1. Chefs

YESTERDAY AND TODAY

"A country without a past has no future." In a culinary sense, we have to reaffirm our past because we have one. And if we have any future, it is our past. We have to understand who we are and where we are.

MARK MILLER

Rick Bayless's life is not atypical of the lives of America's other foremost chefs who, like Rick, alternately wear the hats of chef, restaurateur, businessperson, author, television host, activist, and/or sometimes even celebrity. Bayless runs two successful restaurants—Frontera Grill and Topolobampo—in Chicago, but he crisscrosses the United States to participate in various benefits with other chefs, and regularly travels the globe for business and pleasure. He's an active leader of the Chefs Collaborative, a not-for-profit organization of chefs concerned about the quality of food in America. Rick is also a spouse and a parent—and, even more impressive in this demanding profession, he has found a way to balance all of these professional and personal roles admirably.

Before even having a shot at reaching this level of success, however, working cooks—as I was for ten years—are known to experience "rites of passage" not unlike those one might encounter in boot camp. Our hours are long, the work is physically demanding, and the conditions are, well, hot. Our "uniforms" are anything but—while most kitchens require cooks to wear the traditional white chef's jacket, these days the pants worn could be anything from the traditional black-and-white houndstooth check to a brightly colored print of red chile peppers. Headgear ranges from a traditional toque (the classic tall white hat) to a baseball cap. Footwear might be tennis shoes or clogs, which are particularly popular among cooks who've worked in French kitchens. Kitchen work during lunch or dinner service is always intense, but the atmosphere may range from a tense calm to loud and frenzied screaming and yelling.

Those able to stand the heat are finding that the growth of the foodservice industry today is opening up greater opportunities for cooks and chefs in the profession. These opportunities carry with them an important responsibility, as the choices made by the next generation of chefs will transform the food of tomorrow. I believe aspiring chefs should recognize this influence and use it responsibly, striving to master their profession. This process starts with an understanding of its history.

Looking Backward

Why is it important to understand culinary history? It is the rich tradition of the culinary field that allows this profession to be so much more than standing at a cutting board or a hot stove all day. I have worked with fellow cooks who didn't understand my own interest in the subject. They would ask, "Who cares who James Beard or Escoffier were? Why should I care what anyone did twenty years ago, let alone two hundred years ago? I'd rather hear about what's new."

In fact, the media's emphasis on the latest culinary trends adds to the pressure chefs feel to come out with something new and different to attract attention, to define their style, or to satisfy our American desire for innovation. However, how much is ever truly new? André Soltner provides an interesting perspective of history's importance: "We've had the same food for two hundred to three hundred years—everything we do today was already done before." Could he possibly be right? Think about the wide variety of ethnic and regional cuisines we eat today, the modern demands for convenience and sophistication placed on today's cook, and our concerns about healthful food. Consider these cooking magazine articles: "Foods of the Rio Grande Valley and Northern Mexico," "Italian Cooking," "Russian Recipes," "Fifteen-

Minute Meals," "Lentils: A Meat Substitute," "When Unexpected Company Comes," "World-Famous Recipes by the World's Most Noted Chefs," "Creole Cooking," "Delicious Cooking in a Small Space," "Making Gnocchi," "Homemade Timbales," "Making and Serving Curry." Could such variety and such specific needs even have been imagined more than a few years ago? Well, yes. Each article listed appeared in a United States publication between the years of 1895 and 1910!

Understanding the history of the dish you are preparing will allow you to put a little more of your heart and soul into what you're cooking. I think that's what it's all about.

JIMMY SCHMIDT

In addition, how many people are aware that architecturally structured food, covered extensively in the food press in the 1990s as a "new" trend toward "tall" food, was prepared by chefs in the nineteenth century? As one might imagine, the chefs who pushed food in new directions were real pioneers in their day and thus, not surprisingly, fascinating human beings. Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, "There is properly no history; only biography." History is simply compelling stories about compelling people, and the people who played a role in culinary history particularly so.

Until recently, the chef's profession was not particularly prestigious. Only in the last twenty-five to thirty years have chefs begun to gain the respect and recognition they deserve. Much of the media coverage today stems from their participation in various high-profile charity benefits. But turn to history and you'll see that chefs have long contributed to their communities through food. One example described in the pages that follow includes a chef who fed more than a million people over three months during the Irish potato famine.

As a not-unimportant bonus, an historical perspective allows cooks to give their food greater depth. At the School for American Chefs, Madeleine Kamman would have us think about where and when a dish originated and what the local people might have used to season it in centuries past. In preparing a particular Mediterranean dish, we saw the value of that thinking when we substituted anchovy for salt, and the dish took on a deeper richness and complexity. Understanding the profession's history will make you a better cook—in more ways than one.

Today's cook has a rich and impressive lineage dating back thousands of years, and understanding one's place as a link in a chain to the past—as well as to the future—can help a cook see the profession in a more balanced perspective. The timeline that follows doesn't pretend to be comprehensive—it merely highlights some interesting people, books, and events we hoped might help stimulate the reader's appetite to learn more and feel a stronger connection to the past.

Great Moments in Culinary History

5th Century B.C.

Chefs play an important role in society from this time forward.

4th Century A.D.

Apicius reputedly writes *De re conquinaria libri decem* ("Cuisine in Ten Books"), considered to be the very first cookbook, in which sauces are prepared in much the same manner followed by the French up to 1955.

Middle Ages

Guilds are formed, with chefs beginning their long tradition of community.

1380

Guillaume Tirel Taillevent (1312–95) writes *Le Viandier,* one of the oldest cookbooks written in French, which provides a complete synthesis of all aspects of cookery in the fourteenth century. Its main contribution is considered to be its emphasis on spiced foods and sauces (predominantly saffron, ginger, pepper, and cinnamon), soups, and ragouts, which include the preparation of meat, poultry, game, and fish. (The heavy seasoning served the useful purpose of disguising the taste of stale or rotten food.) He served as the cook of Charles VII of France.

1390

Richard II of England's cooks write *The Forme of Cury* ("The Art of Cookery"), which emphasizes heavily seasoned dishes and recommends the liberal use of almond milk in cooking.

A fourteenth-century European guild manual described the early master chef this way: "He is a professional craftsman. He is a cook. He takes fowl from the air; fish from the waters; fruits, vegetables, and grain from the land; and animals that walk the earth, and through his skills and art transforms the raw product to edible food. He serves to sustain life in man, woman, and child. He has the sacred duty through his efforts and art to sustain and maintain the healthy bodies that God has given us to house our souls."

1475

De Honesta Voluptate ac Valetudine ("Honest Pleasure and Health"), the first printed cookbook, is published in Italy by **Bartolomeo Sacchi Platina** (1421–81).

1533

Italian princess **Caterina de Medici** marries the Duc d'Orleans (later Henri II) of France and arrives in France with her Florentine chefs in tow. They collectively give rise to Florentine influences on the classic French fare, including simplicity, elegance, more delicate spicing, and the addition of new ingredients, most notably spinach.

1651

Pierre François de la Varenne (1615–78) publishes the first cookbook to give an insight into the new cooking practices of the French: *Le Cuisinier François*. It is important as the first book to record the advances of French cooking through the Renaissance era, and represents the turning point when medieval cuisine ends and haute cuisine begins. Notable is the use of mushrooms and truffles, imparting more delicate flavors, and the use of butter in pastries and sauces instead of oil. La Varenne may also have written *Le Pastissier François*, the first exhaustive French volume on pastry making.

1671

The Prince de Condé's cook **Vatel** (1635–71) commits suicide by falling on his sword when the fish he ordered for a banquet honoring Louis XIV fails to arrive. (The fish is delivered fifteen minutes later.)

1765

The first restaurant (or eating establishment serving restorative broths, known then as "restaurants") opens its doors in Paris, with proprietor **M. Boulanger** hanging out a sign: "Boulanger sells restoratives fit for the gods."

1774

Antoine Augustin Parmentier (1737–1813), an agronomist, begins his campaign to promote the potato, at the time regarded as food fit only for cattle or the destitute. A highlight of his efforts includes serving an entire meal—from appetizer and entree to bread and dessert—made from potatoes! Hard evidence that history repeats itself: The night of our first visit to Charlie Trotter's, the dinner menu featured a "potato study" of eight courses using potatoes.

1782

The first restaurant as we know it today, with regular hours and featuring a menu listing available dishes served at private tables, is opened by **Antoine Beauvilliers** (1754–1817) in Paris. Its very French name? The "Grande Taverne de Londres (London!)."

1789–99

The French Revolution spurs many French chefs, previously employees of the monarchy or nobility, to flee the country, and many go on to open their own restaurants elsewhere.

1796

Amelia Simmons publishes *American Cookery,* the first cookbook written by an American for an American audience, giving voice to an "American mode of cooking" and providing the first printed instructions for the cooking of colonial produce such as corn, and specialties such as Indian pudding and johnnycake. One hundred and ninety-three years later, another New Englander, Jasper White, will publish a cookbook with his own recipes for the same.

1800

Count von Rumford, a scientist born **Benjamin Thompson** (1753–1814) in his native United States, develops the stove. Prior to this, cooking was done over open hearths.

1801

When **Thomas Jefferson** (1743–1836), a gourmand and wine connoisseur, becomes president of the United States, he hires the first French White House chef, Chef Julien, and stresses the utmost freshness and quality in produce and other ingredients. His garden features broccoli, endive, peas, and tomatoes (still considered poisonous by some Americans of the day), as well as fresh herbs. He is credited with introducing ice cream, pasta, and new fruits and vegetables to America.

1803–14

The first restaurant guides are published, sparked by the growing popularity of restaurants in Paris.

1820s

Chefs begin to wear the now traditional large white hats known as toques (a white version of the black hats of Greek Orthodox priests).

1825

Seventy-year-old gastronomy philosopher **Jean Anthelm Brillat-Savarin** (1755-1826) anonymously self-publishes *Physiologie du Gout,* in which he challenges, "Tell me what you eat, and I shall tell you what you are."

1833

Marie-Antoine Carême (1783-1833), the most celebrated culinarian of his time, known as the "chef of kings, king of chefs," dies. In 1856, his *La Cuisine Classique* is posthumously published, thanks to the help of his student Plumery. As a young cook, Carême copies architectural drawings, upon which he bases his patisserie creations, which are greatly admired and gain him favor. Through his apprenticeships with the best chefs and pastry chefs of the time—in addition to assisting other leading chefs with special events—he develops in twelve years into their superior. Carême uses his sense of what is in vogue and whimsical to prepare both dramatically presented and elegant dishes, and his work as a philosopher, saucier, pastry chef, craftsman, and author of recipes raises him to the top of his profession. He is credited as the originator of grande cuisine.

Carême believed that "of the five fine arts, the fifth is architecture, whose main branch is confectionary." He saw the ideal cook as having a "discerning and sensitive palate, perfect and exquisite taste, a strong and industrious character; he should be skillful and hardworking and unite delicacy, order, and economy."

1846

Alexis Soyer (1810-58), a French cook, publishes his first book, *The Gastronomic Regenerator.* While contemporary chefs like Jimmy Schmidt and Wolfgang Puck later popularize the wearing of baseball caps (instead of the traditional toque) as headgear in certain American kitchens, Soyer is known for characteristic headgear of his own: his trademark red velvet cap. Even contemporary chefs who donate their time to charitable events on a regular basis would be impressed with Soyer's contributions to the less fortunate: In 1847, Soyer starts a large soup kitchen in London, which feeds thousands of people a day, and during the potato famine the following year, he does the same in Ireland, where he feeds over a million mouths in three months. In 1855, he publishes *A Shilling Cookery for the People,* establishing himself as the "Frugal

Gourmet" of his time. Long before the creation of American Spoon Foods by Larry Forgione and other contemporary businesses started by today's chefs to sell their prepared products to consumers for home use, Soyer markets his own bottled sauces (and so will Escoffier!).

Publicity is like the air we breathe; if we have it not, we die.

ALEXIS SOYER

1850s

Traditional French service, in which all the dishes of a meal are arranged artfully at the start of a meal, resulting in cold food, gives way to Russian service (service à la Russe), in which the courses are portioned in the kitchen and served on platters in sequence, resulting in hot food.

1863

Charles Ranhofer (1836–99) begins his thirty-four-year reign as chef of Delmonico's in New York City, becoming the first internationally renowned chef of an American restaurant. He publishes his cookbook, *The Epicurean,* in 1893.

1889

The opening of the Savoy Hotel in London in 1889, under the leadership of the lengendary hotelier **César Ritz** (1850–1918) and celebrated chef **Auguste Escoffier** (1846–1935) transfers grande cuisine, the culinary movement founded by Carême, from the upper-class household to the hotel deluxe kitchen. This marks the age when chefs went from working as servants to becoming entrepreneurs with their own restaurants.

1896

Fannie Merritt Farmer (1857–1915), principal of the Boston Cooking School, publishes *The Boston Cooking-School Cook Book,* which has since sold almost 4 million copies. Hardly slowed, though confined to a wheelchair, Farmer makes a major impact through her school, speeches, and writings on cooks' use of measured ingredients in recipes.

1900

The first *Guide Michelin* (restaurant guide) is published.

1902

Escoffier publishes the culinary classic *Le Guide Culinaire*. He establishes his place as one of the most influential forces on the foodservice industry by creating the French brigade system, which improves the organization and speed of kitchen operations. In contrast with the stereotypical

The Wisdom of Escoffier

"Society had little regard for the culinary profession. This should not have been so, since cuisine is a science and an art and he who devotes his talent to its service deserves full respect and consideration."

"Not for me is it to point out to what acts of plagiarism the chef must submit. A painter can sign his work, and a sculptor can carve his name upon his, but a dish—how can the chef, its inventor, place his mark upon it?"

"The life of a chef is no idle one, apart from the labor of actual preparation and serving of diverse dishes. His brain must ever be on the alert, and his inventive powers always acute. But there is actual and lasting satisfaction . . . in accomplishing the very best that can be accomplished."

The Wisdom of Fernand Point

"Every morning one must start from scratch, with nothing on the stoves. That is cuisine."

"As far as cuisine is concerned, one must read everything, see everything, hear everything, try everything, observe everything, in order to retain in the end, just a little bit."

"A good meal must be as harmonious as a symphony and as well constructed as a cathedral."

"A man is not a machine and a chef gets tired—but the clientele must never know it."

"The duty of a good cuisinier is to transmit to the next generation everything he has learned and experienced."

screaming that goes on in kitchens of his day (as well as before and since!), Escoffier's style as a chef is to walk away from a situation rather than lose his temper, and he forbids both profanity and brutality in his kitchen.

1924

Fernand Point (1897-1955), who inherited the restaurant his father had opened two years earlier in Vienne, France, renames it La Pyramide. Point is the first chef to leave the kitchen in order to speak with his customers in the dining room. He is considered a great teacher, and many leading contemporary chefs of France, including Paul Bocuse, Alain Chapel, the Troisgros brothers, François Bise, Louis Outhier, and Raymond Thuilier study with him.

1938

Prosper Montagné (1864–1948) publishes *Larousse Gastronomique*—to this day, a culinary bible—with the intention of providing a single reference for the history of gastronomy through the ages, and the spectrum of cooking in the twentieth century. The son of a hotelier, he worked his way up through the ranks of the kitchens of some of the most famous restaurants of his day.

1941

Gourmet begins publication, elevating food to a serious topic meriting its own journal of record.

1941

Henri Soulé (1903–66) opens Le Pavillon in New York City, the first United States restaurant dedicated to French haute cuisine, which later spawns other great French restaurants (including La Côte Basque, La Grenouille, Le Cygne, Le Périgord) and chefs (including Pierre Franey and Jacques Pépin).

1946

During the beginning of the rise of the television era, **James Beard** (1903–85), one of the most esteemed and respected food writers in America and considered the "dean" of American cooking, is tapped for his own cooking show on television because of his experience as both an actor and a cook.

1947

To a Queen's Taste, one of the first televised instructional cooking shows in the United States, featuring **Dione Lucas,** debuts.

1948

Two women, **Frances Roth** and **Katharine Angell,** open the New Haven (CT) Restaurant Institute, which in 1951 becomes known as The Culinary Institute of America (CIA), the first serious cooking school in the country.

1957

Craig Claiborne is named food editor at *The New York Times,* subsequently raising restaurant reviewing from a form of promotional advertising to honest critique.

The 1960s

With new discoveries in science and technology came change, resulting in the advent of fast food, the decline of regional distinctions in food, and the homogenization of the American palate. The 1960s helped usher in a new emphasis on healthy, natural, and organic foods. As more Americans traveled abroad, and as the United States' own ethnic population composition began to shift, there came greater emphasis on the foods and cuisines of other countries. Still, interest in French food was reinvigorated as the "nouvelle cuisine" movement of the young French chefs (including Paul Bocuse and his "band" of chefs) made headlines. Julia Child's presence on TV, with her widely watched series *The French Chef,* exposed Americans to her version of this popular foreign cuisine.

When I started out in the early 1960s, there were no celebrity chefs. Escoffier and Brillat-Savarin had passed away long ago. Our heroes were our instructors.

MARCEL DESAULINIERS

The 1960s decline of classic cuisine was the result of it having become slowly apparent that the complicated concoctions involving technique built upon technique (Beef Wellington, souffléd crepes topped with egg custard, en croute preparations of all sorts) were too expensive to produce and also too heavy for the modern human machine with its worry about a youthful and slim appearance.

MADELEINE KAMMAN

1961

First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy nearly single-handedly revamps White House dining by hiring French-born chef **René Verdon.**

Julia Child, with co-authors Simone Beck and Louisette Bertholle, publishes her first book, *Mastering the Art of French Cooking,* still cited as an important reference to today's chef.

1963

The French Chef, hosted by Julia Child, makes its television debut.

1969

Fernand Point: Ma Gastronomie is published posthumously.

The 1970s

In the 1970s when Jasper White attended The Culinary Institute of America, "the school wasn't anything like it is today, back then. It was attracting a different crowd, more working-class kids who really wanted to become chefs because they thought it would be a great way to make a living. There was no glamour. There were no famous chefs in America in 1975. Not one."

The American restaurant scene was forever changed, however, in 1971 when Alice Waters opened her Berkeley, CA, restaurant Chez Panisse, which emphasized seasonality and freshness in ingredients whose natural taste became the star on the plate. In the years that followed, when Waters received national acclaim, she inspired countless American chefs to follow suit, while attracting a new breed of thoughtful, well-educated men and, notably, women into her kitchen and into the profession. The number of leading American chefs who have worked at Chez Panisse is a testimony to its–and Waters's–influence (see page 104).

The news media responded to the newly burgeoning restaurant scene by hiring food critics and covering food more extensively, spurred on by competition from the new food magazines such as *Bon Appétit* and *Food & Wine,* which chronicled the new generation of young American chefs.

André Soltner recalls, "Suddenly, when the star chefs appeared in magazines, the level of respect for chefs became much, much higher. Young Americans were interested because suddenly the chefs were in the limelight. Before, which American wanted to become a cook? But suddenly, they started to go to

The 1970s saw an explosion of nouvelle cuisine, but is that cuisine really completely new? Some of it–the use of exotic ingredients and spices, the shorter cooking times for better texture and nutrition, for example–is new; some is not and is definitely borrowed from the font of ancient cooking. For example, the sauces based on reduction echo the food of Apicius and all the women who for centuries thickened by reduction because they had to keep flour to make bread. It reflects the shrinking of our world through the interpenetrations of diverse cultures, thanks to air travel.

MADELEINE KAMMAN

school and became chefs. I remember the change—the publicity, the people like Bocuse and a few others who were suddenly on the cover of *Newsweek*. Customers—doctors and lawyers—said to me, 'My son wants to become a chef, he goes to The Culinary Institute of America.' Some went to France to train, some came to our restaurant, some went to La Côte Basque, La Grenouille . . . and some became very good. The level of chefs in America changed dramatically."

This decade is also when American cooking started coming into its own, as American chefs and customers rediscovered pride in the cuisine and ingredients of their own country and its regions.

1971

Alice Waters opens Chez Panisse in Berkeley, CA.

Madeleine Kamman publishes *The Making of a Cook*, the first cookbook in the United States to attempt to explain cooking with why's instead of only how's. It is still cited by contemporary chefs as an important reference.

1972

Leslie Revsin is the first woman chef to take the helm of a major hotel kitchen when she is named chef of the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City, making the headlines of Manhattan newspapers. **Calvin Trillin** writes in *Playboy*, only half tongue-in-cheek, that "the best restaurants . . . are in Kansas City," sparking new attention to and pride in hometown cuisines across the country.

The Culinary Institute of America opens in its Hyde Park, NY, location.

1973

Madeleine Kamman opens Chez la Mère Madeleine at Modern Gourmet in Newton Centre, Massachusetts—one of the first, if not the first, French nouvelle cuisine restaurants in the United States. French chef Paul Bocuse proclaims it "the greatest in the U.S.A."

1975

French chef **Paul Bocuse** is named to the Legion d'Honneur by President Giscard d'Estaing—the first chef to be so honored. Six months later, he is featured on the cover of *Newsweek* for an article entitled "Food: The New Wave."

Every morning I go to the market and stroll among the displays. Sometimes I do not even know what dish I will make for the noon meal. It is the market that decides. This, I think, is what makes good cooking.

PAUL BOCUSE

The more one travels, the more one realizes that other cooks are not standing still; they are progressing. Today anyone who wants to progress must go around the world. Each time that I go to another country, I come back with many ideas.

PAUL BOCUSE

1976

Jeremiah Tower, then of Chez Panisse, is inspired by *The Epicurean—A Franco-American Culinary Encyclopedia*, and features the first California menu at the restaurant, with dishes ranging from "Monterey Bay Prawns" to "Walnuts, Almonds, and Mountain Pears from the San Francisco Farmers' Market."

1977

Jane and Michael Stern write the first edition of *Roadfood*, celebrating old-fashioned American restaurants.

1979

Paul Prudhomme opens K-Paul's in New Orleans' French Quarter, launching the national craze for Cajun food and "blackened" fish.

I must include Larry Forgione with such people as Alice Waters, Jeremiah Tower, Mark Miller, and a few other brilliant young chefs who are making the effort to create a cuisine that is distinctly American and capable of rivaling any other in the Western world.

JAMES BEARD

Selected American Restaurant Openings: 1960–1994

Year	Chef	Restaurant	Location
1961	André Soltner	Lutèce	New York City
1970	Georges Perrier	Le Bec-Fin	Philadelphia
1971	Alice Waters	Chez Panisse	Berkeley, CA
1973	Jean Banchet	Le Français	Wheeling, IL
1978	Patrick O'Connell	The Inn at Little Washington	Washington, VA
1979	Jean-Louis Palladin	Jean-Louis at the Watergate Hotel	Washington, DC
	Paul Prudhomme	K-Paul's	New Orleans
	Barry Wine	The Quilted Giraffe	New York City
1980	George Germon and Johanne Killeen	Al Forno	Providence, RI
	Elizabeth Terry	Elizabeth on 37th	Savannah, GA
	Wolfgang Puck	Spago	Los Angeles
1983	Larry Forgione	An American Place	New York City
	Cindy Pawlcyn	Mustards Grill	Napa Valley, CA
	Jasper White	Jasper's	Boston
	Janos Wilder	Janos	Tucson
1984	Joyce Goldstein	Square One	San Francisco
	Anne Rosenzweig	Arcadia	New York City
	Jeremiah Tower	Stars	San Francisco
1985	Jimmy Schmidt	The Rattlesnake Club	Denver
	Chris Schlesinger	East Coast Grill	Cambridge, MA
	Allen Susser	Chef Allen's	Miami
	Barbara Tropp	China Moon Cafe	San Francisco

Year	Chef	Restaurant	Location
1987	Rick Bayless	Frontera Grill	Chicago
	Susanna Foo	Susanna Foo	Philadelphia
	Gordon Hamersley	Hamersley's Bistro	Boston
	Zarela Martinez	Zarela	New York City
	Nobu Matsuhisa	Matsuhisa	Los Angeles
	Mark Miller	Coyote Cafe	Santa Fe, NM
	Michel Richard	Citrus	Los Angeles
	Charlie Trotter	Charlie Trotter's	Chicago
	Jimmy Schmidt	The Rattlesnake Club	Detroit
1989	Todd English	Olives	Boston
	Bradley Ogden	Lark Creek Inn	Larkspur, CA
	Lydia Shire	Biba	Boston
	Nancy Silverton and Mark Peel	Campanile	Los Angeles
1990	Emeril Lagasse	Emeril's	New Orleans
	Susan Spicer	Bayona	New Orleans
	Jean-Georges Vongerichten	Jo Jo	New York City
1992	Rick Bayless	Topolobampo	Chicago
1993	Daniel Boulud	Daniel	New York City
1994	Nobu Matsuhisa	Nobu	New York City

The 1980s

In the 1980s, the French cuisine craze hit America full force, spurred by chefs like Jean Banchet, founder of Le Français (Chicago); Jean-Louis Palladin of Jean Louis at the Watergate (Washington, DC); and Georges Perrier of Le Bec-Fin (Philadelphia). There was a melding of French technique and American ingredients that helped give rise to the California cuisine movement pioneered by Alice Waters, Jeremiah Tower, Mark Miller, and Wolfgang Puck. Puck is credited with developing a prototype of a successful restaurant through opening Spago in Los Angeles in 1982, with its emphasis on stylish design, informal service, and memorable food. The dining-out phenomenon of the 1980s created celebrity chef groupies, who came to be known as "foodies," as well as the immensely popular *Zagat Surveys* published nationally by Tim and Nina Zagat.

Right around the 1980s, there was a major change where everybody got back to their roots. Across the country—from New Orleans to California people started accepting their grandmother's meatloaf as a meaningful food experience, and America started to define its own standards for what a dining experience was.

CHRIS SCHLESINGER

The 1990s

The 1990s generated creative responses to such trends as growing interest both in healthier food and in melding the cuisines of multiple cultures. Jean-Georges Vongerichten, with the publication of his cookbook *Simple Cuisine: The Easy, New Approach to Four-Star Cooking,* illustrated the strides he'd been making at the four-star Manhattan restaurant Lafayette to provide maximum flavor with minimum fats through an array of juices, flavored oils, and infusions—techniques going back to the Egyptians.

Norman Van Aken is credited with coining the term "fusion cuisine," referring to a harmonious combination of foods of various origins, popularized at restaurants ranging from Lydia Shire's restaurant Biba (Boston) to Susan Feniger and Mary Sue Milliken's City Restaurant (Los Angeles). The era of "political correctness" has pushed chefs to participate in a wide range of charitable events, many benefiting such organizations as Meals on Wheels, City Harvest, and Share Our Strength, which also help keep chefs and food in the media spotlight.

Letter to President Clinton, on Behalf of Chefs' Coalition for Chefs Helping to Enhance Food Safety

December 8, 1992

Dear President-elect Clinton:

We, chefs from across the country, believe that good food, pure and wholesome, should be not just a privilege for the few, but a right for everyone. Good food nourishes not just the body, but the entire community. It increases our awareness of the sources of life and of our responsibility to preserve all life-sustaining resources. Chefs know this, farmers know this, and with your leadership, the whole nation can be reminded of it. Good food is about seasonality, ripeness, and simplicity. Where there is good food–food that is delicious, wholesome, and responsibly produced–good health readily follows. The broader health of our nation is in peril. By your example at the White House, our hopes for the restoration of the nation's health will be nourished.

By promoting the value of organically grown fruits and vegetables, your table would reaffirm Thomas Jefferson's ideas of a nation of small farmers–caring custodians of the land whose work would greatly benefit from your endorsement. Similarly, a discriminating quest for fish and meat of quality would herald the need to care for our waters, pastures, and the areas surrounding them.

We urge you to select a White House chef who embraces this philosophy. The President's own table would then be a singular expression of long-absent values. Set with honesty and integrity, it would speak profoundly to the American people.

The coalition would welcome any opportunity to work with your office on this appointment and the important issues it addresses.

Respectfully,
Alice Waters for the Chefs' Coalition

President Clinton's White House also added high visibility to the American food movement, as Alice Waters and others lobbied for an end to French menus with French ingredients served with French wines (the menus written, of course, in French) at White House state dinners. In a letter to the President, Waters and dozens of other cosigning chefs urged him to appoint a White House chef who would promote American cooking, emphasizing local ingredients and organic food. Even celebrated French chef

Larry Forgione on American Food

I think absolutely, without any stretch of the imagination, the chef in the White House should be American. I think his influence or training should be American food. His fondness should be for American food. His knowledge should be of American food. And I think when dignitaries and heads of state come to this country, they should only be served American food. I think it has been absurd over the years. The reason that I got involved and agreed to continue to be involved with the White House is that it's about time the head of our country serves the cuisine of our country. When our head of state or dignitaries travel to different countries, and they go to Germany, they get German food. If they go to Japan, they get Japanese food. I mean, dignitaries from other countries come to this country and get what? French food? It doesn't make any sense. It's like the White House is years behind what's going on. Again, this isn't a put-down of French chefs or French food–it's just out of place. It shouldn't be there.

Those two stories in the *New York Times* [on Forgione's participation in the Clinton White House's Kitchen Cabinet of American chefs] got more of a reaction than anything I've ever done in my life. I was called by every television station and interviewed by media from every European country. It was interesting that the rest of the world didn't know that we had American cuisine.

I always turn around and say, "You define French cooking to me, and I'll tell you what American cooking is." What's French cooking? A series of dishes that have French names? It's so hard to describe. What is Japanese cuisine? After being in Japan last summer, I realized that what I thought was Japanese food was a very small portion of what is Japanese food. So it's one of those things that we'd have to accept–that our country is made up of many, many influences, from almost every country in the world. When those settlers arrived in the Americas, they brought with them little parts of their country and heritage, maybe seeds of some of their favorite things, and were met by natives or the people there before them who had left a little bit of their country there.

Paul Bocuse admitted that it was "ridiculous" for the White House not to have an American chef. In response, First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton named her "Kitchen Cabinet" of American chef-advisors, including Larry Forgione of An American Place (NYC), Anne Rosenzweig of Arcadia (NYC), and John Snedden of Rocklands–Washington's Barbeque and Grilling Company (DC) before the Clinton administration's first official dinner. In March 1994, French-born White House executive chef Pierre Chambrin's

> You look at New England and you say, "What's New England cooking?" Well, the Portuguese seaports that cook food that is sort of Portuguese-Italian is as much New England cooking as anything else. Portuguese seafood stew from Port Judith in Rhode Island is as much New England cooking as a clam chowder. There is the influence of English cuisine, which is boiled dinners, creamed stews, and then you have the influence of the Portuguese settlers. You obviously have the influence of Native Americans. You have the influence of the French settling the area through Canada. You even have the influence of the Tropics, because of the trade triangle that existed. The Boston port would receive rum and spices from the East or West Indies. That's why when you go through old historic cookbooks, you'll find out that powdered ginger is an ingredient in old, old recipes for codcakes. The dish that we do at An American Place—one of our most popular desserts—is called the Banana Betty. That's a combination of two very old New England desserts that incorporates gingersnaps and bananas and rum. Well, all those things came up on the trade ships. You find pineapple in a lot of old-fashioned dishes, like pineapple upside-down cake. That's New England. Where did it come from? The pineapples came from the coast, the brown sugar and rum from the Islands.
>
> If you look at the old Junior League cookbooks—well, the Junior League of Richmond, Virginia, could only get the ingredients that were in Richmond, Virginia. Nobody would ever think that curry has anything to do with American cooking. Curry is a very intricate part of Georgia, because Savannah was the port to which the ships that came from the Indies would return. And a dish called "Country Captain Chicken" is a classic dish from Savannah. When the sailors would bring back their pouches of curry powder, their wives would prepare for them this curried chicken dish upon their arrival back in port. So here we have chicken curry during the 1800s in America. So is that part of American cuisine? Or does the [imported] curry not make it American cuisine?

resignation was accepted. Less than two months later, California-born Walter Scheib, a graduate of The Culinary Institute of America and executive chef of The Greenbrier, had taken over the position.

The influence of leading chefs cannot be underestimated. While they themselves can personally feed only a tiny fraction of the United States population, they train and inspire countless other chefs and cooks who spread their lessons through their own cooking across the country and around the world. Some chefs have branched out into their own business ventures—such as Wolfgang Puck's (frozen) Spago Original California Pizza and Rick Bayless's Frontera salsas to make their products available to a wider audience. In a growing trend, major food and foodservice corporations, from American Airlines to Kraft General Foods, consult with leading chefs on improving and expanding their own offerings. In addition, the chefs' writing and political activism touch people who might not ever have eaten their food.

A Profession Growing by Leaps and Bounds

The restaurant industry employs more than 6 million people, making it the country's largest retail employer. Chefs, cooks, and other kitchen workers hold about 3 million jobs in the United States. Job openings are expected to be strong, reaching a projected total of 13 million people, through 2010. Unlike many industries, the restaurant industry has had steady growth for more than twenty years—with 2001 posting a 7½ percent growth rate. The aging population is creating more demand for sit-down restaurants, which in turn is leading to a need for more qualified cooks. "Culinary professionals are very fortunate, because there are still plenty of good and interesting jobs out there," says Patrick O'Connell of The Inn at Little Washington.

While workers under twenty-five have traditionally filled a significant proportion of these jobs, the pool of young workers is expected to continue shrinking. Thus, older career-changers will likely help fill the gap. For example, upward of 45 percent of the students at the California Culinary Academy come from nonfoodservice backgrounds, and their average age is twenty-eight. "We are seeing a lot of career changing taking place that was not a legitimate option ten years ago," O'Connell observes. "Now that there is some glamour and a certain respectability attached to the culinary field, people who have been locked into mundane jobs dream about cooking at a restaurant or having a bakery."

Cuisines of the World Find Their Way to the United States

The following list indicates the decade each type of cuisine first received its own heading in the *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature,* along with characteristic (not comprehensive!) ingredients and/or flavor combinations represented in the recipes included. All names of the types of cuisine are indicated as originally published, however politically incorrect or inaccurate they may be now–further underscoring the fact that times change!

Decade	Type of Cuisine	Characteristic Ingredients
1920s	Chinese	garlic, ginger, mushrooms, rice, rice wine, scallion, soy sauce
	French	butter, cheese, cream, eggs, garlic, herbs, olive oil, stock, wine
	Italian	basil, garlic, olive oil, oregano, red wine vinegar, rosemary, tomato (Italian cuisine is influenced by Greek, which is influenced by Oriental cuisine)
	Japanese	garlic, ginger, rice, sake, scallion, sesame oil, soy sauce, sugar
	Jewish	chicken fat, onion
	Mexican	chile, chocolate, cilantro, corn, garlic, lime, rice, scallion, tomato (Mexican cuisine is influenced by Indian and Spanish cuisines)
1930s	Armenian	parsley, yogurt
	Czechoslovak	caraway seeds, sour cream
	Danish	butter, chives, cream, dill, potatoes, tarragon
	English	bacon, dill, mustard, oats, potatoes, Worcestershire (British cuisine is influenced by medieval cuisine)
	Finnish	berries, game (e.g. reindeer), milk, mushrooms
	French-Canadian	maple, salmon, seafood, wild game, wild rice
	German	caraway seeds, dill, mustard, vinegar
	Hungarian	caraway seeds, dill, onion, paprika, sour cream (Hungarian cuisine is influenced by ancient Magyar nomad origins)
	Norwegian	potatoes, smoked and cured fish, sour cream
	Russian	beets, cabbage, dill, mushrooms, potatoes, sour cream
	Swedish	dill, gravlax, herring, lingonberries, potatoes

Decade	Type of Cuisine	Characteristic Ingredients
	Swiss	charcuterie (bacon, meats, sausages; Swiss cuisine is influenced by French, German, Austrian, and Italian cuisines)
1940s	Brazilian	beans, chile, lime, rice
	Greek	cinnamon, garlic, goat cheeses, lemon, mint, olive oil, oregano, tomato
	Hawaiian	coconut, pineapple, sugar
	Irish	cabbage, oats, oysters, potatoes, rye
	Latin American	chile, corn, garlic, plantains, potatoes, red beans, rice
1950s	Korean	brown sugar, chile, sesame, soy sauce
1960s	Argentinian	beef, corn, peppers
	Austrian	cream cheeses, onion, paprika, poppy seeds (Austrian cuisine is influenced by German, Italian, and Hungarian cuisines)
	Basque	garlic, peppers, tomatoes
	Chilean	meat, onions, pimentos, seafood
	Dutch	fish, seafood (Dutch cuisine is influenced by Indonesian cuisine)
	East Indian	aromatics, coconut, coriander, curry, mint, saffron, turmeric
	Middle Eastern	cinnamon, dill, garlic, lemon, mint, olive oil, parsley, tomato, yogurt
	Polish	dill, mushrooms, potatoes, sour cream
	Portuguese	cabbage, chile, chorizo, cod, eggs, garlic, olive oil, potato, rice
	Scottish	fish, oats, potatoes
	South Seas	coconut, ginger, red curry
	Spanish	garlic, nuts, olive oil, onion, seafood, sweet peppers, tomato
	Thai	basil, chile, cilantro, coconut, curry, fish sauce, garlic, mint, peanut, sugar (Thai cuisine is influenced by Chinese and Indian cuisines)
	Ukranian	dill, sour cream
1970s	Belgian	beer, mussels, potatoes
	Jamaican	beans, fish, jerk (herbs, peppers, spices)

Decade	Type of Cuisine	Characteristic Ingredients
	Lebanese	bulgar, sesame oil (Lebanese cuisine is influenced by European, Arabian, and Oriental cuisines)
	Moroccan	cinnamon, coriander, cumin, dried lemon, fruit, ginger, onion, saffron, tomato
	North African	cumin, garlic, mint (North African cuisine is influenced by imperial Roman, Turkish, and Jewish cuisines)
	Pakistani	fruit, pulses, rice, spices
	Puerto Rican	ginger, lime, plantains
	Turkish	allspice, bulgar, lemon, olive oil, onion, parsley, walnuts, yogurt (Turkish cuisine is influenced by Muslim, Jewish, Orthodox, and Christian cuisines)
1980s	African	chile, peanut, tomato
	Black	cornmeal, greens, pork (bacon, chitterlings, ham, ribs)
	Cajun	chile, game, seafood, strong seasonings, tomato
	Caribbean	chile, cinnamon, jerk seasoning, nutmeg, okra, rum, seafood
	Creole	alcohol, banana, chile, okra, pineapple, rum, seafood, spices, tomato (Creole cuisine is influenced by African, Caribbean, French, Hindu, and Italian cuisines)
	Dominican	chile, chorizo, coconut, corn, meats
	Egyptian	fruit, pine nuts, turmeric
	Haitian	red pepper flakes, cumin
	Indian (U.S.)	beans, corn, peppers
	Indonesian	brown sugar, chile, curry, lemongrass, lime, peanut, rice, soy sauce (Indonesian cuisine is influenced by Indian and Chinese cuisines)
	Israeli	carbohydrates (baked goods, potatoes, etc.)
	Mediterranean	anchovy, garlic, olive oil, parsley, tomato
	Peruvian	chile, corn, lime, onion, tomato
	Philippine	garlic, soy sauce, vinegar

Decade	Type of Cuisine	Characteristic Ingredients
1990s	Australian	fish and shellfish, meat, tropical fruits and vegetables (Australian cuisine is influenced by British and Dutch cuisines)
	Balinese	banana and banana leaf, chile, lemongrass, palm sugar, turmeric
	Colombian	coconut, corn, onion, pimento, tomato
	Corsican	broccio cheese, citrus fruits, olives, tomato
	Cuban	black bean, cumin, garlic, lime, bitter orange, plantain, pork, pineapple, rice, yuca
	Iranian	almonds, aromatic spices and herbs, rice, saffron, yogurt
	Jordanian	marjoram, oregano, peanuts
	Laotian	basil, chile, eggplant, freshwater fish, ginger, lime, mint, rice
	New Zealand	apples, kiwi, lamb, mussels, pears, venison, wine
	Romanian	garlic, root vegetables, tomato
	Singaporean	chile, cinnamon, coconut, onion, scallion, turmeric
	Syrian	pine nuts, pistachios, pomegranate, red pepper paste
	Tex-Mex	beans, cheese, cilantro, rice
	Venezuelan	banana, beef, corn, red beans, rice
	Vietnamese	basil, chile, cilantro, fish sauce, garlic, ginger, lemon, lime, mint
Since 2000	Cambodian	basil, chile, citrus, eggplant, fish, fish sauce, ginger, lemongrass, rice
	Catalonian	garlic, nuts, orange, parika, rice, shellfish, saffron
	Ethiopian	allspice, beef, chicken, chile, cinnamon, garlic, ginger, honey, lentils, onion, turmeric
	Georgian	beets, cilantro, citrus, dill, dill pickles, garlic, herring, pickled foods, red beans, walnuts
	Malaysian	cardamom, chile, coconut, cumin, fish, ginger, lemongrass, lime, shrimp paste, tamarind
	Polynesian	banana, coconut, ginger, sweet potato, taro
	Serbian	sweet paprika, potatoes, veal

The New Millennium (2000 and Beyond)

Today, American palates have been honed, resulting in an enthusiastic market of diners patronizing restaurants who can recognize, and demand, the best ingredients and cooking—and who are passionate in their enjoyment of food and wine. "People talk about hitting America's top ten or twenty restaurants, as if they're collecting them," observes Patrick O'Connell. "This never happened before. People are developing American reference points, the way they used to try to hit all the Michelin three-stars in France."

The best American restaurants are considered world class, and the New American cuisine that is emerging through the melding of the best ingredients and techniques from throughout the world is influencing and even exciting chefs around the globe. In 2002, the Relais Gourmand organization had a celebration of American cuisine in Paris, at the suggestion of Patrick O'Connell of The Inn at Little Washington. Twelve American chefs were matched with Michelin three-star chefs and created a collaborative meal, marking the first time that American chefs had cooked in these restaurants.

The torch has been passed. Restaurants in the rest of the world are not evolving as rapidly, while you'll find tremendous vitality, energy, and movement in America today.

PATRICK O'CONNELL

According to Daniel Boulud, a native of France, "Many American chefs are definitely superior—in their cooking and in promoting themselves." He adds, "When many French chefs come to America, they get a real kick in the butt."

Baked Goat Cheese with Garden Salad

ALICE WATERS, Chez Panisse, Berkeley, CA

"Salad is something that I've been obsessed with since I encountered the classic mesclun mix when I visited a friend in Nice twenty-five years ago. I love all of the different tastes, textures, and colors that come together in this salad. We've had goat cheese with garden salad on the menu in the Café ever since it began fifteen years ago, and some people come here just to have it. It's adaptable enough to change with the seasons and is a great companion to serve with fresh figs, olives, walnuts, pears, and many other ingredients. I prefer it after a meal, although many people use it as a starter."

Three to four 2½–inch-diameter rounds of fresh goat cheese, each about ½ inch thick

½ cup olive oil

3 to 4 sprigs fresh thyme

1 bay leaf, crumbled

2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

Dash red wine vinegar

Salt and pepper to taste

1 cup fine dry bread crumbs (toast the bread first, then grind)

About 4 handfuls garden lettuces (rocket, lamb's lettuce, small oak leaf and red leaf lettuces, chervil)

Marinate the goat cheese rounds in ¼ cup of the olive oil with the thyme and bay leaf for a day.

Prepare the vinaigrette by whisking the remaining ¼ cup of olive oil into the vinegars until the vinaigrette is balanced, and season with salt and pepper. Wash and dry the lettuces.

To bake the goat cheese, take the rounds out of the olive oil marinade and dip them in the bread crumbs. Put the cheese on a lightly oiled baking dish and bake in a preheated 450°F oven for 4 to 5 minutes, until the cheese is lightly bubbling and golden brown.

Meanwhile, toss the lettuces with enough vinaigrette to lightly coat them and arrange on round salad plates. Place the cheese in the centers of the plates with the browner side up.

Serves 4

Emeril's Portuguese Kale Soup

EMERIL LAGASSE, Emeril's and NOLA, New Orleans, LA

"When I think of my childhood in Fall River, Massachusetts, I remember a happy blur of Portuguese festivals, wonderful celebrations of music, dance, and food from the old country. The feast was known as *buon fester,* or 'good festival,' and the dish that stands out in my memory from the festivals is the *suppische kaldene,* or kale soup. This unusual soup was prepared many

ways, often with chorizo, split peas, and mint accompanying the base of kale, potatoes, and stock. When I became chef at Commander's Palace, I made kale soup for the staff, substituting local andouille sausage for the Portuguese chorizo. The response was so enthusiastic, I began to run kale soup as a special on the menu in the spring and fall when the kale is in season in Louisiana. There's even a sweet little Portuguese song about *suppische kaldene,* but I'll spare you."

2 tablespoons olive oil

3 cups chorizo, sliced in ½-inch rounds

1 cup chopped onions

2 tablespoons minced fresh garlic

¼ cup coarsely chopped fresh parsley

3 cups diced peeled potatoes (about 2 large), cut in ¼-inch dice

4 quarts chicken stock

6 cups kale, rinsed, stemmed, and leaves torn into pieces

2 bay leaves

¼ teaspoon dried thyme leaves

1½ teaspoons salt

¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes

5 turns fresh ground black pepper

½ cup chopped fresh mint, optional

Heat the oil in a large pot over high heat. When the oil is hot, add the chorizo and the onions and sauté, stirring once or twice, about 2 minutes. Add the garlic, parsley, and potatoes and cook, stirring occasionally, about 2 minutes.

Add the stock and kale and bring to a boil. Stir in the bay leaves, thyme, salt, red pepper, and black pepper. Reduce the heat to medium and simmer until the potatoes are fork-tender, about 30 minutes. Remove from the heat and skim the fat from the top.

To serve, pour about 1¼ cups of the soup in each bowl and stir in ½ teaspoon of the mint, allowing it to infuse for a minute or two. Serve with a crusty Portuguese or French bread.

Serves 8

Spinach-Wrapped Sea Urchin Roe in Spicy Hollandaise

NOBU MATSUHISA, Matsuhisa, Los Angeles, CA, and Aspen, CO; Nobu, New York, NY

"Fifteen years ago, before the sushi boom, most Americans were hesitant to eat raw sea urchin. Therefore, I wanted them to open up their eyes and expand their palates to my favorite seafood. If I made the appearance enticing and heated the sea urchin in a way that did not ruin its delicate taste and texture, then I was confident in having my American customers at least take a bite. Once they took a bite, the rest was automatic, and eventually they were eating it raw."

Spinach balls

3 ounces sea urchin roe

1 shiitake mushroom, finely diced

6 large pieces spinach leaves

1 fresh asparagus stalk, cut in half

Sauce

1 egg yolk

2 tablespoons melted butter

1 teaspoon lemon juice

1 tablespoon tobanjan (red chile paste)

2 tablespoons beluga caviar or salmon eggs

Preheat the oven to 450°F. To prepare the spinach balls, mix the sea urchin roe and mushroom together. Blanch the spinach in boiling water for 2 to 3 seconds, then rinse in cold water. Spread the spinach leaves out and fill with the roe mixture, then wrap the leaves around the mixture to form a ball. Bake for 10 minutes.

To prepare the sauce, beat the egg yolk until smooth; add the butter and continue beating until blended. Add the lemon juice and tobanjan.

To serve, cut the spinach ball in half and place in the center of a plate. Top each half with a generous portion of the caviar or salmon eggs. Pour sauce around the halves to cover the bottom of the plate. Garnish with asparagus.

Serves 1