



## **JohnMichael Lynch**



JohnMichael Lynch started cooking in high school and, as he tells it, “discovered that it was my destiny to be a chef.” After attending the Culinary Education Center of the County of Monmouth in Asbury Park, New Jersey, he went to the Culinary Institute of America where he obtained his bachelor’s degree in culinary management.

JohnMichael knew how important practice was to perfecting his timing for the ACF Greater Atlanta Chapter student culinarian competition, having also competed in the VICASkills USA and the ACF Atlanta Chapter’s Junior Team. But he was determined to push the limit of what he could cook in only one hour’s time. After choosing Lamb Wellington with Smoked Tomato Compote, Braised Artichoke, Glazed Carrots, and Sautéed Swiss Chard, he completed his first practice session only to find he’d run over by a full 20 minutes. From there, he made notes for how to improve his organizational skills as well as the food’s flavor.

It was difficult find the time to practice, since working as a line cook at the Cherokee Town & Country Club in Atlanta meant the kitchen was busy for lunch, dinner and banquet service. But Chef JohnMichael went to work early, set up his mise en place before mealtime, then practiced after dinner service. This made for long days but gave him the confidence that his timing was honed and flavors were perfected.



## **Ender “Andy” Oktayuren**



While growing up in Madison County, Virginia, Ender (“Andy”) Oktayuren started cooking at age three. He began working in a local restaurant at age 14, eventually working his way up from dishwasher to head line cook and pastry chef.

His love of cooking drew him to Joliet Jr. College for Culinary Arts in Joliet, Illinois and to cooking competitions. He won multiple awards while competing with the school’s hot foods team.

Now as a sous chef/pastry chef at the Green Gardens Country Club in Frankfort, Illinois, Chef Andy represented the ACF Louis Joliet Chapter in the student culinarian competition. His winning duck dish pushed the boundaries of his culinary repertoire, since duck was a protein he’d had limited experience cooking. The dish was inspired by his desire for creating new flavors and techniques. After practicing three to four times a week, he became comfortable enough with duck to come away with the award for the central region.



## **Lindsay Kinateder**



From a young age, Lindsay Kinateder, the youngest of six kids, had exposure to international flavors. Her parents, an architectural designer and interior designer by trade, were passionate about cooking and made Sunday dinners a requisite in the household. The family would frequently choose a country to focus on and set about learning how to prepare the national dish. The couple's paella, cooked in an authentic four-foot

Spanish paella pot, is a frequent request at many of Provo, Utah's banquets and weddings.

Lindsay attended Johnson & Wales University in Denver to turn her love of cooking into a career. She attained associate degrees for both chef and pastry chef and a bachelor's in nutrition.

To represent the ACF Colorado Chefs Association, she created an upscale country themed menu with a Choucroute Rabbit Roulade, Braised Leg of Rabbit, Mushrooms de Crème Stuffed Potato Bignon, Wilted Swiss Chard, and a Bouquetiere of Turned Vegetables. To prepare this meal in one hour required practicing three times a week in between working her day job as an Associate Product Development Chef at Leprino Foods and weekends at the Palace Arms in The Brown Palace Hotel, Denver.

Preparing for competition has been central to Chef Lindsay's schedule, practicing three times a week, usually for Denver area ACF chef "judges" who offer critique and suggestions.



## Nicholas Hernandez



Nicholas Hernandez grew up in a small town in Westchester, New York, the middle of five kids of a Puerto Rican father and Italian mother. Eating and cooking traditional cuisine from their home countries had always been a part of Nicholas' upbringing, so it was no surprise that he represented the ACF Chefs and Cooks of the Catskill Mountains by choosing a trio of lobster to showcase his love of seafood and fresh pasta.

While attending State University of New York at Delhi, he was a member of the SUNY Delhi Culinary Hot Food Team as well as other cold food competitions. Nicholas has always looked to other chefs for close inspiration, including the legendary Thomas Keller and Chef Escoffier. His own school's Chef Tom Recinella has been a particularly important mentor to Nicholas, pushing him to compete and perfect his culinary techniques, critical when making a lobster dish in competition.

Today Chef Nicholas works at a local restaurant called Fred's where he translates his cooking competition experiences into making their American regional style of food. Ultimately his philosophy is that sanitation one of his keys to his success in cooking. As Chef Nicholas puts it, "If you work clean, you feel clean, and you cook clean."