very loud (from dried to fresh)
Techniques: raw, roast, sauté
Tips: Add at the end of the cooking process. The spiciness of chile peppers suggests “false heat.”

Asian cuisine
avocado
bananas
basil
bay leaf
BEANS, ESP. BLACK, PINTO
Cajun cuisine
Caribbean cuisine
cayenne
cheese: Fontina, goat, mozzarella, Parmesan
Chinese cuisine
chocolate
CILANTRO, esp. in Latin American cuisine
cinnamon
coconut and coconut milk, esp. in Asian cuisine
coriander
corn
cumin
CURRIES (key ingredient)
eggplant
fennel
fish sauce, esp. in Asian cuisine
fruit, esp. citrus
GARLIC
GINGER, esp. in Asian cuisine
Indian cuisine
ketchup
Latin American cuisine
lemon, juice
lemongrass
lentils
LIME, JUICE
mangoes

marjoram

***MEXICAN CUISINE**

mole sauces

mushrooms

mustard

olive oil

olives

onions

oregano

Pakistani cuisine

parsley, flat-leaf

peanuts, esp. in Asian cuisine

pineapple

rice

rosemary

saffron

salads, esp. bean

salsas and other sauces

seafood

sesame and sesame oil, esp. in Asian cuisine

shallots

Southwestern American cuisine soy sauce

stews

sweet vegetables (e.g., beets, carrots, corn)

***THAI CUISINE**

thyme

tomatoes and tomato sauces

verbena

vinegar: balsamic, red wine, sherry

yogurt

Flavor Affinities

chile peppers + cilantro + lime



CHILE PEPPERS, ANAHEIM

Taste: hot, sweet

Weight: medium

Volume: very quiet–loud

salads

salsas

stuffed peppers

CHILE PEPPERS, ANCHO

(dried poblanos)

Taste: hot, sweet

Weight: medium

Volume: quiet–loud

cashews

chili

sauces, esp. mole

soups

turkey

CHILE PEPPERS, CHIPOTLE

(dried, smoked jalapeño peppers)

Taste: very hot, smoky

Weight: medium

Volume: moderate–very loud

avocado

beans

Central American cuisine

chicken

chili

chocolate

cilantro

game

garlic

lemon, juice

lime, juice

mayonnaise

Mexican cuisine

molasses

olive oil

onions

orange, juice

paprika

pork

rice

salsas and sauces

salt, esp. kosher

soups

stews

sugar

Tex-Mex cuisine

tomatoes

vinegar, white

CHILE PEPPERS, GUAJILLO

Taste: hot

Weight: medium

Volume: moderate–loud

eggs
jicama
lime
pork
sauces
soups
stews
tomatoes

CHILE PEPPERS, HABANERO

Taste: very hot, sweet

Weight: medium

Volume: very loud+

fish (e.g., snapper)
lemon, juice
onions
pork
salsas and sauces
sugar

CHILE PEPPERS, JALAPEÑO

Taste: very hot

Weight: medium

Volume: very loud

cheese
cinnamon
lemon, juice
olive oil
onions, white
salsas and sauces

salt, sea
soups

CHILE PEPPERS, PASILLA

(dried chilacas) **Taste:** hot
Weight: medium
Volume: quiet–loud

mole
sauces

CHILE PEPPERS, PIMENTS D'ESPELETTE

Taste: hot
Weight: medium
Volume: quiet–moderate

cheese, French or Spanish
French Basque cuisine
olive oil
Spanish Basque cuisine

I have made a red-hot apple gelée that was a garnish to a *panna cotta*, taking apple cider and infusing it with cinnamon and **jalapeño chile**—which ended up tasting like red-hot candy. I like using fresh jalapeños in an infusion, or an *espelette* as a finishing note. I also love the idea of chipotle chile paired with chocolate ice cream.

—MICHAEL LAISKONIS, LE BERNARDIN (NEW YORK CITY)

CHILE PEPPERS, POBLANO

Taste: hot
Weight: medium
Volume: quiet–moderate

chile peppers, chipotle
chiles rellenos

cilantro
corn
garlic
onions
salads
salsas
tomatoes
vegetables, roasted

CHILE PEPPERS, SERRANO

Taste: very hot
Weight: medium
Volume: very loud+

Bloody Marys
chili powder
cilantro
coriander
cumin
garlic
molasses
oil, vegetable
olive oil
onions, yellow
orange, juice
salsas
stock, chicken
vinegar, white

CHILEAN CUISINE

(See also Latin American Cuisines)

chile peppers
corn
cumin
garlic
meats

olives
oregano
paprika
pepper, black
raisins

CHILI PASTE

Taste: hot
Weight: medium-heavy
Volume: loud

Asian cuisine
beef
marinades
pork
sauces

CHILI POWDER

Taste: hot
Weight: light
Volume: quiet-loud

cumin
Tabasco sauce
tequila

CHINESE CUISINE

(See also Szechuan Cuisine)
Techniques: fry, stir-fry

cabbage
chicken
chile peppers
cinnamon

duck

fish

garlic

ginger

hoisin sauce

peanuts

pork

RICE

scallions

seafood

sesame: oil, seeds

shrimp: fresh, dried

snow peas

SOY SAUCE

star anise

steaming

stock, chicken

sugar

tofu

vegetables

vinegar, rice wine

wheat (e.g., noodles), esp. in northern China

wine, rice

In Chinese cooking they have a technique called “red cooking” that is a dish braised or steamed with star anise, dark soy sauce, cinnamon, and rock sugar. I cook the oxtail for my timbale of oxtail and foie gras that way, and then clarify the broth and turn it into the aspic that holds the dish together. The foie gras is cooked separately and made into a terrine. The dish is then served with gingery pickled vegetables. It is not a Chinese dish in that it is not a dish that you would find in a Chinese restaurant, but it has Chinese influences. The idea of clarifying the broth is typically French. The use of foie gras is not very Chinese. The pickled vegetables are like something you might find in Chinese cooking, but they are done in perfect dice and served as a relish.

—DAVID WALTUCK, CHANTERELLE (NEW YORK CITY)



Flavor Affinities

cabbage + chicken stock
garlic + ginger + pork
ginger + rice wine + soy sauce
soy sauce + sugar

CHINESE FIVE-SPICE POWDER

(See Five-Spice Powder)

CHIVES

Season: spring–autumn

Botanical relatives: garlic, leeks, onions, shallots

Weight: light, soft-leaved

Volume: quiet–moderate

Tips: Always use fresh, not cooked. Use in stir-fries.

avocados

basil

beans, green

butter

CHEESE, esp. cheddar, ricotta, and cheese sauces

chervil

chicken

Chinese cuisine

cilantro

cream and cream sauces

cream cheese
crème fraîche
dill

EGGS, EGG DISHES, AND OMELETS

fennel

fines herbes (ingredient, along with chervil, parsley, tarragon)

fish

garlic

herbs, most other

marjoram

onions, esp. green

paprika

parsley

pasta

pork

POTATOES

salads and salad dressings

sauces, esp. cheese and cream based

shellfish

smoked salmon

sole

sorrel

SOUPS, esp. cream based and cold (e.g., vichyssoise)

sour cream

tarragon

thyme

vegetables and root vegetables

vinaigrettes

zucchini

You can't cook without onions, and **chives** are a delicate way to get that flavor into a dish. They are good in a soup or a sauce. A chive oil is great drizzled around a plate for flavor as well as appearance.

—DAVID WALTUCK, CHANTERELLE

My chocolate-corn dessert [of soft chocolate ganache and sweet corn in three textures: crunchy corn and hazelnut corn sorbet, and corn tuile] was inspired by freeze-dried corn. [The kernels] are whole with a vibrant sweetness. Corn dates back to the Aztecs, who also loved **chocolate**, so it's funny when people ask, "Where'd you get the

inspiration?” This starts with a layer of milk chocolate hazelnut praline paste, then the corn, and then crushed wafers that give it that Kit Kat candy bar texture; on top of that is some chocolate ganache, then a layer of chocolate. To play off those flavors I serve some *espelette* [pepper] to give a little heat and some smoked salt from Wales. This dish is about the interplay of the chocolate and the corn. The *espelette* gives a heat that reminds me of roasted corn salsa. This is an ode to the origin of the inspiration.

—MICHAEL LAISKONIS, LE BERNARDIN (NEW YORK CITY)

It is hard to think of a fruit or nut that is not improved by combining it with chocolate.

—MICHEL RICHARD, CITRONELLE (WASHINGTON, DC)

I love **chocolate** with fruit or nuts or both. My favorite candy bar in the world is a Cadbury Fruit and Nut bar. On my menu I have a chocolate, hazelnut, and orange dessert, which is essentially a Cadbury!

—GINA DEPALMA, BABBO (NEW YORK CITY)

CHOCOLATE / COCOA—IN GENERAL

Taste: bitter–sweet (depending on sugar content)

achiote
allspice
ALMONDS
anise seeds
apricots
Armagnac
BANANAS
basil
beverages
boar
bourbon
brandy
brioche or challah
butter, unsalted
butterscotch
CARAMEL, esp. with dark chocolate
cardamom
cashews
cheese, ricotta

cherries: regular, sour, dried

chicken

chile peppers

chili powder

chocolate, white

CINNAMON

cloves

cocoa powder

coconut

***COFFEE / ESPRESSO**, esp. with dark chocolate

cognac

Cointreau

corn syrup, light

CREAM

cream cheese

crème anglaise

crème fraîche

crust: pastry, pie

currants

custard

dates

DESSERTS

duck

espelette figs, dried

fruit: dried, fresh



When it comes to **chocolate**, keep it simple. That's always good advice! For simplicity at its best, only two ingredients are necessary: heavy cream and chopped chocolate. Bring the cream to a boil, pour it over the chocolate, and it turns into ganache. Serve it warm with just a spoon. How can you do any better? In my new book, I feature a recipe called Cup O' Dark Chocolate, and essentially it is ganache poured into a cup. Then you grab a cookie, and have at it!

If you want to dip fruit into chocolate, dried fruits such as figs, pear, and pineapple all work really well. People always ask what they can serve to impress their sweetheart on Valentine's Day, and fresh strawberries are really nice in February. Just make a warm ganache, grab the strawberries, and start dipping. Fresh grapes are fantastic with chocolate. Dip them into the melted chocolate, pop them in the freezer, and when they are frozen, put them into a two-quart container. That way, you will always have a little treat in the freezer. Be careful though—they are not M&Ms, so *they will melt in your hands!*

—MARCEL DESAULNIERS, THE TRELLIS (WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA)

game (e.g., rabbit, venison)

game birds

ginger

graham crackers

Grand Marnier

HAZELNUTS

honey
Kirsch
lavender
lemon
liqueurs: berry, coffee (e.g., Kahlúa), nut (e.g., Frangelico), orange
macadamia nuts
malt (malted milk)
maple syrup
marshmallows
mascarpone
meats

Mexican cuisine (e.g., mole sauces)

MILK

MINT

nutmeg, esp. on hot chocolate

NUTS

oats
orange: juice, zest
orange blossom water
passion fruit
peanuts/peanut butter

pears

pecans
pepper: black, pink (pinch)

poultry

praline

prunes

raisins

RASPBERRIES, esp. with milk chocolate

Rice Krispies

RUM: DARK, LIGHT

salt

sauces: savory (e.g., mole), sweet (e.g., chocolate)

sour cream

strawberries

SUGAR: brown, confectioners', white

tea, esp. green or Earl Grey

turkey

VANILLA

Vin Santo
walnuts

Everybody is on the **chocolate** bandwagon now, and we are not far away from the proverbial “man on the street” knowing the difference between a 72 percent and a 66 percent chocolate. The boutique chocolate makers are now coming up with estate and varietal and vintage chocolates. I love that, but honestly, once you add enough sugar and cream to chocolate, those nuances are all gone.

—MICHAEL LAISKONIS, LE BERNARDIN (NEW YORK CITY)

People always ask why I use bittersweet versus semisweet **chocolate**. Semisweet is chocolate that needs salt. When you add salt to it, it brings up the bitter flavor and makes it taste bittersweet. Semisweet chocolate to me tastes kind of flat. Milk chocolate can taste flat as well. Now that there is Scharffen Berger and El Rey on the market, I find both those chocolates to be really, really great, with both flavor and kick to them. But if you want a killer chocolate dessert, don’t use milk chocolate.

When I write a dessert menu, there will be a couple of chocolate desserts, with one being a killer chocolate and the other a lighter option, like chocolate with bananas. If you don’t have something intensely chocolate, chocolate lovers are very, very unhappy. Banana soufflé with chocolate is not considered a chocolate dessert. You have to be careful with a killer chocolate dessert—you can’t just put chocolate, chocolate, and chocolate together. There has to be balance so the dessert is not too rich. To achieve balance, turn to coffee or caramel because they pair so well and help to intensify the chocolate flavor.

For some desserts, I like to combine white and dark chocolate, or milk and dark chocolate, to give balance and cut intensity. It sounds crazy, but you can use one chocolate to mellow the flavor of another.

I’m not a fan of herbs with dessert, with the possible exception of chocolate. I love the combination of chocolate with mint.

—EMILY LUCHETTI, FARALLON (SAN FRANCISCO)

I don’t have a big sweet tooth but I do like all kinds of **chocolate**, from dark to white. Each one is completely different. I like the bitterness and clean flavor of dark chocolate. I like milk chocolate with a piece of bread like when I was a kid. You have to select your white chocolate carefully because not all of it is good. White chocolate works well in a mousse; it has a more neutral flavor and does not dictate. Dark chocolate is all about being the star, versus white, that is better to play with.

—GABRIEL KREUTHER, THE MODERN (NEW YORK CITY)

Dark chocolate goes really well with coffee or caramel, but if I could only pick one it would be the caramel! Caramel and chocolate play so well together despite both being strong flavors.

—EMILY LUCHETTI, FARALLON (SAN FRANCISCO)

Flavor Affinities

chocolate + almonds + cinnamon + sugar
chocolate + almonds + cream
chocolate + banana + butterscotch + macadamia nuts
chocolate + banana + caramel + cream + vanilla
chocolate + butterscotch + caramel + coffee
chocolate + caramel + coffee + malt
chocolate + caramel + coffee + praline
chocolate + caramel + cream + hazelnuts + vanilla
chocolate + cherries + mint
chocolate + cinnamon + chiles + nuts + seeds
chocolate + coffee + hazelnuts
chocolate + coffee + walnuts
chocolate + cream + raspberries
chocolate + custard + pistachios
chocolate + ginger + orange
chocolate + graham crackers + marshmallows
chocolate + hazelnuts + orange
chocolate + lavender + vanilla
chocolate + rum + vanilla

Dishes

Hot Valrhona Chocolate Soufflé, Vermont Maple Ice Cream, Vanilla Ice Cream, and Chocolate Sorbet

—David Bouley, Bouley (New York City)

Austrian Chocolate-Hazelnut Soufflé with Italian Plum Ragoût and Caramel Balsamic Ice Cream

—David Bouley, Danube (New York City)

Chocolate-Hazelnut Cake with Orange Sauce and Hazelnut Gelato

—Gina DePalma, pastry chef, Babbo (New York City)

Almond and Chocolate Torte with Raspberries

—Jim Dodge, at the 2005 James Beard Awards gala reception

Crunchy Chocolate-Hazelnut Spring Roll with Mint and Mango Salad

—Dominique and Cindy Duby, Wild Sweets (Vancouver)

Milk Chocolate and Orange Parfait with Steamed Meringues and Orange and Black Truffle Brown Butter

—Dominique and Cindy Duby, Wild Sweets (Vancouver)

Chocolate-Hazelnut Mousse, Orange Sherbet, and Cardamom-Scented Oranges

—Gale Gand, pastry chef, Tru (Chicago)

Chocolate-Port Semifreddo with Chocolate-Port Bisque, Dark Chocolate Sponge Cake, and Orange-Cinnamon Truffle

—Gale Gand, pastry chef, Tru (Chicago)

Dark Chocolate, Cashew, and Caramel Tart, with Red Wine Reduction, Banana, and Malted Rum-Milk Chocolate Ice Cream

—Michael Laiskonis, pastry chef, Le Bernardin (New York City)

Flourless Chocolate Cake, Dark Chocolate Ganache, Toasted Bread, Maldon Sea Salt, Extra-Virgin Olive Oil

—Michael Laiskonis, pastry chef, Le Bernardin (New York City)

Warm El Rey Chocolate Pudding Cake with Salted Peanut Ice Cream and Peanut Brittle

—Emily Luchetti, pastry chef, Farallon (San Francisco)

Bittersweet Chocolate Pot de Crème with Coffee-Caramel Cream, Butterscotch, and Chocolate Toffee

—Emily Luchetti, pastry chef, Farallon (San Francisco)

Chocolate-Peanut Butter Crème Caramel with Strauss Family Farms Ice Milk

—Ellie Nelson, pastry chef, Jardinière (San Francisco)

Our Marjolaine Cake: A Classic Chocolate-Hazelnut Meringue Layer Cake with Raspberries

—Patrick O'Connell, The Inn at Little Washington (Washington, Virginia)

Our Perennially Popular, Molten-Centered Chocolate Cake with Roasted Banana Ice Cream

—Patrick O'Connell, The Inn at Little Washington (Washington, Virginia)

Chocolate Biscuit Soufflé with Dark Chocolate Mousse and Milk Chocolate–Ginger Parfait

—François Payard, Payard Patisserie and Bistro (New York City)

Milk Chocolate Mousse, Yuzu Citrus Cream, and Sacher Biscuit

—François Payard, Payard Patisserie and Bistro (New York City)

Trio of Desserts: Creamy Chocolate-Cheese Flan with Hibiscus Caramel, Chocolate Bread Pudding with Warm Café con Leche Sauce, Mayan Mediterranean Chocolate Rice Pudding with Cinnamon and Cacao Nib Dust

—Maricel Presilla, Zafra (Hoboken, New Jersey)

Trio of Dark, White, and Gianduja Chocolate Mousses with an Espresso Sauce

—Thierry Rautureau, Rover's (Seattle)

Dark Chocolate–Jalapeño Ice Cream Sundae

—Janos Wilder, Janos (Tucson)

I make a cake with dark **cocoa**, which makes for a bitter chocolate flavor, and then in the middle a milk chocolate cream. Many people don't realize how great the chocolate flavor of cocoa is. It adds bitterness and intensity without adding richness. That is invaluable because so many chocolate desserts are so rich. Often when I make a **chocolate ice cream**, I will combine melted chocolate and cocoa.

—EMILY LUCHETTI, FARALLON (SAN FRANCISCO)

My dessert of **milk chocolate** pot de crème, caramel foam, maple syrup, and Maldon sea salt served in an emptied-out eggshell symbolizes that a few ingredients can come together in a way that is greater than the sum of their parts. The key ingredient which ties it together is the Maldon sea salt. This combination elevates all the ingredients.

Starting with chocolate, caramel was the logical next step. At the time, I played with *fleur de sel*, red salt from Hawaii, and others, before ending up with the Maldon. I like the concept of using sugar as a seasoning, beyond its natural necessity in dessert. I also like natural sweetness from things and maple sugar brings a lot of flavor beyond sweetness. Once I hit upon this combination, I have never changed it.

—MICHAEL LAISKONIS, LE BERNARDIN (NEW YORK CITY)

Dishes

Creamy White Chocolate and Cranberry Risotto with Roasted Apricots

—Dominique and Cindy Duby, Wild Sweets (Vancouver)

White Chocolate and Rice Milk Flan with Pistachio Emulsion

—Dominique and Cindy Duby, Wild Sweets (Vancouver)

Valrhona and El Rey are both good. When you are looking for a **white chocolate**, you want one that has some smoothness to it. It is not going to have the acidity that dark chocolate has. When you are making a dessert with white chocolate, it is going to be a softer, smoother dessert. I don't like dark chocolate and raspberries together, but I believe I am one of the few chefs who feel this way. What I don't like is that when you take a bite of the chocolate with the berry, the acidity of the two don't blend. The acids are too similar, so it doesn't feel like a single dessert in your mouth. Instead, it is a clash with both of them bouncing into each other in your mouth. They don't bridge, and even whipped cream doesn't bring them together. But if you use white chocolate, its softness works much better with berries. The white chocolate complements the berries and brings out their flavors. Citrus, especially anything in the orange family, also works well with white chocolate. Nuts, such as almonds, work well with white chocolate. Spices also work well with white chocolate.

—EMILY LUCHETTI, FARALLON (SAN FRANCISCO)

CHOCOLATE, WHITE

almonds

apricots

bananas

basil

BERRIES: blackberries, blueberries, cranberries

caramel

cashews

cassis

cherries

chocolate, esp. dark

citrus

coconut

cream

dates

figs

ginger

grapes

hazelnuts

lemon: juice, zest

lime

liqueurs: berry, crème de cacao

macadamia nuts

mango

mint

orange

papaya

passion fruit

persimmons

pistachios

pomegranate

prunes

***RASPBERRIES**

rum

strawberries

sugar

sweet potatoes

vanilla

yogurt

Flavor Affinities

white chocolate + basil + strawberries
white chocolate + cream + lemon + orange
white chocolate + dark chocolate + pistachios
white chocolate + ginger + pistachios + rice

CHORIZO

(See also **Sausages**) **Taste:** salty; spicy

Weight: medium-heavy

Volume: moderate-loud

Techniques: sauté, stew

apples

bay leaf

beans

bell peppers, roasted

chicken

chili

clams

garlic

hard cider

herbs

kale

monkfish

olive oil

onions

paprika

potatoes

red pepper flakes

Spanish cuisine

stews

stock, chicken

sweet potatoes

thyme

tomatoes

AVOID

delicate fish (e.g., halibut, scallops)
oily fish (e.g., sardines)

Flavor Affinities

chorizo + clam broth + herbs + monkfish

CHRISTMAS

baked goods, esp. cookies

cinnamon

cloves

eggnog

fruitcake

ginger

peppermint

After a visit to Spain, I created a **chorizo** broth to go with monkfish. I love chorizo, with its paprika flavors and the fattiness of the pork. So I had to figure out how to make a sauce out of a dried piece of sausage. We melted the chorizo in a pan for a long time, and ended up with a flavorful grease that was not that appealing. However, we emulsified it in an herb-infused clam broth, and it became velvety. It wasn't greasy, and gave the sauce a little kick. I chose this sauce to go with monkfish because it is a meaty fish and can stand up to spice and to strong flavors really well. Chorizo would not destroy the soul of the fish.

—ERIC RIPERT, LE BERNARDIN (NEW YORK CITY)

Dishes

Pan-roasted Monkfish with Confit Peppers and Fiery “Patatas Bravas” with Chorizo-Albarino Emulsion

—Eric Ripert, Le Bernardin (New York City)

CILANTRO

Season: spring–summer

Taste: sweet, sour

Weight: light, soft-leaved

Volume: loud

Tips: Always use fresh, not cooked—or, if you must, add at the very last minute.

Use cilantro to provide a cooling note to chile pepper-spiced dishes.

Asian cuisines

avocados

basil

beans

bell peppers

boar, wild

braised dishes

butter

cardamom

Caribbean cuisine

carrots

chicken

CHILE PEPPERS

chives

chutneys

coconut and coconut milk (e.g., Indian cuisine)

corn

cream and ice cream

cucumbers

cumin

curries, esp. Indian

dill

dips

figs

fish, white (e.g., cod, halibut) garam masala (e.g., Indian cuisine)

garlic

ginger

greens

INDIAN CUISINE

lamb

Latin American cuisines

legumes

lemon, juice

lemongrass

lemon verbena

lentils

lime, juice

mayonnaise

meats, esp. white

Mediterranean cuisine

MEXICAN CUISINE

Middle Eastern cuisine

mint (e.g., Indian cuisine)

North African cuisine

onions, red

orange, juice

parsley

pork

Portuguese cuisine

potatoes

rice, esp. Indian

salads, esp. Asian

SALSAS, MEXICAN

sauces

scallions

shellfish

soups

Southeast Asian cuisine

soy sauce

stews

stir-fried dishes

tamarind

Tex-Mex cuisine

Thai cuisine

tomatoes

vegetables, esp. root

Vietnamese cuisine

vinaigrettes, esp. red wine

vinegar, red wine

yogurt

AVOID

Japanese cuisine (say some)

Flavor Affinities

cilantro + chile peppers + coconut milk
cilantro + dill + mint
cilantro + garlic + ginger

I like the anise-seed quality to **cilantro**, which is really good with figs.

—MICHAEL LAISKONIS, LE BERNARDIN (NEW YORK CITY)

I really like using **cilantro** for its lemony and floral qualities, even though it's very non-European. I'll put cilantro stems [not the leaves] in the cavity when I'm roasting a chicken, and I find it lifts the flavor. Cilantro stems are also wonderful in Spanish-themed stews when there's a lot of depth of flavor from ingredients like chorizo, chickpeas, oxtails, or tripe, and it needs a high note.

—TONY LIU, AUGUST (NEW YORK CITY)

Love it or hate it, **cilantro** is in a lot of my dishes! I love its citrus flavor. Cilantro has long legs; we use it to make cilantro oil as well as purees. It lends itself well to white meats but I have even put it on hanger steak and wild boar. I also like it with coconut milk.

—BRAD FARMERIE, PUBLIC (NEW YORK CITY)

CINNAMON

Season: autumn–winter
Taste: sweet, bitter, pungent
Function: heating
Weight: light–medium
Volume: loud
Tips: Add early in cooking.

allspice

APPLES: CIDER, FRUIT, JUICE

apricots

baked dishes and goods

bananas

beef, esp. braised, raw, stewed

bell peppers

berries

beverages, esp. hot

blueberries

breads, sweet (e.g., gingerbread)

breakfast / brunch

butter

caramel

Calvados

cardamom

cherries

chicken

chile peppers

chili powder

Chinese cuisine

CHOCOLATE / COCOA

chutneys

cloves

coffee / espresso

cloves (compatible spice) cookies

coriander

couscous

cream and ice cream

cream cheese

cumin

curries, esp. Indian**CUSTARDS****DESSERTS**

eggplant

fennel

five-spice powder (key ingredient)

French toast

fruits: fruit compotes, fruit desserts

game birds

garam masala, Indian (key ingredient)

garlic

ginger

holiday cooking

honey

Indian cuisine

Indonesian cuisine

lamb, esp. braised

lemon, juice

mace

malt

maple syrup

meats, red

Mediterranean cuisine

Mexican cuisine

Middle Eastern cuisine

mole sauces

Moroccan cuisine

nutmeg

nuts

onions

orange: juice, zest

pancakes

pastries

pears

pecans

pies

plums

pork

poultry

pumpkin

quail

quatre épices (key ingredient)

raisins

ras el hanout (key ingredient)

rice

saffron

sauces (e.g., barbecue)

South American cuisine

Southeast Asian cuisine (as cassia)

Spanish cuisine

squash, esp. winter

star anise

stews

stocks and broths

sugar: brown, white

tagines

tamarind
tea
tomatoes
turmeric
vanilla
veal
vegetables, esp. sweet
waffles
walnuts
wine, red, esp. mulled
yogurt
zucchini

Flavor Affinities

cinnamon + almonds + raisins
cinnamon + cardamom + cloves + coriander + black pepper (garam masala)
cinnamon + cardamom + rice
cinnamon + cloves + mace + nutmeg

I use Saigon **cinnamon** that is the most amazing cinnamon you will ever try. It comes in a chip [as opposed to a stick] and is like the cinnamon used to make red-hots [candy].
I use it in a ganache.

—JOHNNY IUZZINI, JEAN GEORGES (NEW YORK CITY)

CITRUS—IN GENERAL

(See also Lemons, Limes, Oranges, etc.)

Season: winter

Taste: sour

Weight: light–medium

Volume: medium–loud

fish
Greek cuisine
lemongrass
Mediterranean cuisine
salads: green, fruit
shellfish

Dishes

Lemongrass Sorbet, Dehydrated Grapefruit, Crispy Tangerine, Lime Curd

—Johnny Iuzzini, pastry chef, Jean Georges (New York City)

Orange is the leading lady of **citrus**—it brings a sunny, citric flavor to dishes. Lemon and lime are the men of citrus—very strong, so use them carefully!

—MICHEL RICHARD, CITRONELLE (WASHINGTON, DC)

I love candied **citrus** for savory dishes. I love candied kumquats, orange, or lemon. They are great with sweet or savory dishes, and amazing with cheese, such as a soft, non-ashed goat cheese.

—CARRIE NAHABEDIAN, NAHA (CHICAGO)

CLAMS

Season: summer

Taste: salty

Weight: light

Volume: quiet–moderate

Techniques: bake, broil, deep-fry, grill, roast, sauté, steam, stew

aioli

allspice

anchovy

artichokes

asparagus

BACON

basil

bay leaf

beans, white

bell peppers, esp. red

bread, esp. French

bread crumbs

BUTTER, UNSALTED

cabbage, esp. napa

capers

carrots
cauliflower
caviar
cayenne
celery
chervil
CHILE PEPPERS, esp. dried and red (e.g., habanero, jalapeño)
chili powder
chives
chorizo
cilantro
clam juice
cocktail sauce
cod
corn
cream
cumin
fennel
fermented black beans
fish, esp. striped bass
GARLIC
ginger, fresh
gingko nuts
ham, Serrano
hominy
horseradish
Italian cuisine
Japanese cuisine
Korean cuisine
leeks
lemon, juice
lemongrass
lime, juice
marjoram
Mediterranean cuisine
milk
mint, esp. spearmint
mirepoix
mushrooms

mussels
mustard greens
New England cuisine
oil, vegetable

OLIVE OIL

onions, esp. red or Spanish

oregano

oysters

pancetta

PARSLEY, FLAT-LEAF

pasta

PEPPER: BLACK, WHITE

Pernod

pork

POTATOES, esp. Idaho, red

prosciutto

red pepper flakes

rice, esp. Arborio or bomba

romesco sauce

rosemary

saffron

sake

salt, kosher

sausage, esp. spicy (e.g., chorizo)

scallions

scallops (compatible seafood)

shallots

sherry, dry (e.g., fino)

shiso leaf

shrimp (compatible seafood)

soy sauce

spinach

squid (compatible seafood)

stocks: chicken, clam, fish

Tabasco sauce

tapenade

tarragon

Thai basil

THYME

TOMATOES, esp. plum, roasted, sauce

vermouth

WINE, DRY WHITE (e.g., Champagne, Pinot Gris, Tocai Friulano, Sauvignon Blanc)

yuzu juice

Flavor Affinities

clams + aioli + capers + tarragon

clams + bacon + lemon + scallions

clams + basil + garlic + tomatoes

clams + butter + lemon + shallots

clams + cream + curry + fennel

clams + garlic + mussels + onion + thyme + white wine

clams + oysters + potatoes + thyme

Dishes

Linguine with Clams, Pancetta, and Hot Chiles

—Mario Batali, Babbo (New York City)

Clam Chowder with Smoked Bacon

—Rebecca Charles, Pearl Oyster Bar (New York City)

New New England Clam Chowder Served with Cream of Bacon, Onion Jam, and Chive Oil

—Katsuya Fukushima, Café Atlántico / minibar (Washington, DC)

Braised Manila Clams, Italian Sausage, and White Beans

—Rick Tramonto, Tru (Chicago)

CLOVES

Taste: sweet, pungent

Function: heating

Weight: medium

Volume: loud

Techniques: Add early in cooking.

allspice

almonds

apples: cider, fruit, juice

baked goods (e.g., breads, cakes, pastries, pies)

bay leaf

beef

beets

beverages

biryani

cabbage, esp. red

cardamom

carrots

chicken

chile peppers

Chinese cuisine

chocolate

cider, hot (i.e., mulled)

cinnamon

cookies

coriander

cumin

curries (e.g., Asian, Indian)

desserts

duck

English cuisine

fennel seeds

fruits, esp. cooked

game

garam masala (key ingredient)

garlic

German cuisine

ginger

ham, baked

honey

Indian cuisine, esp. northern

ketchup

kumquats

lamb
lemon
mace
meats
Mexican cuisine
nutmeg
onions
orange
pork
pumpkin
salad dressings
sausage
spice cakes
squash
Sri Lankan cuisine
star anise
stews
stock, esp. beef
stuffing
sweet potatoes
Szechuan pepper
tamarind
tea
tomatoes
turmeric
vegetables, sweet
walnuts
wine, red, hot (i.e., mulled)
Worcestershire sauce

Flavor Affinities

cloves + cardamom + cinnamon + tea
cloves + cinnamon + ginger + nutmeg
cloves + ginger + honey

My **coconut** rice pudding strudel was the result of Takashi's influence. [Takashi Yagihashi was his chef at Detroit's Tribute restaurant.] Dessert has to make sense in the context of the rest of the meal. Being a pastry chef is exciting because you have a

lot of autonomy, but you are still working within the chef's framework. Takashi's food was very Asian-influenced. This dish was meant to bring in Asian ingredients in a new way yet be something familiar.

So we have rice pudding flavored with coconut, lemongrass, ginger, and vanilla, and diced apricot for texture. At the time I was introduced to *frie de brique*, which is a Moroccan dough that is like a cross between phyllo and a wonton wrapper. I would wrap these ingredients in this dough and then sauté them in clarified butter and slice them like a spring roll. Alongside I served green tea ice cream. This covered a lot of bases for me: the warm and cold temperatures, the Asian influence, and doing something with boring old rice pudding.

The coolest compliment I ever got was from Andrew Carmellini [chef of New York's A Voce] who was sitting down with us and asked about my background. When I said I used to be a line cook, he said, "I knew it—a pastry chef would never come up with that!" It was the combination of techniques and flavors as well as sautéing something to order.

—MICHAEL LAISKONIS, LE BERNARDIN (NEW YORK CITY)

COCONUT AND COCONUT MILK

Season: autumn–spring

Taste: sweet

Function: cooling

Weight: medium–heavy

Volume: moderate–loud

Techniques: stir-fry

allspice

almonds

apricots

Asian cuisine

bananas

basil

beans, green (e.g., Indian cuisine)

beef

blackberries

Brazilian cuisine

candies

caramel

cardamom (e.g., Indian cuisine)

Caribbean cuisine
cashews (e.g., Indian cuisine)
cauliflower (e.g., Indian cuisine)
cherries, fresh or dried

chicken (e.g., Indian cuisine, etc.)
chile peppers, green or red
chili powder

chocolate, esp. dark or white

cilantro (e.g., Indian cuisine, etc.)
cinnamon

cloves

coriander

CREAM AND ICE CREAM

crème fraîche

cucumber

cumin

curries (e.g., Indian cuisine)

custard

dates

desserts

eggs

figs, dried

fish

fruit, esp. tropical

ginger

grapefruit

guava

honey

Indian cuisine

Indonesian cuisine

kiwi

kumquats

lamb (e.g., Indian cuisine)

lemon

lemongrass

lentils (e.g., Indian cuisine)

lime, juice

lychee

macadamia nuts

Malaysian cuisine
mangoes
maple
mascarpone
milk
mint (e.g., Indian cuisine, etc.)
nutmeg
oats
orange, juice
papaya
passion fruit
peanuts
pepper, black
pineapple
pistachios
rice
rose water
rum, esp. dark
salads, fruit
salmon (e.g., Indian cuisine)
salt, kosher
sesame seeds
shellfish: shrimp, lobster
soups
sour cream
Southeast Asian cuisine
stews
SUGAR: brown, white sweet
potatoes
tea, green
Thai cuisine
tropical fruits
VANILLA
Vietnamese cuisine
vinegar, white wine

Flavor Affinities

coconut + apricot + ginger + green tea + lemongrass + rice + vanilla

coconut + honey + lime
coconut + lemongrass + vanilla
coconut + orange + vanilla
coconut milk + beef + ginger

Dishes

Ice Wine–Lychee Gelée with Coconut Milk Sabayon and Pumpkin Seed Croquant

—Dominique and Cindy Duby, Wild Sweets (Vancouver)

Coconut Crème Brûlée with Lychee Sorbet and Sesame Tuile

—Brad Farmerie, Public (New York City)

Lemongrass and Coconut Panna Cotta

—Nora Pouillon, Asia Nora (Washington, DC)

COD

Weight: medium

Volume: quiet

Techniques: bake, boil, broil, cakes, deep-fry, fry, grill, poach, roast, sauté, steam

anchovies

bacon

basil

bay leaf

beans: cannellini, green, navy, white

bell peppers: red, green, yellow

bouquet garni

brandade

brandy

bread crumbs

BUTTER, unsalted

cabbage, savoy

capers

caraway seeds

carrots

cayenne

celery cheese: Emmental, Gruyère,
Swiss

chervil

chives

cilantro

coriander

cream

currants

daikon

eggplant, esp. Japanese

eggs, hard-boiled

endive

English cuisine, esp. fish and chips

fennel

French cuisine, esp. Provençal

garlic

ginger

ham: cured, Serrano

leeks

lemon, juice

mayonnaise

milk

miso

mushrooms, esp. cepes, portobello, shiitake

mustard, Dijon

New England cuisine

oils: canola, corn, grapeseed, peanut

olive oil

olives: black, green

onions

orange: juice, zest

paprika, sweet

PARSLEY, FLAT-LEAF

peas

pepper: black, white

pine nuts

POTATOES, esp. red, red bliss

prosciutto

radishes

risotto

rosemary

saffron

sage

salt: *fleur de sel*, kosher, sea

sauces: hollandaise, tartar, tomato

sausage, chorizo

scallions

shallots

shellfish: clams, shrimp

stocks: chicken, fish, mussels, veal, vegetable

sugar

tarragon

thyme

tomatoes

truffles, black

VINEGAR: balsamic, champagne, red wine, sherry, tarragon, white wine

wine: dry white, red

yuzu juice

Flavor Affinities

cod + capers + chives + lentils + potatoes

cod + cepes (mushrooms) + garlic + lemon + potatoes

Dishes

Ceviche Fronterizo: Lime-Marinated Alaskan True Cod with Vine-Ripe Tomatoes, Olives, Cilantro, and Green Chile, Served on Crispy Tostaditas

—Rick Bayless, Frontera Grill (Chicago)

Alaskan True Cod and Fresh-Shucked Oysters in Tamazula-Sparked Homemade Cocktail Sauce with Lime, Avocado, White Onion, and Cilantro

—Rick Bayless, Frontera Grill (Chicago)

Chatham Bay Codfish: Chanterelle Mushrooms, Sweet Peas, and Tarragon Sauce

—David Bouley, Upstairs (New York City)

Atlantic Cod “au Naturel” with Littleneck Clams; Roasted Artichokes, Swiss Chard, and Lemon Marmalade

—Daniel Boulud, Daniel (New York City)

Roast Cod on Edamame Risotto with Salt and Pepper Sepia and Carrot-Yuzu Sauce

—Brad Farmerie, Public (New York City)

Brioche-Crusted Cod with Baby Artichokes, Oven-Dried Tomatoes, Garlic Mashed Potatoes, and Artichoke Puree

—Bob Kinkead, Kinkead's (Washington, DC)

Cod Baked in a Salt Crust Stuffed with Baby Artichokes, Romesco, Red Wine, Olive, and Preserved Tomato Stew

—Eric Ripert, Le Bernardin (New York City)

Cod is an undervalued fish. It's light, flaky, and delicate, and I especially like it served with broths or chowders. It's also great baked for ten minutes on salt on a sheet tray. Cod pairs well with clams and shellfish, and I love the combination of fresh cod with salted cod in a dish.

—BRADFORD THOMPSON, MARY ELAINE'S AT THE PHOENICIAN (SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA)

Dishes

Black Cod with Miso Sauce

—Nobu Matsuhisa, Nobu (New York City)

Broiled Sake-Marinated Alaskan Black Cod and Shrimp Dumplings in Shiso Broth

—Hiro Sone, Terra (St. Helena, California)

COD, BLACK

bell peppers, red chile peppers, esp. red chives
garlic
ginger
leeks
miso
onions
shiso
shrimp
soy sauce
sugar, brown

COD, SALT

Taste: salty
Weight: medium
Volume: moderate–loud

artichoke hearts
bay leaf
beans, white
bell peppers: green, red
bread crumbs
capers
chile peppers
cilantro
cream
French cuisine, esp. Provençal **GARLIC** greens, salad
lemon, juice
marjoram
mint
Old Bay seasoning
OIL, canola
olive oil
olives, esp. black or kalamata
onions
paprika: hot, sweet
parsley, flat-leaf
pasta

pepper: black, white
potatoes
saffron
salt: kosher, sea
scallions
shallots
shrimp
sour cream
stock, fish
sugar
Tabasco sauce
thyme
tomatoes
vinegar: red wine, white wine
wine, dry
Worcestershire sauce

Flavor Affinities

salt cod + bay leaf + thyme + white wine vinegar

Dishes

Warm Salad of Poached Salt Cod, Porcini Mushrooms, and Yukon Golds

—David Pasternak, Esca (New York City)

COFFEE AND ESPRESSO

Taste: bitter
Weight: medium
Volume: moderate–loud

almonds
amaretto
anise
bananas

barbecue sauce

beverages

bourbon

brandy

caramel

cardamom

cheese, ricotta

cherries

chicken

chicory

CHOCOLATE, ESP. DARK, white

cinnamon

cloves

COCOA

coconut

cognac

CREAM

curry

custards

dates

fennel seeds

figs

game birds

gravy

ham (e.g., with red-eye gravy)

hazelnuts

honey

ice cream, vanilla

Irish whiskey

lamb

lemon

lime

liqueurs, coffee (e.g., Kahlúa, Tía Maria)

macadamia nuts

maple syrup

milk, including sweetened, condensed

nutmeg

NUTS

oats

orange
pears
pecans
persimmons
pork
prunes
raisins
rum
star anise
SUGAR: brown, white
VANILLA vinegar, balsamic

AVOID

lavender

Flavor Affinities

coffee + bourbon + cream
coffee + caramel + chocolate
coffee + cinnamon + cloves + orange
coffee + cinnamon + cream + lemon + sugar
coffee + mascarpone + rum + sugar + vanilla

Dishes

Espresso Cupcakes Filled with Milk Chocolate Ganache and White Chocolate Frosting

—Emily Luchetti, pastry chef, Farallon (San Francisco)

Bourbon Ice Cream on Coffee-Flavored Tapioca in a Martini Glass

—Kaz Okochi, Kaz Sushi Bistro (Washington, DC)

COGNAC

apples and apple cider
beef (e.g., filet mignon)
chicken

chocolate
cream
foie gras
mushrooms
mustard, esp. Dijon
pepper: black, green
pork
prunes
raisins
turkey
vanilla
vinegar, cider

In addition to seasonality, I always pay attention to temperature. I look at what I feel like eating now given that day's weather. If it is **cold** and raining, I make sure soup is on the menu.

—ANDREW CARMELLINI, A VOCE (NEW YORK CITY)

COLDNESS

(of indoor or outdoor temperature; See also Winter)

braised dishes
butter and butter-based sauces and dishes
cheese and cheese dishes
cream and cream-based sauces and dishes
grains, heavy
hot dishes and beverages
meats, esp. red
polenta
risotto
soups, hot and hearty
spices, warming
stews and stewed dishes

COLLARD GREENS

(See Greens, Collard)

COOLING

Function: Ingredients believed to have cooling properties; useful in hot weather.

asparagus
avocados
berries
buttermilk
cucumbers
figs, fresh
fruits, esp. sweet (e.g., cherries, grapes)
herbs, cooling (e.g., cilantro, honeysuckle, lavender, lemon balm, mint, peppermint)
lettuce
melon
salads
spices, cooling (e.g., cardamom, coriander, fennel)
water
watercress
watermelon
yogurt
zucchini

Flavor Affinities

cucumbers + mint + yogurt

My personal preference for the ratio of **coriander** to cumin is threequarters of a portion of coriander to one portion of cumin.

—MEERA DHALWALA, VIJ'S (VANCOUVER)

I'll use **coriander** with peppercorns in a sachet for soups, with the pepper providing the heat and the coriander more of a fruity note.

—BRADFORD THOMPSON, MARY ELAINE'S AT THE PHOENICIAN (SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA)

CORIANDER

Taste: sour, pungent, astringent

Function: cooling

Weight: light–medium

Volume: moderate–loud

Tips: Add near the end of cooking.
Toast coriander seeds to release their flavor.

allspice
anise
apples
baked goods (e.g., cakes, cookies, pies)
basil
beans
beef
cardamom
carrots
cayenne
chicken
chickpeas
chile peppers (e.g., fresh green)
chili
chutneys
cilantro
cinnamon
citrus and citrus zest
cloves
coconut and coconut milk corn
crab, esp. boiled
cumin
curries (e.g., Indian cuisine)
curry powder
desserts
eggs
fennel
fennel seeds
fish
fruits, esp. autumn and dried
garam masala (key ingredient)
garlic
ginger
gingerbread
grapefruit
ham

harissa (key ingredient)

hot dogs

Indian cuisine

lamb

Latin American cuisine

lentils

mace

meats

Mediterranean cuisine

Mexican cuisine

Middle Eastern cuisine

mint

Moroccan cuisine

mushrooms

North African cuisine

North American cuisine

nutmeg

nuts

olive oil

onions

orange: juice, zest

pastries

pears

pepper, black

pickles

plums

pork

potatoes

poultry

quince

rice (e.g., as pudding)

saffron

salmon

sausages

sesame seeds

shellfish

soups, esp. cream-based

Southeast Asian cuisine

Southwestern cuisine

spinach
stews (e.g., chicken)
stocks (e.g., fish)
stuffing
sugar
tomatoes and tomato sauces
turkey
turmeric
Vietnamese cuisine

Flavor Affinities

coriander + cardamom + cinnamon + clove
coriander + cayenne + cumin + garlic
coriander + chile peppers + mustard + black pepper
coriander + cumin + curry
coriander + fish + garlic + olive oil + tomatoes

CORN

Season: summer
Taste: sweet
Function: heating
Weight: medium
Volume: moderate
Techniques: boil, grill, roast, sauté, steam

bacon

BASIL: sweet, lemon
bay leaf
beans, esp. lima
béchamel sauce
beef

BELL PEPPERS: red, green

BUTTER, UNSALTED

buttermilk
caraway seed
carrots
cayenne

celery

cheese: **cheddar**, Colby, Cotija, feta, Monterey Jack

chervil

CHILE PEPPERS: chipotle, jalapeño, serrano

chili powder

chili sauce

Chinese cuisine

chives**cilantro**

clams

cornmeal

crab

CREAM, esp. heavy

crème fraîche

cumin

curry powder

dill

eggs

fava beans

fennel

fish, salmon

GARLIC

ginger, fresh

ham

leeks

lemon, juice

lemon thyme

lime, juice

lobster

lovage

maple syrup

marjoram

mascarpone

Mexican cuisine

milk

mirepoix

MUSHROOMS, esp. chanterelle, oyster, shiitake, other wild mustard

New England cuisine

nutmeg

OIL: canola, peanut, vegetable

OLIVE OIL

ONIONS: red, Spanish, yellow

oregano

pancetta

paprika

parsley

pasta

PEPPER: BLACK, WHITE

pesto

polenta

potatoes

poultry

risottos

rosemary

saffron

sage

salads, green

salmon

salsas

SALT: kosher, sea

scallions

scallops

shallots

sherry, dry

shiso

Southern cuisine

Southwestern cuisine

squash, esp. summer

star anise

STOCKS: chicken, vegetable

sugar

tarragon

thyme

tomatoes tortillas, corn

vermouth

vinaigrette

vinegar: cider, white wine

wine, dry white

We participate in an event called “Plate and Pitchfork” that is held on a farm with the food from the farm. The guests sit in the field among the **corn** and tomatoes, and we cook a meal for them on a couple of grills.

I made a corn soup for this event. We removed the husks, then cut the kernels off the cob. Then we used the husks, which produce a juice, to make a stock for the soup. If you were to use cobs, you wouldn’t get the same flavor. It is important to keep the corn flavor pure. Most cooks would throw in a bunch of vegetables in the stock, and what you’d get then is a vegetable stock with corn. I want to have a corny flavor in the end. We made a stock using the corn husks cooked with a little onion, water, and salt, and let it cook for about 45 minutes. What came out was the most amazing sweet broth. We added the corn, pureed it, and served it chilled. It was so sweet and full of corn flavor you would have sworn there were cream and sugar in it.

We now make a corn husk broth to add to a corn, chanterelle, and Dungeness crab risotto with a touch of pesto. Basil pesto and corn really speaks to me. It is a **wonderful combination**.

—VITALY PALEY, PALEY'S PLACE (PORTLAND, OREGON)

To intensify the flavor of **corn** in a dish, add [corn] juice. I’ll make a corn ravioli with pureed corn and cooked corn. I add corn juice to the filling to add a fresh corn flavor to the ravioli.

—ANDREW CARMELLINI, A VOCE (NEW YORK CITY)



Dishes

Homemade Corn and Leek Ravioli with Maine Lobster and Silver Queen Local Corn

—Lidia Bastianich, Felidia (New York City)

Baby Corn on the Cob, Brown Butter Powder, Cilantro Emulsion

—Brad Farmerie, Public (New York City)

Arepas de Choclo: Corn Cakes Topped with Crème Fraîche and Salmon Roe

—Maricel Presilla, Zafra (Hoboken, New Jersey)

Red Bliss Potato and Corn Pizza, Parsley Pesto, and Smoked Cow's Milk Cheese

—Cory Schreiber, Wildwood (Portland, Oregon)

Flavor Affinities

corn + bell pepper + jalapeño chile + cilantro + tarragon

corn + butter + salt

corn + cayenne + lime + salt

corn + cilantro + shrimp

CORNED BEEF

(See Beef—Brisket)

CORNISH GAME HENS

cardamom

cayenne

cinnamon

cloves

cumin, esp. toasted

garam masala

garlic

ginger

lemon

oil, canola

onions

paprika

pepper, black
salt
tomatoes and tomato paste
turmeric
yogurt

COUSCOUS

Weight: light
Volume: quiet–moderate
Techniques: steep

African (North) cuisine
apricots, dried
basil
bell peppers, esp. red
butter
cabbage
carrots
cayenne
chervil
chicken
chickpeas
cilantro
cumin fish (e.g., snapper)
ginger
lemon: juice, preserved, zest
Middle Eastern cuisine
mint
Moroccan cuisine
olive oil
olives
onions
parsley, flat-leaf
pepper, black
raisins
saffron
salt: kosher, sea

sausage, *merguez*
scallions
stocks: chicken, fish, vegetable,
tomatoes and tomato juice
turnips
zucchini

COUSCOUS, ISRAELI

Weight: medium-heavy
Volume: light-moderate

olive oil
pepper, white
pesto
shallots
stock, chicken

CRAB

Season: summer
Taste: sweet
Weight: light
Volume: quiet
Techniques: bake, boil, broil, grill, steam

aioli
apples
artichokes
asparagus
***AVOCADOS**
bacon
basil
bay leaf
bell peppers, esp. green, red, yellow
bread crumbs / panko
butter, unsalted
carrots and carrot juice

cauliflower

caviar

cayenne

celery

celery root

celery salt

chervil

chile peppers: jalapeño, Scotch bonnet pepper, Thai

chili sauce

Chinese cuisine

CHIVES

cilantro

coconut and coconut milk

coriander

corn

crab roe

cream

crème fraîche

cucumber

cumin

Dishes

Jumbo Lump Crab Salad with Asparagus, Mustard Seed Dressing

—Daniel Boulud/Olivier Muller, DB Bistro (New York City)

Crab Salad with White Asparagus, Ginger, Lime, Pistachio Oil

—Daniel Boulud/Bertrand Chemel, Café Boulud (New York City)

Marinated Jumbo Lump Crabmeat with Horseradish, Coriander, Tomato, Seaweed Salad, and Ginger Vinaigrette

—Jeffrey Buben, Vidalia (Washington, DC)

Red and Yellow Tomato Gazpacho with Avocado Puree and Lump Crabmeat, with Microgreen Salad

—Bob Iacovone, Cuvée (New Orleans)

A Mélange of Jumbo Lump Crab, Mango, and Avocado in a Tropical Fruit Coulis

—Patrick O'Connell, The Inn at Little Washington (Washington, Virginia)

Signature Sushi: Blue Crab with Celery and Red Bell Pepper

—Kaz Okoshi, Kaz Sushi Bistro (Washington, DC)

Potato Gnocchi with Oregon Dungeness Crab and Preserved Lemon

—Vitaly Paley, Paley's Place (Portland, Oregon)

Spicy Crab and Peanut Soup with Okra

—Monica Pope, T'afia (Houston)

Crab Cake with Saffron-Sherry Aioli

—Monica Pope, T'afia (Houston)

Dungeness Crab and Potato Cakes, Green Beans, Cucumbers, Almonds, and Shaved Fennel

—Cory Schreiber, Wildwood (Portland, Oregon)

Michael Dean's Squash Blossom, Crabmeat, and Squash with Green Tomato Relish

—Frank Stitt, Highlands Bar and Grill (Birmingham, Alabama)

I'll never forget tasting the combination of **crab**, avocado, and almonds at chef Pascal Barbot's Paris restaurant L'Astrance.

—MICHAEL ANTHONY, GRAMERCY TAVERN (NEW YORK CITY)

Crab is something that you typically see steamed and served with butter. King crab is intensely flavorful, meaty, and salty. When it is caught at sea, it is cooked on the boat with heavily salted water. The first thing I did was soak the crab multiple times in ice water to draw out all the salt. I saw and created a vision of this red crabmeat within a *barigoule* with perfectly cut vegetables, artichokes, French green beans, Valencia oranges, sweet garlic, and finished with olive oil.

—CARRIE NAHABEDIAN, NAHA (CHICAGO)

curry
custard
dill
eggplant
eggs
endive, Belgian
fennel
fish: pike, sole
fish sauce, Thai

garlic

ginger

grapefruit

honey

LEMON: juice, zest

lemongrass

lemon thyme

lime: juice, zest

lobster

mango

mascarpone

MAYONNAISE

melon: cantaloupe, honeydew

mint

mushrooms (e.g., button, cremini, shiitakes)

mustard, Dijon

mustard powder

nutmeg

OIL: canola, grapeseed, peanut, sesame, vegetable

olive oil

Old Bay seasoning

ONIONS: green, red, spring, sweet, white

orange: juice, zest

paprika, esp. sweet

PARSLEY, FLAT-LEAF

peas, green

PEPPER: black, white

pineapple

pine nuts

ponzu sauce

potatoes
radishes
saffron

SALT: kosher, sea
scallions

sesame seeds

shallots

sherry, dry
shiso

SHRIMP

snow peas
sour cream
soy sauce
spinach
stocks: chicken, vegetable
sugar (pinch)

Tabasco sauce

tamarind

tarragon

tartar sauce

thyme

TOMATOES: fresh, sun-dried

vinaigrette, esp. citrus

vinegar: balsamic, champagne, red wine, sherry

watercress

yogurt

Flavor Affinities

crab + aioli + cilantro + jalapeño chile

crab + almonds + avocado

crab + avocado + cilantro + mango

crab + avocado + grapefruit

crab + corn + green tomatoes

crab + cucumber + lime + mint

crab + ginger + lime

crab + lime + mint

crab + mango + raspberry vinegar

crab + black pepper + snow peas

crab + saffron + shallots

When making crab cakes, I'll use whole shrimp—the meat in the cakes, and the shrimp heads in the sauce—to intensify the shellfish flavor.

—MICHEL RICHARD, CITRONELLE (WASHINGTON, DC)

Dishes

Black and White Fettuccini with Oven-Dried Tomatoes, Almond Pesto, Calamari, and Crisp Soft-Shell Crab

—Lidia Bastianich, Felidia (New York City)

Crispy Thai-Style Soft-Shell Crab with Green Papaya Salad and Lime Dipping Sauce

—Bob Kinkead, Kinkead's (Washington, DC)

Pecan-Crusted Soft-Shell Crab Tempura with Italian Mustard Fruit

—Patrick O'Connell, The Inn at Little Washington (Washington, Virginia)

Soft-Shell Crab: Sweet Corn, Potatoes, Leeks, Spring Onions, Caper–White Wine Emulsion

—Alfred Portale, Gotham Bar and Grill (New York City)

Chesapeake Bay Soft-Shell Crabs with Young Ginger and Chinese Chive Coulis

—David Waltuck, Chanterelle (New York City)

CRAB, SOFT-SHELL

Season: spring–summer

Taste: sweet

Weight: light–medium

Volume: quiet–moderate

Techniques: deep-fry, grill, pan roast, sauté, tempura

almonds

arrowroot
arugula
asparagus
avocado
bacon
basil
bell peppers, red
broccoli rabe
brown butter sauce
butter: clarified, unsalted capers
cayenne
chervil
chile peppers, jalapeño
chili powder
chives
coleslaw
couscous, Israeli
cream
crème fraîche
cucumbers
daikon
dill
fennel
garlic
ginger (e.g., pickled)
grapefruit
leeks
LEMON, JUICE
lime: juice, zest
mayonnaise
mushrooms (e.g., shiitakes)
mustard, Dijon
nori
OIL: canola, peanut, vegetable
olive oil
onions, red
orange, juice
paprika
parsley, flat-leaf

peas, sugar
PEPPER: black, white
pesto

potatoes, esp. new
rémoulade sauce
sake
SALT: kosher, sea
scallions
scallops
shallots
shiso leaf
shrimp
sorrel

soy sauce
stock, fish
Tabasco sauce

tarragon, fresh

tartar sauce

thyme

tomatoes

vinaigrette

vinegar: balsamic, champagne, white wine

wine, dry white

zucchini

Flavor Affinities

soft-shell crab + arugula + tartar sauce
soft-shell crab + asparagus + capers + garlic + lemon + potatoes
soft-shell crab + broccoli rabe + brown butter
soft-shell crab + cabbage + mustard
soft-shell crab + lemon + parsley
soft-shell crab + orange + parsley

CRANBERRIES

Season: autumn–midwinter

Taste: sour

Weight: light–medium

Volume: loud

Techniques: boil

allspice

almonds

apples

apricots

baked goods

cheese, goat

chicken

chile peppers, jalapeño

chocolate: dark, white

cinnamon

cloves

cognac

cream

cream cheese

currants

ginger

hazelnuts

honey

LEMON: JUICE, ZEST

lime, zest

liqueur, orange (e.g., Grand Marnier)

maple syrup

nuts

oats

ORANGE: juice, zest

peaches

pears

pepper

pistachios

pork

poultry

pumpkin

raisins

quince

salt

star anise

SUGAR: brown, white
sweet potatoes
tangerines
thyme
turkey
vanilla
walnuts
wine, white

CRAYFISH

(aka crawfish)

Season: spring
Weight: light–medium
Volume: moderate
Techniques: boil, broil, steam

asparagus
avocados
bacon
basil
bay leaf
butter
Cajun cuisine
carrots and carrot juice
cayenne
celery
chervil
chives
cloves
coriander
cream / milk
Creole cuisine
dill
egg yolks
endive
fennel seeds
garlic

hazelnuts
leeks
mango
mayonnaise
mirepoix
mushrooms, morels
mustard
oil, grapeseed
olive oil
onions
orange, juice
parsley, flat-leaf
pepper, black
radishes
rice
rosemary
salt
shallots
sorrel
Tabasco sauce
tarragon
thyme
tomatoes
vinegar: tarragon, white wine
wine, dry white (e.g., white Burgundy)
zucchini

Flavor Affinities

crayfish + asparagus + morel mushrooms
crayfish + carrot juice + orange juice

Dishes

Crayfish, Beet, Leek, and Bacon Salad with Mustard Vinaigrette

—Daniel Boulud, at the 2003 James Beard Awards gala reception

CREAM

When you eat a piece of pumpkin pie, the whipped **cream** is the first thing you go for! You can take this for granted in desserts, or you can dig deeper: You can think of cream as its own flavor. When I was in Japan, the cream was miles better than here in the U.S. You also need to think about your dairy choice in relation to the country. In India, everything is centered around reduced milk. The counterpart would be *dolce de leche* in Latin cuisine. I love yogurt because it is simple and complex; it can be in the forefront or in the background.

—MICHAEL LAISKONIS, LE BERNARDIN (NEW YORK CITY)

CREAM CHEESE

Taste: sour

Weight: heavy

Volume: loud

berries

blueberries

bread, esp. fruit

breakfast / brunch

cheese: fresh goat, ricotta

cherries

cloves

cream

crème fraîche

desserts

eggs

fruit, dried

ginger

graham cracker crumbs

honey

kiwi fruit

LEMON: JUICE, ZEST

liqueur, orange (e.g., Grand Marnier)

maple syrup

mascarpone

nutmeg

orange, juice

quince paste

raisins
raspberries
rum
salt (pinch)
sour cream
strawberries
sugar
vanilla
yogurt

Flavor Affinities

cream cheese + crème fraîche + orange + sugar + vanilla
cream cheese + maple syrup + mascarpone

CREAM, SOUR (See Sour Cream)

CRÈME FRAÎCHE

Taste: sour
Weight: medium-heavy
Volume: loud

apples
caramel
French cuisine
fruit, fresh
potatoes
raspberries
sauces
strawberries
sugar, brown

CREOLE CUISINE bouillabaisse

cayenne
crawfish
okra
onions
oysters
paprika
pepper: black, white
salt
seafood
shrimp rémoulade

CRESS

(See Watercress)

CUBAN CUISINE

allspice
avocado
bay leaf
beans
beef
bell peppers
chicken
chocolate
citrus (e.g., lime, orange)
cumin
garlic
lime
olive oil
onions, esp. white
orange, juice
oregano
pineapple
plantains
pork
rice
seafood (crab, fish, lobster, shrimp)
sugar, white

watercress

Your choice of sugar suggests a country of origin. For example, **Cuban cuisine** relies on white sugar, while Mexican cuisine relies on brown sugar.

—MARICEL PRESILLA, ZAFRA (HOBOKEN, NEW JERSEY)

Flavor Affinities

allspice + cumin + garlic + orange juice + pork

avocado + onions + pineapple + watercress

bay leaf + green bell peppers + garlic + onions + oregano (aka *safrito*)

chocolate + garlic + olive oil

citrus juice + garlic + olive oil (aka *adobo*)

CUCUMBERS

Season: spring–summer

Taste: sweet, astringent

Function: cooling

Weight: light

Volume: quiet

Techniques: pickle, raw, salads, sauté, soups

allspice

bell peppers, esp. green

basil

butter

buttermilk

caraway seeds

cayenne

celery and celery seeds

cheese: blue, feta

chervil

chile peppers: fresh green, jalapeño

chives

cilantro

coconut milk

coriander

cream

cream cheese
crème fraîche
cumin
DILL
fish
fish sauce, Thai or other Asian
frisée
garam masala
GARLIC
gin
Greek cuisine
horseradish
Japanese cuisine
jicama
lemon balm
lemon, juice
lime, juice
melon, esp. honeydew
MINT (e.g., Indian cuisine)
mustard, Dijon
oil: sesame, vegetable
olive oil
ONIONS, esp. green or red
oregano
parsley, flat-leaf
peanuts
pepper: black, white
pineapple
romaine
red pepper flakes
salads
salmon
salt: kosher, sea
scallions
scallops
sesame seeds
shallots
shrimp
smoked salmon

soups, chilled (e.g., gazpacho)
sour cream
soy sauce
sprouts
sugar (pinch)
Tabasco sauce
tamari
tarragon
tea sandwiches
thyme
tomatoes
Vietnamese cuisine
vinaigrettes
VINEGAR: balsamic, champagne, cider, red wine, rice wine, sherry, tarragon, white wine
vodka
watercress
wine, white
YOGURT (e.g., Indian cuisine)

CUMIN

Taste: bitter, sweet

Function: heating

Weight: medium

Volume: moderate–loud

Tips: Add early in the cooking process.

Toast cumin seeds in a dry pan to evaporate their moisture and increase their flavor.

allspice
anise
apples
baked goods (e.g., breads)
bay leaf
beans, esp. black or kidney
beef
beets
bread (e.g., rye)

cabbage
caramel
cardamom
carrots
cayenne

Flavor Affinities

cucumber + chervil + salt + vinegar
cucumber + chile peppers + mint + yogurt
cucumber + cilantro + ginger + sugar + rice vinegar
cucumber + dill + red onion + sour cream + vinegar
cucumber + dill + salmon
cucumber + dill + yogurt
cucumber + feta cheese + garlic + mint + olive oil + oregano + red wine vinegar
cucumber + garlic + mint + yogurt
cucumber + lemon + sesame oil + vinegar
cucumber + jalapeño chile + dill + onion
cucumber + mint + yogurt

With lighter dishes like rice pilaf or lentils, I use **cumin seeds** for their gentler flavor. With heavier dishes like chickpeas, kidney beans, or red meat, I'll use the stronger-flavored **cumin powder**.

—MEERU DHALWALA, VIJ'S (VANCOUVER)

cheese: esp. aged, feta, Muenster
chicken
chickpeas
chile peppers
chili
chili powder
cinnamon
cloves
coriander
couscous
curries
curry leaves
eggplant
eggs

fennel
fennel seeds
fenugreek seeds
fish
fruits, dried
garam masala (key ingredient)

garlic

ginger
harissa
honey
hummus (key ingredient)

Indian cuisine

Indonesian cuisine

lamb, esp. grilled

LENTILS

mace
meats, esp. stronger-flavored, and esp. grilled

MEXICAN CUISINE

mint, dried

Moroccan cuisine

mustard and mustard seeds (e.g., Indian cuisine)

nutmeg

onions

orange

oregano

paprika

peas

pepper

pork

Portuguese cuisine

potatoes

rice

saffron

salads, esp. pasta, tomato

salmon

sauces (e.g., mole)

sauerkraut

sausages

shellfish

soups (e.g., black bean)

Spanish cuisine

squash

stews

sugar, palm

Tabasco sauce

tahini

tamarind

tequila

Tex-Mex cuisine

Thai cuisine

thyme

tomatoes

tuna

turmeric

vegetables, esp. summer

Vietnamese cuisine

yogurt

Flavor Affinities

cumin + cayenne + coriander + garlic

cumin + chickpeas + yogurt

cumin + cinnamon + saffron

cumin + palm sugar + tamarind

cumin + tomatoes + turmeric

CURRY LEAVES

Taste: sour, bitter

Weight: light

Volume: quiet–moderately loud

Tips: Add later in cooking, or to finish a dish.

allspice

Asian cuisines

bread, esp. Indian (e.g., naan)

cardamom

chile peppers

cilantro
cinnamon
cloves
coconut
coriander
cumin
curries, esp. Indian
fennel seeds
fenugreek seeds
fish
garlic
ginger
Indian cuisine
lamb
lentils
mustard seeds
paprika
peas
pepper
rice
shellfish
soups
stir-fried dishes
stocks
tamarind
turmeric
vegetables

CURRY POWDER AND SAUCES

Taste: bittersweet, pungent
Weight: medium-heavy
Volume: moderate-loud
Tips: Add early in cooking process.

beef
butter
cardamom

cashews
cayenne
cheese
chicken
chile peppers, red
cilantro
cinnamon
cloves
coconut
coriander
cream
crème fraîche
cumin
dill

eggs and egg salad
fennel
fish
garlic
ginger

Indian cuisine

lemon, zest
lemongrass
lime, juice
mace
mayonnaise
mushrooms
nutmeg
oil, vegetable
onions
paprika
pepper: black, red
potatoes
saffron
salads (e.g., chicken, egg, potato)
salt, kosher
sauces
shellfish
soups, esp. fish, pea
star anise

stews, meat
stocks: chicken, fish
tamarind
Thai cuisine
tomatoes
tuna
turmeric
vegetables
zucchini

CUSTARDS

Weight: medium-heavy
Volume: quiet

almonds
apples
apricots
bananas
berries
caramel
chai
cherries
chocolate, esp. dark or white
cinnamon
coconut
coffee
ginger
hazelnuts
lemon
liqueurs: nut, orange
mango
maple syrup
nutmeg
orange
passion fruit
pears
persimmons

pineapple
plums
prunes
pumpkin
quince
raisins
raspberries
rhubarb
strawberries
sweet potatoes
thyme
vanilla
walnuts
wine, sweet

Torrijas, which means “soaked,” are a [**custardy**] dessert in the Basque country that are like French toast or *pain perdu*. We soak the bread until it is saturated in milk, then let it sit [in the refrigerator] overnight. The next morning before serving, we coat it in egg and then fry it. We serve our version of *torrijas* with poached apples and instead of serving it with maple syrup, we serve it with Pedro Ximenez [a rich, sweet, Spanish sherry] syrup that has a raisin-like quality to it. The PX is just warmed and has a little glucose added to thicken it into a syrup. I don’t cook it or reduce it because I want to keep the alcohol in the syrup so it doesn’t become overly cloying.

—ALEXANDRA RAJ, TÍA POL (NEW YORK CITY)

DAIKON

Season: autumn–winter

Taste: sweet

Weight: light

Volume: quiet–moderate

Techniques: braise, marinate, raw (e.g., julienned), stew, stir-fry

basil
beef
beets
butter
cabbage

carrots

celery root

cheese, feta

chives

cream

cream cheese

cucumbers

curry powder

dill

duck

fish

ginger

honey

lemon, juice

lovage

marjoram

mint

miso

oil, sesame

onions, esp. green

orange, juice

oregano

parsley

pork

salmon

scallions

soups

sour cream

soy sauce

sugar

sugar snap peas

tamari

thyme

tuna

vinegar

Daikon is great in stews and is milder, sweeter, and more absorbent than turnips or radishes. Duck and turnips is a classic, but I like duck with daikon even better. It pairs well with other heavier flavors, such as pork or beef.

Dishes

Chocolate and Date Pudding Cake

—Gina DePalma, pastry chef, Babbo (New York City)

Baked-to-Order Date Pudding with a Caramelized Rum Sauce and a Dollop of Freshly Whipped Cream

—Toshi Sakihara, Etats-Unis (New York City)

Medjool Dates Stuffed with Chorizo, Wrapped in Bacon

—Monica Pope, T'afia (Houston)

Medjool Dates with Maple Mascarpone, Pistachios, and Orange Blossom Water

—Monica Pope, T'afia (Houston)

Someone told me about a savory **date** dish they had but could only remember that it was stuffed and wrapped in bacon. This led me into the kitchen to stuff a date with chorizo, wrap it in bacon, and then add charmoula [typically made of paprika, cayenne pepper, cumin, garlic, lemon juice, parsley, cilantro, and olive oil]. The dish just hits the mark. I also serve a sweet date dish that I stole from Judy Rodgers of Zuni Café. My version is made with Medjool dates that have maple mascarpone smeared in, pistachios crumbled on top, and orange blossom water. The orange blossom water gives people a visceral reaction because you don't see it, but you taste it. When people have the dish, they lick their fingers trying to figure it out!

—MONICA POPE, T'AFIA (HOUSTON)

DANDELION GREENS **(See Greens, Dandelion)**

DATES

Season: autumn–winter

Taste: sweet

Function: cooling

Weight: medium-heavy

Volume: moderate

almonds

apples

apricots

Armagnac

bacon

bananas

brandy

butter, unsalted

buttermilk

cakes

caramel

CHEESE, esp. Brie, Explorateur, **Parmesan**, pecorino, ricotta, Roquefort

cherries, dried

chicken

chives

chocolate, esp. dark or white

cinnamon

coconut

coffee

couscous

cranberries, dried

cream and ice cream

cream cheese

crème fraîche

currants

desserts

figs

ginger

hazelnuts

honey

lamb

lemon

lime

macadamia nuts

maple syrup

mascarpone

Middle Eastern cuisine

Moroccan cuisine

nuts

oats

orange blossom water

ORANGE: juice, zest

pecans

pepper, black

pistachios

prunes

quince

raisins

rosemary

rum

sugar: brown, white

thyme

vanilla

walnuts

wine: red, sweet

Flavor Affinities

dates + caramel + vanilla + walnuts

dates + chocolate + walnuts

dates + cream + rum

dates + maple syrup + mascarpone + pistachios

dates + orange + walnuts

Emily Luchetti of Farallon in San Francisco on When and How to Serve Dessert

The older I get, the more I like my dessert at 3:00 in the afternoon. I like it all by itself, it has no competition and you are usually hungry. Your taste buds are wide awake and you can appreciate what it is. Of course if we have people over for dinner I can't get away with not serving dessert!

When you serve a dessert after a meal you are already full, not in a bad way, but if you had a first course and main course your palate has gone through many flavor components. At home I always take a little break and give people a breather between dinner and dessert. I'll have my guests help with the dishes or, if it's a formal party, I'll let them talk for a half hour and finish off the red wine. It is not just for their stomachs but for the palate as well.

I hate when it comes to slicing a dessert and someone says, "No, no, that is too big!" I used to fight it and take it personally, so now I just ask in advance. The guest appreciates it, has a small

piece, and then has seconds. It is recognizing that everyone has their own choice regarding how much they want to eat. If I am serving a shortcake, I will put the fruit with a little cream on the cake, then pass a bowl of whipped cream, so whether they want to pile it or keep it light, they can.

DESSERTS

Tips: Sweetness satiates the appetite, so generally end a meal on a sweet note. Even sweet desserts should be in balance (their acidity, saltiness, etc.). Dessert wine should always be sweeter than the dessert it accompanies.

Dill adds a certain freshness and cleanliness to a dish. During the winter, most of my fish dishes have dill—as well as dishes like goulash with noodles, which is served with both chives and dill for their herbal freshness.

—TONY LIU, AUGUST (NEW YORK CITY)

DILL

Season: spring–autumn

Taste: sour, sweet

Weight: light, soft-leaved

Volume: moderately loud

Tips: Always use dill fresh, not cooked.

asparagus

avocados

basil

beans, esp. fava or green

beef

beets

breads, esp. rye

broccoli

cabbage

capers

carrots

cauliflower

celery root

cheese: cheddar, cottage, goat, soft

chicken

chives

cilantro

coriander

corn

crayfish

cream cheese

cream sauces

crème fraîche

CUCUMBERS

eggplant

EGGS AND EGG DISHES (e.g., omelets)

European cuisines

FISH, esp. whole

garlic

German cuisine

Greek cuisine

green beans

halibut

horseradish

lemon balm

lemon thyme

lovage

meats, e.g., lamb

Mediterranean cuisine

Middle Eastern cuisine

mint

mushrooms

mustard

North American cuisine

onions

paprika

parsley

parsnips

peas

PICKLES (key ingredient)

POTATOES AND POTATO SALAD

poultry

rice, esp. pilaf

Russian cuisine

salads and salad dressings

salmon

salmon, cured (key ingredient)

salmon, smoked

sauces

scallops

Scandinavian cuisine

shellfish

shrimp

sole

soups, esp. potato

sour cream and sour cream sauces

spinach

squash

TOMATOES AND TOMATO JUICES

trout

Turkish cuisine

veal

vegetables

YOGURT AND YOGURT SAUCES

zucchini

Flavor Affinities

dill + cilantro + mint

dill + cucumber + salmon

Dishes

Duck, Butternut Squash, and Banana with Thai Flavors

—Grant Achatz, Alinea (Chicago)

Liberty Farms Duck Breast with Smoked Bacon, Savoy Spinach, and Pickled Mulberries, Ginger Consommé

—Traci Des Jardins, Jardinière (San Francisco)

Roast Duck Breast, Bok Choy, and Cassava Chips with Sesame Soy Dressing and Pickled Chiles

—Brad Farmerie, Public (New York City)

Duck with Tomato, Red Chile, and Dried Mixed Fruits

—Zarela Martinez, Zarela (New York City)

Blossom Honey “Lacquered” Aged Moulard Duck Breast, Caramelized Quince and Fennel, Broccoli Rabe, Sicilian Pistachios, and Port

—Carrie Nahabedian, Naha (Chicago)

Grilled Duck Breast with Creamy Farro, Spring Onion, and Sour Cherry Jus

—Peter Nowakoski, Rat’s (Hamilton, New Jersey)

Braised Duck Legs on Wilted Watercress in an Aromatic Asian Broth

—Patrick O’Connell, The Inn at Little Washington (Washington, Virginia)

Cured Duck Meat with a Salad of Licorice-Scented Fennel Shavings and Blood Orange

—Monica Pope, T’afia (Houston)

Drake Duck “Sirloin” with Roasted Sweet Potatoes and Port Wine Sauce

—Monica Pope, T’afia (Houston)

Duck Breast with Fava Beans and Roasted Plums

—Alfred Portale, Gotham Bar and Grill (New York City)

Grilled Duck Breast over Aromatic Tamarillo Sauce, Creamy Quinoa, and Sweet Potato Puree

—Maricel Presilla, Cucharamama (Hoboken, New Jersey)

Moulard Duck Breast with Parsnips, Wild Mushrooms, and a Rosemary Sauce

—Thierry Rautureau, Rover’s (Seattle)

Muscovy Duck Breast with Rainier Cherries, Pecans, and Garden Lettuces

—Judy Rodgers, Zuni Café (San Francisco)

Charcoaled Duck with Walnuts, Confit Leg, and Apricots Baked in Brown Sugar Brioche

—Lydia Shire, Locke-Ober (Boston)

Grilled Liberty Farm Duck with Duck-Liver Wontons in Wild Mushroom Sauce

—Hiro Sone, Terra (St. Helena, California)

Grilled Duck Breast in Lime Leaf Curry with Ginger, Jalapeño Basmati Rice

—Vikram Vij and Meelu Dhalwala, Vij's (Vancouver)

Spit-Roasted Duck with Quince Sauce

—Alice Waters, Chez Panisse (Berkeley, California)

DUCK

Season: autumn

Weight: heavy

Volume: moderate–loud

Techniques: braise (esp. legs), grill (esp. breast), roast, sauté, stir-fry

allspice

APPLES, esp. Granny Smith

apricots (sauce)

artichokes

arugula

bacon

basil

bay leaf

beans, fava

blueberries

bok choy

butter, unsalted

cabbage: green, red

caraway seeds

cardamom

carrots

celery

celery root
cheese: Asiago, Parmesan, pecorino, ricotta

Our paella made with **duck** confit, foie gras, and morels is in honor of [the late chef] Jean-Louis Palladin. We made a paella with the fat from the duck and morels, and to finish it we topped it with thin slices of raw foie gras. The foie gras would get warm from the hot rice and melt into the rice. It is an amazing paella!

—JOSÉ ANDRÉS, CAFÉ ATLÁNTICO (WASHINGTON, DC)

Duck is great with fruit. We serve a duck with Seville oranges that are a little bitter. We made a puree of the pulp and a little peel that had nice acidity and bitterness. We then added fennel that had been cooked with butter and a little star anise.

—DANIEL HUMM, ELEVEN MADISON PARK (NEW YORK CITY)

For my dish of lacquered **duck** and peppercress, I make a duck cooked with honey served with a brown butter–honey that gives the duck a sweet, nutty flavor. To cut the sweetness, I added a reduction of pomegranate juice and oil emulsion to give the dish a tart contrast.

—BOB IACOVONE, CUVÉE (NEW ORLEANS)

CHERRIES: regular, sun-dried

chervil

chestnuts

chicory

chile peppers: ancho, jalapeño

chili paste

Chinese cuisine

chives

chocolate / cocoa

cilantro

cinnamon

citrus fruit

cloves

coconut milk

coriander

cucumbers

cumin

currants, black or red: fruit, preserves

curry paste, esp. Thai green, or curry powder, esp. Madras

dates
duck fat
farro
fennel
fennel seeds

figs

fish sauce, Thai
five-spice powder

foie gras

GARLIC

GINGER

hoisin sauce

honey, esp. lavender

horseradish

huckleberries

juniper berries

kaffir lime leaves

kumquats

lavender

leeks

LEMON, JUICE, preserved

lemongrass

lentils

lime, juice

liqueur, orange (e.g., Grand Marnier), peach

mangoes

marjoram

Mediterranean cuisine

mint

mirepoix

morels

MUSHROOMS, ESP. WILD (esp. porcini or shiitake)

mustard, Dijon

nutmeg

nuts, macadamia

OIL: canola, grapeseed, peanut, sesame, vegetable

olive oil

olives, esp. green

ONIONS, esp. green, sweet

ORANGE: juice, zest

pancetta

parsley, flat-leaf

pasta

peaches

pears

peas

PEPPER: black, green, pink, white

plums: fruit, sauce

pomegranates

poppy seeds

port

potatoes

prunes

raspberries

red pepper flakes

rice, esp. basmati, wild

risotto

rosemary

sage

sake

SALT: *fleur de sel*, kosher, sea

sauerkraut

scallions

sesame seeds: black, white

shallots

sherry

SOY SAUCE

spinach

squash, butternut

star anise

STOCKS: chicken, duck, game, meat, turkey

stuffing

SUGAR: brown, white

sweet potatoes

Tabasco sauce

tamarind

tarragon, fresh

teriyaki sauce

Thai cuisine

thyme, fresh

tomatoes: paste, puree, raw

turmeric

TURNIPS

vegetables, root

verjus

vermouth

VINEGAR: balsamic, champagne, raspberry, red wine, rice wine, sherry, white water chestnuts

watercress

WINE, dry red (e.g., Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot), dry white (e.g., Riesling), port, rice, sweet (Madeira, Muscat)

Flavor Affinities

duck + almonds + apricots

duck + almonds + honey

duck + apples + celery root + hazelnuts

duck + apples + parsnips (and/or other root vegetables)

duck + apricots + cherries + basmati rice

duck + arugula + lentils

duck + arugula + vinaigrette + walnuts

duck + bacon + ginger + spinach

duck + blackberries + ginger + Pinot Noir

duck + cabbage + mushrooms

duck + cherries + vinegar

duck + cinnamon + honey + orange + star anise

duck + cloves + garlic + orange + prunes + red wine

duck + dates + turnips

duck + fava beans + pecorino cheese

duck + garlic + ginger + mint

duck + ginger + honey + soy sauce

duck + ginger + kumquats + black pepper + star anise

duck + green peppercorns + sweet potatoes

duck + honey + lavender

duck + lemon + plums

duck + lentils + onions + balsamic vinegar

duck + orange + scallions

duck + parsnips + turnips

We serve a sixteen-ounce **duck** breast with a Pinot Noir, blackberry, and ginger sauce. The sauce is made from frozen Oregon blackberries, which I am not shy to admit I use, because eleven months out of the year, there is nothing better. At home, I make a version of this sauce with currant preserves: I sauté the duck, then add lots of fresh ginger and shallots, a few tablespoons of currant preserves, and some champagne vinegar to cut the sweetness.

—MICHAEL LOMONACO, CHEF, PORTER HOUSE NEW YORK (NEW YORK CITY)

Dishes

Duck Confit: Wild Mushrooms, Red Swiss Chard, Sweet and Sour Duck Jus

—Olivier Muller, DB Bistro Moderne (New York City)

DUCK CONFIT

beets
cheese, Roquefort
frisée
garlic
lentils, green
mushrooms, wild
mustard, Dijon
oil: hazelnut, walnut
onions
parsley, flat-leaf
pepper, white
salt
shallots
stock, chicken
vinegar, red wine
watercress

EASTERN EUROPEAN CUISINES

allspice, esp. in desserts
bacon
beef
beets
bell peppers, green
cabbage
caraway seeds
carrots
celery
celery root
chicken
cinnamon, esp. in desserts
cloves, esp. in desserts
cream
dill
game
garlic
ginger, esp. in desserts
juniper berries
lamb
marjoram
meats
mushrooms
mustard
noodles
offal
onions
paprika
pepper, black
potatoes
rice
sour cream
sugar
tomatoes
veal
vegetables, root
vinegar

Flavor Affinities

beef + cabbage + rice
beets + dill + sour cream
cabbage + caraway + vinegar
chicken + cream + paprika
noodles + caraway seeds + sour cream

EGGPLANT

Season: summer

Taste: bitter

Weight: medium-heavy

Volume: moderate

Techniques: bake, boil, braise, broil, deep-fry, grill, roast, sauté, steam, stir-fry, stuff

allspice

anchovies

artichokes

basil

bell peppers, esp. green, red

bouquet garni

bread, pita

bread crumbs

cabbage, green

capers

cashews

cayenne

CHEESE: Emmental, feta, goat, Gruyère, mozzarella, **Parmesan, ricotta, ricotta**

salata, Romano, Swiss

chickpeas

chile peppers, esp. fresh green

chili powder

Dishes

Grilled Eggplant Terrine with Red Bell Pepper and Italian Parsley Sauce

—David Bouley, Bouley (New York City)

Eggplant Ravioli with Medallions of Maine Lobster and Tomato-Basil Butter

—Patrick O'Connell, The Inn at Little Washington (Washington, Virginia)

Baba Ghanoush Soup, Made with Eggplant, Tahini, Tomato Water, Garlic, and Cumin

—Michel Richard, Citronelle (Washington, DC)

Eggplant, Peas, and Paneer in Pomegranate-Cinnamon Masala with Raita and Chapati

—Vikram Vij and Meeru Dhalwala, Vij's (Vancouver)



Chinese cuisine

chives

cilantro

cinnamon

coconut milk

coriander

cumin

curry

dips

Eastern Mediterranean cuisine

fennel

fennel seeds

French cuisine, esp. Provençal
garam masala

GARLIC

ginger

honey

Indian cuisine

Italian cuisine

Japanese cuisine

Korean cuisine

lamb

LEMON, juice

lentils

Middle Eastern cuisine

mint

miso

mushrooms, esp. button, shiitake

mustard, Dijon

oil: peanut, sesame

OLIVE OIL

olives: black, green

ONIONS, esp. red, Spanish, yellow

oregano

paprika (garnish)

PARSLEY, FLAT-LEAF

pasta

PEPPER: BLACK, WHITE

peppers, piquillo (e.g., Spanish cuisine)

pine nuts

pomegranate

prosciutto

red pepper flakes

rice

rosemary

saffron

sage

SALT: kosher, sea

sausage

savory

scallions

sesame: oil, seeds

shallots

soy sauce

squash, yellow or other summer

stock, chicken

sugar

tahini

tamari

thyme

TOMATOES, tomato juice, tomato sauce

VINEGAR: balsamic, champagne, red wine, rice wine, sherry

walnuts

yogurt

zucchini

Flavor Affinities

eggplant + basil + bell peppers + garlic + tomatoes

eggplant + basil + mozzarella cheese

eggplant + basil + olive oil + balsamic vinegar

eggplant + basil + ricotta salata cheese + tomatoes

eggplant + bell peppers + garlic + mustard

eggplant + garlic + lemon juice + olive oil + parsley + tahini

eggplant + garlic + onions + parsley

eggplant + lentils + yogurt

Eggplant is funny. It is a subtle vegetable that can work with strong herbs like rosemary or marjoram.

—JERRY TRAUNFELD, THE HERBFARM (WOODINVILLE, WASHINGTON)

Eggplant can take on an even richer, meatier flavor when it's enhanced with miso or tahini.

—BRAD FARMERIE, PUBLIC (NEW YORK CITY)

My **eggplant** gazpacho really tastes like a baba ghanoush soup. We start the soup by roasting eggplant and onions. Then we blend this together with tahini, tomato water, buttermilk for acidity, lemon, and garlic. The soup is garnished with three gels made of eggplant, lemon, and onion—all flavors from the soup. I love texture—people joke

with me and call me “Captain Crunch”—so at the last second, we top the soup with Rice Krispies.

—MICHEL RICHARD, CITRONELLE (WASHINGTON, DC)

Dishes

Frittata with Zucchini and Parmesan Cheese, with Arugula Salad

—Andrew Carmellini, A Voce (New York City)

Poached Eggs with Crispy Polenta and Tomato Hollandaise

—Andrew Carmellini, A Voce (New York City)

Warm Salad of Greens with Pancetta and Scrambled Eggs

—Cesare Casella, Maremma (New York City)

Organic Egg Frittata with Mushrooms, Zucchini, and Gruyère

—Daniel Humm, Eleven Madison Park (New York City)

Organic Farm Egg Omelet with Capriole Farms Goat Cheese, Oranges, and Citrus Hollandaise, Toasted Ciabatta, and Apple Butter

—Carrie Nahabedian, Naha (Chicago)

Organic Farm Egg and Wood-Grilled Spanish Sausage with a Salad of Italian Frisée Smoked Red Thumb Potatoes, French Breakfast Radishes, Sweet Garlic, and Herbs

—Carrie Nahabedian, Naha (Chicago)

Organic Scrambled Egg with a Lime Crème Fraîche and White Sturgeon Caviar

—Thierry Rautureau, Rover's (Seattle)

Traditional Eggs Benedict, Shaved Canadian Bacon, Lemon-Thyme Hollandaise, and Truffle Pesto

—Nori Sugie, Asiate (New York City)

Smoked Chicken, Roasted Bell Pepper, Artichoke, and Fontina Cheese Omelet

—Nori Sugie, Asiate (New York City)

I like **frittata** as a main course at lunch or dinner. You can simply have frittata with a soup, and it's a meal. Frittata is like a risotto in its versatility; you can go crazy with it and add almost anything to them. I love my frittata with vegetables; asparagus, artichokes, mushrooms, onions, zucchini all work. With any variety of vegetables I would add some fresh herbs and cheese. Since the eggs are the protein, the only thing I don't personally care for in my frittata is meat, or maybe pickled vegetables.

—ODETTE FADA, SAN DOMENICO (NEW YORK CITY)

We will serve the combination of poached egg and spring asparagus differently at brunch versus dinner. At brunch, we will serve sliced asparagus mixed with other sliced vegetables in the bottom of a *cazuela* [clay pot] with the poached egg on top. For dinner, it will be green market asparagus topped with a poached egg and anchovy butter.

—ALEXANDRA RAJ, TÍA POL (NEW YORK CITY)

EGGS AND EGGBASED DISHES—IN GENERAL

Taste: sweet, astringent

Function: heating

Weight: light–medium

Volume: quiet

Techniques: bake (frittata, quiche, etc.), boil (soft or hard), fry, poach, scramble

asparagus

bacon and pancetta

basil

bell peppers, esp. green

bread

butter

capers

caviar

cheeses: Comté, Emmental, feta, Gruyère, Havarti, mozzarella, Parmesan,

Roquefort

chervil

chives

chorizo

cream

cream cheese
crème fraîche
dill
garlic
ginkgo nuts
ham: Serrano, Virginia
herbs, esp. fines herbes (i.e., chervil, chives, parsley, tarragon)
leeks
marjoram
mushrooms
olive oil
onions
parsley, flat-leaf
pepper: black, white
potatoes
salmon, smoked
salt: kosher, sea
sausage
scallions
shallots
sorrel
spinach
tarragon
thyme
tomatoes
truffles



AVOID

cranberries

Flavor Affinities

eggs + bacon + cheese + onions

eggs + bacon + crème fraîche + onions (Alsatian)

eggs + beets + smoked whitefish (Yiddish)

eggs + cheese + mushrooms + thyme

eggs + kale + pinkelwurst (oatmeal sausage) (Berliner)

eggs + mozzarella cheese + tomatoes (Roman)

eggs + mushrooms + red wine (Bordelaise)

eggs + potato + sausage

EGGS, FRITTATA

anchovies

artichokes

arugula

asparagus

bacon and pancetta

basil

bell peppers

cheese: feta, Gruyère, Havarti, mozzarella, Parmesan

chives

herbs

Italian cuisine

mushrooms

olives

onions

pepper, black

salt, esp. kosher

sausage

shallots

thyme

tomatoes

zucchini

EGGS, HARD-BOILED

Techniques: chop, devil, halve, sieve, slice

almonds
basil
butter, unsalted
cayenne
chile peppers,
jalapeño
chives
cilantro
cream
curry
dill
garlic
ginger, pickled
leeks
mayonnaise
mint
mustard: Dijon, dry
olive oil
paprika
parsley, flat-leaf
pepper, black
salmon
salt, kosher
sauce, béchamel
scallions
shallots
sour cream
Tabasco sauce
tarragon
tomatoes

ENDIVE

Season: winter–spring

Taste: bitter, sweet

Weight: light

Volume: quiet–moderate

Techniques: braise, glaze, grill, raw, roast

almonds

anchovies

apples

arugula

avocado

bacon and pancetta

basil

bay leaf

beets

butter, unsalted

capers

cardamom, green

celery

CHEESE: Asiago, blue, goat, Gorgonzola, Gruyère, herb, Parmesan, Roquefort

chervil

chicken

chives

cinnamon

coriander

crab

cream

cream cheese

crème fraîche

cumin

fennel seeds

fenugreek

French cuisine

frisée

game

garlic

ginger

grapefruit

honey

horseradish

leeks

lemon, juice

mayonnaise

mushrooms

mustard: Dijon, dry, whole grain

mustard seeds

OIL: grapeseed, peanut, safflower, vegetable

OLIVE OIL

olives, black

orange: fruit, juice

parsley, flat-leaf

peanuts

pears

pecans

pepper: black, white

nuts

pistachios

pomegranate

radicchio

red pepper flakes

rosemary

salads

salt: kosher, sea

seafood

shallots

shrimp

smoked fish, esp. salmon or trout

sour cream

stocks: chicken, fish, veal

sugar: brown, white

tarragon

thyme

tomatoes

vinaigrette, mustard

VINEGAR: balsamic, raspberry, red wine, sherry

WALNUTS

watercress

Dishes

Cabbageless Sauerkraut: Pickled Onions, Fennel, Endive, and Green Apple

—Christopher Lee, Gilt (New York City)

Endive Tips with Red Pepper Puree, Maple Molasses, and Candied Walnuts

—Monica Pope, T'afia (Houston)

Endive and Grapefruit Salad with Honey Dressing and Toasted Pecans

—Monica Pope, T'afia (Houston)

Belgian Endive Salad, Shredded Carrot and Apple Salad, Concord Grapes, Sonoma Verjus Vinaigrette

—Nori Sugie, Asiate (New York City)

People shy away from **endive** because of its bitterness. But a good chef will pair it with a sweet dressing.

—CARRIE NAHABEDIAN, NAHA (CHICAGO)

Flavor Affinities

endive + arugula + radicchio
endive + cheese + mushrooms

ENDIVE, CURLY

(See *Frisée*)

ENGLISH CUISINE

cheese: Cheddar, Stilton
cream
fish (and chips)
game
jams and preserves
lamb
mutton
oats
peas

puddings (e.g., Yorkshire)
roast beef
scones
tea
tea sandwiches
Worcestershire sauce

EPAZOTE

Taste: bitter
Weight: light–medium
Volume: moderate–loud

beans, esp. black
bell peppers
Caribbean cuisine
Central American cuisine
chile peppers
chorizo
cilantro
cloves
corn
cumin
fish
garlic
goat
Latin American cuisines
legumes
lime

Mexican cuisine

mole sauces
mushrooms
onions
oregano
paprika
pepper
pork
rice

salsas
shellfish
soups
squash
tomatillos
vegetables, green

I have always loved to mix meat and fish in a very delicate way. I went to Cut [Wolfgang Puck's steak restaurant] and had my first true Kobe beef steak. I begged Lee [Heftner, the chef] for his source! Surf and turf is not as much about having a piece of meat and fish on the plate as about the ideas they create for flavor combinations. The Kobe beef triggered everything. I can't serve steak at a fish restaurant, but the Kobe was so good I had to find a way to justify it on the menu. I came up with Kobe beef and **escalar**, with a brown butter that is classic with the fish. The final dish was inspired by having Korean barbecue at a friend's house, which is when I realized how to bring it together.

I wanted another element in the dish because the Kobe, escalar, and brown butter are all rich and all soft. The dish also has squash, Japanese pears, and napa cabbage marinated like Korean kimchee for just a moment. These elements add contrast, chewiness, and crunchiness.

—ERIC RIPERT, LE BERNARDIN (NEW YORK CITY)

ESCALAR

brown butter
Kobe beef

Flavor Affinities

escalar + Kobe beef + brown butter

ESCAROLE

Season: year-round
Taste: bitter
Weight: medium
Volume: moderate–loud
Techniques: braise, grill, roast

almonds
anchovies
beans
beef
butter
cheese: Fontina, Gruyère, mozzarella, Parmesan, Roquefort
chile peppers, dried red
cream
cumin
fish
garlic
hazelnuts
lemon
olive oil
olives,
black
onions
paprika, sweet
parsley
pepper: black, white
pork
poultry
red pepper flakes
salt, kosher
shallots
soups, esp. bean
stock, chicken
tomatoes (e.g., cherry)
vinegar, red or white wine

Flavor Affinities

escarole + apples + Cheddar cheese
escarole + olive oil + shallots

Escarole is a bitter but sturdy leaf, and in a salad dressed with olive oil and red wine vinegar, I like to add Cheddar for its sharpness and creaminess plus some crisp and refreshing apples.

—TONY LIU, AUGUST (NEW YORK CITY)

ETHIOPIAN CUISINE

beef, raw or stewed injera
spices
stewed dishes
vegetables, stewed
wine, honey

EUROPEAN, EASTERN CUISINES

(See Eastern European Cuisines)

FALL

(See Autumn)

FENNEL

Season: year-round
Taste: sweet
Weight: light
Volume: quiet
Techniques: boil, braise, fry, grill, raw, roast, sauté, steam

almonds

anise

apples

arugula

asparagus

basil

bay leaf

beets: vegetable, juice

bell peppers

BUTTER, UNSALTED

carrots

CHEESE: blue, goat, Gorgonzola, Gruyère, **Parmesan**, pecorino

chicken

chives

coriander

crab
cream
crème fraîche

cucumbers

eggplant

eggs

endive

fennel pollen

fennel seeds

FISH, esp. grilled and/or whole salmon, sea bass, snapper

frisée

garlic

ginger, fresh

Italian cuisine

herbs

honey

lamb

leeks

LEMON: juice, zest

lemon balm

lettuce: Bibb, butter

lime: juice, leaf (kaffir)

lobster

lovage

meats

Mediterranean cuisine

mint

mussels

nutmeg

OIL: canola

olive oil

olives: black, green

onions, esp. red

ORANGE: JUICE, segments

pancetta

paprika

parsley, flat-leaf

pasta

pears

pecans

PEPPER: BLACK, WHITE

Pernod

pickles

pork

potatoes

prosciutto

rice

rosemary

salads (e.g., green or tuna) and salad dressings

salmon

salt: kosher, sea

sambuca

sauces

scallions

shallots

shellfish

shrimp

soups, esp. vegetable

spinach

star anise

stews, esp. fish

stocks: chicken, veal, vegetable

stuffing

sugar (pinch)

swordfish

tarragon

thyme

tomatoes and tomato sauce

tuna

veal

vegetables, esp. summer

vermouth

vinaigrettes

vinegar: champagne, cider, raspberry

walnuts

watercress

wine: dry white, vermouth

zucchini

Dishes

Wild Fennel and Ramp Soup with Broken Capellini and Alaskan King Crab

—Lidia Bastianich, Felidia (New York City)

Braised Fennel Salad with Pears and Gorgonzola

—Mario Batali, Babbo (New York City)

Puree of Fennel Soup with Apples, Almonds, and Madras Curry

—Traci Des Jardins, Jardinière (San Francisco)

I like **fennel** shaved raw, with just some lemon juice, olive oil, and fennel seeds. Fennel goes well with dried meats like prosciutto. It also pairs nicely with shellfish like langoustines, lobster, or crab. Fennel can work with fish as well as with meat. It goes really well with cold poached salmon or white, light meats like chicken or veal.

—GABRIEL KREUTHER, THE MODERN (NEW YORK CITY)

Fennel is a flavor I like so much that I have to show restraint with it. You can add anything to it because other flavors really adhere to it. You can braise it in olive oil and veal stock to get one flavor. Or you can braise it in olive oil, white wine, and water and get a whole other flavor. Or you can quarter it, caramelize it, and roast it in the oven—now you have a sugar flavor and it can become a dessert. I love fennel every way including braised, caramelized, dried, candied, and pureed. In the fall, I served raw shaved fennel with arugula, and shaved Honeycrisp apple with a dressing made of apple cider, honey, and mustard. Fennel puts the salad over the top with its crunch. In summer, we serve a fennel and fig tarte tatin with duck. You get a Fig Newton flavor from the fig and Pernod flavor from the fennel; they match really well.

—CARRIE NAHABEDIAN, NAHA (CHICAGO)

Flavor Affinities

fennel + almond + fennel seeds + honey + lemon

fennel + apple + pecorino cheese + watercress

fennel + asparagus + fennel seeds + garlic + olive oil

fennel + garlic + onions + tomatoes

fennel + lemon + mint + olive oil + olives + orange

fennel + lemon + olive oil + Parmesan cheese + parsley

fennel + onions + potatoes + chicken stock

fennel + orange + sambuca

FENNEL POLLEN

Taste: sweet

Weight: light

Volume: quiet

Tips: Use to finish a dish.

apricots

beef

boar

chicken

cream

fennel seeds

fish, esp. flakier white, poached or steamed

garlic

lamb

lemon

nuts, esp. almonds, pistachios

pasta

pork

potatoes

poultry

rabbit

rice or risotto

salads

salmon

sea trout

shellfish

vegetables

yogurt

Flavor Affinities

fennel pollen + lemon + yogurt

Fennel pollen has a light, fennel-anise flavor with a floral component. It is delicate, so you don't cook with it—you just finish a dish with it. It is great on lighter things like salads, poached or steamed flaky white fish, poultry, or pork. When a dish has fennel pollen, even before the food hits your mouth you will notice a floral smell that gets you thinking of summer, lighter foods, and freshness. I use it with my sea trout dish, which is served with a simple salad of green apple, fennel, jicama, pistachios, and dried gooseberries. The dish is topped with the pollen blended with some yogurt, lemon juice, and preserved lemon, which we drape over the fish. This dish just screams "summer." With a glass of Sauvignon Blanc on the terrace in the early evening, you're set!

—BRAD FARMERIE, PUBLIC (NEW YORK CITY)

I really like **fennel pollen**. The majority of the time, we use it in a marinade for meats like pork, boar, chicken, and lamb. It adds an interesting herbaceous, aromatic note and a mysterious flavor.

—SHARON HAGE, YORK STREET (DALLAS)

FENNEL SEEDS

Taste: sweet

Weight: light

Volume: quiet-medium

Tips: Add near end of cooking process.

apples

baked goods (e.g., breads)

basil

beans

beets

bouillabaisse

cabbage

chicken

Chinese cuisine

cinnamon

cloves

cucumber

cumin

curries

duck

fennel

figs

FISH, ESP. STEAMED

five-spice powder (key ingredient)

garam masala (key ingredient)

garlic

herbes de Provence (key ingredient)

Italian cuisine

leeks

lentils

meats, braised

Mediterranean cuisine

olives

orange

paprika

parsley

pasta

pepper, black

pickles

pork

potatoes

ras el hanout (key ingredient)

rice

saffron

salads

sauces

sauerkraut

***SAUSAGES, esp. Italian**

Scandinavian cuisine

shellfish

soups, esp. fish

star anise

stews, esp. fish

stocks and broths

tarragon

tomatoes and tomato sauces

vegetables, esp. green

Flavor Affinities

fennel seeds + cinnamon + cloves + peppercorns + star anise (five-spice powder)

FENUGREEK

Season: autumn

Taste: bitter, sweet

Function: heating

Weight: light–medium

Volume: quiet–moderate

cardamom

cauliflower

cheeses, esp. creamy

chicken

cinnamon

cloves

coriander

cream, esp. sour

cumin

CURRIES AND CURRY POWDERS

Ethiopian cuisine

fennel seeds

fish

garlic

Indian cuisine lamb

legumes

lentils

maple syrup, artificial (key ingredient)

mayonnaise

mint

peas

pepper

potatoes

rabbit

rice

sauces, esp. creamy

shellfish, shrimp

soups
spinach
stews, esp. tomato-based
tomatoes
turmeric
vegetables, esp. green and root
yogurt

I love **fenugreek**, and its incredible aromatics. It goes well with everything from lamb to chicken to vegetables.

—VIKRAM VIJ, VIJ'S (VANCOUVER)

FETA CHEESE

(See Cheese, Feta)

FIDDLEHEAD FERNS

Season: spring

Taste: bitter

Weight: medium

Volume: moderate–loud

Techniques/Tips: Always serve cooked: blanch, boil, sauté, steam.

American cuisine, esp. New England

asparagus

bacon

basil

beans, fava

beef

brown butter

butter, sweet

cayenne

cheese: Comté, goat, Parmesan

chicken

fennel

fish (e.g., halibut, salmon)

garlic

hollandaise sauce
horseradish
lamb
lemon, juice
MUSHROOMS, WILD, e.g., chanterelles, morels
mustard
oil: sesame, walnut
olive oil
onions, esp. cipollini, red, spring
parsley, flat-leaf
pasta, esp. gnocchi
pepper
polenta
potatoes, esp. Yukon gold
poultry
prosciutto
ramps
salads
salt
sesame seeds
shallots
soy sauce
spinach
tarragon
thyme
veal
vinaigrettes
vinegar: balsamic, sherry
walnuts
yogurt

Dishes

Bresaola with Fiddleheads and Pecorino

—Mario Batali, Babbo (New York City)

Flavor Affinities

fiddlehead ferns + butter + herbs + morel mushrooms + ramps
fiddlehead ferns + garlic + morel mushrooms + salmon
fiddlehead ferns + sesame oil and/or seeds + soy sauce

FIGS, DRIED

Taste: sweet

Weight: medium

Volume: moderate

Techniques: stew

almonds

anise seeds

apples

apricots, dried

bananas

bay leaf

brandy

caramel

cheese: goat, manchego, Parmesan, ricotta

cherries, dried

chestnuts

chocolate, esp. dark, white

cinnamon

cloves

coconut

coffee

cognac

cream

dates

game

ginger

HONEY

lemon: juice, zest

macadamia nuts

maple syrup

mascarpone

nutmeg

oats

ORANGE: fruit, juice

pastries

pears
pecans
pineapple
pistachios
prunes
quince
raisins, yellow
sugar, brown
sweet potatoes
vanilla
WALNUTS
WINE, RED, sweet

Flavor Affinities

dried figs + anise + oranges + walnuts



FIGS, FRESH

Season: summer–autumn
Taste: sweet, astringent
Function: cooling
Weight: medium

Volume: quiet–moderate

Techniques: bake, broil, caramelize, deep-fry, grill, raw, roast

ALMONDS

anchovies

anise, esp. green

apples

arugula

bacon

butter, unsalted

caramel

CHEESE: blue, fromage blanc, goat, Gorgonzola, dry Jack, manchego, provolone, ricotta, Roquefort

cherries

chicken

chocolate: dark, white

cilantro

cinnamon

cloves

coffee / espresso

cognac

CREAM AND ICE CREAM

cream cheese

crème anglaise

crème fraîche

duck

fish (e.g., bass)

five-spice powder

French cuisine, esp. southern

game birds

garlic

ginger

grapes

ham, esp. Serrano

hazelnuts

HONEY

Italian cuisine, esp. southern

Kirsch

lamb

lavender

lemon: juice, zest

lime, juice

liqueurs, esp. raspberry

mango

mascarpone

meats, cured and smoked

Mediterranean cuisine

Middle Eastern cuisine

mint

Moroccan cuisine

oil, grapeseed

olive oil

onions

ORANGE: juice, zest

pancetta

pears

pecans

pepper, black

pine nuts

pistachios

pork

port

prosciutto

quail

radicchio

RASPBERRIES

rice

rosemary

rum, esp. dark

sorbets

star anise

SUGAR: brown, white

thyme

VANILLA

Vin Santo

VINEGAR: BALSAMIC, red wine, sherry

WALNUTS

wine: dry red, Marsala, port

Dishes

Fresh Fig Tart with a Dollop of Mascarpone

—Gina DePalma, pastry chef, Babbo (New York City)

Fig and Ricotta Gelato

—Gina DePalma, pastry chef, Babbo (New York City)

Honey-Baked Figs Stuffed with Walnuts

—Gina DePalma, pastry chef, Babbo (New York City)

Black Mission Figs with Goat Cheese Mousse, Honey Ice Cream, and Port Sabayon

—Gary Danko, Gary Danko (San Francisco)

Rogue River Oregonzola, Black Mission Figs, Lavender Honey, Toasted Hazelnuts

—Monica Pope, T'afia (Houston)

Flavor Affinities

figs + almonds + green anise

figs + black pepper + ricotta cheese

figs + caramel + vanilla + balsamic vinegar

figs + cilantro + lime

figs + cinnamon + honey + orange

figs + cream + goat cheese + honey

figs + cream + honey + raspberries

figs + goat cheese + pine nuts

figs + honey + mascarpone

figs + lemon + rosemary

figs + olive oil + rosemary

figs + Pernod + walnuts

FILET MIGNON

(See Beef—Steak: Filet Mignon)

FINES HERBES

Tips: Use late in the cooking process.

French cuisine

Flavor Affinities

chervil + chives + parsley + tarragon

Think of white **fish**—dorade, Dover sole, pompano, skate, snapper—as white meat, and red fish—salmon, tuna—as red meat. Salmon is like pork, and tuna like beef, and both combine better with stronger flavors. Tuna even pairs with some of the same flavors as beef, including black pepper, red wine, and wasabi.

—MICHEL RICHARD, CITRONELLE (WASHINGTON, DC)

I like my **fish** simply grilled or steamed. I choose fish that have a lot of flavor so very little has to be done to them. I don't believe you need 10,000 things for a great piece of fish. Dover sole doesn't need anything. Turbot has a wonderful flavor with no help.

We get our baby octopus from Sicily and they have plenty of flavor.

—ODETTE FADA, SAN DOMENICO (NEW YORK CITY)



FISH—IN GENERAL

(See individual fish; Seafood)

Taste: sweet

Function: heating

Weight: light–medium

Volume: quiet–moderate

anise

basil

broths

butter

cream

dill

fennel

fines herbes (i.e., chervil, chives, parsley, tarragon)

garlic

ginger

grapefruit

leeks

lemon: juice, zest

lemongrass

lemon verbena

lime: juice, zest

parsley

peas (accompaniment)

peppercorns

rhubarb

salt

tomatoes

wine, esp. white

Dishes

Onion-Crusted White Fish with Tomato-Water Sauce

—Michel Richard, Citronelle (Washington, DC)

Flavor Affinities

fish + ginger + lemongrass
fish + herbs + white wine
fish + onions + tomatoes

FISH SAUCE

Taste: salty

Weight: light

Volume: loud

lime, juice
sauces, dipping
shrimp

Southeast Asian cuisines

spring rolls

sugar

Thai cuisine

Vietnamese cuisine

vegetables

FIVE-SPICE POWDER

Taste: sweet

Weight: light

Volume: quiet–moderate

beef
chicken
Chinese cuisine
duck
pork
stews
stir-fries

Flavor Affinities

cinnamon + cloves + fennel seeds + star anise + Szechuan peppercorns

Dishes

Flounder Wrapped in Spring Roll Paper Served with House-Made Egg Noodles, Thai Green Curry-Coconut Milk Broth with Snow Peas, Yuzu Lime, and Honey Mushrooms

—Bob Kinkead, Colvin Run (Vienna, Virginia)

Sesame-Flavored Flounder and Wakame Seaweed Soup

—Kaz Okochi, Kaz Sushi Bistro (Washington, DC)

FLOUNDER

Season: summer

Weight: light

Volume: quiet

Techniques: bake, broil, deepfry, fry, poach, sauté, steam, stir-fry

almonds

basil

bread crumbs or cracker crumbs

butter

capers

chili sauce

chives

coconut milk

corn

cornmeal (e.g., as a crust)

crab

curry, green

dill

lemon

lime

Mediterranean cuisine

miso

noodles

olive oil

onions, Vidalia

pasta
peas
pepper, black
ramps
salt
seaweed, esp. konbu
shiso
ume (Japanese plum)
wine, white
yuzu
zucchini

Flavor Affinities

flounder + capers + lemon
flounder + shiso + *ume*
flounder + konbu seaweed + shiso

FOIE GRAS

Season: autumn
Weight: heavy
Volume: moderate
Techniques: braise, sauté, terrine

allspice
APPLES
apricots
Armagnac
bacon
brandy
cabbage
cherries
chives
chocolate
cognac
endive
figs: dried, fresh
French cuisine

ginger
grapes
leeks
lemon
mangoes
miso
nutmeg
oil, grapeseed
olive oil
onions
peaches
pears
pepper, black
pistachios
plums
port
raisins
rhubarb
salt, kosher
Sauternes
shallots
stock, chicken
strawberries
sugar (dash)
tomatoes
truffles and truffle oil, esp. white
vinegar: balsamic, cider

Flavor Affinities

foie gras + cherries + balsamic vinegar
foie gras + cherries + pistachios
foie gras + strawberries + black pepper

Dishes

Foie Gras with Roasted Plums

—Carrie Nahabedian, Naha (Chicago)

Foie Gras Sushi with Plum-Wine Jelly

—Kaz Okochi, Kaz Sushi Bistro (Washington, DC)

Seared Hudson Valley Foie Gras with Caramelized Three-Pear Salad

—Jimmy Schmidt, at the 2003 James Beard Awards gala reception

I found a recipe for olive oil cake at the same time that I was perfecting making a **foie gras** mousse that was pliable to the point that it could be made into an icing. So, I created a savory cake topped with the icing. Then one day while I was online I heard someone mention Twinkies, and the next thing I knew I was ordering real Twinkie pans online. Three days later, Twinkies stuffed with foie gras was born. I serve it with fresh strawberries and black pepper. It seems like everything has been done already, but I like to think I am the only person working with Twinkies.

—BOB IACOVONE, CUVÉE (NEW ORLEANS)

FRENCH CUISINE—IN GENERAL

beef

cheese

CREAM

eggs

herbs

mustards

onions

parsley

pastries

pork

potatoes

poultry

roasted meats

SAUCES

sausages

sautéed dishes

seafood

shallots

spirits

STOCK

tarragon

thyme
truffles, black
veal
vinegars
wheat, esp. as flour
WINE

Flavor Affinities

butter + cheese + stock
butter + cheese + wine
butter + herbs
cream + herbs
herbs + stock
herbs + wine

Tarte flambée is a dish that is 200 years old and was originally made by farmers in Alsace in the village's wood-burning oven used for baking bread. The *tarte flambée* developed from what was on hand on the farm: cheese and cream from the cow, pork from the pig, and onions from the field, which they added to some dough. Since we don't have a wood-burning oven [in the middle of Manhattan], we have to tweak the recipe from the classic. We have to tweak the cream because if we don't, it breaks and just becomes grease. Instead, I use a mix of fromage blanc, cream, and sour cream so I can get the same result as cream in the original. And to compensate for not having a fire, I use an applewood-smoked bacon.

—GABRIEL KREUTHER, THE MODERN (NEW YORK CITY)

FRENCH CUISINE, NORTHERN

apples: cider, fruit, juice buckwheat (key ingredient in crepes)

BUTTER

cabbage
Calvados
charcuterie
cheese: Camembert

CREAM

fish, freshwater
game
lobster

oysters
pork: bacon, ham
sausages
shellfish
veal

Flavor Affinities

bacon + cheese + cream

FRENCH CUISINE, SOUTHERN

(aka Provençal Cuisine)

anchovies
anise
basil
beef, esp. stewed
bell peppers
chicken, esp. grilled
fish, esp. grilled
garlic
grilled dishes
herbes de Provence
lamb, esp. roasted
lavender
marjoram
meats
mustard

OLIVE OIL

olives
pâtés
pork
rosemary
sage
shellfish
soups
tomatoes
vegetables
wine

Flavor Affinities

basil + garlic + olive oil + Parmesan cheese

basil + olive oil + tomatoes

bell peppers + eggplant + garlic + onions + tomatoes + zucchini

chicken + garlic + olives + onions + tomatoes

garlic + egg yolk + lemon + olive oil + saffron

marjoram + rosemary + sage + thyme (aka *herbes de Provence*)

olives + basil + capers + garlic + olive oil (aka tapenade)

pork + anise + marjoram + thyme

seafood + garlic + olive oil + tomatoes

FRESHNESS

Season: spring–summer

Tips: Listed herbs are always used fresh (with little or no cooking), and add a note of freshness to a dish. Other listed flavors add a bright note to a dish. For the opposite, see listing for **Slow-Cooked**.

basil

chives

cilantro

citrus

dill

fennel pollen

mint

tarragon

FRISÉE

(a fine-leaved variety of curly endive)

Season: year-round

Taste: sweet, bitter

Weight: light

Volume: quiet

Techniques: raw, wilt

almonds

anchovies

avocado

bacon / lardons

basil

bell peppers: red, yellow

beets

CHEESE: BLUE, GOAT, PARMESAN, ROQUEFORT

cherries, dried

chervil

chives

cilantro

croutons (accent)

cucumbers

eggs, esp. poached

endive

fat: bacon, duck

garlic

ginger

grapefruit

lemon, juice

lettuces: red oak leaf, red leaf

lime, juice

maple syrup

mushrooms, white

mustard, Dijon

oil: canola, grapeseed, hazelnut, walnut

olive oil

olives

onions, red

orange, juice

parsley, flat-leaf

pepper: black, white

salads, esp. warm

salt: kosher, sea

scallops

seafood

shallots

tangerines and tangerine juice

tarragon

tomatoes

vinaigrette
vinegar: sherry, white wine
walnuts (accent)
watercress

Dishes

Salad “Lyonnaise”: Italian Frisée, Applewood Slab Bacon, and Warm Poached Egg, Sherry Wine–Dijon Mustard Vinaigrette

—Carrie Nahabedian, Naha (Chicago)

Warm Frisée and Bacon Salad with Beet Carpaccio and Toasted Walnuts

—Lydia Shire, Locke-Ober Café (Boston)

Frisée and Spinach Salad with Dried Cherries, Blue Cheese, Walnuts, and Maple-Sherry Vinaigrette

—Charlie Trotter, Trotter’s to Go (Chicago)

Flavor Affinities

frisée + anchovies + garlic + Parmesan cheese
frisée + bacon + poached egg
frisée + bacon + Roquefort cheese + garlic + shallots + sherry vinegar

FRUIT, DRIED

(See also Dates, Figs, Raisins, etc.)

Taste: sweet

Tips: If the fruit is hard, steam before using.

apple juice
chocolate
cinnamon
ginger
lemon
nuts

pistachios

vanilla

walnuts

FRUIT, FRESH

(See also specific fruits)

Taste: sweet

Tips: Sugar enhances the natural flavor of fruit.

almonds

ginger, fresh

lemon: juice, zest

sabayon sauce

SUGAR

vanilla

FRUIT, TROPICAL

(See also specific fruits, e.g., Mangoes, Papayas, Pineapples, etc.)

Taste: sweet, sour

bananas

bourbon

caramel

chile peppers

chocolate

chocolate, white

cloves

coconut

coriander

cream and ice cream

five-spice powder

ginger

guava

honey

lemon: juice, zest

lemongrass

LIME: JUICE, ZEST

mangoes
melon, honeydew
mint
orange: juice, zest
pineapple
pomegranates

RUM

spirits, white: gin, vodka
strawberries

SUGAR: BROWN, WHITE

vanilla

yogurt

Tropical fruits are strong flavored, and stand up to chocolate better. At the same time, tropical fruits like bananas or mangoes are not overly sweet fruits, so caramel can stand up to them. With tropical fruits, I will use a little lime juice and often rum as well to help give them a little kick. With mangoes, I use a little light brown sugar—or I'll even blend light brown and white sugar together because I'll want the flavor but not want it to be too harsh.

—EMILY LUCHETTI, FARALLON (SAN FRANCISCO)

Dishes

Exotic Fruit Salad with Guava Sauce and Phyllo Galettes

—Dominique and Cindy Duby, Wild Sweets (Vancouver)

Chocolate Custard Cake with Exotic Fruit Gelée and Caramelized Bananas

—Dominique and Cindy Duby, Wild Sweets (Vancouver)

Tropical Fruit Salad with Rosewater and Sweet Tahini Yogurt

—Brad Farmerie, Public (New York City)

Flavor Affinities

tropical fruit + coconut + honey + lime

tropical fruit + ginger + mint + orange + sugar

GAME—IN GENERAL

(See also Rabbit, Venison)

Season: autumn

Weight: heavy

Volume: moderate–loud

Techniques: braise, roast

Tips: The flavor of cloves adds richness to game.

allspice

cabbage, red

cayenne

cherries

chestnuts

cloves

cranberries, dried

garlic

gin

greens

Italian cuisine

juniper berries

lentils

Madeira

maple syrup

mushrooms, wild

mustard, Dijon

onions

parsley, flat-leaf

pepper, black

salt, sea

stock, beef

sugar, brown

vinegar

wine, red

GARAM MASALA

Function: warming

Tips: Add near the end of the cooking process or before serving.

Indian cuisine

Flavor Affinities

cardamom + black pepper + cinnamon + cloves + coriander + cumin + dried chiles + fennel + mace + nutmeg



GARLIC

Season: year-round

Botanical relatives: chives, leeks, onions, shallots

Function: heating

Weight: light–medium

Volume: moderate (esp. cooked)–loud (esp. raw)

Techniques: grill, raw, roast, sauté

almonds

anchovies

bacon

barbecue

basil

bay leaf

beans
beef
beets
bread
broccoli
cabbage
Cajun cuisine
caraway seeds
cayenne
cheese, Parmesan
chicken
chile peppers
Chinese cuisine
chives
cilantro
coriander
cream, half-and-half
Creole cuisine
cumin
curries
eggplant
eggs
fennel
fennel seeds
fish
French cuisine
ginger
Indian cuisine
Italian cuisine
Korean cuisine
lamb
leeks
LEMON: juice, zest
lemongrass
lentils
lime, juice
mayonnaise
meats
Mediterranean cuisine

Mexican cuisine
Middle Eastern cuisine
Moroccan cuisine

mushrooms

mustard

oil: canola, peanut

OLIVE OIL

onions

oregano

paprika, esp. sweet

parsley, flat-leaf

pasta and pasta sauces

pepper: black, white

pesto (key ingredient)

pork

potatoes

rice

rosemary

saffron

sage

salads (e.g., Caesar)

salt

sauces

shallots

shellfish

shrimp

soups

soy sauce

spinach

steak

stocks: chicken, vegetable

sugar

tarragon

Thai cuisine

thyme

TOMATOES AND TOMATO SAUCE

vegetables

Vietnamese cuisine

VINEGAR, esp. balsamic, red wine

wine, white
zucchini

When **garlic** needs to be there, it needs to be there. That includes a lot of dishes, such as lamb. Garlic is also called for with all kinds of vegetables, sauces, pastas, and salads.

—DAVID WALTUCK, CHANTERELLE (NEW YORK CITY)

I use **garlic** primarily in two ways: infused into olive oil, or served crispy as a garnish. I'll use the garlic oil for cooking—and even if a dish will have garlic added later, I will start with this oil. For crispy brown garlic, you start by slicing it thinly like a chip. The garlic is then put into cold olive oil and cooked until it is just brown. Then, you add parsley, red pepper flakes, and an acid like lemon juice or vinegar to make a vinaigrette. You can even add some stock like a fumet, which is wonderful, too—served hot, it is great with almost any kind of fish, from something light all the way to oily blue fish.

—ALEXANDRA RAJ, TÍA POL (NEW YORK CITY)

GEORGIAN CUISINE (RUSSIAN)

fish
garlic
meats
pepper, red ground pickles
pomegranates
vinegar
walnuts

Flavor Affinities

coriander + dill + fenugreek (blue) + garlic + red peppers
garlic + walnuts

GERMAN CUISINE

allspice
anise
bay leaf
beer
bread, rye
caraway seeds

chives
cinnamon
dill: seeds, weed
fish
ginger
horseradish
juniper berries
mace
meats, esp. with fruits
nutmeg
paprika, sweet
parsley
pepper, white
poppy seeds
pork
potatoes
sauerbraten
sauerkraut
sausages
sour cream
sugar
veal
vinegar

Flavor Affinities

caraway + paprika + sour cream
caraway + sauerkraut
cream + horseradish + fish or meat
cream + paprika + poppy seeds
dill + cucumbers
ginger + sauerbraten
juniper berries + game
mace + chicken
nutmeg + potatoes
sugar + vinegar

GIN

Weight: light–medium

Volume: quiet–loud

apple brandy

apricot brandy

basil

blackberries

celery

Champagne

cilantro

Cointreau

cola

cranberry juice

cucumber

Curaçao

Earl Grey tea

ginger

HERBS

honey

lemon juice

lime juice

mint

orange juice

oysters

pomegranate

pomegranate molasses

rose geranium

rosemary

sage

sugar

TONIC

Cucumber and mint is a fashionable combination in cocktails, [especially] those with Hendrick's **gin**, which has a cucumber flavor. Cucumber is a flavor that's distinct yet delicate, and very refreshing. It goes beautifully with a range of foods, from Asian cuisine to smoked salmon.

—JERRI BANKS, COCKTAIL CONSULTANT (NEW YORK CITY)

With **gin**, or even Martini & Rossi Bianco, I love the combination of blackberries and sage. Blackberries have an indescribable flavor to begin with, and the sage gives them a brooding quality.

—JERRI BANKS, COCKTAIL CONSULTANT (NEW YORK CITY)

Flavor Affinities

gin + apple brandy + lemon juice + orange juice
gin + basil + lemon
gin + blackberries + sage
gin + cilantro + lime
gin + Cointreau + lime + rosemary
gin + cucumber + mint
gin + Earl Grey tea + lemon + sugar
gin + lime + mint
gin + lime + mint + pomegranate
gin + lime + orange

Gin Flavors

Beefeater: pear
Hendrick's: cucumber, rose petals
Old Raj: saffron
Zuidam Dry: orange peel

Dishes

Ginger-Honey Gelato

—Gina DePalma, pastry chef, Babbo (New York City)

Ginger-Lemon Drink: Ginger, Lemon, Sugar, Salt, and Pepper

—Vikram Vij and Meenu Dhalwala, Vij's (Vancouver)

GINGER

Season: year-round

Taste: sour, hot

Weight: light–medium

Volume: loud

Techniques: bake, stir-fry

allspice

almonds

anise

apples

apricots

Arabic cuisine

ASIAN CUISINES

bananas

basil

bay leaf

beef

bell peppers, red

beverages

butter

caramel

cardamom

carrots

cashews

celery

cheese, ricotta

chicken

chile peppers, esp. jalapeño

CHINESE CUISINE

chocolate, esp. dark, white

cilantro

cinnamon

citrus

cloves

coconut

coriander

crab

cranberries

CREAM AND ICE CREAM

cumin

CURRIES

custards
duck
eggplant
European cuisines

fennel

figs

FISH

fish sauce
five-spice powder (key ingredient)

garlic

grapefruit

guava

hazelnuts

HONEY

Indian cuisine, esp. curries

Indonesian cuisine

JAPANESE CUISINE

kaffir lime leaves

Korean cuisine

kumquats

lamb

lavender

leeks

lemon

lemongrass

lemon herbs (e.g., balm, thyme, verbena)

LIME, JUICE

lobster

lychees

mangoes

maple syrup

marinades

mascarpone

meats

melon

Middle Eastern cuisine

mint

molasses

Moroccan cuisine
mushrooms
mussels
noodles and noodle dishes
North African cuisine
nutmeg
oats
oil: canola, grapeseed
olive oil
onions, esp. red
orange
papaya
passion fruit
peaches
peanuts
pears
pepper, white
persimmons
pineapple
plums
pork
prunes
pumpkin
quince
raisins
raspberries
rhubarb
rice
rum, esp. dark
saffron
salad dressings
salads, esp. Asian
salt, kosher
sauces
SCALLIONS
scallops
sesame oil
shallots
shellfish

shrimp

soups

SOY SAUCE

star anise

steak

stews

stocks: beef, chicken

strawberries

SUGAR: white, brown

sushi and sashimi

sweet potatoes

Tabasco sauce

tamarind

tarragon

tea

Thai cuisine

tomatoes

turmeric

vanilla

vegetables

verbena

Vietnamese cuisine

VINEGAR: champagne, cider, rice wine

walnuts

wasabi (e.g., with seafood)

wine, sweet

yogurt

yuzu

Flavor Affinities

ginger + carrot + celery + garlic

ginger + chile peppers + garlic

ginger + chocolate + cream + rum

ginger + cider vinegar + sugar

ginger + cilantro + garlic + scallions

ginger + cream + honey

ginger + lemon + mint

ginger + lemon + pepper + salt + sugar

Ginger and honey is one of my favorite flavor combinations.

—GINA DEPALMA, BABBO (NEW YORK CITY)

I'll use **ginger** more for its heat than its sweetness. For example, I'll juice it to add to a carrot or squash puree, which gives it heat and backbone.

—BRADFORD THOMPSON, MARY ELAINE'S AT THE PHOENICIAN (SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA)

GINGER, GROUND

Taste: pungent

Function: heating

Weight: light–medium

Volume: moderate–loud

Asian cuisine

baked goods (e.g., breads, cakes, cookies)

bananas

beverages

cardamom

carrots

chicken

chocolate

chutneys

cinnamon

cloves

couscous

cream and ice cream

desserts

fruits

gingerbread (key ingredient)

ham

honey

lemon

meats, esp. braised or stewed

melon

Moroccan cuisine

nutmeg

nuts

onions

oranges
paprika
peaches
pears
pepper
pineapple
pork
pumpkin
rice
saffron
squash, winter
stewed dishes
sweet potatoes
tea
tomatoes

Dishes

Gingersnap-Lemon Ice Cream Sandwiches

—Emily Luchetti, pastry chef, Farallon (San Francisco)

Ginger is great on its own, but also works great with other flavors. It's one of those "wake up" flavors that you can hide beneath all sorts of other flavors. I think it works especially well with citrus. It works with yuzu, passion fruit, coconut, banana, and other tropical flavors.

—MICHAEL LAISKONIS, LE BERNARDIN (NEW YORK CITY)

My mom always had **candied ginger** in the spice cupboard when I was growing up. Today at the restaurant, we take candied ginger and combine it with whatever fruit is in season—from nectarines, to cherries, to quince—and then add Vin Santo to make a sauce for our foie gras. Vin Santo brings nuttiness and candied ginger brings spice that both cut through the fat of the foie gras. I think nectarines and candied ginger are a perfect flavor combination.

—HOLLY SMITH, CAFÉ JUANITA (SEATTLE)

GOAT CHEESE

(See **Cheese, Goat**)

GRAPEFRUIT

Season: year-round

Taste: sour

Weight: light

Volume: loud

Techniques: bake, broil, raw

arugula

asparagus

avocado

bananas

butter, unsalted

Campari

caramel

cashews

ceviche

Champagne

chicken

coconut

crab

crème fraîche

fish, esp. grilled

fromage blanc

gin

ginger, fresh

Grand Marnier

grenadine syrup

hazelnuts

honey

lemon

lime

macadamia nuts

melons

meringue

mint, fresh

miso
olive oil
onions, esp. spring

orange
papaya
pecans
pineapple

pomegranate

poppy seeds
port
raspberries
rum

salads, esp. fruit

salmon

seafood

seaweed

shrimp

sorbet

star anise

strawberries

SUGAR: brown, white

tarragon

tequila

tomatoes

vanilla

vinaigrette

vinegar, champagne

vodka

walnuts

watercress

wine, sparkling, white

yogurt

Dishes

**Yuzu Cream, Caramelized Rice, Grapefruit, Green Tea Ice Cream, Crisp Meringue,
Malted Rum Milk Chocolate Ice Cream**

—Michael Laiskonis, pastry chef, Le Bernardin (New York City)

We serve a dish of **grapefruit**, crab salad, and mint. Grapefruit is sweet and a little bitter, which makes it fun to play with. I like mint in the dish because it refreshes and wakes your palate up. When you get a little taste of mint it brings up the other flavors of the dish.

—GABRIEL KREUTHER, THE MODERN (NEW YORK CITY)

I love tarragon with **grapefruit**. It is a classic.

—MICHAEL LAISKONIS, LE BERNARDIN (NEW YORK CITY)

I have served a **grapefruit** and seaweed crab salad with miso dressing. I also like grapefruit with asparagus.

—BRAD FARMERIE, PUBLIC (NEW YORK CITY)

I never mess with the flavor of **Concord grapes**; I always just make them into a sorbet. I was upstate in my cabin when the first Concord grapes came into season. I wanted sorbet so badly that I cut one of my T-shirts in half to use as a strainer, and then used my broom handle with the shirt to squeeze every last bit of juice from the grapes. The sorbet was awesome!

—JOHNNY IUZZINI, JEAN GEORGES (NEW YORK CITY)

Flavor Affinities

grapefruit + avocado + crème fraîche

grapefruit + caramel + meringue

grapefruit + crab + miso + seaweed

grapefruit + *fromage blanc* + pomegranate

grapefruit + mint + sugar

grapefruit + star anise + yogurt

GRAPES

Season: summer–autumn

Taste: sweet

Weight: light–medium

Volume: quiet–moderate

almonds

apples
arugula
brandy
cayenne
CHEESE, esp. blue, cow's milk, goat's milk
chicken
chocolate, white
cognac
cream
cumin
curry
curry leaf
duck
endive
fennel seeds
fish
game, esp. roasted
garlic
hazelnuts
honey
lemon
mint
mustard seeds
olive oil
paprika
pears
pecans
pistachios
pork, esp. roasted
poultry, esp. roasted
raspberries
rice
rosemary
rum
salads, esp. chicken, fruit, tuna, Waldorf
salt
sour cream
strawberries
sugar

vinegar, sherry

walnuts

wine: red, white

yogurt

GREEK CUISINE

(See also Mediterranean Cuisines)

allspice

anise

basil

bay leaf

beef

bell peppers

CHEESE: FETA, goat, sheep

chicken

cinnamon

cloves

custard

dill

eggplant

eggs

fennel

figs

fish, esp. grilled

GARLIC

grape leaves

honey

kebabs

LAMB

LEMON

meats, esp. grilled, roasted

mint

nutmeg

nuts

octopus

OLIVE OIL

olives

onions

oregano
parsley
phyllo dough
pine nuts
pita bread
pork
raisins
rice
salads, esp. with mint
shellfish
spinach
thyme
tomatoes
yogurt
zucchini

Dishes

Mediterranean “Greek Salad” of Mt. Vikos Feta, Kalamata Olives, Plum Tomatoes, Cucumbers, Torn Mint, and Oregano with Warm Feta Cheese “Turnover”

—Carrie Nahabedian, Naha (Chicago)

Flavor Affinities

cucumber + dill + garlic + yogurt
dill + lemon
dill + lemon + olive oil
dill + yogurt
eggplant + custard + garlic + meat
eggplant + garlic + olive oil
eggs + lemon
lamb + garlic + lemon + oregano
lemon + olive oil
lemon + olive oil + oregano
lemon + oregano
phyllo dough + honey + nuts
rice + grape leaves

rice + nuts
spinach + feta cheese
tomatoes + cinnamon
yogurt + cinnamon

GREEN BEANS

(See Beans, Green)

GREENS—IN GENERAL

(See also specific greens)

Season: year-round

Taste: bitter

Weight: medium-heavy

Volume: moderate-loud

Techniques: blanch, raw, sauté, steam

allspice

arugula

bacon

basil

butter

caraway seeds

celery or celery seeds

CHEESE, esp. grated (e.g., Asiago, Jack, Parmesan)

chicory

chili sauce

coriander

corn

curry

dill

eggs, esp. hard-boiled

fennel

GARLIC

ginger

ham

horseradish

leeks
legumes
lemon, juice
mushrooms
mustard, Dijon
nutmeg
nuts, toasted
oil: mustard, nut, peanut, sesame

OLIVE OIL

onions, green

oregano
paprika
parsley
pasta
peaches
pears
pomegranates

potatoes, esp. new and/or red

red pepper flakes
rice
sage
salads
salt, kosher
savory
sesame seeds
shellfish: oysters, esp. fried, shrimp
sweet potatoes
Tabasco sauce
tarragon
thyme
tomatoes

VINEGAR: balsamic, red wine

Dishes

A Simple Salad of Beautiful Greens, Forelli Pears, Pomegranate, and Saba Balsamic
—Carrie Nahabedian, Naha (Chicago)

GREENS, COLLARD

Season: winter–spring

Taste: bitter

Botanical relatives: broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, kale, kohlrabi

Weight: medium–heavy

Volume: moderate–loud

Techniques: boil, braise, steam, stir-fry

bacon

black-eyed peas

brown butter

cheese, Parmesan

garlic

ham hocks

mustard seeds

oil: peanut, vegetable

onions, yellow

oregano

pepper, black

red pepper flakes

salt

salt pork

soul food cuisine

Southern cuisine (American)

tomatoes

vinegar, cider

GREENS, DANDELION

Season: late spring–early autumn

Taste: bitter

Weight: medium

Volume: moderate

Techniques: raw, sauté, steam

anchovies

bacon

garlic

mustard, Dijon
oil, peanut
onions
pepper, ground
salads
salt
vinegar

GREENS, KALE

(See Kale)

GREENS, MUSTARD

Season: winter–spring
Taste: bitter
Weight: medium–heavy
Volume: moderate–loud
Techniques: boil, braise, grill, stew, wilt

It's hard to even think about **bitter greens** without thinking about toasted nuts. You can get the flavor from the nuts themselves, or from toasted nut oils, which are balanced by the bright fruitiness of cider vinegar.

—MICHAEL ANTHONY, GRAMERCY TAVERN (NEW YORK CITY)

Asian cuisine
bacon
black-eyed peas
Chinese cuisine
ham hocks
oil, sesame
olive oil
onions
prosciutto
salads
Southern cuisine (American)
soy sauce

Flavor Affinities

mustard greens + bacon + onions
mustard greens + garlic + olive oil + prosciutto
mustard greens + sesame oil + soy sauce

GREENS, SALAD

(See also Lettuce, Sorrel, Watercress, etc.)

Season: late spring

bacon
cheese
croutons
fruit: apples, pears
garlic
olive oil
pepper, black
salt
vinegar: red wine, sherry

GREENS, TURNIP

Season: fall–winter

Techniques: boil, braise

bacon
black-eyed peas
eggs
ham hocks
onions

Dishes

Turnip Green and Onion Soup with Poached Egg

—Judy Rodgers, Zuni Café (San Francisco)

A salad is a tricky thing to season. If you put the salt on too early, it will wilt the greens. You have to be careful not to leach it of its life!

—TRACI DES JARDINS, JARDINIERE (SAN FRANCISCO)

Dishes

Wild Dandelion Greens with Anchovy Vinaigrette

—David Pasternak, Esca (New York City)

GRILLED DISHES

artichokes
asparagus
bell peppers
chicken
corn, esp. on the cob
eggplant
endive
fennel
fish, whole
garlic
hamburgers
hot dogs
lamb: butterflied, chops
lobster
mushrooms
onions
pineapple
pork: chops, loin
salmon
sausages
shrimp, esp. skewered
squash, summer
steaks
swordfish
tomatoes
tuna

turkey: breasts
veal: chops, steaks
zucchini

GRITS

Techniques: simmer

cheese: cheddar, Parmesan

corn

cream

garlic

mascarpone

nutmeg

pepper, black

salt

sausage, andouille

shrimp (to accompany)

Southern cuisine (American)

GROPER

Season: spring

Weight: medium

Volume: quiet

Techniques: bake, braise, broil, deep-fry, grill, poach, roast, sauté, steam, stir-fry

almonds

anchovies

artichokes

bacon

bay leaf

bell peppers, red

bok choy

butter

capers

carrots

cayenne

celery
cheese, Asiago
chervil
chile peppers, Anaheim
chili sauce
cucumber
endive
garlic
ginger
lemon, juice
lime, juice
Mediterranean cuisine
mushrooms, porcini
oil: corn, sesame, vegetable
olive oil
olives, picholine
onions, white
oyster sauce
parsley, flat-leaf
pepper: black, white
port
rosemary
sage
salt, sea
sesame, seeds
shallots
soy sauce
stocks: chicken, fish, pork
tarragon
thyme
tomatoes
vermouth, dry
vinegar: balsamic, sherry
wine: red, white
zucchini

Dishes

Grilled American Red Grouper on Crab Hash, Pancetta–Red Onion Vinaigrette

—Sanford D'Amato, Sanford (Milwaukee)

GUAVAS

Season: summer–autumn

Taste: sweet

Weight: medium

Volume: moderate

Techniques: bake, juice, poach

BANANAS

cashews

cheese

chocolate, white

coconut

cream

cream cheese

curry powder

ginger

ham

honey

lemon

lime, juice

macadamia nuts

mascarpone

oil, vegetable

onions, yellow

orange

passion fruit

pineapple

pork

poultry

raisins

rum

salads, fruit

sauces

strawberries

sugar: brown, white

vanilla

vinegar, white

HADDOCK

(See Cod)

HALIBUT

Season: spring–summer

Weight: medium

Volume: quiet

Techniques: bake, braise, broil, grill, pan roast, poach, roast, sauté, steam

aioli (sauce)

almonds

anchovies

apples: cider, fruit, juice

artichokes

arugula

asparagus

bacon

basil

beans: black, fava, haricots verts

bell peppers: red, yellow

bok choy

butter, unsalted

capers

cardamom

carrots and carrot juice

cayenne

celery

celery root

chamomile

chard

chervil

chicory

chile peppers: dried red, fresh green

chives

cilantro

clams

coriander

cornichons

couscous

cream

cucumber

cumin

curry powder

dill

endive

fennel

fennel seeds

fenugreek seeds

frisée

garam masala

GARLIC

ginger, ground

grapefruit

hazelnuts

horseradish

kohlrabi

leeks

LEMON: juice, preserved

lemon balm

lime, juice

lovage

mint

mushrooms, esp. oyster, porcini, portobello, shiitake

mussels

mustard: Dijon, dry, grainy

OIL: canola, grapeseed

olive oil

olives: black, niçoise

onions, esp. pearl, red, spring

paprika

PARSLEY, flat-leaf

parsnips

pepper: black, white

potatoes, esp. new (e.g., fried, mashed)

pumpkin seeds

red pepper flakes

rhubarb

rosemary

saffron

salt: kosher, sea

savory

scallions

sesame seeds: black, white

SHALLOTS

sorrel

spearmint

spinach

stocks: chicken, fish

sugar (pinch)

tamarind

tapanade

tarragon

thyme

tomatoes and tomato sauce

turmeric

vinaigrette

vinegar: balsamic, sherry

walnuts

watercress

WINE: dry red, dry white (e.g., Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc), vermouth

yogurt

zucchini

Halibut from the East Coast is the most delicate and silky fish. It is different than Alaskan halibut, which is drier, meatier, and more robust. East Coast halibut is so delicate that anything can kill it. That is why we steam and poach so much here: Even searing it too strongly in the pan will hurt a piece of halibut.

We'll poach halibut, then serve it with a blood orange vinaigrette made with extra-virgin olive oil, which gives it a round and full flavor. The fish is then served atop a carpaccio of golden beets that have been cooked in sherry vinegar. The beets have a

sweet-and-sour flavor to them. They are also very crunchy, which I like with the creamy texture of the halibut. The vinaigrette brings the right degree of acidity to the dish to make it exciting.

—ERIC RIPERT, LE BERNARDIN (NEW YORK CITY)

Halibut is a gentle-tasting fish, which leads to gentle herbs like cilantro, chives, or chervil.

—JERRY TRAUNFELD, THE HERBFARM (WOODINVILLE, WASHINGTON)

Dishes

Wellfleet Line-Caught Halibut, Sweet Corn, Shiitake Mushrooms, and Lemon Thyme Sauce

—David Bouley, Upstairs (New York City)

Almond-Crusted Halibut with Parsnip Puree, Fava Beans, Haricots Verts, and Wild Mushrooms

—David Bouley, Danube (New York City)

Halibut: Braised Tomato, Olives, Escarole, and Spring Salad

—Daniel Boulud/Bertrand Chemel, Café Boulud (New York City)

Olive Oil–Poached Halibut with Star Route Farm’s Fava Beans, Fennel Salad, and Niçoise Olives

—Traci Des Jardins, Jardinière (San Francisco)

Alaskan Halibut, Potato, and Black Pepper Crust

—Hubert Keller, Fleur de Lys (San Francisco)

Alaskan Halibut on a Bed of Creamy Leeks with Asparagus Puree, Fines Herbe, Spring Ramps, Favas, and English Peas

—Bob Kinkead, Kinkead’s (Washington, DC)

Chermoula Halibut with Red Quinoa, Edamame, and Shell Bean Salad with Preserved Lemon Vinaigrette

—Monica Pope, T’afia (Houston)

Halibut with Morel Mushrooms, English Peas, and Fingerling Potatoes

—Alfred Portale, Gotham Bar and Grill (New York City)

Halibut, Kohlrabi, Celery, Verbena-Lime Emulsion

—Michel Richard, Citronelle (Washington, DC)

Halibut Poached with Sweet-and-Sour Golden and Red Beets, Citrus and Extra-Virgin Olive Oil Emulsion

—Eric Ripert, Le Bernardin (New York City)

Alaskan Halibut Braised in the Brick Oven with Marble Potatoes, Baby Carrots, English Peas, Butter, and Cilantro

—Judy Rodgers, Zuni Café (San Francisco)

Line-Caught Seal Rock Halibut, Leek Emulsion, Reduced Chardonnay, Bacon Vinaigrette

—Rick Tramonto, Tru (Chicago)

Flavor Affinities

halibut + anchovies + black olives

halibut + anchovies + garlic + lemon + sorrel

halibut + apples + celery root + parsnips

halibut + beets + blood orange + olive oil + sherry vinegar

halibut + bok choy + sesame seeds

halibut + chicory + grapefruit

halibut + coriander + fennel + lemon

halibut + garlic + lemon + sorrel

halibut + scallions + white wine

HAM

Taste: salty

Weight: medium

Volume: moderate–loud (depending on smokiness)

Techniques: bake, sauté

allspice
apples and applesauce
arugula
bacon
bay leaf
breakfast / brunch
butter, unsalted
buttermilk
cayenne
CHEESE: cheddar, Emmental, Fontina, Gruyère, Jack, manchego, mozzarella, Parmesan, Swiss
chestnuts
chives
cinnamon
cloves
corn
cornmeal
French cuisine
eggs
garlic
greens
honey
Italian cuisine, esp. with prosciutto di Parma
macaroni
maple syrup
mushrooms
mustard, Dijon
nutmeg
olive oil
onions, red
orange, juice
parsley
pears
peas
pepper, black
pine nuts
potatoes
sage
sauce, Mornay

scallions
Southern cuisine (American)
soy sauce
spinach
stock, chicken
sugar: brown, white
sweet potatoes
tarragon
thyme
vinegar, balsamic
wine: dry sherry, Madeira red, white

Flavor Affinities

ham + cheese + mustard
ham + honey + soy sauce
ham + Jack cheese + greens + mushrooms
ham + mozzarella cheese + red onion

Dishes

Raviolis of Virginia Country Ham and Fontina Cheese

—Patrick O'Connell, The Inn at Little Washington (Washington, Virginia)

Serrano Ham with Roasted Onions, Manchego Cheese, and Watercress

—Charlie Trotter, Trotter's to Go (Chicago)

Virtually all vegetables—from asparagus to green beans—pair well with **ham** because of its natural saltiness.

—JOSÉ ANDRÉS, CAFÉ ATLÁNTICO (WASHINGTON, DC)

One of the happiest trios in the flavor world is **Ibérico ham**, manchego cheese, and manzanilla sherry.

—ADRIAN MURCIA, CHANTERELLE (NEW YORK CITY)

If you are a first timer, the only thing you should combine with **Ibérico ham** is the warmth of your tongue. Just let it rest on your tongue and let your 37 degrees Celsius do the rest! You can use just the fat of Ibérico ham melted in a pan and make scrambled eggs or a tortilla, and it will add amazing flavor and aroma.

—JOSÉ ANDRÉS, CAFÉ ATLÁNTICO (WASHINGTON, DC)

HAM, IBÉRICO

cheese, pressed sheep's milk (e.g., manchego)

HAM, SERRANO

asparagus
beans, green
cheese, manchego
olive oil
peppers, piquillo
Spanish cuisine
tomatoes

HAZELNUT OIL

(See Oil, Hazelnut)

HAZELNUTS

Taste: sweet, salty
Weight: medium
Volume: moderate–loud

almonds
apples
apricots
asparagus
bananas
beets
berries
butter, unsalted

buttermilk

caramel

carrots

cheese: feta, goat, Gruyère, ricotta, Taleggio

cherries

chestnuts

CHOCOLATE, esp. dark or white

cinnamon

cocoa powder

coffee / espresso

cognac

cranberries

cream and ice cream

cream cheese

custard

dates

figs

garlic

ginger

grapefruit

grapes

hazelnut oil

honey

Kirsch

kiwi

lemon

liqueur: **almond** (e.g., amaretto), hazelnut (e.g., Frangelico), orange

mango

maple syrup

mascarpone

mint

nectarines

nutmeg

oats

orange: juice, zest

pastries

peaches

pears

pecans

persimmons
plums
prunes
pumpkin
quail
raisins
raspberries
rum
sauces
soups
strawberries
sugar: brown, confectioner's, granulated
sweet potatoes
tea
VANILLA
vegetables
walnuts
wine: red, sweet, white

HERBES DE PROVENCE

French cuisine, southern

meats
stews, esp. vegetable
vegetables

Flavor Affinities

basil + fennel seeds + lavender + marjoram + rosemary + sage + summer savory + thyme

Dishes

Chocolate-Hazelnut Cake with Orange Sauce and Hazelnut Gelato

—Gina DePalma, Babbo (New York City)

Hazelnut and Chocolate Soufflé

—Odette Fada, San Domenico (New York City)

Gianduja Napoleon with Chocolate-Hazelnut Ganache, Frozen Caramel Mousse, Crispy Hazelnut Nougatine

—Gale Gand, pastry chef, Tru (Chicago)

Hazelnuts have a complicated flavor, though not as complicated as walnuts.

—MARCEL DESAULNIERS, THE TRELLIS (WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA)

Hazelnuts are from the north and are used in Piedmontese cooking. Hazelnuts are very rich and round and buttery, so I will use them to achieve a rich, fatty quality in my dessert. Hazelnuts with chocolate are a natural. Hazelnut with grapes are great; it's like peanut butter and jelly!

—GINA DEPALMA, BABBO (NEW YORK CITY)

I am more of an **herb** guy than a spice guy. It comes back to a certain conservatism I have regarding food. The French are not big on spices; they use more herbs. I know the spices used in European cooking and use them in moderation. I am not going to serve a dish that is wildly nutmegged!

—DAVID WALTUCK, CHANTERELLE (NEW YORK CITY)



HERBS

(See specific herbs)

Herbs 101

with Jerry Traunfeld of The Herbfarm, Woodinville, Washington

Working with herbs is very different from working with spices. With herbs, you can really only work with a few at a time. With spices, you can throw so many more together. An Indian dish may have more than a dozen spices in it. Here are some guidelines:

- *Know your herb.* Herbs range in intensity, so you need to know the profile of the herb you are choosing at the start. You need to be careful; for example, if you add rosemary to chervil it will overpower the chervil.
- *You want to pair delicate with delicate or strong with strong.* Chervil is possibly the most delicate herb. Lemon basil and lemon thyme would be in the middle. Lemon verbena or tarragon I would consider loud. Then you have bay leaf which is light, until you add twenty together and it becomes strong.
- *Not all herbs are created equal, and they can vary within their categories or season.* Oregano can be mild, or hot and spicy. With mint, applemint is mild while peppermint is strong. The season also has an effect on rosemary: in the winter, rosemary is mild and in the summer, it is strong.
- *Herbs have regional affinities.* Mediterranean herbs marry well together. Rosemary and marjoram or thyme and savory are naturals together. Among Asian herbs, lemongrass goes with mint and cilantro or mint and chives. In France, you have lots of combinations: chervil, tarragon, chives, and parsley. The one exception to France's herbs is tarragon, which is probably best on its own.
- *Herbs also have seasonal affinities.* Summer vegetables work with summer herbs, as do winter vegetables with winter herbs. In summer, it is basil or marjoram with tomatoes. Basil with zucchini is one of my favorite combinations. In winter, sage and rosemary work with potatoes and root vegetables. Also in winter, one of my favorite combinations is butternut squash with bay leaf and nutmeg. Pumpkin and bay leaf together make the pumpkin taste even more pumpkin-like.
- *How to use the chosen herb.* Soft-leaved herbs—such as basil, chervil, chives, cilantro, dill, lovage, and sorrel—shouldn't be cooked because they will lose their flavor. Toughleaved herbs—such as bay leaf, savory, and rosemary—can go into dishes and stand up to heat and cooking.
- *Choose an herb that is the same intensity as your protein.* Halibut is a gentle-tasting fish, which leads to gentle herbs like cilantro, chives, or chervil. Smelt is a local fish that is oily, so here we look to stronger herbs like oregano, savory, or rosemary.
- *Herbs aren't exclusive to savory dishes.* Anise hyssop works with most stone fruits like peaches. Cinnamon basil works with blue huckleberries. Cinnamon with blueberries really intensifies the flavor of the blueberry. Lavender works with plums or peaches. Lemony herbs like basil or anise hyssop work with watermelon. Rosemary works with apples or pears. Sage works with tart cherries. Tarragon works with muskmelon.

We grow forty different tomatoes and eight different basil. Our farmer planted the tomatoes surrounded by the basil, and I thought he did it because they taste good together. It turns out that doing so attracts beneficial insects to each. Our farmer believes that tomato and basil work so well on the plate because they work so well in the field. He also explained that if you plant certain basil next to tomatoes, you can taste it in the tomato.

All our cooks take care of their own section of the **herb** garden. The garde-manger cooks [who prepare appetizers] look after the chives and chervil. The fish cooks care

for the lemon herbs like lemon thyme and lemongrass, and the meat cooks for the rosemary, sage, and thyme. Our pastry cooks tend the edible flowers that can be candied, and mint and lemon verbena, which they use in sorbets.

—DAN BARBER, BLUE HILL AT STONE BARNs (POCANTICO HILLS, NEW YORK)

I am a big fan of roasting and resting meat on **herbs**. If you roast a rib eye, prime rib, or filet mignon, most people would put it on a sheet tray with a roasting rack. One day, I didn't have a roasting rack but I had a lot of thyme and savory and rosemary, so I threw the meat on top and roasted it. The technique did the trick by keeping the meat from the juices and it also enhanced the flavor that much more. Since then, we have stopped using roasting racks for our meats and switched to herbs. During the roasting process, I like to turn the meat so that the flavor of the herbs penetrates even more. Since you are roasting in a closed oven, the air circulates the herb flavor.

For a lamb shoulder, if you can't get hay, I would recommend using savory, thyme, sage, and rosemary. This technique is great for a whole chicken: slice some truffles to put under the chicken skin, brush it with butter, and put it on a bed of savory and thyme. It will be pretty incredible.

—VITALY PALEY, PALEY'S PLACE (PORTLAND, OREGON)

I might grab **honey** when I am working with nutty flavors or to macerate some fruit. You can also scorch honey to create a whole new flavor; one of my favorite dishes is a **burnt honey caramelized pistachio ice cream**.

—MICHAEL LAISKONIS, LE BERNARDIN (NEW YORK CITY)

I use **honey** as a flavor, not as a sweetener like sugar. In my honey *panna cotta*, I add some sugar to make it sweet enough. If I used only honey as a sweetener, the flavor of honey would be too strong and the *panna cotta* would taste a little flat.

—EMILY LUCHETTI, FARALLON (SAN FRANCISCO)

I like the combination of fresh pineapple topped with warm **honey**. I will glaze my raspberry tart with flower honey, and my apple tart with chestnut honey. Chestnut honey gives a rustic flavor that goes well with the apple.

—MICHEL RICHARD, CITRONELLE (WASHINGTON, DC)

Dishes

Lavender Honey-Roasted Pig with Spiced Banana Puree

—Sandy D'Amato, Sanford (Milwaukee)

Honey Semifreddo with Tropical Consommé, Fresh Coconut, and Bloomed Basil Seeds

—Celina Tio, American Restaurant (Kansas City)

HONEY

Taste: sweet, astringent

Function: heating

Weight: medium-heavy

Volume: moderate-loud

almonds

apples

apricots

baked goods (e.g., biscuits, breads)

bananas

brandy

butter

buttermilk

carrots

cheese: goat, ricotta, soft

chestnuts

chicken

Chinese cuisine

chocolate: dark, white

cinnamon

coconut

coffee

cognac

CREAM AND ICE CREAM

currants, red

dates

desserts

duck

figs, esp. dried

fruit

ginger

grapefruit

grapes

Greek cuisine

guava

ham

hazelnuts

kiwi fruit

kumquats

lamb

lavender

LEMON: juice, zest

LIME, juice

liqueur, orange (e.g., Grand Marnier)

lychees

mascarpone

melon

Middle Eastern cuisines mint

Moroccan cuisine

mustard

nutmeg

NUTS

oats

ORANGE: juice, zest

papaya

pastries

peaches

peanuts

pears

pecans

persimmons

pineapple

pine nuts

pistachios

plums

pomegranate

pork

prunes

pumpkin

quince

raisins

raspberries

red pepper flakes
rhubarb
rum
sage
sauces
Southern cuisine
soy sauce
SUGAR: brown, white
sweet potatoes
tea
tequila
thyme
Turkish cuisine
VANILLA
walnuts
whiskey
wine: red, white

Flavor Affinities

honey + almonds + chicken + pomegranate
honey + bananas + lavender + pork
honey + cream + pistachios
honey + fruit + yogurt

HONEY, BLUEBERRY

cheese, esp. cheddar

HONEY, CHESTNUT

Taste: sweet-bitter
cheese, esp. goat, ricotta, triple crème

HONEY, RASPBERRY

cheese, esp. cheddar

HONEYDEW

Season: midsummer

Taste: sweet

Weight: light–medium

Volume: moderate

basil

blackberries

cardamom

Champagne

chiles

coconut milk

coriander

cream

cumin

figs

ginger

grapefruit

honey

lemon, juice

lemon basil

lime

melon, cantaloupe

milk

mint

nectarines

peaches

red pepper flakes

pepper: black, white

prosciutto

ricotta cheese

salt (pinch)

scallions

strawberries

sugar

tarragon

wine, sweet

yogurt

Flavor Affinities

honeydew melon + figs + mint + prosciutto

Dishes

Honeydew-Mint Sorbet with Fresh Blackberries

—Gina DePalma, pastry chef, Babbo (New York City)

Honeydew Melon Salad with Oven-Roasted Tomatoes, Goat Cheese, and Pistachios

—Gabriel Kreuther, The Modern (New York City)

HORSERADISH

Season: spring–autumn

Taste: pungent, hot

Weight: light–medium **Volume:** very loud

Tips: Use horseradish raw or add at end of cooking process. Heat diminishes the pungency of horseradish.

apples, esp. Golden Delicious

apricots

Austrian cuisine

avocados

BEEF, ESP. CORNED OR ROAST

beets

celery

chicken

chives

cinnamon

cloves

corn

CREAM

cream cheese

crème fraîche

dill

Eastern European cuisine

eggs
fennel
fish, esp. oily, smoked
garlic
German cuisine
ham
ketchup
lemon, juice
lime, juice
lobster
mascarpone
mayonnaise
meats, esp. cold
mustard
olive oil
oxtails
oysters
parsley
pears
pepper, black
pork
potatoes
Russian cuisine
salads
salmon
salmon, smoked
salt: kosher, sea
sauces
sausage
shellfish
sour cream
steak
sugar
Tabasco sauce
tomatoes and tomato paste
trout
vinegar
walnuts
Worcestershire sauce

yogurt

Heating grated horseradish changes the **horseradish** completely. It makes it more mellow and takes away the bite while keeping its yummy flavor. Horseradish prepared this way works well with Nantucket Bay scallops that are naturally sweet and work with the sweetness of the horseradish. We will also use it in a lemony vinaigrette and dress a smoked trout with it.

First, grate horseradish on a microplane [a fine grater]. Coat a teninch skillet with some Ligurian olive oil, and heat the horseradish over medium heat. Watch it very closely, because the minute it starts to turn from its blond color, it is done. From there, transfer it into cold pans to cool it quickly. When it is totally cool and has its crunch, add some lemon zest and kosher salt.

—HOLLY SMITH, CAFÉ JUANITA (SEATTLE)

Flavor Affinities

horseradish + apples + pork + sour cream
horseradish + beef + beets
horseradish + beets + cream cheese
horseradish + garlic + olive oil
horseradish + salt + vinegar
horseradish + seafood + tomatoes

HOTNESS

(of indoor or outdoor temperature; see also Summer)

chilled dishes and beverages
fish
grilled dishes
herbs, esp. cooling
olive oil-based dishes
raw dishes
salads, esp. fruit, vegetable
salsas, fresh
seafood
soups, cold
vegetables, esp. green leafy

If it is **hot** outside, I make sure there are lots of salads on the menu.

—ANDREW CARMELLINI, A VOCE (NEW YORK CITY)

HUNGARIAN CUISINE

bacon
beef
bell peppers, green
caraway seeds
chile peppers
garlic
ham
lard
mushrooms
ONIONS
PAPRIKA
pork
pork fat
potatoes
sausage
SOUR CREAM
tomatoes
wheat
wine, esp. Tokaji Aszu

Flavor Affinities

onions + paprika
onions + paprika + pork fat
onions + paprika + sour cream

In Eastern European or **Hungarian cooking**, you will see a stewed or braised dish flavored with paprika that is cut with sour cream either in it or served on top so that it mixes together as you eat it. I serve rare roasted venison in venison stock with hot and sweet paprika that is essentially a goulash. Alongside, I serve creamed sauerkraut that bleeds into the sauce and gives the same effect as a goulash. Even though the sauerkraut has an intense flavor, it is still mild because it has been cooked in cream. It is not a Hungarian dish but rather a play on a Hungarian dish, and it works in the context of the subtler intensity of flavors I like.

—DAVID WALTUCK, CHANTERELLE (NEW YORK CITY)

HYSSOP

Taste: bitter
Weight: medium
Volume: strong

beans, green
beef
beets
cabbage
carrots
chicken
cranberries
eggs
fruits
lamb
meats
parsley
pork
rice
rosemary
salads: fruit, green
soups, esp. chicken
stews
thyme
tomatoes
turkey, esp. stuffed and roasted
vegetables
venison

INDIAN CUISINE

allspice
almonds, esp. in desserts
anise
breads, in the north
cardamom
cauliflower
chicken

chile peppers

cilantro, esp. in the south

cinnamon

cloves

coconut, esp. in the south and/or in desserts

coriander

cumin, esp. in the north

CURRIES

curry leaf

eggplant

fenugreek

garlic, esp. in the north

ghee (clarified butter)

ginger, esp. in the north

herbs

lamb

lentils

mint

mustard seeds, esp. in the south

nutmeg

oil: canola, grapeseed

paprika

peas

pepper: black, white

pistachios, esp. in desserts

poppy seeds

potatoes

rice, basmati, esp. in the south

saffron

sage

SPICES

spinach

tamarind, esp. in the south

TOMATOES**turmeric**

vegetables, esp. in the south

wheat, esp. in the north

yogurt

Tomatoes are as important to making **Indian cuisine** as they are to making Italian cuisine. In fact, making an Indian curry is a lot like making an Italian tomato sauce.

—MEERU DHALWALA, VIJ'S (VANCOUVER)

If my mind is in **India**, tamarind will be sneaking its way into the dish. When thinking of India, my inspirations are the flavors of clove, cardamom, and coriander seed. They are aromatic spices that really cut the fat of the dish, so it is not big, fat, and flabby on the palate.

—BRAD FARMERIE, PUBLIC (NEW YORK CITY)

I worked in an **Indian** restaurant as a waiter for four years. I love cooking with Indian ingredients. Everything I learned at the CIA was thrown out the window when I learned Indian cooking, which is where I picked up many techniques and philosophies. I now roast my own spices and create spice blends. I love creating my own flavor combinations. I came to love a garam masala made with fennel, cinnamon, clove, cumin, and coriander. Each of these five spices has a distinctive flavor, but combined they create one single flavor that is amazing. I will use my garam masala mixture in soups and sauces. When people ask about the dish, they always ask, “What was that flavor?”

—BOB IACOVONE, CUVÉE (NEW ORLEANS)

AVOID

beef, for religious reasons, say some
pork, for religious reasons, say some

Flavor Affinities

cinnamon + cloves + mace + nutmeg

coriander + cumin + turmeric

coriander + cumin + yogurt

cumin + garlic + ginger

cumin + garlic + yogurt

garlic + ginger

garlic + ginger + onion

potatoes + chili powder + turmeric

yogurt + fruit

INDONESIAN CUISINE

chicken
chile peppers
coconut
coriander
fish
garlic
grilled dishes
lemongrass
molasses
noodles
peanuts
pepper
rice
shellfish
shrimp paste
soy sauce
spices, esp. clove, nutmeg, pepper
stir-fried dishes
sugar, brown
vegetables

Flavor Affinities

chile peppers + peanuts + soy sauce
garlic + peanuts + soy sauce
garlic + soy sauce + brown sugar

IRANIAN CUISINE

(aka Persian Cuisine)

apricots
basil
beans
chicken
cinnamon
dates
dill
duck
fish

garlic
herbs
kebabs
lamb
lime
meats
mint
nuts
onions
parsley
plums
pomegranates
prunes
raisins
rice
saffron
stews

Flavor Affinities

cardamom + cinnamon + cloves + cumin + ginger + rose
duck + pomegranates + walnuts

ITALIAN CUISINE—IN GENERAL

anchovies
artichokes
basil
beef
bell peppers
capers
cheese: mozzarella, Parmesan, pecorino, ricotta
chicken
eggplant
fennel
fish
garlic
grappa
greens

honey, esp. in desserts
lemon, esp. in desserts
Marsala
mascarpone, esp. in desserts
mushrooms
nuts
olive oil
olives
orange and orange zest, esp. in desserts
oregano
pancetta
parsley
pasta
pork
prosciutto
red pepper flakes
rosemary
rum, esp. in desserts
saffron
sage
sausage
shellfish
spinach
thyme
tomatoes and tomato sauces
veal
vinegar: balsamic, red wine
wine
zucchini

Flavor Affinities

anchovies + capers + lemon juice
anchovies + garlic + wine vinegar
basil + garlic + olive oil
basil + garlic + tomatoes
bell peppers + olive oil + tomatoes
capers + garlic + wine vinegar
garlic + olive oil + parsley
garlic + oregano + tomatoes

garlic + saffron + shellfish
red pepper flakes + fennel + sausage

ITALIAN CUISINE, NORTHERN

asparagus
basil
beans
butter
cheeses, creamy and rich
cream and cream-based sauces
cured meats
fish
goat
hazelnuts
lemon, juice
Marsala
nuts
pasta, esp. richer egg-based and/or ribbon-shaped, often combined with other starches
 such as beans
pine nuts
polenta
potatoes
rice and risotto
truffles, white
vinegar, esp. wine
wine

ITALIAN CUISINE, SOUTHERN

bell peppers
chile peppers
cinnamon
eggplant
fennel
garlic
marjoram
nutmeg
olive oil, heavy

oregano

pasta, esp. tube-shaped and with tomato sauce

pizza

pork

raisins

red pepper flakes

sardines

sausage

tomatoes and tomato sauces



I only half joke that if you add rum or orange zest to a dessert, it will taste **Italian**. They are very common flavors in Italy.

—GINA DEPALMA, BABBO (NEW YORK CITY)

There are five ingredients that any **Italian** cook must use: 1) real Italian pasta; 2) extra-virgin olive oil; 3) real balsamic vinegar; 4) Italian prosciutto; and 5)

Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese.

—MARIO BATALI, BABBO (NEW YORK CITY)

Holly Smith of Café Juanita in Seattle on Five Flavors that Will Take You to Northern Italy

White Truffles. The perfect vehicle for white truffles is hand-cut pasta that is egg rich. Eggs that taste like real eggs make a great pasta. Our pasta is egg rich and has 35 egg yolks to a kilo (2.2 pounds) of flour. You can get them in there, it is crazy! The pasta looks like a sunset. On the pasta, I would first put butter barely scented with sage, before shaving the truffles on top.

Nebbiolo. Beef cheeks braised in Nebbiolo [wine]. To keep it simple, we serve roasted turnips and the reduced sauce with pomegranate seeds and that's it. We braise our cheeks for seven and a half hours. Most braised dishes go four hours, but not beef cheeks—anything less, and they are [still tough].

Anchovies. I love a really acidic anchovy vinaigrette for a bread salad. Anchovies with roasted garlic are like butter at this restaurant; they go in lots of dishes. We put them in lamb, we put them in between potatoes with chicken stock for a gratin. We love them. I like anchovies with sage on each side deep fried for an appetizer. We cook anchovies in olive oil with a little butter until they get toasty, throw in onions to caramelize, and serve this with fish.

Hazelnuts. Chocolate and hazelnut is the perfect combination so we make *gianduja* and put it inside crepes and warm them and put chestnut honey on top. Most of the time hazelnuts end up in salad or ground for a final dusting for a pasta. Beet pasta that looks like candy wrappers is served on top of a warm plate that has just been smeared with Gorgonzola Piccante, then topped with ground hazelnuts just before it is served. Blue cheese and hazelnuts is it for me.

Goat Meat. I just had spit-roasted goat at Da Cesare. If I knew I was going to die, I would get myself there [to the Piedmont region of Italy]. Roasted goat basted with garlic, olive oil, marjoram, mint, or rosemary is it.

JAMAICAN CUISINE

(See also Caribbean Cuisines)

jerked dishes (e.g., chicken)

JAPANESE CUISINE

bonito: dried, flakes

broiled dishes

chile peppers

daikon

dashi (kelp-based stock)

fish, cooked and raw

ginger

kelp

mirin (sweet rice wine)

noodles
pickles
poached dishes
ponzu sauce
rice
sake
scallions
sesame: oil, seeds
shellfish
***SOY SAUCE**
steamed dishes
tea
vinegar, rice wine
wasabi
wine, rice
yuzu

Flavor Affinities

bonito flakes + kelp
garlic + ginger + soy sauce
ginger + scallions + soy sauce
sake + soy sauce + sugar
soy sauce + wasabi

Japanese cuisine is very simple. We don't mix too many ingredients together. One of the main ingredients we use in Japanese cooking is soy sauce, for both its saltiness and umami. Soy sauce is very complex: It takes months and months to make it. Same for the dried bonito used to make *dashi*, our Japanese broth. So Japanese chefs find that much of the hardest work has already been done for us!

—KAZ OKOCHI, KAZ SUSHI BISTRO (WASHINGTON, DC)



JICAMA

Season: winter–spring

Taste: sweet

Weight: light–medium

Volume: quiet

Techniques: cooked (e.g., stir-fry), raw

avocado

cabbage, green

carrots

chicken

***CHILE PEPPERS**

chili powder

cilantro

cloves

cucumbers

cumin

fish

ginger

grapefruit

ketchup

lemon

***LIME, juice**

Malaysian cuisine

mangoes

melon

Mexican cuisine

mustard, yellow

oil: canola, sesame

onions, red

orange

papaya

peanuts, crushed

pepper, black

pineapple

pumpkin seeds

radishes

salads (e.g., fruit)

salsa

salt, kosher

sesame oil

shrimp

soy sauce

spinach

sugar

vinegar, white

Flavor Affinities

jicama + avocado + grapefruit + pumpkin seeds

jicama + chili powder + lime juice

Dishes

Jicama Callejera: Crunchy Jicama with Oranges, Grapefruit, and Pineapple; Orange-Lime Vinaigrette and Fresh Limes to Squeeze On

—Rick Bayless, Frontera Grill (Chicago)

Ensalada de Jicama y Aguacate: Jicama, Grapefruit, and Avocado Salad with Pumpkin Seeds

—Traci Des Jardins, Mijita (San Francisco)

Seaweed and Jicama Salad with Ginger Dressing

—Kaz Okochi, Kaz Sushi Bistro (Washington, DC)

I love the gentle, mellow tanginess **kaffir lime leaf** adds to curries.

—MEERU DHALWALA, VIJ'S (VANCOUVER)

JUNIPER BERRIES

Season: summer–autumn

Character: refreshing

Taste: bitter

Weight: medium

Volume: moderate–loud

allspice

Alsatian cuisine

apples

bay leaf

beef

cabbage

caraway

celery

chicken

choucroute

duck

fennel

fish

GAME

game birds

garlic

German cuisine

gin
goose
ham
kidneys
lamb
liver
marinades
marjoram
Mediterranean cuisine
onions
oregano
parsley
pâtés
pepper
pork
rosemary
sage
salmon
sauces
sauerkraut
savory
Scandinavian cuisine
stuffings, esp. bread
thyme
veal
VENISON
wine, red

Flavor Affinities

juniper berries + game + garlic + rosemary

KAFFIR LIMES AND KAFFIR LIME LEAF

(See also Lemons, Limes, etc.)

Season: year-round

Taste: sour

Weight: light

Volume: moderate–loud

Techniques: stir-fry

basil, Thai
beef
cardamom
chicken
chile peppers
cilantro
coconut and coconut milk
coriander
cumin
curry pastes and curries
fish

ginger

Indian cuisine

Indonesian cuisine
lemongrass
lime, juice
marinades
mushrooms
noodles

pork

poultry
rice
salads
sesame
shellfish
soups, esp. Thai
star anise
sugar

tamarind
THAI CUISINE

turmeric

vegetables, esp. green

Flavor Affinities

kaffir lime + saffron + seafood
kaffir lime leaf + duck + ginger

kaffir lime leaf + rice + turmeric

KALE

Season: autumn–spring

Taste: bitter, sweet

Botanical relatives: broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, collard greens, kohlrabi

Weight: heavy

Volume: moderate

Techniques: blanch, boil, braise, sauté, steam, stir-fry

bay leaf

bell peppers, red

butter

cheese: cheddar, Parmesan

chicken, roasted

cream

GARLIC

ginger

lemon

meats, roasted

nutmeg

OIL: grapeseed, vegetable

olive oil

onions, esp. yellow

oregano

pancetta

pasta

pepper: black, white

pork

potatoes

red pepper flakes

salt, kosher

sausage, chorizo

shallots

sour cream

soy sauce

stock, chicken

sugar

sweet potatoes

thyme

tomatoes

vinegar, red wine

Flavor Affinities

kale + garlic + olive oil + red wine vinegar

kale + onions + salt + smoked sausage

I like **kale** blanched then sautéed with some onions, a pinch of salt, and some smoked sausage.

—GABRIEL KREUTHER, THE MODERN (NEW YORK CITY)

KIWI FRUIT

Season: late autumn–spring

Taste: sour

Weight: medium

Volume: quiet–moderate

Techniques: raw

bananas

berries

cherries

chocolate: dark, white

coconut

cream and ice cream

crust: pastry or pie

custard

grapefruit

hazelnuts

honey

Kirsch

lemon: juice, zest

lime

lychee

macadamia nuts
mangoes
oranges
papaya
passion fruit
pineapple
rum
salad, esp. chicken or fruit
strawberries
sugar
wine: Champagne, ice wine

KOHLRABI

(See also **Rutabagas, Turnips**)

Season: summer–autumn

Botanical relatives: broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, collard greens, kale

Weight: medium (esp. when younger)–heavy (esp. when older)

Volume: moderate (esp. when younger)–loud (esp. when older)

Techniques: boil, steam, stir-fry

allspice
basil
butter, unsalted
cabbage
carrots
celery
celery leaves or seeds
celery root
cheese, esp. Parmesan, Swiss
chervil
cilantro
coriander
cream
dill
fennel leaves or seeds
garlic

horseradish
leeks
lemon, juice
lovage
mace
mustard (e.g., Dijon)
mustard seeds
onions
parsley, flat-leaf
pepper, black
potatoes
rosemary
salt, esp. sea
sesame oil, seeds
soups
sour cream
soy sauce
stews
tamari
turmeric
vinegar, red wine

Kohlrabi is an underrated vegetable. I admit it has not always been one of my favorites, but it has grown on me over the years. Now, I love it. I can't precisely place its flavor, which is somewhere between a turnip, radish, and cauliflower. But it tastes great and is really versatile. You can grill it, roast it, glaze it like a carrot, or make a gratin out of it with potatoes. We have even grated it and made a rémoulade out of it like you would with a celery root. But the best way to enjoy kohlrabi is grilled, roasted, and drizzled with olive oil and sea salt. That is my favorite!

—VITALY PALEY, PALEY'S PLACE (PORTLAND, OREGON)

KOREAN CUISINE

chile peppers
fish
garlic
noodles, esp. buckwheat
rice
sesame seeds

shellfish
soy sauce
sugar
vegetables, pickled (e.g., kimchi)

Flavor Affinities

chile peppers + garlic + soy sauce
chile peppers + sesame seeds + soy sauce
chile peppers + soy sauce
garlic + sesame seeds + soy sauce
garlic + soy sauce

KUMQUATS

Season: autumn–winter

Taste: sour, bitter

Weight: light–medium

Volume: moderate–loud

Techniques: raw, stew

Asian cuisines
beef
berries: **cranberries**, strawberries
brandy
caramel
cayenne
chicken
chocolate: dark, white
chutney
cinnamon
citrus
coconut
cranberries
cream
custard
dates
duck
East Asian cuisine

endive (Belgian)
fish, esp. cod, halibut, red snapper, salmon, tuna, esp. grilled
ginger
hazelnuts
honey
lemon, juice
lime
mace
mango
marinades
meats
mint
nutmeg
olive oil
onions, spring
orange
papaya
pecans
persimmons
pineapple
pistachios
pomegranates
poppy seeds
pork
pumpkin
quince
rum
SALADS: FRUIT, GREEN
salt
strawberries
sugar
vanilla
walnuts
wine, white

LAMB—IN GENERAL

Season: spring
Taste: sweet, astringent

Function: heating

Weight: heavy

Volume: moderate–loud

Techniques: braise (esp. shanks), grill (esp. leg), roast (esp. leg), stew (esp. shoulder)

Tips: Cloves add richness to the flavor of lamb.

Our signature wine-marinated lamb popsicles in fenugreek cream curry on spinach potatoes dish is bare rugged simplicity. You have rack of lamb that has been cooked just a few minutes. Then you have a simple sauce that is essentially just cream and garlic—and you can taste all three. We add some green fenugreek that gives an earthiness to the dish and takes it to a whole new level. It is incredibly simple. It is a dish about technique because if the garlic is cooked too long, it gets bitter. Or if you add too much fenugreek, it gets bitter and overpowers the cream. But in the right proportions, it is perfect.

—MEERU DHALWALA, VIJ'S (VANCOUVER)



Dishes

Lamb, Fig, Pernod, and a Pillow of Sassafras Air

—Grant Achatz, Alinea (Chicago)

Lamb with Stew of Chickpeas, Root Vegetables, and Braised Lettuces

—Dan Barber, Blue Hill at Stone Barns (Pocantico Hills, New York)

Mint Love Letters with Spicy Lamb Sausage

—Mario Batali, Babbo (New York City)

Grilled Lamb Sirloin in a Roasted Garlic Sauce with Potato–Celery Root Gratin and Sautéed Escarole

—Ann Cashion, Cashion's Eat Place (Washington, DC)

Colorado Rack of Lamb with Roasted Fennel, Glazed Baby Carrots, Fresh Garbanzo Beans, and Cardoon Puree, Niçoise Olive–Kumquat Tapenade

—Traci Des Jardins, Jardinière (San Francisco)

Colorado Lamb Loin with Creamy Polenta, Morel Mushrooms, and Star Route Fava Beans, Perigord Truffle Jus

—Traci Des Jardins, Jardinière (San Francisco)

Roast Lamb Sirloin on Crispy Goat Cheese Polenta with Saffron-Braised Baby Vegetables and Minted Yogurt

—Brad Farmerie, Public (New York City)

“Armenian Style” Lamb Skewers, Mediterranean Chickpea Salad, “Panisses,” and Minted Sheep’s Milk Yogurt

—Carrie Nahabedian, Naha (Chicago)

Poached Spring Lamb with Artichoke Tart and Pine Nut–Morel Gremolata

—Bradley Ogden, at the 2003 James Beard Awards gala reception

Moroccan Spiced Rack of Lamb with Couscous Salad, Roasted Eggplant, Lemon–Black Pepper Jus

—Alfred Portale, Gotham Bar and Grill (New York City)

Pan-Roasted Lamb Rack and Eighteen-Hours-Braised Leg of Lamb; Goat Cheese Mashed Potatoes; Wild Mushroom–Red Wine Sauce

—Eric Ripert, Le Bernardin (New York City)

Lamb Black Truffle Tagliatelle with Preserved Lemon and Aged Parmesan

—Eric Ripert, Le Bernardin (New York City)

Truffle and Almond-Crusted Rack of Lamb

—Brad Thompson, Mary Elaine's at the Phoenician (Scottsdale, Arizona)

Wine-Marinated Lamb Popsicles in Fenugreek Cream Curry on Spinach Potatoes

—Vikram Vij and Meeru Dhalwala, Vij's (Vancouver)

aioli

almonds

anchovies

apples

apricots, dried

artichokes

asparagus

bacon

basil

bay leaf

beans: cranberry, **fava**, **FLAGEOLETS**, green, **WHITE**

beer

bell peppers

brandy

bread crumbs

bulgur wheat

butter: clarified, unsalted

capers

cardamom

carrots

cayenne

celery

celery root

chard

cheese: blue, feta, Parmesan, ricotta

chickpeas

chiles: jalapeño, red

chili powder

chives

chocolate, dark

cilantro

cinnamon

cloves

coconut

cognac

coriander

couscous

cream

cumin

curry powder

dates

dill

Eastern Mediterranean (e.g., Greek, Turkish) cuisine

eggplant

endive

escarole

fennel

fennel seeds

fenugreek, esp. green

figs, dried black

five-spice powder

FLAGEOLETS

garam masala

***GARLIC and garlic paste**

ginger

Greek cuisine

herbs

honey

Indian cuisine

Irish cuisine (e.g., stews)

Italian cuisine, esp. southern

lavender

leeks
LEMON: juice, zest
lemon, preserved
lentils
lime, juice
mace
marjoram
Middle Eastern cuisine
***MINT**, esp. spearmint, mint jelly
mirepoix
Moroccan cuisine
mushrooms
MUSTARD, Dijon
nutmeg
OIL: canola, peanut, vegetable
olive oil
olives, esp. black, kalamata, niçoise
ONIONS: pearl, red, white, yellow
orange: juice, zest
oregano
paprika
PARSLEY, flat-leaf
pasta, esp. pappardelle
peas, esp. sweet
PEPPER: black, white
pesto
pine nuts
pistachios
polenta
pomegranates and pomegranate molasses
porcini mushrooms
potatoes, esp. new or red prunes
raisins
red pepper flakes
rice: basmati, white, wild
risotto
***ROSEMARY**
rutabaga
saffron

sage, fresh

SALT: *fleur de sel*, kosher, sea

savory

scallions

shallots

sherry, oloroso

spinach

stocks: beef, chicken, lamb, veal

sugar: brown, white

tabbouleh

tamarind

tarragon

THYME, FRESH

TOMATOES and tomato sauces

truffles, black, and truffle oil

turmeric

turnips

vanilla

vegetables, root

vermouth

vinaigrette

vinegar: balsamic, red wine, rice wine, sherry, white

watercress

WINE: dry white, red (e.g., Petite Syrah)

Worcestershire sauce

yogurt

zucchini

I work with a local **lamb** farmer in the Willamette Valley who has true spring lamb in the spring. We have a spit and every Friday night we roast a whole lamb. I am a big fan of lamb shoulder. It can take a beating and in the end come out glorious tasting!

There is an old French technique where they cook ham in hay. The hay is submerged in water; then they put the ham on it to cook. It is amazing. We adapted this technique to the lamb. We had our farmer collect the hay and grass in the field where the lamb grazed with the thinking that this is what the lamb actually ate. We then dry the hay by letting it sit out overnight on a tray, so it becomes really butterscotchy and barnyardy. You can use any hay for this technique but I'm just a purist.

We brine a boneless shoulder of lamb for 24 hours in a brining solution of 1 cup of salt and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of sugar in a gallon of water, [adding] some peppercorns, bay leaf, a

couple of cardamom pods, a cinnamon stick, and cumin. The brine is brought to a boil, cooled down, and the lamb goes in. After the brining we rub the lamb with garlic and summer savory and tie it up into a log and put it on the bed of hay, drizzle it with white wine, cover it, and put it in the oven. It is nature going back on itself. The lamb ate the hay, the hay makes the lamb taste better. When it's cooked, the flavors are intense but pleasant and it becomes something else. When lavender is in season, I'll throw some in the hay as well and it is delicious.

With the lamb I like to serve a stuffed tomato Provençal [typically a combination of basil, bread crumbs, garlic, olive oil]. You want to serve something simple. You could also serve a crushed potato with savory and olive oil or a medley of vegetables.

—VITALY PALEY, PALEY'S PLACE (PORTLAND, OREGON)

Flavor Affinities

lamb + broccoli rabe + Parmesan cheese
lamb + cardamom + yogurt
lamb + carrots + ginger + pistachios
lamb + carrots + lentils + parsley
lamb + chickpeas + garlic
lamb + chocolate + cinnamon + cloves
lamb + cilantro + dill + garlic + mint
lamb + cinnamon + dried apricots + preserved lemons + walnuts
lamb + cinnamon + garlic + lemon + mint + onion + oregano
lamb + cinnamon + prunes
lamb + clove + red wine
lamb + cream + fenugreek + garlic
lamb + cucumber + mint + tomatoes
lamb + escarole + lemon
lamb + fava beans + thyme
lamb + fennel + onions + turnips
lamb + flageolet beans + thyme
lamb + garlic + flageolet beans
lamb + garlic + olives
lamb + garlic + rosemary
lamb + mint + mustard
lamb + mint + olives
lamb + mint + parsley
lamb + mint + peas + risotto
lamb + mint + ricotta cheese
lamb + mint + tomatoes

LAMB, CHOPS

Techniques: broil, grill, sauté

anchovies

beans (e.g., fava)

bell peppers, red

broccoli, rabe

butter, unsalted

capers

carrots

cayenne

chard

cheese, feta

cilantro

cumin

curry

fennel

garam masala

garlic

ginger

honey

leeks

lemon

lime

mace

mint

miso

mushrooms

mustard, Dijon

nutmeg

oil: canola, peanut

olive oil

olives, black

onions, esp. pearl oregano

paprika

parsley, flat-leaf

pepper: black, white

pomegranates

potatoes
rosemary
salad
salt: kosher, sea
savory
shallots
stock, chicken
sugar
tarragon
thyme
tomatoes
truffles
vinegar: balsamic, malt
wine, dry red
yogurt

Flavor Affinities

lamb chop + lemon + mint

Latin American cuisine is very Mediterranean. It's based on what was brought over from Spain and Italy. You'll see the combination of garlic, onions, and peppers like you'll see in Spain and Italy, not to mention the same pantry of herbs and spices: **cilantro, cinnamon, cloves, cumin, oregano, rosemary, thyme.**

—MARICEL PRESILLA, ZAFRA (HOBOKEN, NEW JERSEY)

LATIN AMERICAN CUISINE

beans, black
beef
café con leche
chile peppers
cilantro
cinnamon
cloves
corn
cumin
fruits
garlic

greens
lime, juice
meats
mixed grilled meats
onions
orange
oregano
peppers
pork
potatoes
rice
rosemary
sausages
seafood
tarragon
thyme
vegetables

Flavor Affinities

beef + corn + sweet potatoes
garlic + onions + peppers
meats + black beans + greens + orange + rice
seafood + chile peppers + cilantro + garlic + lime

LAVENDER

Taste: sweet, sour

Weight: light

Volume: loud

Tips: Caraway seeds can substitute for lavender.

almonds
apples
baked goods: cakes, cookies, scones, shortbread
berries
blackberries
blueberries
cheese, ricotta

cherries

CHICKEN

CREAM AND ICE CREAM

crème fraîche

currants, black

custards

desserts

duck

figs

French cuisine

fruit and fruit preserves

game birds

ginger

herbes de Provence (occasional ingredient)

HONEY

LAMB

lemon

lemonade

marjoram

mascarpone

meats (e.g., beef, lamb, steak)

milk

mint

onions

orange

oregano

parsley

peaches

pistachios

plums

pork

potatoes

Provençal cuisine

quail

rabbit

ras el hanout (key ingredient)

raspberries

rhubarb

rice

rosemary
savory
spearmint
stews
strawberries
sugar
tea, esp. black
thyme
vanilla
vinegar, balsamic
walnuts

Flavor Affinities

lavender + cream + sugar
lavender + meat + salt

Lavender works with plums or peaches.

—JERRY TRAUNFELD, THE HERBFARM (WOODINVILLE, WASHINGTON)

Lavender and rosemary work in butter cakes, cookies, and other baked goods.

—JERRY TRAUNFELD, THE HERBFARM (WOODINVILLE, WASHINGTON)

I like very little **lavender** with quail for its savory aroma, but the key phrase is “very little”—or else it’s like eating a piece of soap!

—SHARON HAGE, YORK STREET (DALLAS)

LEEKs

Season: autumn–spring
Taste: sweet
Botanical relatives: chives, garlic, onions, shallots
Weight: light–medium
Volume: quiet
Techniques: boil, braise, fry, grill, roast, steam
Tips: Add early in cooking process.

anchovies
bacon

barley
bay leaf
beef
bouillabaisse
butter, unsalted
capers
caraway
carrot
cauliflower
celery
cheese: cheddar, goat, Gruyère, Parmesan
chervil
chicken
chile peppers
chives
coriander
cream
crème fraîche
dill
eggs (including hard-boiled) and egg dishes
fennel
fish
French cuisine
garlic
Greek cuisine
lemon, juice
lovage
meats, white
mushrooms, esp. oyster mussels
mustard
nutmeg
oil: corn, grapeseed, hazelnut, peanut, vegetable
olive oil
onions
oregano
paprika
parsley
pasta
pepper: black, white

potatoes

rice

sage

salads

salt, kosher

sauces, romesco

scallions

sea bass

soups

soy sauce

stews

stocks: chicken, vegetable

tamari

tarragon**thyme**

tomatoes and tomato sauce

truffles, black

vinaigrette

vinegar, balsamic

wine: dry white, red**Flavor Affinities**

leeks + anchovies + garlic + olive oil

leeks + bacon + cream

leeks + cream + thyme

leeks + mustard + vinaigrette

Dishes**Salade de Poireaux Frais: Chilled Leeks with Fingerling Potatoes and Piquillo Peppers**

—Thomas Keller, Bouchon (Yountville, California)

Leek and Asparagus Pasta with Lemon, Parmesan, and Poached Egg

—Peter Nowakoski, Rat's (Hamilton, New Jersey)

We have **lemon juice** right next to the salt when we cook. Acid is the most important aspect of how a dish tastes—whether it is there as subtle punctuation or an exclamation point!

—SHARON HAGE, YORK STREET (DALLAS)

Lemon zest adds a totally different dynamic than lemon juice. If you are making an apple crisp, if you added a teaspoon of zest it would taste very different than if you added lemon juice. The juice would make it taste tart, whereas the zest would actually add a lemon flavor component to it. For ice cream, custards, and tarts, use lemon juice. But if you are going to combine lemon with other flavors, that's when you use zest.

—EMILY LUCHETTI, FARALLON (SAN FRANCISCO)

Use **lemon juice** when you want the acid and lemony flavor of the juice. If you want the perfume of the lemon, use the zest because the skin is where you get the essential oils. I use more lemon and orange than vanilla in my cooking because they are more prevalent in Italy and in Italian cooking, and a flavor profile that people recognize as Italian.

—GINA DEPALMA, BABBO (NEW YORK CITY)

Lemon can be used by itself or with other ingredients because it enhances so many flavors. An orange can be a little too mellow, but lemon makes flavors much brighter. Lemon is an underlying flavor as much as the star. If there is one fruit you had to always have on hand as a basic staple, it is lemon.

—EMILY LUCHETTI, FARALLON (SAN FRANCISCO)

LEGUMES

(See Beans, Lentils, Peas, etc.)

LEMONS

Season: year-round

Taste: sour

Weight: light

Volume: loud



almonds

anise

apples

apricots

artichokes

bananas

basil

bay leaf

beef

berries

beverages

blackberries

blueberries

butter, unsalted

buttermilk

capers

caramel

cardamom

cayenne

cheese: goat, ricotta

cherries

chervil

chestnuts

chicken

chives

chocolate: dark, white

cinnamon

coconut

coffee

crab

cranberries

cream / milk

cream cheese

crème fraîche

custard

dates

desserts

duck

figs: fresh, dried

FISH**GARLIC**

gin

ginger

gooseberries

grapefruit

grapes

Greek cuisine

guava

hazelnuts

HONEY

kiwi fruit

lamb

lemongrass

lemon verbena

lime

liqueurs: nut, orange (e.g., Cointreau, curaçao, Grand Marnier)

mango

maple syrup

mascarpone

Mediterranean cuisines

Middle Eastern cuisines

mint (garnish)

Moroccan cuisine

mustard, Dijon

nectarines

nuts, esp. hazelnuts

oats

olive oil

orange: juice, zest

oregano

oysters

papaya

parsley, flat-leaf

passion fruit

pasta and pasta sauces peaches

pears

pecans

pepper, black

persimmons

pine nuts

pistachios

plums

poppy seeds

pork and pork chops

poultry

prunes

quince

raisins

raspberries

rhubarb

rice
rosemary
rum
sage
salads and salad dressings
salt, kosher
sauces: brown butter, parsley
sesame oil
shallots
SHELLFISH
sour cream
stock, chicken
SUGAR: brown, white
tangerine
thyme
vanilla
veal
violets
vodka
walnuts
wine: red, sweet (e.g., Muscat), white
yogurt

Flavor Affinities

lemon + berries + crème fraîche
lemon + blackberries + honey + ricotta cheese

Dishes

Ricotta-Lemon Pancakes with Blackberries and Honeycomb Butter

—Andrew Carmellini, A Voce (New York City)

LEMONS, MEYER

Season: autumn–spring
Taste: sour–sweet

Weight: light

Volume: moderate–loud

cream

grapefruit

honey

lemon

lime

orange

sugar

vanilla

LEMONS, PRESERVED

Taste: sour

Weight: light–medium

Volume: moderate–loud

cinnamon

cloves

lamb

MOROCCAN CUISINE

nigella seeds

saffron

We churn through **preserved lemons!** In the middle of the summer, we buy cases so that we can age them eight months before we use them. After six months, they are great. After eight months or a year, you see God. They become incredible just by waiting those extra few months. I make preserved lemons by feel. I primarily use salt and will add some cinnamon, clove, nigella, a tiny, tiny bit of saffron, and then just tuck them away in the refrigerator. If I wasn't so greedy, I would give them away, but we are talking a year of my life here!

—BRAD FARMERIE, PUBLIC (NEW YORK CITY)

When you are using different kinds of lemons, you need to treat them as different things. A **Meyer lemon** is different from a regular lemon. If you are using a Meyer lemon, you may want the perfume, aroma, and subtlety of it. Yet when you taste it, you

may want to add a touch of regular lemon to give it a little more acidity and a little kick.

—EMILY LUCHETTI, FARALLON (SAN FRANCISCO)

We get a lot of **Meyer lemons** in during the season, and they have a lovely sweet-orangey lemon flavor. But there are times that they are simply too sweet and we have to either add regular lemon or some lime to balance the Meyer lemon.

—MONICA POPE, T'AFIA (HOUSTON)

Dishes

Meyer Lemon Cream Pie with Roasted Strawberries, Candied Coconut, Vanilla Chantilly

—Emily Luchetti, pastry chef, Farallon (San Francisco)

LEMON BALM

Season: spring–autumn

Taste: sour

Weight: light–medium

Volume: quiet–moderate

apricots

asparagus

berries

carrots

chicken

chives

dill

fennel bulb

fish

fruit

ginger

melon

mint

nectarines

parsley, flat-leaf

peaches

peas
salads, esp. fruit and green
teas

LEMON BASIL

Taste: sour
Weight: light
Volume: moderate

apricots
berries
cinnamon
desserts
fish
peaches
seafood
shellfish
soups
vegetables

LEMONGRASS

Taste: sour
Weight: light
Volume: moderate–loud
Tips: Add near end of cooking process; use in stir-fries.

basil
beef
chicken
chile peppers: red, green
chives
cilantro
cinnamon
cloves
coconut and coconut milk
coriander

crab

cream

curries

FISH

fruits

galangal

garlic

ginger

honey

Indonesian cuisine

lime, juice

lobster

Malaysian cuisine

meats

mint

noodles, rice

offal

onions

parsley

peanuts

pork

poultry

sage

salads and salad dressings

scallions

shallots

SHELLFISH

shrimp

soups, esp. chicken or turkey

Southeast Asian cuisines

spring rolls

stews

teas

THAI CUISINE

turmeric

vanilla

vegetables

Vietnamese cuisine

vinaigrettes

Flavor Affinities

lemongrass + chives + mint
lemongrass + cilantro + mint
lemongrass + cream + vanilla

LEMON THYME

Taste: sour

Weight: light

Volume: moderate–loud

asparagus

basil

bay leaf

beets

beverages (e.g., herbal teas) bouillabaisse

carrots

chicken, esp. roasted chives

eggs

fennel

figs

fish

fruits

ginger

halibut

lamb

marjoram

meats

mint

orange

parsley

potatoes

poultry

rabbit

rosemary

sage

salads: fruit, green

seafood

shellfish
sole
spinach
stews
stocks and broths: fish, seafood
stuffings
veal
vegetables, esp. spring

LEMON VERBENA

Taste: sour

Weight: light

Volume: loud

anise hyssop
apricots
baked goods (e.g., cakes, shortbread)
basil
beets
berries
beverages
blueberries
butter, unsalted
carrots
cherries
chicken
chile peppers
chives
cilantro
cinnamon
cream and ice cream
crème fraîche
currants, red
custards
desserts
fish
fruits

garlic
ginger
grapes
honey
lamb
lavender
lemon, juice
lemonade
lemongrass
lemon thyme
lime, juice
melon
milk
mint
mushrooms
nectarines
peaches
peas
plums
raspberries
rice
salads, fruit and green
salt
sour cream
strawberries
sugar
tamarind
tea, green
zucchini

Flavor Affinities

lemon verbena + apricots + sugar

Lemon verbena is amazing. I love to make a lemon verbena syrup and then poach apricots in it. It is so refreshing! We also make our own soda here, and lemon verbena is great in soda.

—JOHNNY IUZZINI, JEAN GEORGES (NEW YORK CITY)

Dishes

Green Lentil Soup with Black Truffle, Smoked Quail, Crispy Shallots

—Daniel Boulud, Daniel (New York City)

Lentil Stew with Blood Sausage, Chorizo, or Ham with a Poached Egg on Top

—Alexandra Raij, Tía Pol (New York City)

A drizzle of sherry vinegar just before you serve **lentils** elevates them to another level.

—JOSÉ ANDRÉS, CAFÉ ATLÁNTICO (WASHINGTON, DC)

I like **lentils** for soup with a smoked ham hock. For seasoning the soup, I recommend thyme, bay leaf, and a pinch of cumin. You can add bacon or sausage, or serve it with **potato galettes** on the side.

—GABRIEL KREUTHER, THE MODERN (NEW YORK CITY)

LENTILS

Season: winter

Taste: sweet–stringent

Function: cooling

Weight: medium

Volume: moderate

Techniques: simmer

Tips: Green lentils are more flavorful than brown or red.

apples: cider, juice

bacon

BAY LEAF

bell peppers, esp. red

bouquet garni

bread and croutons

butter, unsalted

cardamom

CARROTS

cayenne

CELERY

celery root
cheese, goat
chervil
chile peppers: dried red, fresh green
chives (garnish)
cilantro
cinnamon
cloves
coconut
cornichons
cream
cumin, esp. seeds
curry: leaves, powder, sauces
dill
eggplant
French cuisine
game birds, roasted (e.g., quail)
GARLIC
ginger
ham and ham hocks
honey
Indian cuisine
lamb
leeks
lemon, juice
lime, juice
meats
Mediterranean cuisine
mint, esp. spearmint
mirepoix (esp. for soups)
mustard, Dijon
mustard seeds, black
OIL: hazelnut, peanut, vegetable, walnut
olive oil
ONIONS, esp. red, white, yellow
oregano
PARSLEY, flat-leaf
PEPPER: black, white
pineapple

pork

poultry, roasted (e.g., chicken)

prosciutto

SALMON**SALT: kosher**

sausage, esp. smoked

scallions

shallots

sorrel, esp. with green lentils

soups

soy sauce

spinach

squash, winter (e.g., butternut)

STOCKS: chicken, vegetable**thyme****tomatoes**

turmeric

turnips

VINEGAR: balsamic, red wine, sherry

walnuts

wine, red

zucchini

Flavor Affinities

lentils + bacon + bell pepper + cumin + garlic

lentils + bacon + garlic + sherry vinegar

lentils + bay leaf + onions + thyme

lentils + cumin + turmeric

lentils + olive oil + parsley + sorrel

LETTUCES—IN GENERAL

Season: spring–autumn

Function: cooling

Weight: light–medium

Volume: quiet–loud

apples

bacon
basil
bread, breadsticks, croutons, etc.
capers
cheese (e.g., feta)
chicories, aka bitter greens
dill
eggs, esp. hard-boiled
fennel leaves
garlic
lemon, juice
mint
mushrooms
mustard, Dijon
nuts
oil: hazelnut, peanut, walnut
olive oil
olives
orange
parsley
peaches
pears
pepper, black
raisins
salt
shallots
sprouts
tarragon
vegetables, esp. raw
vinaigrette
vinegar: balsamic, cider, red wine
watercress

Bibb lettuce is a light, delicate, and almost creamy lettuce, so I serve it with a creamy dressing to mimic that creaminess. Because of its delicacy, to make the mayonnaise I'll use a neutral oil that's a blend of 80 percent canola and 20 percent olive. It finds a counterpoint in lemon and fines herbes, and gets a note of freshness, crunch, and spicy heat from radishes.

—TONY LIU, AUGUST (NEW YORK CITY)

LETTUCE, BIBB

(aka Boston or butter lettuce)

Season: spring

Taste: sweet

Weight: light-medium

Volume: quiet

arugula

avocados

basil

chervil

chives

cucumbers

fines herbes

lemon

orange

parsley

pepper, black

radishes

salt

sesame seeds

shallots

tarragon

vinaigrette

watercress

yogurt



LETTUCES—BITTER GREENS AND CHICORIES

(See Arugula, Escarole, Frisée, Radicchio)

Season: spring

Taste: bitter

Weight: light–medium

Volume: medium–loud

bacon

basil

beans, esp. “fresh shell”

butter

cheese: Asiago, Gruyère, Parmesan

cilantro

cream

eggs, hard-boiled

garlic

lemon, juice

lemon balm

nuts

olives

olive oil

onions, yellow

pancetta

parsley

pasta

red pepper flakes

rices

salt, kosher

scallions

shallots

sugar

thyme

vinegar: balsamic, red wine, white

walnuts

LETTUCES—MESCLUN GREENS

(i.e., mixed baby lettuces) (See also Lettuce—Bitter Greens and Chicories)

Season: spring

Taste: bitter

Weight: light

Volume: moderate

Dishes

Hearts of Romaine and Treviso Radicchio with Spanish Serrano Ham, Manchego Cheese, White Anchovies, Fire-Roasted Peppers, and Crisp Capers

—Carrie Nahabedian, Naha (Chicago)

Caesar Salad Soup

—Nobiyuki Sugie, Asiate (New York City)

Leaves of Romaine, Creamy Garlic Dressing, Red Onions, Capers, and Parmesan

—Cory Schreiber, Wildwood (Portland, Oregon)

basil

cheese, goat
chervil
chives
confit (e.g., duck)
French cuisine
hazelnuts
lemon, juice
mushrooms, wild (e.g., morels)
olive oil
parsley, flat-leaf
pecan
pepper, black
salt
shallots
tarragon
vinaigrettes

Flavor Affinities

mesclun greens + goat cheese + hazelnuts

LETTUCE, ROMAINE

Season: spring–autumn

Taste: sweet, bitter

Weight: light

Volume: quiet

anchovies

avocados

bell peppers: green, red

butter

Caesar salad

capers

cayenne

CHEESE: feta, dry Jack, Monterey Jack, **Parmesan**, Stilton

chervil

chile peppers: jalapeño, serrano

chives

cilantro
cream
crème fraîche
croutons

cucumbers

eggs, yolk

GARLIC

grapefruit

ham

leeks

lemon, juice

lime: juice, zest

lovage

mayonnaise

mustard, Dijon

OIL: canola, vegetable

OLIVE OIL

olives, kalamata

onions, esp. red

parsley, flat-leaf

pepper: black, white

salt: kosher, sea

shallots

sour cream

stocks: chicken, vegetable

tarragon

tomatoes

vinaigrette

VINEGAR: balsamic, cider, raspberry, red wine, sherry, white wine

walnuts

Worcestershire sauce

Flavor Affinities

romaine + anchovies + Parmesan cheese

romaine + capers + garlic + Parmesan cheese + red onions

Acidity awakens flavors. I love **lime**, and just a squeeze of lime on seafood soup or Thai soup awakens it.

Dishes

Key Lime Cheesecake with Macadamia Nut Crust, Lime Caramel, Key Lime Curd

—Emily Luchetti, pastry chef, Farallon (San Francisco)

Grilled Lime Pound Cake with Crème Fraîche–Tapioca Pudding, Blueberry Gelée, and Burnt Honey Ice Cream

—Celina Tio, American Restaurant (Kansas City)

LIMES

Season: year-round

Taste: sour

Weight: light

Volume: moderate

apricots

avocados

berries: blueberries, gooseberries, raspberries, **strawberries**

butter

buttermilk

capers

caramel

ceviche

chicken

chile peppers, esp. jalapeño or serrano

chocolate, white

cilantro

coconut and coconut milk

cream

cream cheese

crème fraîche

dates

duck

figs, dried

fish, esp. grilled
fruits, esp. tropical

gin

ginger

gooseberries

grapefruit

green tea

guacamole

guava

hazelnuts

honey: raw, burnt

jicama

kiwi fruit

Latin American cuisine lemon

lemongrass

lime: juice, zest

lobster

macadamia nuts

mangoes

maple syrup

margaritas

mascarpone

meats, esp. grilled

melon, esp. honeydew

Mexican cuisine

mint

orange, juice

papayas

passion fruit

peanuts

pecans

pie, esp. with Key limes

raspberries

rum

salt

scallops

sea bass

shellfish

shrimp

Southwestern cuisine

strawberries

sugar: brown, white

sweet potatoes

tequila

Thai cuisine

tomatoes

tuna

vanilla

Vietnamese cuisine

vodka

yogurt

Flavor Affinities

lime + blueberries + burnt honey + crème fraîche

lime + caramel + cream cheese + macadamia nuts

lime + strawberries + tequila

LIMES AND LIME LEAF, KAFFIR

(See Kaffir Limes and Kaffir Lime Leaf)

LIVER, CALF'S

Taste: bitter

Weight: medium-heavy

Volume: moderate-loud

Techniques: braise, broil, grill, sauté

Tips: Cook briefly, one minute per side.

apples

arugula

avocado

bacon

bay leaf

bouquet garni

butter, unsalted

carrots

celery
cheese, Parmesan
chervil
chives
cream
figs
French cuisine
garlic
jasmine
lemon, juice
milk
mushrooms
mustard, Dijon
oil, canola
olive oil
olives, green
ONIONS: fried, red, Vidalia, white
orange, zest
pancetta
parsley, flat-leaf
pears
pepper: black, white
polenta
potatoes, mashed
prunes
rhubarb
sage
salt, kosher
sauce, brown butter
sausages
shallots
spinach
stock, chicken
sugar, brown
thyme
tomatoes
turnips
VINEGAR: balsamic, cider, red wine, sherry
wine: dry red or white

Flavor Affinities

calf's liver + arugula + onions + pancetta

calf's liver + figs + onions + red wine vinegar

LIVER, CHICKEN

Weight: medium

Volume: moderate–loud

Techniques: grill, sauté

anchovies

apples

bacon

bay leaf

butter, unsalted

capers

chicken fat

chives

cilantro

eggs, hard-boiled

garlic

kale

lemon, juice

lime, juice

oil, peanut

olive oil

ONIONS: fried, red, sweet (e.g., Vidalia)

parsley, flat-leaf

peanuts

pepper: black, white

radishes

red pepper flakes rosemary

sage

salt, kosher

shallots

sherry, dry (e.g., fino) soy sauce

sugar

thyme

vinegar: balsamic, sherry wine, dry red

Flavor Affinities

chicken livers + apples + sage

chicken livers + bacon + balsamic vinegar + onions + rosemary

chicken livers + kale + lemon

I love **lobster**: poached, roasted, or grilled. I like mayonnaise or a vinaigrette with my lobster much more than butter with lobster. In the summertime, I like it with small potatoes and corn. I really like it with cilantro.

For my dish Roasted Maine Lobster in “Folly of Herbs” with Baby Fennel and Salsify, I wanted to do something different with lobster besides a lobster sauce. I make a “tea” of dried herbs: thyme, rosemary, fennel seeds, oregano, sage, mint, and tarragon. This is boiled and strained, then gets a dash of Ricard [also known as Pernod, an aniseflavored liquor]. The lobster gets finished with fresh parsley, mint, and fresh oregano. I chose these two vegetables because salsify is underused and underappreciated. I don’t blanch my salsify in water because when you do, the flavor stays in the water. I roast them and caramelized them a little bit, then deglaze with just a little water with a sprig of thyme and a bay leaf. Baby fennel is good because it plays off the Ricard and fennel. I quickly blanch the fennel and then caramelized it.

—GABRIEL KREUTHER, THE MODERN (NEW YORK CITY)

Cooked **lobster** meat blends well with mayonnaise, but I don’t think I’d use it with raw lobster—I’d use soy sauce instead.

—KAZ OKOCHI, KAZ SUSHI BISTRO (WASHINGTON, DC)

LIVER, DUCK OR GOOSE

(See Foie Gras)

LOBSTER

Season: summer–autumn

Taste: sweet

Weight: light–medium

Volume: quiet–medium

Techniques: bake, boil, broil, grill, pan roast, poach, roast, sauté, steam

anchovies

apples

artichokes

asparagus

avocado

bacon

basil

bay leaf

beans: green, flageolets, white

beets

bell peppers, esp. red, yellow, and/or roasted

brandy

BUTTER, unsalted

cabbage, esp. savoy

capers

carrots

caviar

cayenne

celery

celery root

Champagne

cheese: Gruyère, Parmesan

chervil

chile peppers, jalapeño

chili paste

Chinese cuisine

chives

cilantro

cinnamon

clams

clove

coconut and coconut milk

cognac

coriander

corn

crab

cream

crème fraîche

cucumbers

cumin

curry: paste (red), powder

curry leaf

daikon

dill

eggs and egg yolks

endive

fennel

fennel seeds

fenugreek seeds

figs

fish sauce, Thai

foie gras

frisée

GARLIC

ginger, fresh

grapefruit

grapes

guacamole

haricots verts

honey

horseradish

kiwi fruit

kumquats

leeks

LEMON: juice, zest

lemon, Meyer

Dishes

Spaghettini with Spicy Budding Chives, Sweet Garlic, and a One-Pound Lobster

—Mario Batali, Babbo (New York City)

Chatham Bay Day Boat Lobster with Red Wine Sauce and Parsnip-Rosemary-Apple Puree

—David Bouley, Upstairs (New York City)

Chilled Maine Lobster: Mango, Fresh Artichoke, and Serrano Ham with a Passion Fruit and Fresh Coconut Tamarind Dressing

—David Bouley, Bouley (New York City)

Potato Gnocchi with Maine Lobster, Wild Asparagus, Meyer Lemon, and Tarragon

—Traci Des Jardins, Jardiniére (San Francisco)

Lobster and Morel Ravioli in Basil Broth, Hazelnuts, and Lobster Oil

—Sandy D'Amato, Sanford (Milwaukee)

Nova Scotia Lobster Poached with Florence Fennel and Chamomile

—Daniel Humm, Eleven Madison Park (New York City)

Warm Lobster Salad, Cauliflower and Watercress Coulis

—Jean Joho, Everest (Chicago)

Butter-Poached Lobster with Sweet Carrot Emulsion

—Thomas Keller, The French Laundry (Yountville, California)

Briny Lobster with Wasabi Mayo

—Kaz Okochi, Kaz Sushi Bistro (Washington, DC)

Maine Lobster Tails Roasted with Fingerling Potatoes, Pea Greens, Whole Garlic, and Fava Beans

—Alfred Portale, Gotham Bar and Grill (New York City)

Martini of Maine Lobster, Cucumber Salad, Belvedere Vodka, and White Sturgeon Caviar

—Thierry Rautureau, Rover's (Seattle)

Lobster Poached in a Lemon Miso Broth with Shiso and Hon Shimgeji Mushrooms

—Eric Ripert, Le Bernardin (New York City)

Baked Lobster; Braised Endives, with Enoki and Black Trumpet Mushroom with Bourbon–Black Pepper Sauce

—Eric Ripert, Le Bernardin (New York City)

lemongrass

lentils

lime: leaf (kaffir), juice

lobster roe

macaroni and cheese

mace

mâche

mangoes

mascarpone

mayonnaise

Mediterranean cuisine

mint

mirepoix

miso, white

mushrooms: button, cepes, chanterelles, cremini, porcini, shiitake, white, wild

mussels

mustard: dry, seeds

New England cuisine

nutmeg

OIL: canola, corn, grapeseed, hazelnut, peanut, sesame, vegetable, walnut

olive oil

onions, esp. pearl, red, Spanish

orange (juice, zest) and clementine

oyster sauce

papaya

paprika, sweet
parsley, flat-leaf
parsnips
pasta (e.g., macaroni)
passion fruit
peanuts
peas
peas, snow
pepper: black, white
Pernod
pineapple
port
potatoes, esp. fingerling or new
pumpkin
radicchio
red pepper flakes
rhubarb
rice, esp. sticky, and risotto
rosemary
saffron
SALT: kosher, sea, *sel gris*
sauces, béchamel
scallions
scallops
sea urchin
shallots
shrimp
snow peas
Southern cuisine
soy sauce
spinach
squid
star anise
stocks: chicken, fish, lobster, shellfish, veal, vegetable
Tabasco sauce
tamarind, puree
tarragon
thyme
TOMATOES: juice, paste, pulp

truffles: black, juice

vanilla

vermouth, dry

vinaigrette, esp. citrus

VINEGAR: red wine, rice wine, **sherry**, white wine

vodka

wasabi

water chestnuts

watermelon

whiskey

WINE: dry to off-dry white (e.g., Gewürztraminer or Riesling), dry red (e.g., Syrah), port

Worcestershire sauce

yuzu juice

Flavor Affinities

lobster + artichokes + garlic

lobster + avocado + mayonnaise + tarragon + white wine vinegar

lobster + bacon + porcini mushrooms

lobster + basil + hazelnuts + morel mushrooms

lobster + basil + tomatoes

lobster + brandy + cream + rosemary

lobster + brown butter + orange + vanilla

lobster + butter + garlic + tarragon

lobster + celery + mayonnaise + black truffles

lobster + chanterelle mushrooms + parsley + Pernod

lobster + chanterelle mushrooms + tarragon

lobster + chive + lemon

lobster + cilantro + cumin

lobster + corn + garlic + lemon + potatoes + tarragon

lobster + fennel + lemon

lobster + mango + spinach

lobster + mayonnaise + wasabi

lobster + orange + soy sauce

lobster + pasta + peas

lobster + saffron + vanilla

Stinging nettles and **lovage** is a wonderful combination. Stinging nettles are peppery with a green flavor and lovage is celery-like. It's funny: I find nettles without lovage are kind of flat tasting. I will use this combination in a ravioli filling or with local Dungeness crab as a sauce for a soufflé.

—JERRY TRAUNFELD, THE HERBFARM (WOODINVILLE, WASHINGTON)

LOTUS ROOT

Season: summer–winter

Taste: sweet

Weight: light–medium

Volume: quiet

Techniques: fry, raw, simmer, stir-fry

ginger

lemon

lime

oil, vegetable

salads

soups

soy sauce

stir-fried dishes

tempura

vinegar, rice

wine, rice

LOVAGE

Season: spring, autumn

Taste: sour

Weight: light–medium, soft-leaved

Volume: quiet–loud

Tips: Always use fresh, not cooked.

apples

bay leaf

beans, green

bell peppers

caraway
carrots
chard
cheese
chervil
chicken
chile peppers
chives
clams
corn
crab, Dungeness
cream cheese
dill
eggs and egg dishes
fennel
fish, e.g., halibut, skate, smoked, tuna
garlic
greens
ham
juniper berries
lamb
marjoram
mint
mushrooms
mussels
mustard
nettles, stinging
onions
oregano
parsley
pork
potatoes
rabbit
rice
salads, green
sauces
shellfish
sorrel
soups, esp. fish

spinach

stews

tarragon

thyme

tomatoes and tomato juice

veal

vegetables, esp. root

zucchini

Flavor Affinities

lovage + Dungeness crab + stinging nettles

lovage + salmon + tomatoes

LUXURIOUS

caviar, esp. Beluga

Champagne

foie gras

Ibérico ham

Kobe beef

saffron

smoked fish

vanilla

truffles: black, white

wine

LYCHEES

Season: summer

Taste: sweet

Weight: light–medium

Volume: quiet–moderate

Techniques: raw

anise hyssop

berries

blackberries

chicken

chile peppers

cilantro

coconut and coconut milk

cream

cream cheese

curry

duck

foie gras

ginger

honey

kiwi fruit

lemon, juice

lemongrass

lime, juice

mangoes

melon, esp. honeydew

nuts

orange, tangerine

passion fruit

pears

pineapple

plums

pork

raspberries

rice

rose (French cuisine)

rum

sake

salads, fruit

shellfish: scallops, shrimp

strawberries

sugar, esp. palm

vodka

wine: plum, sparkling

yogurt

Flavor Affinities

lychees + ginger + lime

lychees + raspberries + rose

Dishes

Summer Raspberry-Lychee Macaroon with Lemon Sorbet

—Eric Bertoia, Cafe Boulud (New York City)

Our **macadamia nut** tart, which we serve with banana-rum ice cream, is our take on pecan pie.

—LISSA DOUMANI, TERRA (ST. HELENA, CALIFORNIA)

Macadamia nuts are buttery, rich nuts. I will even pair them with sea scallops, which also have a richness to them. The macadamia nuts don't overwhelm the scallops and I put them in the dish slightly chopped—otherwise, the texture of the nut would be too chewy. We use macadamia nuts on one of the simplest yet most popular dishes on our menu—our jumbo lump crab cake with grilled asparagus and toasted macadamia nuts. Our crab cake is the only recipe we won't give out. It contains no herbs or spices. The only thing that goes in our crab cake is crab, salt, pepper, *panko* [Japanese bread crumbs], and a little mayonnaise to hold them together. You are the first people to get this recipe!

—MARCEL DESAULNIERS, THE TRELLIS (WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA)

MACADAMIA NUT OIL

(See Oil, Macadamia Nut)

MACADAMIA NUTS

Weight: light–medium

Volume: moderate

apricots

bananas

beets

bourbon

brandy

caramel
cashews
chicken
chocolate, esp. dark or white
coconut
coffee
crab
cream
dates
desserts
figs, dried
fish (e.g., cod, halibut, mahi mahi)
ginger
goat cheese
grapefruit
guava
Hawaiian cuisine
honey
kumquats
lamb
lemon
lime
mango
maple syrup
mint
orange
papaya
passion fruit
peaches
pineapple
prunes
raspberries
rum
scallops
sugar, brown
vanilla

Flavor Affinities

macadamia nuts + bananas + caramel + cream

macadamia nuts + beets + goat cheese

macadamia nuts + coconut + lime

MACE

Season: summer–autumn

Taste: pungent, sweet

Botanical relatives: nutmeg

Weight: light–medium

Volume: loud

allspice

Asian cuisine

baked goods (e.g., doughnuts)

beans

broccoli

butter

cabbage

cardamom

carrots

cheese and cheese dishes, esp. creamy

cherry pie

chicken

chocolate

chowders (e.g., fish)

cinnamon

cloves

coriander

cream / milk

cumin

curry (ingredient)

eggs

English cuisine

fish

French cuisine

garam masala (ingredient)

ginger

hazelnuts
Indian cuisine
ketchup (ingredient)
lamb

meats

New England cuisine

NUTMEG

onions

paprika

pastries

pepper

potatoes

pound cake

puddings

pumpkin

salads, fruit

sauces: béchamel, cream, onion

sausages

shellfish, shrimp

soups and consommés

spinach

stuffing

sweet potatoes

thyme

veal

vegetables

West Indian cuisine

MÂCHE

Season: autumn–spring

Weight: very light

Volume: very quiet

Techniques: raw, steam

apples

bacon

beets

butter
cheese, goat
cream
eggs, quail
endive
lemon, juice
mustard, Dijon
nuts: pistachios, **walnuts**
oil: grapeseed, nut
olive oil
orange
pomegranates
potatoes
scallops
shallots
vinegar: champagne, sherry

Flavor Affinities

mâche + apples + bacon
mâche + apples + bacon + vinegar
mâche + apples + beets + endive + sherry vinaigrette + walnuts
mâche + oranges + pistachios + pomegranates

MACKEREL

Season: summer–autumn

Weight: light

Volume: loud

Techniques: braise, broil, grill, marinate, poach, sauté, sear

If you go to Japan, you'll find that virtually all the sushi restaurants put a little ginger and scallion on their **mackerel** sushi. It cuts its “fishiness” while adding flavor.

—KAZ OKOCHI, KAZ SUSHI BISTRO (WASHINGTON, DC)

apples
artichokes
bay leaf
beets

bell peppers: red, yellow
butter
capers
caraway seeds
caviar
ceviche
chile peppers
chives
cilantro
cinnamon
cloves
coriander
cornichons
cream
crème fraîche
cucumber
cumin
dill
fennel
French cuisine
garlic
ginger
gooseberries
horseradish
LEMON, juice
lemon thyme
lentils
lime, juice
mint (garnish)
miso
mushrooms
mustard, Dijon
mustard seeds
OIL: canola, corn, peanut, sesame, vegetable
olive oil
onions
orange, juice
pancetta
parsley, flat-leaf

PEPPER: black, green, white

red pepper flakes

rosemary

saffron

sake

salmon caviar

salt, sea**scallions**

sesame seeds

shallots

sorrel

soy sauce

stocks: chicken, fish

sugar

thyme

VINEGAR: champagne, red wine, sherry, white wine

wine, dry white

Flavor Affinities

mackerel + arugula + chickpeas + lemon + rosemary

mackerel + chives + Dijon mustard + lemon juice + shallots + vinegar

mackerel + ginger + scallions

mackerel + onions + thyme

MAHI MAHI

Taste: sweet

Weight: medium-heavy

Volume: quiet

Techniques: bake, broil, deepfry, grill, poach, sauté, steam, stirfry

avocado

cabbage

cilantro

coriander

dill

fruits, esp. tropical

gin

juniper berries
lemon: juice, zest
orange: juice, zest
pepper, white
salt, sea
sugar

Flavor Affinities

mahi mahi + avocado + cabbage + cilantro

Dishes

Taco de Pescado “Baja”: Battered and Deep-Fried Mahi Mahi in Soft Corn Tortillas with Cabbage and Avocado-Cilantro Cream

—Traci Des Jardins, Mijita (San Francisco)

MALT

Taste: sweet
Weight: light
Volume: moderate

bananas
caramel
chocolate
cinnamon
coffee
cream and ice cream
nuts
sugar
vanilla

Dishes

Naha Sundae of Vanilla Malt Ice Cream, Hickory Nut Waffle, Bananas, and Bourbon-Pecan Syrup, Shortbread Cookies

—Elizabeth Dahl, pastry chef, Naha (Chicago)

Double-Malted Euphoria with Malted Chocolate, Vanilla Mousse, and Marcona Almond Brittle

—Celina Tio, American Restaurant (Kansas City)

I love malt. It has a sweetness, breadiness, and graininess to its flavor. It works with the classics like chocolate, vanilla, and caramel.

—MICHAEL LAISKONIS, LE BERNARDIN (NEW YORK CITY)

Dishes

Mango Mousse, Pineapple Soufflé, Roasted Pineapple, Swiss Meringue

—François Payard, Payard Patisserie and Bistro (New York City)

Organic Strawberry and Grapefruit Granitas, Mango “Salad,” Mascarpone

—Monica Pope, T’afia (Houston)

Mango, Pistachio, and Banana Strudel with Coconut-Curry Sauce

—Allen Susser, at the 2003 James Beard Awards gala reception

Raspberry-Mango Soufflé with Fresh Fruit and Bittersweet Chocolate Ice Cream

—Celina Tio, American Restaurant (Kansas City)

MANGOES

Season: late spring–late summer

Taste: sweet

Weight: medium

Volume: moderate

Techniques: raw

almonds
amaretto
anise
avocados
BANANAS (compatible fruit)
basil
bell peppers, esp. red and green
beverages (e.g., cocktails, smoothies)
blackberries
blueberries
buttermilk
butterscotch
cabbage, green
caramel
cashews
cayenne
ceviche
Champagne
cheese, esp. mixed-milk cheeses (e.g., Robiola Rocchetta and Amarelo da Beira Baixa)
CHILE PEPPERS, esp. jalapeño, serrano, red, green
chocolate, white
chutneys
cilantro
cinnamon
cloves
COCONUT AND COCONUT MILK
coffee
cream (e.g., heavy, whipped)
crème fraîche
curry powder
custard
fish
game
garlic
ginger, fresh
grapefruit
honey
Indian cuisine
Kirsch

kiwi fruit
kumquats
lemon, juice
LIME, juice
macadamia nuts
mascarpone
Mexican cuisine
milk (e.g., evaporated)
mint
nutmeg
oil, vegetable
olive oil
ONIONS: red, sweet
ORANGE: juice, zest
orange liqueur
papaya
passion fruit
pepper, white
pineapple
pork, esp. roasted
poultry: chicken, duck
prosciutto
raspberries
rice
RUM
sake
salads, fruit
salmon
salt
Sauternes
scallions
sesame seeds
shellfish, shrimp
sorbet
squab
star anise
strawberries
SUGAR: LIGHT BROWN, WHITE
Tabasco sauce

Thai cuisine
tuna, esp. grilled
vanilla
vinegar: balsamic, red wine
violets
vodka
wine: Chardonnay, sweet (e.g., ice wine)
yogurt
AVOID
soy sauce
wasabi

Flavor Affinities

mango + almonds + lime
mango + basil + Champagne
mango + black pepper + lemon + mint + passion fruit
mango + coconut + rice
mango + ginger + mint + papaya
mango + salmon + sushi rice

Mangoes pair well with some of the mixed-milk cheeses such as Robiola Rocchetta and Amarelo da Beira Baixa.

—MAX MCCALMAN, ARTISANAL CHEESE CENTER (NEW YORK CITY)

MAPLE SYRUP

Taste: sweet, bitter
Function: cooling
Weight: medium-heavy
Volume: moderate-loud



almonds
anise
apples
apricots
bacon
baked goods, e.g., gingerbread
BANANAS
BLUEBERRIES
breakfast / brunch
butter

buttermilk
Canadian cuisine
caramel
carrots
chestnuts
chocolate, esp. dark, white
cinnamon
coffee
corn syrup
cream
cream cheese
custard
dates
desserts
duck
figs, esp. dried
foie gras
French toast
fruit
ginger
ham
hazelnuts
ice cream: coffee, vanilla
lemon, juice
lime, juice
macadamia nuts
mascarpone
nectarines
New England cuisine
nutmeg
nuts
oats
onions
orange
pancakes
peaches
PEARS
PECANS
persimmons

pineapple
plums
pork ribs
prunes
pumpkin
quince
raisins
raspberries
rhubarb
rum: dark, light
star anise
strawberries
sweet potatoes
sugar: light brown, raw, white
tea
turkey
vanilla
waffles
WALNUTS
whiskey
yogurt

AVOID

sugar, dark brown, as it is too intense with maple syrup

Flavor Affinities

maple syrup + blueberries + lemon
maple syrup + butter + chocolate + cream
maple syrup + caramel + pecans
maple syrup + mascarpone + pistachios

I typically use **maple syrup** with nuts, like in a pecan pie. I will replace the dark corn syrup in the recipe with maple syrup instead. It is always important to use a very good quality [e.g., Vermont or Canadian] maple syrup. If you are working with syrup and sugar, you need to be careful because the combination of dark brown sugar with maple syrup can become very intense.

—EMILY LUCHETTI, FARALLON (SAN FRANCISCO)

BLIS maple syrup is aged in bourbon barrels, and is good enough to drink on its own! I'll use it with everything from duck breast to foie gras.

—BRADFORD THOMPSON, MARY ELAINE'S AT THE PHOENICIAN (SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA)

Dishes

Maple and Anise French Toast with Lavender Custard

—Dominique and Cindy Duby, Wild Sweets (Vancouver)

Milk Chocolate and Maple Caramel Cake

—Dominique and Cindy Duby, Wild Sweets (Vancouver)

Milk Chocolate and Maple Caramel Ice Cream, Caramelized Bananas, and Ginger Tuile

—Dominique and Cindy Duby, Wild Sweets (Vancouver)

MARJORAM

Season: summer–winter

Taste: sweet, spicy

Botanical relatives: oregano (which is stronger in flavor than marjoram)

Weight: light

Volume: quiet–moderate

Tips: Add at the end of the cooking process.

artichokes asparagus

basil

bay leaf

beans, esp. green

beef

beets

bouquet garni (ingredient)

bread

butter

carrots

chard

cheese: fresh goat, mozzarella

chicken

chives

chowders

clams

corn

cucumber

delicate-flavored foods (e.g., those “quiet” in Volume)

duck

eggs and egg dishes (e.g., omelets)**fish**

French cuisine

fines herbes (ingredient)

garlic

halibut

Italian cuisine

lamb

lemon, juice

lima beans

meats, esp. grilled

Mediterranean cuisine

Middle Eastern cuisine

mint

mushrooms, esp. wild

North African cuisine

North American cuisine

oil, peanut

olive oil

olives

onions

oregano**parsley**

pasta, esp. macaroni or ravioli

peas

pizza

pork

potatoes

poultry

rabbit

risotto

rosemary
sage
SALADS, esp. green, and salad dressings
sauces
sausages
savory
shellfish
soups, esp. bean, onion
spinach
squash, summer
stews
stuffing
thyme
tomatoes and tomato sauce
tuna
veal
vegetables, esp. summer
vinaigrettes
wine, red
zucchini

Flavor Affinities

marjoram + chicken + lemon
marjoram + fresh goat cheese + prosciutto
marjoram + tomato sauce + zucchini

Mediterranean herbs marry well. Rosemary and **marjoram**, or thyme and savory, are **naturals together**.

—JERRY TRAUNFELD, THE HERBFARM (WOODINVILLE, WASHINGTON)

MASCARPONE

Taste: sweet
Weight: medium-heavy
Volume: quiet

almonds
anchovies

apricots
arugula
berries
biscotti
blackberries
blueberries
brandy
butter
caramel
cheese, ricotta
cherries
chives
chocolate, esp. dark
cinnamon
cloves
coffee/espresso
cream
cream cheese
crème fraîche
currants, red
dates
figs
fruits, tropical
ginger
guava
hazelnuts
honey
Italian cuisine
Kirsch
ladyfingers
lemon: juice, zest
lime
maple syrup
mushrooms
mustard
nectarines
nutmeg
oats
orange

pasta
peaches
pears
pepper, black
pesto
pine nuts
pistachios
prosciutto
pumpkin
quince
raisins
raspberries
rhubarb
rum

strawberries

sugar: raw, white

truffle oil

vanilla

vinegar, balsamic

walnuts

wine: red, sweet

Flavor Affinities

mascarpone + arugula + truffle oil
mascarpone + berries + figs
mascarpone + chocolate + strawberries
mascarpone + cinnamon + pumpkin
mascarpone + espresso + ladyfingers (cookies) + sugar
mascarpone + figs + prosciutto
mascarpone + maple syrup + pistachios

Dishes

Black Mission Figs with Mascarpone Foam and Prosciutto di Parma

—Rick Tramonto, Tru (Chicago)

MEATS

Tips: Enhance the flavor of meat *before* (e.g., via brining and marinating), *during* (e.g., via selecting the best cooking technique), and *after* cooking (e.g., via condiments and sauces).

MEDITERRANEAN CUISINES

(See also French [southern], Italian, Middle Eastern, Moroccan, and Spanish Cuisines)

basil

citrus

garlic

herbs

lemon, juice

marjoram

olive oil

oregano

parsley

rosemary

sage

savory

thyme

tomatoes

vinegar: balsamic, red wine

Flavor Affinities

marjoram + rosemary

savory + thyme

MELON/MUSKMELONS—IN GENERAL

(See also Cantaloupe, Honeydew, etc.)

Season: summer

Taste: sweet

Function: cooling

Weight: light–medium

Volume: moderate

Techniques: raw

almonds

anise seeds and anise hyssop

apricots

basil

beverages, esp. smoothies

blackberries

blueberries

Champagne

cherries

chile peppers, esp. serrano chili powder

chili sauce

cilantro

cognac, esp. in cocktails

Cointreau

cream / milk

crème fraîche

cucumbers

curaçao, esp. in cocktails

cured meats (e.g., prosciutto, sopressata)

curry

fennel

ginger

Grand Marnier, esp. in cocktails grapefruit

grapes

hazelnuts

honey

ices and ice creams

Italian cuisine

Kirsch

kiwi fruit

LEMON, juice

lemon balm

LIME, juice

lychees

macadamia nuts

Madeira

mangoes
Midori liqueur
MINT, esp. spearmint
olive oil
orange
orange-flower water
pears
pecans
pepper: black, white
port
PROSCIUTTO
raspberries
rum
sake
salads, esp. fruit
salsas, fruit
salt, kosher
sambuca
soups, esp. chilled
strawberries: fruit, puree
tarragon
tequila, esp. in cocktails
vanilla
vinegar, rice
wines, sweet, esp. Gewürztraminer, late harvest wines, **Muscat Beaumes-deVenise**
Riesling, Sauternes
yogurt
yuzu juice

Tarragon works with muskmelons.

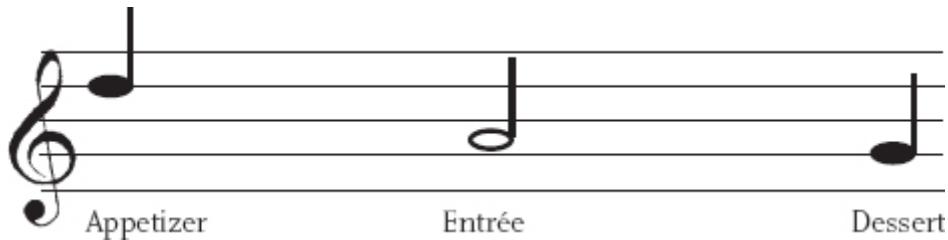
—JERRY TRAUNFELD, THE HERBFARM (WOODINVILLE, WASHINGTON)



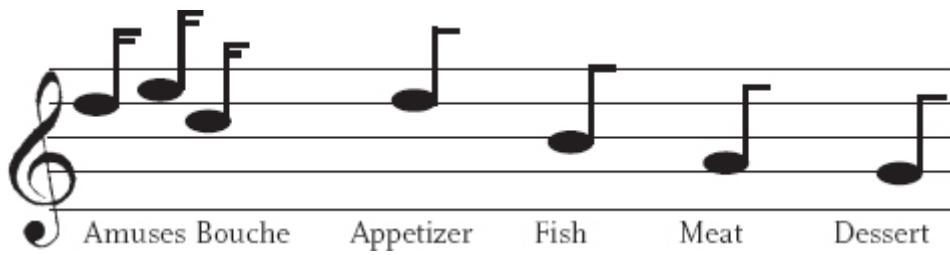
MENU

Tips: Strive for balance over an entire menu, i.e., appetizer, entrée, and dessert. Envision the course of a menu as a piece of music having a melody, rhythm, and tempo.

Three-course menu:



Tasting menu:



When planning a **menu**, pick the dessert or the entrée first and have the other one match it, in terms of style and preparation. If you are doing an entrée that requires last-minute time in the kitchen, don't serve a dessert that requires last-minute time as well. If you have a main course that takes last-minute work, serve a dessert that can be made a day ahead—or if your dessert is what needs last-minute attention, serve it after a

stew or lasagna. When deciding what to make, remember: The heavier the main course, the lighter the dessert should be, or vice versa. I was recently going through some of my earlier books and was shocked when I looked at the recipes. One recipe for a chocolate cake that we served at Stars was served in big wedges. I was amazed we used to serve such a huge portion! People can't eat like that anymore. At the same time, the cake is so good I still want to serve it so I work backward. I will serve a chicken or something else light for the main course, not a prime rib of beef.

—EMILY LUCHETTI, FARALLON (SAN FRANCISCO)

MERLOT

Weight: medium

Volume: moderate

beef

cheese, esp. blue and other fullflavored

chicken

duck

lamb

meat, red

mushrooms

pork

steak

turkey

veal

MEXICAN CUISINE

avocados

beans

beef

chicken

*CHILE PEPPERS

chili powder

chocolate

cilantro

cinnamon

corn

cumin

epazote
fried dishes
garlic
lemon
lime, juice
nuts
onions
orange
oregano
pork
rice
saffron
salsas
scallions
seeds
squash
tomatoes
tortillas
turkey
vanilla
wheat

Flavor Affinities

beans + rice
chile peppers + lime
chile peppers + tomatoes
cilantro + lime