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INDUSTRY NEWS



American Culinary Federation
Chefs and Culinary
Professionals of Chicagoland

ACF Chefs and Culinary
Professionals of Chicagoland,
founded in 2003, is one of the
fastest-growing chapters of the
American Culinary
Federation (ACF). Click [here](#)
for more information.

Enjoy the Monotony

It has been said many times that the "devil is in the details." The success of anything can be destroyed if the details are lost or not performed correctly. Many argue that not focusing on details prevents you from achieving perfection. Whatever you do, mastering the little mundane tasks can be the difference defining your own personal perfection. Whatever you think perfect is, it has to be learned over time and with lots of similar experiences. This is where the monotony sets in!

As a chef and weekend BBQ master, I know that it is in the monotony of repetition of a single task over and over that you learn your ideas, your palate and the realization of whatever level of culinary perfection you desire. You can't just think that if you smoke a brisket once, you know how to properly tend a fire, season and slice! I have spent many years in the kitchen and learned many skills from the simple to the very complex. These experiences have defined who I have become and how I think about food. Looking back, the experiences that have influenced me the most have been those around repetitive, mundane prep. Prep work is generally delegated to the apprentices, interns and more than likely many a dishwasher who has time on his hands between services. This was the tradition of the classical kitchen. You learned through monotonous tasks. Remember-a sushi chef in Japan may spend three years just cooking rice. Don't expect to hit a golf ball straight every time unless you hit countless buckets at the range!

If you asked me in my early days if I enjoyed prepping cases of asparagus, cleaning bags of scallops and hand-peeling and seeding grapes, I would have said a profanity-laden NO! Today is a different story. As you make your way up the ladder of leadership, you slowly distance yourself from the tasks that got you where you are. We became leaders in our industries not necessarily because we have great looks or can tell a great story of our lives. I believe that we get where we are because we can still perform those mundane tasks better than those around us. Our craftsmanship will always make us better than the next.

Recently, I had the tremendous opportunity to relive my culinary youth by prepping and fileting over 100 Dover soles for an event. It brought me back to the rhythms of the cutting board and a knife. When you have a gorgeous ingredient such as Dover sole, you respect it, and its preparation must be handled with a commitment to perfection. I loved every minute of the process. It may sound weird, but there are days I am happy peeling cases of asparagus. (Yes, asparagus needs to be peeled!) I challenge you to find those opportunities. Don't open a can of artichokes-buy fresh ones and lose yourself in the process of shaping a fresh artichoke where the bottom is round

Trib Food

Recipes, reviews and resources for everything food and dining in the Chicago area. [Check out](#) what's happening this week.



Check out this great magazine, [Four](#).



Eater is the source for people who care about dining and drinking in the nation's most important food cities, like Chicago. A favorite of industry pros and amateurs alike, Eater has an uncanny knack for finding out what's opening where, who's serving what, and how it's all going down. Find out [what's new](#) in Chicago.



The Cicerone Certification Program certifies and educates beer professionals in order to elevate the beer experience for

and smooth, the stem is intact and the flesh is bright from rubbing every single one with lemon. Take the time to poach every one correctly in a blanc. The results are awesome. Sometimes you need to say screw the labor cost and the mundane-make it an experience for you and your team. I spent many a night listening to music and turning potatoes. I ate lots of mashed potatoes. Those late-night potatoes never made it to a customer's plate, but when they did in the restaurant, they represented a dedication to the craft. It doesn't matter if your guests don't see it. You need to believe that with every plate of food you make, you paid attention to the mundane tasks that make the difference. This has been a recipe for success for many a chef!

AUTHOR'S NOTE: Sometimes you will screw something up, but there will always be another day. If you are lucky, there will be a cold beverage in the fridge to make you smile and know that you are keeping the traditions alive for the next generation by enjoying the monotony.

- Chef John Reed, CEC, CCA

RECIPE

A Blanc for Artichokes



Ingredients:

- 1 Qt Water
- 1 Tbsp AP Flour
- 2 Tbsp Lemon Juice
- ½ Tsp Salt
- 1 Onion Studded with 2 Cloves
- 2 Thyme Sprigs
- 2 Bay Leaves
- 6 to 8 Parsley Stems
- 10 Black Peppercorns

Directions:

1. Bring the water, flour, salt and lemon to a boil.
2. Add the remaining ingredients when you add the artichokes or other items to be cooked. Cover with paper to keep the items submerged in the blanc.

BEER

Something to Drink with an Artichoke

Artichokes have a bitter and slightly sweet taste, and when cooked with acidity, can kill a wine choice unless highly acidic. However, there is always a beer to the rescue.

Try a "malty" Belgian-style pale ale that has both bitterness and some "funky" notes from the yeast.

Orval



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