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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.

Ball and Chain

While walking back from the gym the other day, I was inspired by the colors of the trees, the low light and the feeling of the late autumn dusk. I began to think about the season-and of course the food I wanted to cook. I was interrupted by another coffee pitch on my music service (I am too cheap to pay for the commercial-free service). It was about everyone's favorite pumpkin spiced this or that and other contrived flavors to make you feel in the season. I generally let these sorts of things pass me by until the next song comes on. However, the next song was "Ball and Chain," released in 1990 by Social Distortion, an American punk band from Southern California. I have a certain base playlist deeply rooted in late '70s British punk. The line that got me thinking was "There's got to be another way...take away this ball and chain." It started me thinking about what my ball and chain is. I know what these coffee flavorists and marketing companies have as theirs-trends and consumer information that pumpkin spiced lattes are America's favorite and we all need to run out and pay \$5 for one right now. Their ball and chain is flavor trends and market research, not necessarily quality. They believe because it sells everyone likes it and we all need to like it. We all know what opinion polls can be like!

We all have things that hold us back and keep us in a certain safety zone that we can get stuck in; we don't want to believe that there are other great things to taste. I have in the past called this the "vanilla" effect. In cooking, it can be learned tasting experiences that are both positive as well as negative, keeping us in this safety zone (or more like "behind bars"). We all have things that we like and don't like to eat. This learned experience is a ball and chain. I have a hard time eating some things like sea urchin and dams on the half shell, as these walls came from bad experiences and stopped me from exploring these tastes. It was the same with raw oysters for years, but knowing that so many people like them, I had to taste them again to see what all the fuss was about. I put my dislikes away and tasted to understand. I remember culinary students who refused to taste things because they don't like them. How are you able to cook for your guests if you don't know what food is supposed to taste like? Still, to this day, I see this obstacle affecting our cooking and purchasing habits. There must be another way to expose yourself to new tastes. This cutting of the chain will allow you and those around your table to get outside of that comfort zone and live a little more through amazing food experiences.

A colleague of mine made a brilliant observation about our national cuisine becoming globalized through the fusion of cultures. However, because we have preconceived notions about certain cuisines being different, we dumb them down



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



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



The Craft Beer Networking Group is comprised of professionals from a wide variety of industries, and we meet approximately every 6 weeks at different breweries or craft beer bars in Chicago for two main reasons:

1. Networking
2. Enjoying craft beer

Email cbngchicago@gmail.com for more info and to become part of the group.



Eater is the source for people who

to make them palatable for the mass market. We make them "vanilla." We are doing our customers an injustice by not exposing them to the real thing. How many times have you ventured into an ethnic market and walked out with a couple things only because the label looked familiar? Next time, hit an Indian, Asian or Latin market or restaurant and grab or order some things that you have no clue about and just taste. This is the first step in taking away those preconceived notions of what we can experience in the world of food.

There are so many great dishes from around the world that we can experience and cook, but first, we need to taste and understand before we just start throwing things into the pot.

Here are a few dishes you need to try:

- Goa Pork Vindaloo
- Chinese Congee
- Lutefisk
- Haggis
- Oaxaca Mole Poblano
- Mofungo

Enjoy, have fun and see you on the outside!

- Chef John Reed, CEC, CCA

DISHES TO TRY

Chinese Congee



Check out how [street-style Congee](#) is made.

Lutefisk



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.

Lutefisk is enjoyed with a good amount of beer or Aquavit. My choice for this is a crisp, clean European-style Premium Lager or Pilsner. If you come across this one, you may like it! [Mikkeller California Dream Hopy Pilsner](#).

BEER

Mikkeller California Dream



[Mikkeller](#) is one of the top European craft brewers spreading great beer around the world.

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