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INDUSTRY NEWS



American Culinary Federation
Chicago Chefs

ACF Chefs and Culinary
Professionals of Chicagoland,
founded in 1925, is one of the
fastest-growing chapters of the
American Culinary
Federation (ACF). Click [here](#) for
more information.



Sofrito

After my recent trip to South Florida, I was re-energized by something that I have talked about before: sofrito. This predominately purchased item in home kitchens is a cooked seasoning base used to season beans, braises and other typically Latin dishes. However, sofrito should not be pigeon-holed in Latin cuisine.

I have talked many times about a personal Culinary GPS, which is the idea of incorporating local food culture, personal history, heritage and a host of other factors into your style of cuisine, thus creating your sense of global cuisine in your kitchen.

My introduction to sofrito was not from my wife's side of the family (Cuban) but a book that I read many years ago on Italian cooking. Thank you Marcella Hazan; her book *Essentials of Classic Italian Cooking* is still a treasure. She talks about the concept of building flavor through the use of *battuto* and then *soffritto* (different spelling) and the *insapore* being built sequentially from the components of the *battuto*. This is how the book starts. Of course, my favorite part of this was that classically it was built on lard being the primary fat used to transfer the flavor of the other ingredients throughout the dish.

The key to this whole process is patience and layering of ingredients. The typical *battuto* of finely chopped ingredients typically includes fat, parsley and onion. Yes, parsley as a flavoring ingredient, not just chopped, washed, and squeezed of all of its beauty to be thrown around like confetti on New Year's Eve. There is tremendous flavor in those stalks! Start with fat, then slowly cook the onions and parsley until translucent. Add the remaining flavoring agents such as garlic, the "mirepoix" gang and others depending on your GPS to cook out to make the sofrito; when harmonized, your primary ingredients-whether vegan, grains or protein-"bestow" the taste. This is the technique of the "insapore."

Great cooking across many cuisines follows this process of layering flavors. Here are some techniques from around the globe that you can think about when cooking in your kitchen. Use them to build your GPS for dishes you like. This will help you navigate different cuisines and rely less on recipes in cookbooks but build confidence in your ability to build global flavors using the fundamental principles.

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.



The hunt for unique craft beers is just as fun as the tasting. Here is [The List](#) of beers that we have tasted at our weekly craft beer tap room meeting.

Pastes

Cuban: Sofrito, a cooked paste of onion, garlic, peppers, chorizo, tomato and cumin

Puerto Rico: Recaito, a green sofrito made with cilantro, onions, garlic and seasonings

Indian: Masala, a wet or dry seasoning paste that varies from dish to dish

Catalan: Sofregit, a cooked paste of onions and tomatoes

Catalan: Samafaina, a reduced caramelized vegetable paste based on onions, eggplant, zucchini and peppers

Thailand: Curry pastes, from yellow and green to Massaman brown

Processes

China: Wok hay, the proper temperature control of the wok prior to adding oil and initial seasoning of garlic, ginger, chilis, etc.

Thailand: Frying of coconut milk before adding curry pastes

Korea: Cooking of ginger, garlic, soy and sweeteners and reducing prior to adding other ingredients for "braised" dishes

France: Caramelizing mirepoix and the *pince* of tomato paste

There are plenty of these processes and flavoring agents out there; just use your imagination, creativity and trust yourself. It will be worth the effort and less guilt of shopping in the frozen food section!

- Chef John Reed, CEC, CCA

CURRY PASTE

My favorite Store-Bought Curry Paste

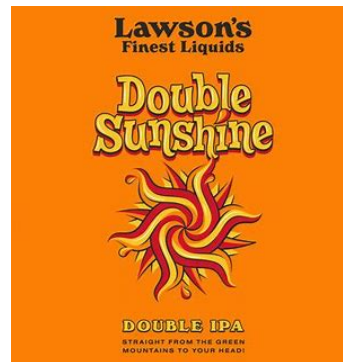
This one is a little harder to make at home, but I really love the complexity of the taste.



BEER

Double Sunshine

For no particular reason other than I have some in my fridge, if you can get to the East Coast (Vermont), it's one of the best drinkers you can have if you like the hazy.



CHEESE



Not to be shy about it, but I have been able to work with some of the best Italian cheeses you can get, and they do make awesome pizza. If you haven't tried them, definitely look for [Galbani](#) next time.

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