



Culinary Institute
of America

San Leandro Unified School District Training – Day 3

Chef Avia Hawksworth '91

June 2025



Program Overview

- Lecture 1 – 1 hr
- Demos & Hands-on Production 2.5 – 3 hr
- Dinner/Critique 30 min
- Review & Preparation for the next day 30 min

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
Introduction	Food Safety Review	Market Basket Challenge
Mise en Place	Explorine French Cuisine	Seasoning & Flavor
Knife Skills	Production Review	Production Review
Exploring Mexican Cuisine		What next?
Production Review		



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Seasoning & Flavor



Salt! NaCl



Salt's function in cooking:

- Boost perceived taste of foods.
- Helps retain moisture in some dishes.
- Tenderizes foods
- Used for preservation (think processed foods but also preserved)

Salt's Function in Flavor:

- Enhances flavor by suppressing bitterness and bringing out sweetness and umami
- Western cuisines salt is often primary seasoning
- Other cuisines build flavor through:
 - Fermentation
 - Spices & herbs
 - Acidity
 - Umami-rich ingredients



Building Flavor without Salt

Herbs & Spices

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

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)

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.



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Any Questions?

Next steps

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

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?



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What's
Next?

