

by Rocky Dunnam, CEC, CDM, CFPP

Building Layers of Bold Flavor



CULINARY CONNECTION



THIS CE ARTICLE IS SPONSORED BY: 

We live in a world of many dimensions. Previous luxuries like 3D movies, 4K television, HD audio, etc., are common to us now. Our food parallels this process. With instant access to television and the Internet, we have connections to chefs from across the globe. We can see their cuisine, experience the preparation processes, and maybe even taste the completed product when dining out.

In our world today, we need not travel to exotic lands to experience the flavors and ingredients indigenous to that region. Most metropolitan areas offer a plethora of dining options ranging from the common to the downright bizarre. This amazing reality is a two-edged

sword for those of us in the culinary and foodservice industry. On one side, we love the ability to understand such a diverse blend of cuisines from around the globe and the exotic flavors that accompany them. On the other side, because everyone else gets to enjoy those cuisines, the client demand for stand-out flavor is very high and is increasing daily. Thus, our duty to produce flavorful, bold, and inventive cuisine grows on a parallel.

When building a flavor profile that's both bold and as authentic to the natural flavor of the ingredients as possible, there are many things to consider. What ingredients can I access that are the same or similar to

Continued on page 2



✉ rocky.dunnam@ejbcc.org

Rocky Dunnam, CEC, CDM, CFPP

is the Executive Chef for the Bivins Foundation, Bivins Pointe, EJB Culinary Center, NINE-TEEN49 Catering, and Rock'D Recipes in Amarillo, Texas.

Continued from page 1

those used to prepare certain dishes? What equipment is necessary to produce these cuisines? Which techniques should I use? Can I do something quicker, better, or less expensive, and still deliver a high quality product? What cuisines tout the boldest flavor? What ingredients pack the biggest punch? Can I bring out more flavors from certain ingredients? The answers to each of these questions most certainly require more information that you will need to insert in your operation, but one thing is certain: you can absolutely bring on the flavor!

The approach used by many chefs across the globe is really quite simple when given a few small techniques and ingredients. The general idea is to allow the flavor of the ingredient to be the dominant flavor in a dish. Even when ingredients don't seem particularly dynamic on their own, with some "coaxing" they will boast a flavor profile that's sure to please any palate.

FLAVOR HACKS

Fats

Fat IS flavor...simple as that. Hundreds of fats are used for cooking. Most common fats we think of are oils. Olive oil, canola oil, and vegetable oil are

probably the most common and inexpensive types of cooking oils commercially available today. But the variety doesn't stop there; we also have coconut, avocado, hemp, cottonseed, grapeseed, palm, palm kernel, sesame, soybean, and sunflower oils readily available in most supermarkets.

Then we discuss other fats like butter, ghee, beef dripping, lard, duck fat, etc. from the animal kingdom that assert their own unique, bold flavors.

So how do we choose the right fat for our application? Simple—it's a matter of preference. For example, in vinaigrettes that will not be heated, I prefer a light, mildly-flavored oil like grapeseed. Others simply use an extra virgin olive oil in such recipes. The flavor difference here is subtle, but still important enough to consider when building flavor. Take coconut oil for an extreme example. Anything you prepare (cooked or not) with coconut oil will have a noticeable coconut flavor. The use of olive or grapeseed oils may be significantly less perceptible. And cooking in animal fats like duck, lard, beef, or even butter will return a great flavor presence unlike those of seeds and vegetables.



STICK WITH VERSATILE OILS

like olive or grapeseed as your "go-to" oils for both cold and hot applications.

My advice is to stick with versatile oils like olive or grapeseed as your "go-to" oils for both cold and hot applications (especially when adding other flavorful ingredients like vinegar in a vinaigrette and onions or shallots in a sauté). Venture into animal fats when preparing like-proteins. Sear that pork chop in rendered bacon fat, and confit that shredded beef in lard to really boost the flavor profile.

Acids

Acids are both very flavorful and complement accompanying flavors. Most, if not all, ingredients could use an acidic touch to really elevate the flavor. Most common acids are natural, citric acids found in citrus like lemon, lime, orange, grapefruit, etc. These "juices" are commonly used in marinades and sauces accompanying many recipes. Another great acid to consider is vinegar. The types and flavors are almost as limitless as fats,

Continued on page 3

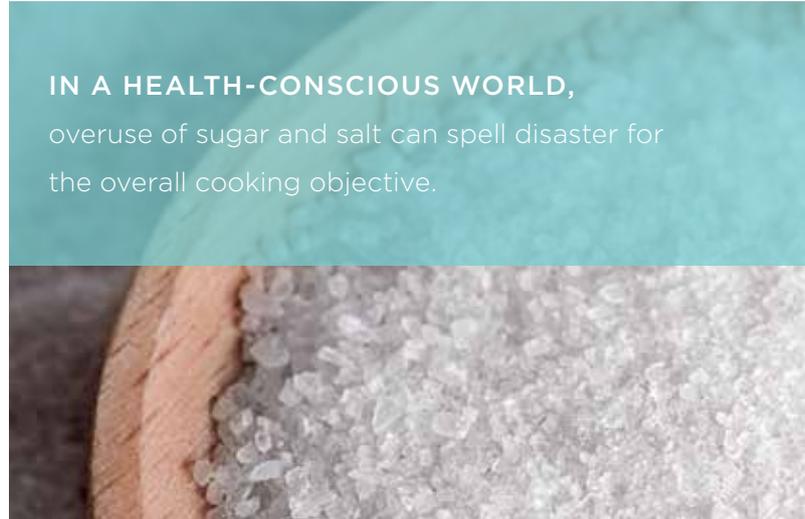
but they all function to elevate your flavor profile to another dimension. We have vinegars from a multitude of liquids. Common are types like balsamic, apple cider, wine, rice, beer, malt, and simple distilled white vinegar. To this, there are a myriad of flavors with which to experiment. And the luxury of utilizing such flavor enhancers is that you don't add many calories outside of the small amount of sugar in the flavored vinegars. Acids are quite powerful as well. It takes a very small amount of acid to pack a powerful flavor punch.

My advice is to always keep in mind that acid is your friend when it comes to flavor. You will be amazed to find that flavor skyrockets when you squeeze a lemon over a salad or fish, marinade

your vegetables in citrus or a flavored vinegar, or see the depth of flavor develop when you glaze a protein with a vinegar/vinegar-based sauce. Many BBQ pitmasters spray their whole cuts of meat with a vinegar solution during the cooking process to add flavor and moisture. When developing your next recipe, no matter what it is, consider adding some acid either in the cooking process or as a finisher to bring that profile to the next level.

Sugar and Salt

These are two flavor manipulators that I like to reserve for last case scenarios. I do this for a couple of reasons: 1) They both work really well, almost too well, and can be overused quickly without even realizing you've done it, and 2) In a health-conscious world, overuse of these two ingredients can spell disaster for the overall objective. Sugar and salt work in similar ways. Both are dissolvable ingredients that have distinct flavors of their own, yet amplify other flavors around them. Both are necessary in cookery on multiple levels, and both have had their day in court with medical professionals. So let's just say this: use sugar and salt strategically. Most bland taste tests can be cured with the addition



IN A HEALTH-CONSCIOUS WORLD, overuse of sugar and salt can spell disaster for the overall cooking objective.

of one or both of these ingredients. Salt should be used in layers beginning with the very first step in the cooking process. It should always build to a climax, and never be a last resort for flavor.

My advice is to keep both on hand. Use sugar to amplify sweet dishes, sauces, rubs, etc. Use salt throughout the cooking process in small doses to develop a well-rounded flavor profile. One of the best uses for salt before you even cook is submerging poultry overnight (or up to 24 hours) in a salt water "brine" solution.

There are obviously many other ways to develop great flavor in our dishes. Adding herbs and spices is a wonderful way to build flavor. Choose spices appropriate to the

cuisine. Be bold, but don't overwhelm the diner with over-seasoned food.

These simple hacks are versatile and will allow you to bring additional flavor, amplify existing profiles, and elevate current recipes in your establishment.

What separates your Caesar Salad from the next guy could easily be that squeeze of grapefruit at the end. The thing that makes your Airline Chicken so mouthwatering and juicy compared to the dry, overcooked bird down the street could be as simple as an overnight sugar or salt brine. Experiment with these hacks (with deep respect for the ingredients) to elevate your recipes and set you apart in a world that's demanding well-executed flavor. **E**

MOST, IF NOT ALL, INGREDIENTS

could use an acidic touch to really elevate the flavor profile.



ONE FREE CE HOUR THROUGH SEPTEMBER 7, 2017

Basic American Foods is generously sponsoring 1 free continuing education (CE) hour for CDMs who read **Building Layers of Bold Flavor** and answer the following questions through September 7, 2017. You must log into the **ANFP Marketplace** and access the online CE quiz there for this members-only offer. Follow the directions on the quiz below to access your free CE.

CE Questions: Culinary Connection



Sponsored by Basic American Foods



Reading *Building Layers of Bold Flavor* and successfully completing these questions online has been approved for 1 hour of continuing education for CDM, CFPPs. CE credit is available ONLINE ONLY. To earn 1 CE hour, access the CE quiz in the ANFP Marketplace. Visit www.ANFPonline.org/market, select “**Publication**,” then select “**CE article**” at left, then search the title “*Building Layers of Bold Flavor*” and purchase the article.

No payment information is required for ANFP members through September 7, 2017.

1. Why is bold flavor so important?
 - A. To show off your skills
 - B. Because the consumer demands it
 - C. So you can use multiple ingredients
2. What are common fats used for flavor?
 - A. Animal fats and oils
 - B. Fatter cuts of meat
 - C. Oil of oregano, tea tree oil, and horse fat
3. What are common acids used for flavor?
 - A. Hydrochloric acid
 - B. Sulfuric acid
 - C. Citric acids and vinegars
4. When should you use salt?
 - A. Throughout the cooking process to develop flavor
 - B. At the end, adjust seasoning as needed
 - C. Never—sodium is bad for you
5. What is brine?
 - A. Pickling spice to add flavor to meats like corned beef
 - B. Salt/water solution used to enhance flavor and retain moisture
 - C. The fried fat of a pig
6. How can you use acids?
 - A. Soak meat in acid for several days to break it down naturally
 - B. As an accompanying side soup
 - C. Both during a recipe and as a “finisher” enhancement
7. How do I select the right fat or acid for my recipe?
 - A. Personal preference with flavor profile in mind
 - B. They are all the same, vinegar is vinegar
 - C. Whatever is cheapest

EARN 1 FREE CE HOUR FOR THIS ARTICLE. DETAILS ABOVE!

