



Culinary Institute
of America

Rialto Unified School District Training – Day 3

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March 2025



Program Overview

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
Introduction		
Food Safety	Mise En Place	Seasoning & Flavor
Knife Skills	Cooking Basics & Terminology	Production Review
Production Review	Production Review	What next?



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Seasoning & Flavor



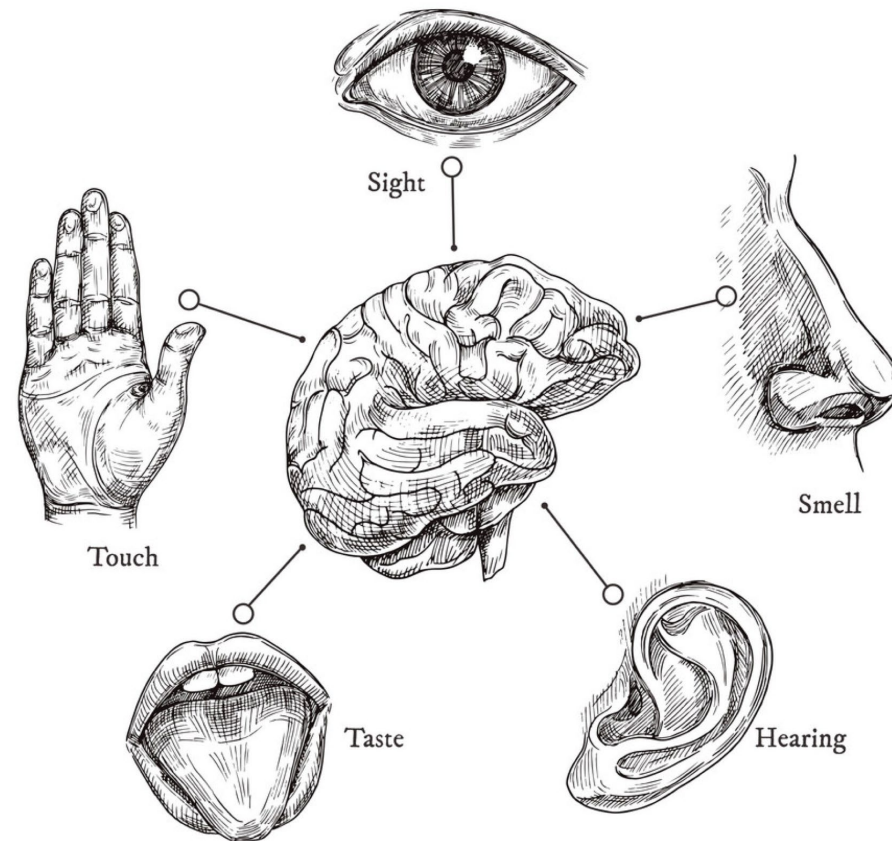
Learning Objectives

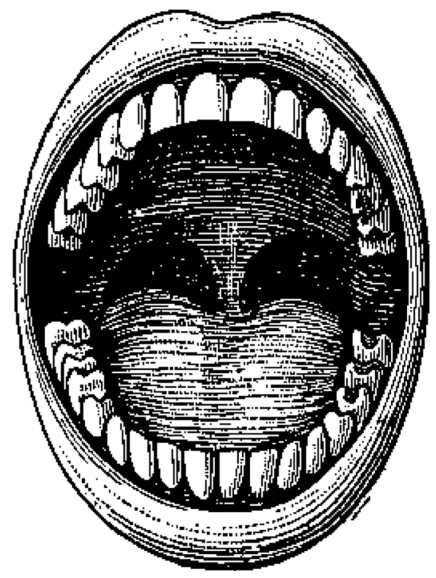
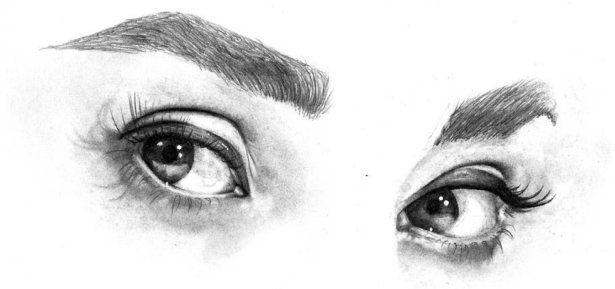
- Recognize how the brain perceives flavor.
- Learn how to make things delicious by combining flavor perceptions and sensations and affecting them with temperature to derive texture.
- Identify the flavor of umami and explore how to interact with it in cooking.
- Understand the components of flavor design and the process to create flavor.
- Experience the sensations of deliciousness.

Key Terms

- aroma
- balance
- bitter
- complexity
- creamy
- effervescent
- flavor
- salty
- sour
- spicy
- sweet
- taste
- palate
- umami

How do we perceive flavor?





What influences our experience of food & flavor? (context)

Cultural Background

Social context

Presentation/expectation

Personal memories & associations (comfort foods, childhood favorites)

Texture/Mouthfeel

Social Justice/Environmental Justice

Environment

Current state of being (hunger, intoxicated, hungover, full)

Food Insecurity



What does a chef think about?



Flavor Fingerprint

Ingredient



Dish





components of flavor design

the syntax



list the ingredients



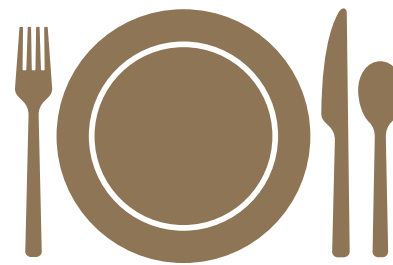
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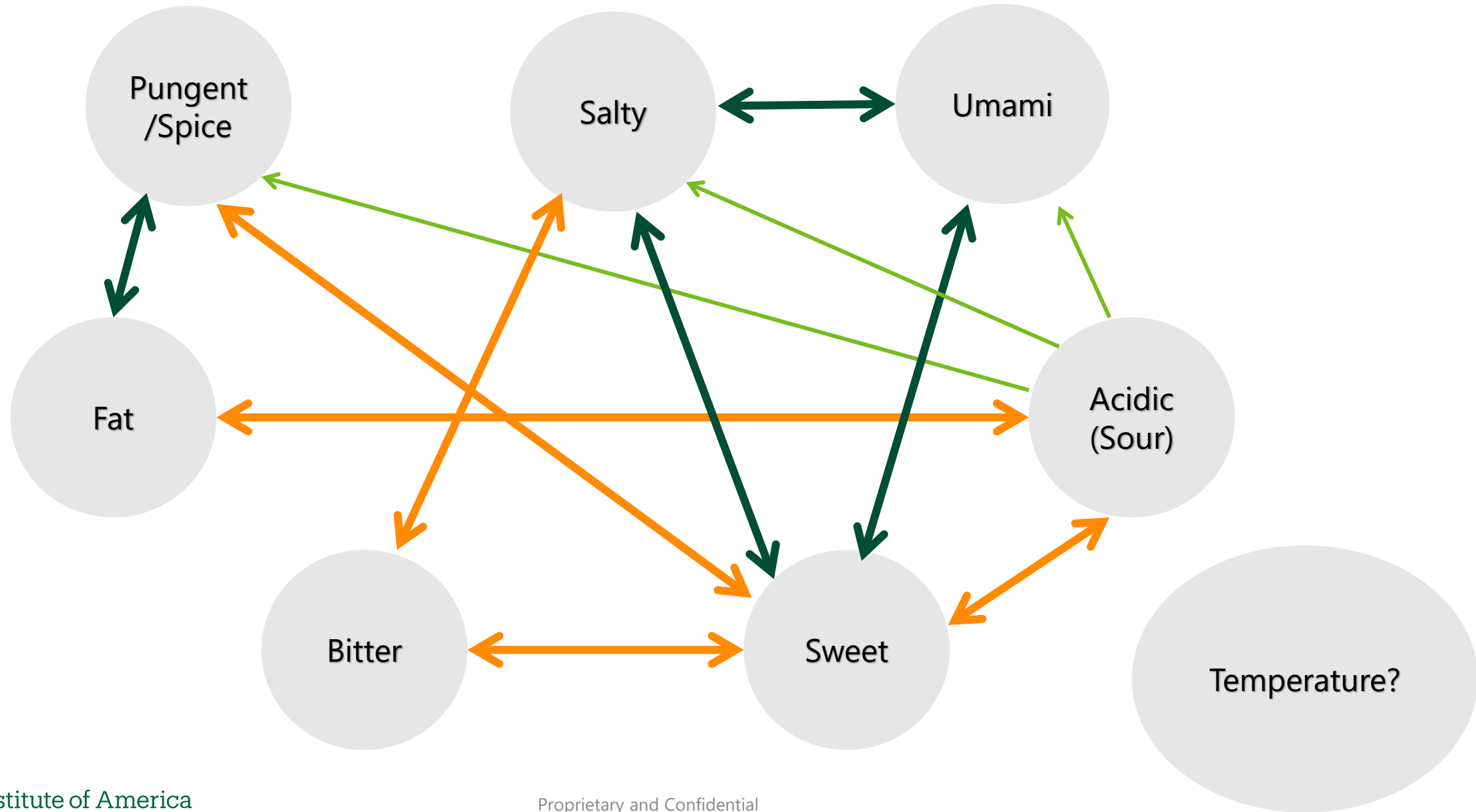


explore the result

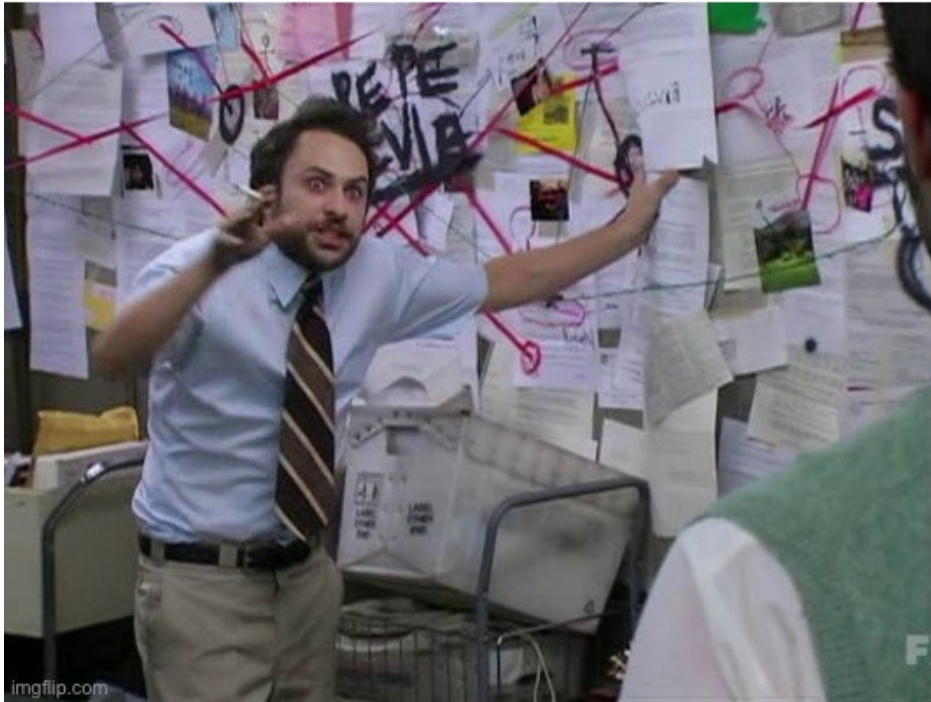


eat

Balance of elements



Chef explaining how to balance flavors and seasoning



What's Wrong?	To Balance
Too sweet	Sour/acid or spice/Heat
Too salty	Sour/Acid or cut with unseasoned batch
Too hot/spicy	Sweet/fat
Too sour	Sweet/fat
Too bland	Salt/heat/spices
Too bitter	Sweet/Fat
Needs brightness	Sour/Acid/Aromatics/heat
Needs depth	Fat/heat/aromatics/spices

Salt! NaCl

Function in seasoning and flavor:

- Boost perceived taste of foods
- Can balance bitterness, sweetness, and acidity
- Crave for survival

Function in cooking:

- Affects moisture retention in proteins and vegetables
- Tenderizes foods
- Used for preservation (think processed foods but also preserved)



Use It Effectively:

Season in layers (before, during, after cooking).

Use flaky salt for finishing (Maldon)

Pair salt with acidity (citrus, vinegar) to create balance.

For contrast – balances sweetness in desserts (salted caramel, chocolate)

Umami (Savoriness)

Adds a savory, deep, mouth-coating taste

- Makes dishes feel rich and satisfying often without the need for excess salt
- Develops over time (slow cooking, roasting)
- Layered in for complexity in stocks, soups, sauces

umami foods: Mushrooms, tomatoes, Parmesan cheese, aged meats, bone broths, slow roasted meats, grilled meats, seaweed

Fermented umami sources: Miso, soy sauce, fish sauce, kombu, Worcestershire sauce.

Cooking Techniques to bring out umami: Roasting, Searing, Reduction, caramelization, Maillard reaction, slow cooking



Bitter – Complexity & Balance

Adds depth and can contrast sweet, salty, rich flavors offsets sweetness, and stimulates digestion

- Often bitter foods tamed through cooking techniques (grill, braise, roast)
- Balances rich and fatty foods (bitter greens with creamy dressing)
- Used in marinades and spice rubs



Bitter foods;

- Leafy greens (kale, arugula, radicchio, dandelion greens)
- Coffee, cacao, tea
- Grapefruit, citrus peels, cranberries
- Hops, dark chocolate, charred foods
- Olive oils



Sweet – Not just for Desserts

Used in balance, often softens and rounds out acidity, balances spice, and enhances umami

- Honey, Maple syrup, molasses, agave, date syrup, jams
- Fruits & Vegetables (carrots, apples, fennel, dates, sweet potato, tomato, dried fruits etc.)
- Dairy, (sweetness from milk, cream, butter, even cheeses)
- Sweet sauces: bbq, ketchup



Balancing acidity – honey in vinaigrettes, sugar in tomato sauce.

Developing sweetness through cooking techniques: roasting, caramelization, mallard reaction, searing, sous vide

Pairing with umami – balsamic glaze over roasted mushrooms.

Enhancing spice – mango chutney with spicy curries.

Sour (Acidity) – Brightness & Contrast

Adds freshness, balances fats, enhances complexity

- Citrus: Lemon, lime, grapefruit, yuzu.
- Vinegars: Apple cider, balsamic, rice, sherry.
- Fermented foods: Pickles, Sauerkraut, kimchi, yogurt, buttermilk
- Fermented drinks: kombucha, kefir,

Cutting through richness – lemon juice over fried foods, yogurt in sauces, juice from ferment foods in dressings

Balancing sweet flavors – vinegar in fruit based dishes

Brightening up dishes – lime on tacos, vinegar in soups, vinaigrettes in salads



Fat – The Flavor Carrier

Adds richness, enhances texture, carries flavors, creates mouthfeel

- Plant-based Fats: Olive oil, avocado, nuts, seeds, coconut oil, sesame oil, peanut oil, canola oil, nut-butters
- Animal fats/dairy fats: butter, ghee, lard, fatty cuts of meat, cream, cheese, yogurt



Carrying fat-soluble flavors – garlic-infused olive oil, herb butter.

Balancing bitterness & acidity – creamy dressing for arugula salads.

Adding richness to dishes – finishing drizzle of sesame oil or coconut milk.

Spice/Pungent (Heat & Warmth)

Adds warmth, heat, pungency. Excites the palate and builds complexity. Can enhance or contrast other flavors

- Fresh and dried chilies, smoked, ground (jalapeno, serrano, chipotle, cayenne, poblano)
- Aromatics: black pepper, wasabi, horseradish, mustard
- Warming spices: cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, clove, allspice
- Spice blends: curry powder, harrisa, garam masala





Bringing it together
building flavor with reduced or no salt

HOW?

Salty Ingredients

SALTY & SAVORY/UMAMI
Balances bitterness. Enhances sweetness.

IF YOU NEED TO ADD SALT/UMAMI

- KOSHER SALT
- SEA SALT
- ANCHOVIES/ ANCHOVY PASTE
- HARD CHEESES, LIKE PARMESAN
- SOY SAUCE
- FISH SAUCE
- SEAWEED
- MISO
- PICKLED VEGETABLES

FOOD INGREDIENTS THAT ARE SALTY/UMAMI

- MUSHROOMS
- TOMATOES
- BACON AND OTHER CURED MEATS

<https://www.wekivaculinary.org/balancing-flavors/>

Building Flavor without Salt

Herbs & Spices

How & When to Use?

- Fresh Herbs: Add at the end for brightness (cilantro, basil)
- Dried Herbs: Add early in cooking to release flavors (oregano, thyme)
- Toasting Spices: Heat in dry pan or oil to intensify aroma (cumin, coriander)
- Blending Flavors: Combine herbs & spices to build layers (e.g., curry blends, BBQ rubs)

Add depth, complexity and aroma

Examples:

- Fresh Herbs: Basil, cilantro, parsley, mint, dill
- Dried herbs: thyme, oregano, rosemary
- Spice Blends: za'atar, curry, togerashi
- Warming Spices: cinnamon, clove, nutmeg, allspice
- Earth spices: cumin, coriander, turmeric, paprika
- Pungent spices: garlic, onion, mustard
- Heat & spice: black pepper, chili, cayenne ginger

Building Flavor without Salt

Acidic Ingredients



How & When to Use?

- Finishing with acidity: lemon juice over veggies, lime on tacos, vinegar in soups
- Marinades & Dressings
- Layering acidic ingredients: tomatoes in soup, pickled onions on tacos, kimchi in stir-fry or on top of a bowl

Building Flavor without Salt

Cooking Techniques

Searing, Grilling, Roasting → (Maillard Reaction)

- Amino acids + sugar = deepen flavors

Caramelization → Adds natural sweetness & depth

Reduction → Concentrates flavor (think balsamic glaze)

Fermentation → Adds umami & tangy complexity

Acid & Spice Pairing → Balances flavor (lemon + chili, vinegar + mustard)

Cooking techniques **naturally enhance flavors**, allowing for more depth and richness without relying on sodium.



Examples

Flavor-Building in Different Cultures

- Mexican: Lime, cilantro, chili, cumin (bright & spicy)
- Asian: Soy sauce alternatives, vinegar, ginger, sesame oil, chili paste
- Mediterranean: Lemon, oregano, olive oil, garlic
- Middle Eastern: Sumac, tahini, za'atar, yogurt

Example Dishes Without Salt

- Roasted Vegetables with Lemon & Herbs
- Citrus & Herb Marinated Chicken
- Spiced Lentil Soup with Caramelized Onions
- Gochujang Chicken and Rice Bowl
- Yogurt-Based Sauces & Dressings

Key Takeaways

Deliciousness is a balance of multiple taste components!

Great chefs don't just rely on salt – they build layers of flavor.

Use herbs, spices, acids, and cooking techniques to enhance taste naturally.

Understand your ingredients and experiment with balance!



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Day 3 Production



Day 3 Assignments

T1	T2	T3	T4
Schnitzel with Lemon-Caper Beurre Blanc	Grilled Salmon with Orange-Thyme butter	40-clove chicken	Roast Sirloin of beef with Jus Lie
Garlic-Roasted Potatoes with Parsley & oregano	Rice Pilaf	Whipped potatoes	Pommes Duchessee
Braised Collard Greens	Green Beans	oven-roasted Vegetables	Grilled Zucchini



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Any Questions?



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What's
Next?



Next steps

- How can you use what you learned?
 - Timing
 - Efficiency
 - Organization
 - Quality of Food
- What was your most important take away?



Benefits

- Helps improve the Team as a whole
- Reduces difficult situations
- Helps to “Work smarter not harder”
- Reduces liability issues
- Overall helps produce better food
- Personal growth and satisfaction

Ways to improve

- Discussions with Management
- Continued Training/Education
- Professional development
 - Culinary classes
 - Educational workshops
- Team meetings and discussions
- Reassess and evaluate current methods with management



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Any Questions?