



Preparing for the Culinary World Cup

By Michelle Whitfield

In just a few weeks, the U.S. will compete against other countries at the Culinary World Cup, which takes place Nov. 20-24 in Luxembourg. ACF Culinary Team USA has devoted a lot of time and energy to preparing for this international competition.

"The theme for the table design and dishes will focus on the harvest season and the bounty of American foods," says Steve Jilleba, CMC, CCE, AAC, ACF Culinary Team USA manager. "Marcos Cruz, an artist/sculptor based in Winter Springs, Fla., the team's visual art design consultant, has created a centerpiece that gives the impression of flowing wheat or reeds, with lighting incorporated in the reeds. The team will use white plates and platters, and the tabletop and risers will be covered in white spandex. This is a clean, modern look, with the focus on the food."

"In developing the menu, it is important that the dishes complement each other,

with the same flavor profile," says Joseph Leonardi, CEC, ACF Culinary Team USA captain. "The team will focus on clean, solid cooking techniques to enhance the flavors of the ingredients."

For the hot kitchen, all teams will prepare and serve 105 portions, under new rules. In the past, 80% of the product could be prepared outside the kitchen; now, 100% must be completed in the kitchen, including the butchery of fish and all pastry decoration.

"ACF Culinary Team USA's menu for the hot kitchen includes Alaska halibut with seasonal vegetables, such as cauliflower and cabbage (during this time of year, vegetables achieve their fullest and boldest flavors), and will incorporate bacon and some smoked shredded halibut from the trim of the fish," Jilleba says. "The approach is to do a great sautéed fish with complementary ingredients that enhance the flavor of the fish."

He says the team's main course will feature lamb. "The team will roast two loins together with a center filling of spinach and other aromatics. It will also serve a lamb meatball flavored with fresh herbs and filled with a braised lamb neck and a small piece of foie gras. When the meatball is cut open, the filling will ooze out, creating a 'wow' effect. The dish will also include glazed puréed root vegetables.

"The dessert plays off peanut butter and jelly (strawberry sorbet), with banana, chocolate, caramel and a lime marshmallow, creating a mélange of intense flavors."

With the support of ACF members, chapters and partners, Team USA has been able to dedicate more time and energy to practice sessions. Let's wish the team members much luck in this endeavor.



ACF Culinary Team USA welcomes **Mark Morgan**, a U.S. Army master sergeant based at Fort Monroe, Va., as the team's new pastry chef. Morgan brings vast experience in international culinary competition to the team.



Morgan

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