

CONTINENTAL COOKBOOK

By Tammy Briggs

Chef Gerry McLoughlin

GERRY McLOUGHLIN IS CONTINENTAL AIRLINES' FOOD & BEVERAGE DEVELOPMENT manager and corporate executive chef. Early in his career, the European-trained chef specialized in traditional French cuisine; he later moved to the United States to expand his culinary repertoire. Today he has more than 30 years' experience in culinary management. We spoke with our Irish-born chef and asked for a recipe.

Q. What food brings back memories of your childhood?

A. Colcannon, a traditional Irish side dish served at Halloween, made with potatoes and either kale or cabbage. Our mother told us that the leprechaun's magical powers would add money and charms into the steaming pot as it cooked. If you discovered a ring in your portion, it meant you would be the first to marry, a button or a thimble would result in a bachelor or a spinster (an old maid), but if you discovered a sixpence, you'd be rich. We would all eat with anticipation in hopes of discovering a sixpence while dreading to find a ring, because what 8-year-old wants to get married?

Q. When did you come to America?

A. I came for the Chicago St. Patrick's Day parade in 1984. Is it over yet?

Q. If you could have dinner with anyone, who would it be?

A. Auguste Escoffier, who is considered by many as the father of modern French cuisine and perhaps the world's first celebrity chef. He changed culinary trends during his lifetime. He created — amongst other innovations — the à la carte concept and emphasized the use of seasonal foods and lighter sauces. Today, his cooking philosophy and books are still used as the foundation of culinary training. It would be a remarkable experience to dine with him.

Q. What was your most enjoyable restaurant meal?

A. There are a number of components that make an enjoyable meal, including ambience, service, and food. A restaurant may have great food, but if the wait staff continually bumps your chair, that's all you'll remember. As a chef, I tend to critique all of these components wherever I am and will inevitably find something — however minor. But there's one memorable exception. The best dining experience I've ever had was at Charlie Trotter's in Chicago. The ambience was wonderful, the service impeccable, and each of the seven courses was faultless, with perfect temperature, flavor, and presentation. Each course complemented the next, including the wine tasting menu.



Guinness-braised Short Ribs with Colcannon

Ingredients

- 1½ lbs. beef short ribs
- 6 oz. all-purpose flour
- 2 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 large carrots, diced
- 2 stalks of celery, diced
- 2 medium onions, chopped
- 1 can Guinness Stout
- 1 bouquet of thyme, parsley, and bay
- 4 cups beef stock
- 1 head of curly green kale (stems removed), chopped
- 2 lbs. red potatoes, peeled
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- ¼ cup butter
- 8 oz. cream or milk
- 1 bunch of green onions, finely chopped
- 1 Tbsp parsley, freshly chopped

Instructions

1. Trim ribs into 4x2-inch portions; rub with salt and pepper; toss in flour.
2. Place braising pan over medium-high heat; add oil; sear ribs 2 minutes per side; remove ribs.
3. On medium heat, sauté carrots, celery, and 1 chopped onion for 5 minutes; add ribs, beer, herb bouquet, and stock; bring to gentle boil; cover and place in a 375° oven for 2 hours or until very tender. Remove from oven.
4. Strain cooking liquid into a pot; discard vegetables; reduce liquid by half over medium heat. Add ribs back in and heat through.
5. Bring salted water to boil in two medium-sized pots; add kale to one and potatoes to the other; simmer until just tender and remove from heat; drain.
6. Sauté garlic for 1 minute in butter; add 1 chopped onion and cream and bring to a simmer; remove from heat.
7. Add potatoes and mash well; add kale, green onions, and parsley. Mix well; season with salt and pepper.
8. Arrange as shown with pan-roasted carrots and parsnips. Serves four.

7 The number of flight kitchens owned and operated by Continental, allowing us to cater our own flights as well as those of many other airlines.