



Culinary Institute
of America

Day 2: Cuisine of the Americas



Learning Objectives

- List the culinary regions within the US, Mexico, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean.
- Explain the flavors and spices commonly used in each culinary region.
- List the key ingredients used in each culinary region.
- Explain the common cooking techniques used in each culinary region.
- Describe the popular dishes representative of each culinary region.
- Prepare a variety of dishes representative of these culinary regions using standardized recipes.

New England Cuisine

Coast: comforting dishes focused on fresh ingredients

- **Staples:** seafood, dairy, hearty vegetables, citrus
- **Cooking methods:** boiling, steaming, grilling, stewing

Inland: rustic, hearty stews, roasts, casseroles focused on local ingredients

- **Staples:** meats, seasonal fruits/vegetables
- **Cooking methods:** roasting, slow cooking, canning, preserving, baking, casseroles





Coastal Specialties



Clam chowder:
clams, potatoes,
and vegetables in a
thick, creamy broth



Lobster roll:
fresh lobster meat mixed
with mayo, lemon juice,
herbs and served on a
buttered, toasted bun



Clam bake:
various seafood, corn,
and other vegetables
cooked in a large pot
or over a fire pit

Inland Specialties



Boston baked beans:
slow-cooked beans
with molasses and
bacon



Yankee pot roast:
slow-cooked beef
with root vegetables



Johnny cakes:
cornmeal flatbread
that can be savory or
sweet

Southern Cuisine

Cuisine: a blend of bold spices, smoky meats, fresh produce, and rich comfort foods

Staples: slow-cooked meats, fried foods, rich sauces, heavy use of butter/cream

Seasonings: cayenne, paprika, vinegar, file powder, sugar, cumin, mustard powder, thyme, oregano, garlic/onion powder

Flavor profile: savory, smoky, sweet, spicy, tangy

Cooking methods: frying, grilling, slow cooking, baking, stewing canning

Main styles of cuisine: soul food, cajun/creole, Appalachian, lowcountry, barbeque



Styles of Cuisine

Soul Food: comforting, hearty dishes

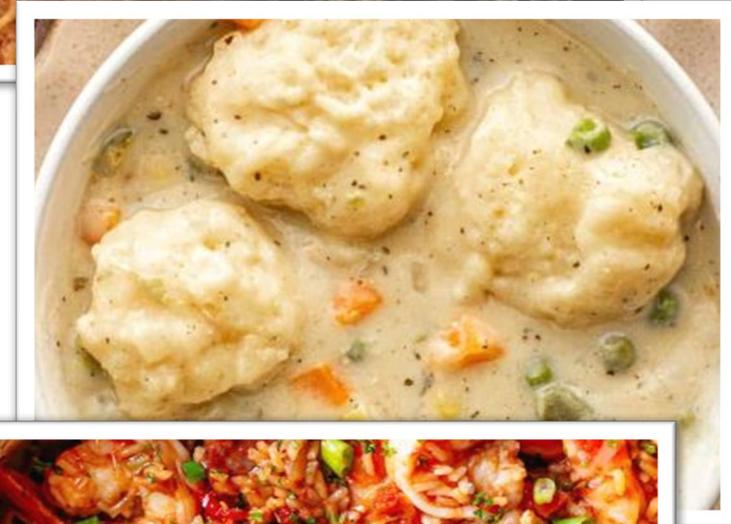
- Rooted in African American culture
- **Staples:** *fried chicken, collard greens, black-eyed peas, mac and cheese, cornbread*

Appalachian: hearty, home-style dishes

- Scots-Irish, German, African American, Native American influences
- **Staples:** *biscuits and gravy, chicken and dumplings, peach cobbler, pies*

Cajun/Creole (Louisiana): hearty, spicy dishes

- French, Spanish, African influences
- **Staples:** *seafood gumbo, jambalaya, étouffée*



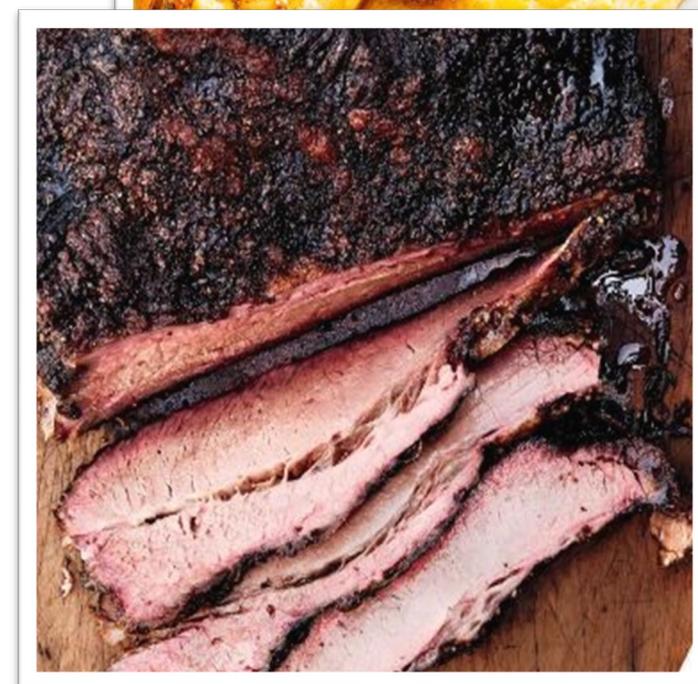
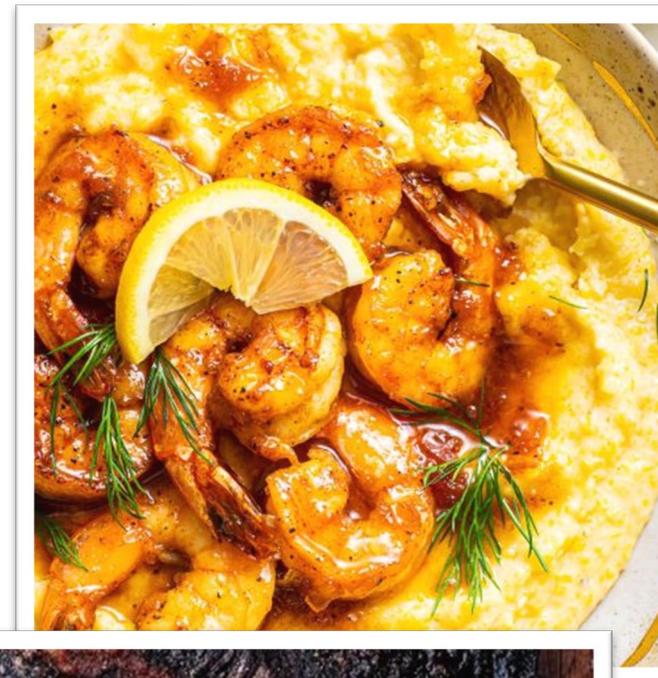
Styles of Cuisine

Lowcountry (Georgia, South Carolina): simple, fresh, locally sourced seafood & rice dishes

- African, European and Caribbean influences
- **Staples:** *shrimp and grits*, crab cakes, Hoppin' John

Barbeque: regional styles in meat, sauces/rubs, and cooking methods

- **Texas:** beef (*brisket*), wood slow-smoked, dry rub
- **East Carolina:** pork, slow-cooked, vinegar-based sauce
- **Memphis:** pork, smoked low & slow, dry rub/tomato-based sauce
- **Kansas City:** pork, smoked/grilled, tomato-based sauce



Southwestern Cuisine

A vibrant fusion of Spanish, Mexican, Native American, and Anglo heritages

Staples: corn, beans, and squash (the three sisters), chili peppers, pork, beef, tomatoes, onions, rice, Monterey Jack, queso fresco, queso Blanco

Seasonings: garlic, cumin, oregano, cilantro

Cooking methods: grilling, roasting, frying, steaming



Regional Variations

Tex-Mex: spicy, tangy, often smoky dishes

- **Staples:** cheddar cheese, flour tortillas, ground beef, refried beans

New Mexican: spicy, earthy dishes

- **Staples:** red/green chilis, blue corn, corn tortillas, Monterey Jack cheese, pinto beans, Piñon nuts

Sonoran (Arizona): hearty, simplistic dishes

- **Staples:** beef (*carne asada*), variety of chiles, pinto beans, cactus (*nopales*), corn/flour tortillas, corn, queso fresco



Popular Dishes



Green chili stew
(New Mexican):
stew with green
chiles, potatoes,
tomatoes, and lean
meat



Carne asada classica
(Sonoran):
marinated beef, typically
skirt steak or flank steak,
grilled and thinly sliced



Beef enchiladas
(Tex-Mex):
flour tortillas filled
with ground beef,
onions, refried beans
and topped with red
sauce, cheese

Pacific Northwest Cuisine

Coastal dishes: light, fresh, simple

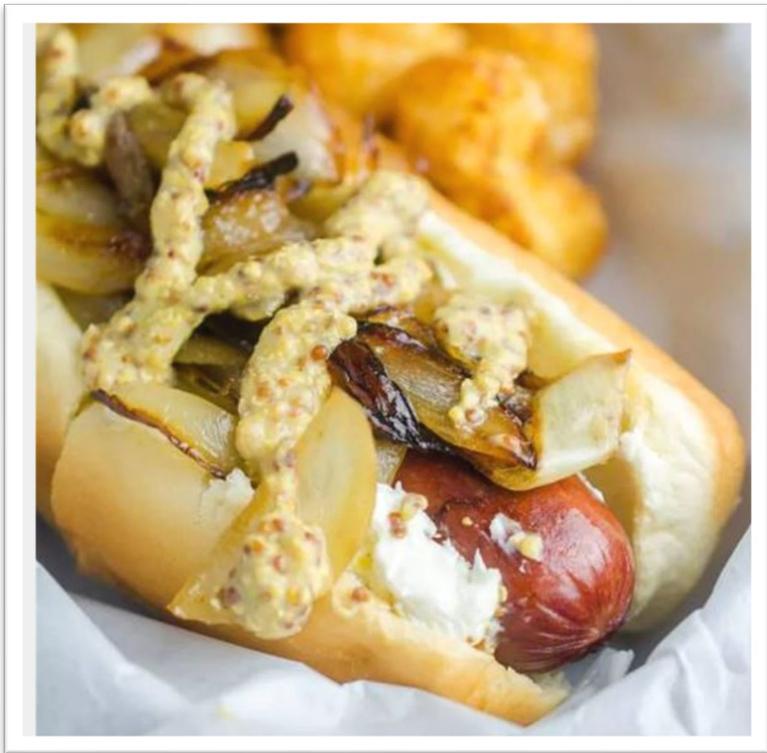
- **Staples:** seafood, trout, salmon, Dungeness crab, oysters, seaweed, sea vegetables, Salal berries, blackberries
- **Cooking methods:** smoking, baking, grilling, steaming, raw

Inland dishes: hearty, slow-cooked, earthy

- **Staples:** elk, duck, deer, marionberry, apples raspberries, beer, hazelnuts, potato, carrot, wild mushrooms, blue cheese
- **Cooking methods:** stewing, roasting, pan-searing, baking, preserving



Popular Dishes



Seattle dog:
hot dog with cream
cheese, Dijon mustard
and grilled onions



Salmon chowder:
salmon and
potatoes stewed in
a cream base



Marionberry pie:
made with fresh juicy
marionberries, sugar,
and lemon, baked in a
double-crust

Mexico

Seven main regions: North, Baja, Bajío, Central, Gulf, Yucatan, Pacific Coast

- Made up of 32 states

Influences: Spain, France, Africa, Middle East

Seasonings: garlic, onions, oregano, cumin, chili peppers/powder, chipotle, epazote, cilantro, marjoram, Hoja Santa

Cooking methods: roasting/charring, frying, boiling, simmering

Equipment: metate (grinder), molcajete (mortar/pestle), comal (griddle) cazuela (clay pot)



Staple Ingredients

Salsa: salsa verde, pico de gallo, salsa taquera

Meat: pork (fried pork skin (*chicharron*), chorizo, serrano ham), chicken

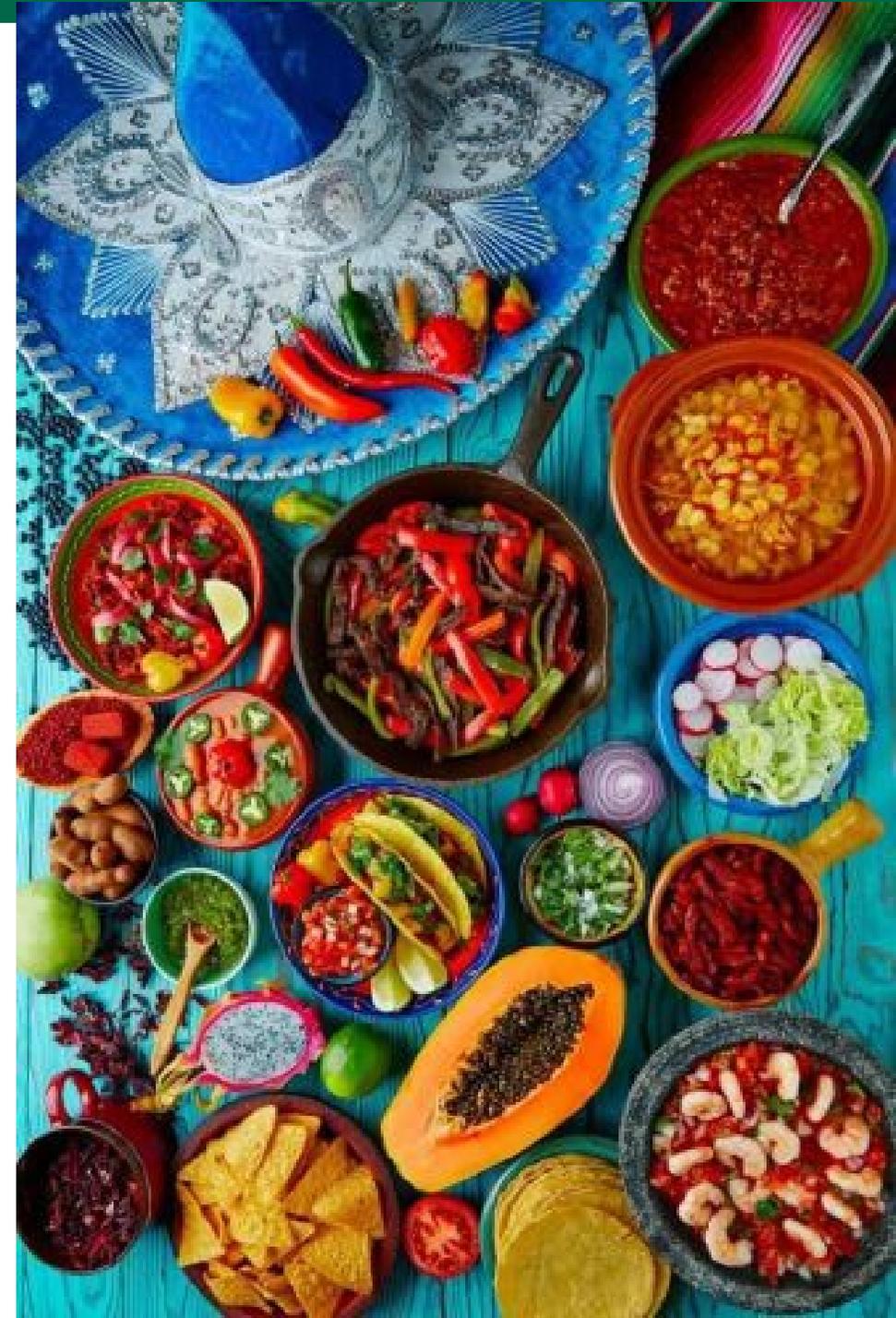
Seafood: shrimp, lobster, octopus, snapper, grouper

Cheese: *oaxaca*, *cotija*, *fresco*

Fruits: avocado, papaya, mango, citrus

Vegetables: squash, potato, sweet potato, tomatillo, pepper, jicama, tomatoes, cactus leaves, corn, beans (pinto, black, bayo, lima)

Grains: rice, corn (tamales, tortillas, oil)



Popular Dishes



Pozole:
hearty meat and corn
soup with various
vegetables/toppings



Tamale:
steamed masa
dough with a savory
filling, wrapped in a
corn husk



Enchilada:
rolled tortillas
filled with savory
ingredients and
covered in sauce

Central American Cuisine

Pacific Coast: savory, hearty, moderately spicy food with Spanish influence

- **Staples:** grilled meats, seafood, rice, beans, spicy salsas, ceviche, achiote, citrus, saffron

Caribbean Coast: richer, sweeter, very spicy food with Caribbean/African influence

- **Staples:** coconut, tropical fruits, spicy seasoning, seafood, Pimenta, ginger, Scotch Bonnet pepper

Cooking methods: grilling, frying, steaming, slow cooking (*tapado*), leaf wrapping

Seasonings: oregano, chili, cumin, garlic



Regional Ingredients

- **Panama:** rice, corn, coffee, bananas, shrimp, pineapple
- **Costa Rica:** coffee, rice, bananas, tropical fruits/vegetables, palm oil, sugar
- **Nicaragua:** beef, sugar, coffee, plantains, beans, rice
- **Honduras:** coffee, coconuts, *queso fresco*, plantains, cabbage, seafood
- **El Salvador:** pork, seafood, squash, flatbread, *loroco*, *relajo*
- **Guatemala:** avocado, chiles, beans, cacao, pork, beef, chicken
- **Belize:** seafood, coconut milk, yuca, beans, rice, tropical fruits/vegetables, *annatto*



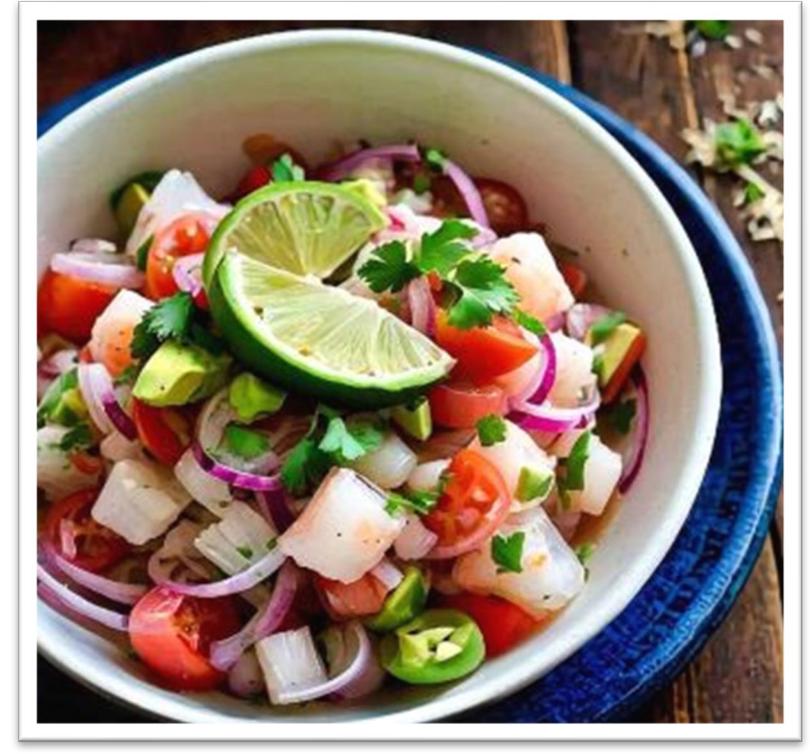
Popular Dishes



Gallo Pinto:
rice and beans
cooked with herbs
and spices



Pupusas:
flatbread stuffed with meat,
cheese, vegetables, or
beans



Ceviche:
seafood salad

South America

Cuisine: diverse regional dishes with a focus on fresh ingredients, bold flavors

Culinary regions

- Guyana, Andean, Brazil, Southern

Cooking equipment: molcajete (mortar), tortilla press, comal (griddle), metate/muller (grinder)

Cooking methods: nixtamalization (alkali-based cooking), pachamanca (cooking underground), stewing, dry/fire/pit roasting, deep/pan frying, grilling



Guyana Region

Countries: Guyana, Suriname

Influence: Caribbean, Africa, Asia, Europe

Staples: rice, elephant ear root, sugarcane, cassava, plantains, yams, tropical fruits, beans, pigeon peas, onion, peppers, beef, pork, chicken, fish

Seasonings: Scotch Bonnet peppers, garam masala, lemongrass, thyme, garlic, Wiri Wiri pepper, cumin



Pepperpot:
meat stew
with cassareep
sauce



Moksi-alesi:
rice, salted
meat, shrimp
or fish, and
vegetables

Andean Region

Countries: Bolivia, Columbia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela

Influence: Peru's Incan roots

Coastal staples: fish, seafood, beans, plantains

Inland staples: guinea pig, llama, pigeon, rice, potatoes, quinoa, amaranth, corn, salty cheese, onion

Seasonings: aji peppers, parsley, oregano, thyme, paprika, garlic



Rocoto relleno:
bell pepper
stuffed with
minced meat and
topped with
melted cheese



Cuy asado:
roasted guinea
pig

Brazil

- A region unto itself (42% of S. America)

Influences: Portugal, West Africa

Staples: coffee, sugarcane, coconut milk, wheat, maize, rice, black beans, bananas, citrus, grapes, dried shrimp, avocado, ground nuts, onion

Seasonings: malagueta chiles, West African oil (dende), turmeric, nutmeg, Pimenta, Brazilian black pepper, garlic



Feijoada:
pork and
black bean
stew



Moqueca:
seafood
stew

Southern Region

Countries: Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay

Influences: Italian, Spanish

Staples: corn, potatoes, fruit, sugarcane, grapes, onion, beans, cassava, fish

- Meat-centric; much land devoted to pasture for livestock (cattle, sheep, pigs, llama)
- World renowned Argentinean beef

Seasonings: chili peppers, pink pepper, cayenne, cumin, coriander, oregano, garlic, paprika



Churasco:
thin sliced
meat grilled
over an
open fire

Empanadas:
savory
pastry filled
with country
specific
fillings



The Caribbean

Cuisine: known for bold, spicy flavors, fresh ingredients, vibrant colors

Greater Antilles: Cuba, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Navassa Island, Cayman Islands

Lesser Antilles: 25+ small islands

Well known islands include:

- **Leeward Islands:** Antigua, Montserrat, St. Martin, St. Kitts, St. Barths, Guadeloupe
- **Windward Islands:** St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Grenada
- **Leeward Antilles:** Aruba, Curacao
- **Isolated:** Trinidad & Tobago, Barbados



Greater Antilles

Influences: Africa, *Taíno*, Europe, Middle East, Asia

Cooking methods: stewing, grilling, smoking, frying

Staples: plantains, callaloo, yuca, ackee, pork, rice, saltfish, beans

Seasonings: adobo, achiote, bouillon, *èspice*, pikliz, Scotch Bonnet chiles, curry powder, turmeric, sofrito, sazón



Jerk chicken:
often with rice
and peas and
salad

**Ackee and
saltfish:**
often with fried
breadfruit and
meze dumplings
(*festival*)



Lesser Antilles

Influences: West Africa, Europe, Asia, Middle East

Cooking methods: steaming (in banana/plantain leaves), grilling, smoking, currying

Staples: tropical fruits, rice, plantains, breadfruit, yams, chicken, pork, seafood

Seasonings: hot peppers, allspice, ginger, nutmeg, cloves, paprika, onion powder, parsley



Oil down:
coconut milk stew
with meat,
dumplings, green
banana, yam,
potatoes



Callaloo soup:
puréed, stewed
greens in
coconut milk
broth, topped
with crab



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Any Questions?