



PROGRAM PLANNING IDEAS FROM THE GLOBAL CULINARY INITIATIVE COMMITTEE

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# Hello, World! The GCI Newsletter

## The GCI Global Travel Issue

By The Global Culinary Initiative Committee

Global Culinary Initiative programs help to connect us to cultures and cuisines around the world from right here at home. Dames also go out in search of new culinary experiences through world travel.

Here are observations from some of this year's Dame travelers that could serve as inspiration for future GCI programs.

In this issue, we look at England, Morocco, Italy, Turkey, Ireland and Bulgaria.

### England Susan Fuller Slack, Charleston Chapter

- The great treasure hunt is on! Britons trek through fields for edible plants; chefs seek out wild mushrooms, truffles and herbs from hedgerows.
- Urban foragers visit city parks hunting elderberry flowers for cordials and desserts.
- Demand is great for specialty shops on high streets with a fruiterer, a baker, a butcher and fromager.
- A TV talent show, *The Great British Bake Off*, created a tidal wave of interest in baking.

- Tea is trending, appearing in cocktail pairings like Lapsang Souchong with Scotch, and rose tea with gin and elderberry.
- Flavor notes in chocolate (fruity and caramel) are excellent partners for cheese. British chefs match goat cheese with white chocolate lemon ganache, and 70 percent dark chocolate with Stilton.
- British culinary inspiration comes from the past, often with a modern interpretation. Comfort foods like savory pie and mash are enjoying a renaissance.

### Morocco Zov Karamardian, LA/Orange County

- In the villages, time does not succumb to the demands of industry. It is the gentle flapping of leaves on branches, the plaintive wail of pushcart vendors and the muezzins' call to prayer that mark the passage of time.
- Great food was in abundance at the North African buffet, which we savored in the sunny foothills of the stunning Atlas Mountains.

### A quick take around the world:

- ❖ **Trend:** Ramen, going gangbusters from Sydney to Stockholm, [losing steam](#) in Japan
- ❖ **Global Food Security:** A look at [percentage of household income](#) spent on food, per country
- ❖ **Food Future:** [How to feed](#) our growing planet
- ❖ **Food History:** The [origin of "calamari" in North America](#)—economics, ethnicity and rebranding
- ❖ **Ethnic for Everyone:** To stay relevant, [Arby's adds "gyros"](#)
- ❖ **Foodservice:** France combats [factory-made food](#) in restaurants with new menu icon
- ❖ **Drink:** Try Chinese [Baijiu](#), the most powerful liquor in the world
- ❖ **Global Influences:** Previously obscure ingredients evolve from ["trash to treat to trite"](#)
- ❖ **Equipment:** London's Kingston University graduate [re designs the microwave](#) oven by rethinking modern culinary methods
- ❖ **From Convenience to Cuisine:** [7-Eleven goes gourmet](#) in the Philippines
- ❖ **World Hunger:** [University of California joins](#) the battle

- The medina's narrow alleys are thronged with donkeys and traders. The scents of Africa emit from fresh fruits and mounds of brilliantly colored spices. There are beautifully displayed olives and preserved lemons.
- We learned to make the ubiquitous fresh mint tea, which is the soul of Morocco.
- The culinary world would be a dull place had we not been introduced to the magical, transformative properties of spices—indispensable to every chef on the planet.

### Italy, specifically Puglia and Basilicata Mary Ann Esposito, Boston Chapter

- The cuisine is vibrant and abundant use of vegetables make up a major part of the diet.
- The oldest olive trees are producing the most olive oil in Italy.
- There is a surprising emphasis on meats, especially lamb and goat, given the regions are surrounded by water.
- This area is the durum wheat belt where some of the best breads in all of Italy are made, especially in Altamura dubbed *La citta' del pane* (city of bread).
- A surprising number of women keep the tradition of making various shapes of pasta alive. The most important dish is orecchiette with rape (pasta shaped like little ears and served with broccoli rape).
- The region showcases the purity of traditional recipes that have not been compromised by influences outside the region.
- Artisan cheese trade has grown up.

### Istanbul, Turkey Sharon Olson, Chicago Chapter

- Roaming the old city and emerging new neighborhoods, we discovered Turkey's unforgettable hospitality.
- We started the day in a small outdoor café with local cheeses, tomatoes, cucumber, homemade bread, honey and preserves accompanied by tea.
- The kebab is endlessly popular with locals and travelers alike.
- We indulged in authentic Iskender Kebab; layered flatbread with crispy shaved meat doused in creamy yogurt, melted butter and a tangy tomato sauce.

- We watched the dance of the fishermen along the Bosphorus in choreographic perfection; no one ever seemed to get lines tangled.
- We savored fresh fish simply grilled or cured in-house, accompanied by imaginative side dishes.
- We enjoyed desserts made with local honey, pistachios and pine nuts that were luxurious without being too sweet.
- We had authentic Turkish Delight, a confection made from an old family recipe; it melts into a subtle, slightly sweet flavor memory.

### Ireland Rachel Gaffney, Dallas Chapter

- Eating local is not a trend in Ireland; it is a way of life.
- Seaweed is being used by chefs for stocks and as a base for soups and sauces.
- Artisan butters are appearing all over the island of Ireland.
- Breads, jams and chutneys served in restaurants tend to be house-made.

### Bulgaria CiCi Williamson, Washington Chapter

- The magnificent architecture of Bulgaria is as varied as its cuisine—from fine dining to kebab shops.
- Despite an average income of \$3,479, its capital, Sofia, has many shopping malls replete with all types of restaurants.
- The cuisine is influenced by its neighbors, Greece, Italy, Russia and the Middle East. Menus include grilled meats and vegetables such as *shishcheta* (kebabs); stews; white, brined cheese (*sirene* or сирене), similar to feta; and phyllo dough pastries.
- *Lactobacillus bulgaricus*, the bacteria that cultures yogurt, originated in, and is named for Bulgaria.
- The Russian scientist Ilya Metchnikoff—one of the founders of modern immunology—linked the Bulgarian people's longevity to the yogurt they eat in hefty quantities.
- A traditional Balkan dish, and summertime favorite, is tarator, a cold soup (or "liquid salad") of yogurt, cucumber, garlic, walnut, dill and vegetable oil.
- Despite the many vegetable dishes, Bulgaria is basically a meat-and-potatoes country where lamb and veal are the most popular.

## Program Ideas

- **Morocco:** Explore Moroccan spices and their uses with a Moroccan chef or spice expert.
- **Bulgaria:** Host a session on suppers on a stick, from the *shishcheta* of Bulgaria and the kebab of Turkey, to yakitori of Japan.
- **Ireland:** Find an expert on edible seaweed who can discuss how seaweed is being used in stocks in European and Asian cuisines.
- **Italy:** Explore the more esoteric Italian pasta shapes and best uses with a pasta expert or local Italian chef; hold a pasta-making demo.
- **England:** Find a local forager and go on a foraging outing; return and cook your finds.
- **Morocco:** Hold a session on how tea is prepared around the world, from Moroccan mint tea to Chinese and Thai versions.
- **Turkey:** Invite an expert to prepare Turkish desserts and other regional dessert specialties from neighboring countries; discuss how ingredients and methods are similar and different.
- **England:** Experiment with chocolate and cheese pairings, bringing together local cheese makers and chocolatiers.
- **Ireland:** Host a St. Patrick's Day event with a food historian to share Irish food customs.

## GCI Hosts a Breakfast

Be sure to attend the GCI Breakfast at the LDEI conference in Boston on Saturday, November 1. Kara Nielsen, Culinary Director, Sterling-Rice Group, will explore how understanding global cuisines and food culture can impact your career and business.

### Newsletter Credits

The GCI Committee members are Sandy Hu (San Francisco, Chair), Roberta Duyff (St. Louis), Rachel Gaffney (Dallas) and Susan Slack (Charleston).

Photos for this issue courtesy of Susan Slack and Reni Steves (England), Zov Karamardian (Morocco) and Sharon Olson (Turkey).

