

# The Heat is ON at the “culinary Olympics”



## Members of ACF Culinary Team USA prepare for international competitions in Erfurt.

By Leah Spellman, Public Relations Specialist, American Culinary Federation

At the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, more than 10,500 athletes from more than 200 nations will compete, representing their sport and their country. As the Olympic Games begins August 8, another U.S. team is honing its skills and preparing for a culinary competition of international proportions.



The 22nd Internationale Kochkunst Ausstellung (IKA) International Culinary Art Exhibition, more commonly known as the “culinary Olympics,” will draw more than 40 nations together for a four-day competition that takes place every four years. National, regional, pastry and youth teams, as well as individual competitors, will battle it out in their respective categories, defending their region’s cuisine. ACF Culinary Team USA will compete for the gold in Erfurt, Germany, October 19-22, in what Edward Leonard, CMC, AAC, ACF Culinary Team USA manager, calls, “the largest culinary event on the global circuit.”

### The Chefs

ACF Culinary Team USA is the official representative team of the United States in major national and international culinary competitions. It comprises one national team, two regional teams and a youth team. Team members represent several areas of the industry. They are executive chefs at country clubs and hotels, owners of restaurants and catering companies, and chef-instructors at culinary schools.

America began competing in the IKA in 1956. At the most recent IKA in 2004, ACF Culinary National Team USA took home the gold medal in hot-food cooking, earning the title of World Champion in that category. Other awards include third overall ranking in the world by ACF Culinary Regional Team USA, sixth overall in the world by ACF Culinary Youth Team USA, and second place overall by ACF Culinary Pastry Team USA.

Like Olympic athletes, ACF culinary competitors do not become champions overnight. To earn one of the 21 spots on one of the four teams is a great accomplishment and a milestone in a chef’s career.

### Teams & Tryouts

ACF Culinary National Team USA represents the best in the industry. Currently there are three certified master chefs, of which there are only 61 in the country, on the team. Tryouts for the national team, ACF Culinary Regional Team USA and AAC Culinary Regional Team USA were held at the National Restaurant Association Restaurant, Hotel-Motel Show in Chicago in 2006. ACF Culinary Youth Team USA was chosen at a competition held during the 2007 ACF National Convention in Orlando, Fla., in July 2007.

As is the case with sports, talent is only one element contributing to victory. Training, discipline and drive are crucial for a competitor’s success. All teams have their

own practice regimen. The national team has scheduled practices about every six weeks, but team members, who work full time in the industry, also devote their personal time to researching, refining their menus and sending pictures of plate-ups and ideas to each other.

“Leaving our legacy in the history of ACF Culinary Teams awaits us in Erfurt. If we succeed at our goal and achieve our objectives, the legacy of American cuisine is in our hands,” says Leonard.



From left to right: Joachim Buchner, CMC; Edward Leonard, CMC, AAC; Richard Rosendale, CEC; and Daniel Scannell, CMC.

So, as Olympic teams from around the world journey to Beijing to compete for the gold, members of ACF Culinary Team USA are preparing for a journey and competition of their own. With competing teams from Australia to Canada and Sweden to South Africa, ACF Culinary Team USA is certain that once they step into the competition kitchen, the heat is on.

Visit [www.acfchefs.org](http://www.acfchefs.org) to read bios and learn more about ACF Culinary Team USA.

## A Recipe from a Certified Master Chef

Are you looking for a great new recipe to enjoy during the summer months? Try this New England Lobster Roll, created by certified master chef Daniel Scannell, executive chef at Carnegie Abbey Club, Portsmouth, R.I. Scannell is a member of 2008 ACF Culinary National Team USA, and was on the winning 2000 and 2004 teams.

*Cooking with America's Championship Team* (Feeding Frenzy, Inc., 2005) offers more than 100 recipes from 2004 ACF Culinary Team USA.

### New England Lobster Roll

Daniel Scannell, CMC

Serves 4

#### Lobster Rolls:

- 16 oz. cooked Maine lobster meat
- 3 T. diced, blanched celery
- 1 T. minced onions
- ¾ cup mayonnaise
- 2 t. lemon juice
- 2 t. Old Bay Seasoning
- 1 t. celery salt
- 1 t. ground black pepper
- 2 t. dry mustard powder
- 1 T. minced red bell pepper
- 1 T. chopped Italian parsley

#### Polenta Fries:

- 4½ cups water
- 2 t. kosher salt, plus more to sprinkle on fries
- 4 T. unsalted butter
- 1 cup yellow cornmeal
- ½ cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, plus more to sprinkle on fries
- 2 cups flour
- 2 cups vegetable oil

#### Finish and Serve:

- 4 New England rolls or white bread slices
- 3 T. melted unsalted butter
- 4 lettuce leaves
- 4 tomato slices
- 4 pickle planks sprinkled with celery salt

#### To Make the Lobster Rolls:

*Method:* Cut lobster meat into chunks. Set aside in large mixing bowl. In another bowl, mix together blanched celery, onions, mayonnaise, lemon juice, Old Bay, celery salt, pepper and mustard. Stir in bell pepper and parsley. Fold in lobster meat. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours and up to 24 hours.

#### To Make the Polenta Fries:

- 1) In a 2-quart stainless-steel saucepan, bring water and salt to a boil. Add 2 T. butter. Whisking constantly, very slowly whisk cornmeal into water.
- 2) Once all cornmeal has been incorporated, lower heat to low and switch to wooden spoon. Continue to cook, stirring, for 10 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in remaining 2 T. butter and cheese.
- 3) Line baking sheet with parchment paper. Spread polenta evenly over parchment. Cover with plastic wrap; refrigerate for 2 hours.
- 4) Using a sharp knife, cut polenta into strips the size of french fries; gently flour polenta. Heat oil to 350°F. Working in batches, fry polenta until golden and crisp. Drain fries. Sprinkle with a little salt and grated parmesan cheese; serve hot.

#### Finish and Serve:

*Method:* Brush rolls with butter; grill on both sides until golden-brown. Fill rolls with lobster salad; garnish with polenta fries, lettuce, tomato and pickle.



From *Cooking with America's Championship Team* (Feeding Frenzy, Inc., 2005)

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