

VOLUME 27 ISSUE 1
BOUQUET GARNI

IS YOUR
CINNAMON
SAFE?

AI is my
Co-Author

WHAT'S
GOING ON
IN BC



THE BOUQUET GARNI

Newsletter of the British Columbia Culinary Arts Specialist Association



President's Message



As we welcome a new school year, it's hard to believe September has already flown by! This time of year is truly special for me. The rush of eager new faces brings an energy and potential that simply lights up our kitchens. After our essential startup lessons—covering knife safety, kitchen safety, weights and measures, equipment, knife skills, and Foodsafe—the excitement and tentativeness of our first-year students sets the perfect tone to impose our standards and expectations that will truly shape the entire school year.

As we move into October and things begin to settle into a routine, I see it as my responsibility to continually challenge each student while maintaining their enthusiasm. While our kitchens thrive on traditional routines, introducing small changes each week can keep the experience fresh and exciting. However, achieving our many goals comes with one major challenge: time.

As chefs, educators, and artists, our minds are brimming with ideas to enhance our culinary arts programs. Whether it's improving classroom management, engaging students, or focusing on specific menus, I often find that our weeks and months flying by can be a limiting factor. Yet, I view this as a privilege; we are a fortunate group, dedicated to our craft and passionate about what we do. It's essential for us to set realistic goals and allow ourselves the grace to adjust when necessary. Remember, achieving a healthy work/life balance is crucial, and it looks different for everyone. Our roles extend beyond those of our teaching colleagues, making it nearly impossible to accomplish everything week after week.

That's why it's vital to lean on one another. With many schools having only one Chef Instructor, building a network like ours within BCCASA is invaluable. I'm excited to connect with many of you at our conference on October 25th. During the AGM, we will share some new goals and plans for BCCASA this year, aimed at fostering

connections among current, past, and potential future members. More importantly, I want every chef instructor to know they are not alone, even if they feel isolated in their schools or districts. We have a vibrant, inclusive community ready to share and support one another.

I hope you all enjoyed a well-deserved Thanksgiving long weekend with family and friends. I am truly thankful for the opportunity to do what I love and to be part of such a strong and incredible PSA. I look forward to seeing many of you in October. If you can't make it, please keep an eye on your email for AGM minutes and upcoming opportunities to connect and grow throughout the year.

Trevor Randle

Editor's note:

Ahhhh, Fall, my favourite time of the year. The impossible heat of summer starts to wane, the leaves turn vibrant colours, my slow cooker comes out from storage, and I rediscover all my flannel shirts. Labour Day, leads to Hallowe'en, which leads to Remembrance Day, which starts off the Christmas countdown. Best of all it's time for one of my favourite weekends of the year, our annual BCCASA Conference and AGM. I'm really looking forward to reconnecting with colleagues and friends in Maple Ridge on October 25th this year.

One thing that I've noticed, as I've regrettably gotten older, is all the new faces I'm seeing at our meet ups. New teaching chefs with new ideas, cooking philosophies and backgrounds. This 'new blood' keeps us evolving and adapting to a changing culinary world, keeps us old chefs in perspective with a changing classroom. I really feel this is vitally important.

One of these new and eager Chefs, is Hunter Schaeferle, my teacher/chef candidate from last year. If you see him on the 25th, introduce yourself. Riverside Secondary in Coquitlam is lucky to have him.

Anyways, hope you enjoy our latest issue! Keep those submissions coming in people.

Your friendly neighbourhood editor,
Stephen Schram

WHAT'S GOING ON

...around British Columbia

New Jackets for Langley Culinary Class

By Jason Edge

Walnut Grove Secondary School, Langley BC



When I got to the school in 2018 the program was struggling with numbers, not many repeat students...we had white jackets for first year students, and black jackets for second year (there weren't many of them). As we got more repeat students we decided to add Grey Jackets in 2020 for students who were taking the course 3+ times and got them embroidered with the cafe logo, and also their names!

The students in the grey jackets are so excited to receive them. Younger students can go to them and approach them...and know their names. They are a big help in the kitchen when it's busy as they can answer many questions

that young students have. Students in grey jackets really take ownership of their stations and the kitchen. It's been a big piece of the culture shift in the kitchen and creating a culture of ownership. Students always ask if they get a grey jacket in their third year when choosing courses. And when the students graduate...they keep their jackets! A couple have gotten their classmates to sign them.

When it's all said and done it costs maybe \$50-\$60 a jacket per student...but the culture it has created, and honestly the stress of answering hundreds of questions a day instead of thousands is well worth it.

Jackets are from Textile Innovations. Graphics are done and embroidered by Emblazon Design in Langley. Names were put on by textile class here at the school!

Cookie Art You Can Eat!

By Karen Caruthers

Thomas Haney Secondary School, Maple Ridge BC

I'm excited to share a new and creative addition to our teaching kitchen at THSS! In collaboration with a teacher from another department, we've taken cookie decorating to the next level.





Heidi Gawehns shared her incredible cookie artistry skills, helping our students design what we now call the *Thunder Cookie*, served daily in our cafeteria.

The students love putting their creativity to the test, using our specialty logoed cookie as a canvas to create unique designs. This collaboration has not only enhanced their decorating skills but has also fostered a great sense of pride in their work.

Day at The Farm

By Anastasia Fey, Maya Gottschalk, Kinsley Mulli, & Avni Sandhu

Lori Pilling, Teacher
Delta Secondary, Ladner BC

We, the Delta Secondary School student volunteers, spent our day at the farm on Westham Island. We got picked up in the morning by our teacher, Chef Pilling, to drive to the West Island Herb Farm.

We started our day off, with Chef Randle, making bacon hash served with chipotle mayo, and a poached egg. Around an hour and a half later we began to cut and serve chicken and corn quesadillas



with cilantro lime sauce. As a group we started to create a system in which we were able to increase productivity without getting in each other's way. After the lunch dish, we started to caramelize sugar with a torch on the crème brûlée. We felt the thankfulness of the customers, which was very heartwarming.

We had time to look around the farm and get our own impression of what the day is about. Our impressions of the Day at the Farm were very positive and educational. We had a chance to talk to the farm visitors about school projects, and the fact that all the ingredients in our dishes were produced and formed by BC Farmers.

We enjoyed ourselves and would love to participate again next year!



OCTOBER
25



**FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO
HARVEST: A CULINARY
CELEBRATION OF LOCAL
INGREDIENTS**

**Garibaldi Secondary School
8:30am - 3:30pm**

This PSA Day will have the 2024 BCCASA Conference and AGM hosted in Maple Ridge. This one day will be filled with local specialty food suppliers showcasing their products and talking about their passions. We will also be treated to a guest speaker from SD #42 to showcase and discuss some unique assessment tools you may want to implement into your teaching kitchen. The day will wrap with a locally inspired lunch and time for reflection and collaboration. Registration details TBD, stay tuned.

COST: \$200.00 (Includes \$30 membership fee)

See you in Maple Ridge!

Full sized pdf can be found [HERE](#) or at www.bccasa.ca

2024 BCCASA Conference Agenda



8:30am - 9:00am - Registration and morning refreshments compliments of Garibaldi Secondary School Culinary Arts Students

9:00am - 9:45 - BCCASA Annual General Meeting

10:00am - 12:00pm - Vendor Tour. Specialty Food Vendors will showcase and share their products and discuss their operations. Vendors will include owners and operators from Ponderosa Mushrooms, Bruce's Country market and Deep Roots Family Farm. As well, the SD #42 District Assessment team will share culinary arts specific assessment ideas created especially for this conference.

1:00pm - 3:00pm Participants will transport themselves 10 minutes to the Kingfisher Waterfront Restaurant for a locally inspired plated lunch and group collaboration.



AI IS MY CO-AUTHOR

A series of articles written with help from Chat GBT... our students use it, why shouldn't we?



Culinary Traditions of Mexico's Day of the Dead Celebrations

By Stephen Schram and his Robot Friend

Christmas is OK, it's a nice time of year and always fun to spend time with family, but Hallowe'en is my jam. Candy, tricks and treats, spooky decorations, falling autumn leaves, a full moon, the impending sense of doom. Other than chocolate and sugar there's not much to look forward to food-wise except the eventual hard sugar rush and crash.

For great food with ghastly twist at this time of year we need look no further than Mexico. The Day of the Dead, or Día de los Muertos, is a vibrant and deeply meaningful celebration in Mexico that honors deceased loved ones. This annual event, observed on November 1st and 2nd, combines ancient indigenous customs with Spanish influences, creating a unique cultural tapestry that includes rich culinary traditions. Food plays a pivotal role in these festivities, serving both as an offering to the departed and as a way for families to gather and celebrate life.

Food during Día de los Muertos is not just about sustenance; it is a spiritual connection between the living and the dead. Families create altars, or ofrendas, adorned with photographs, flowers, candles, and, importantly, food that the deceased enjoyed in life. The belief is that the spirits return to earth during this time, and offering their favorite dishes provides nourishment and welcomes them back.



Traditional foods prepared for the celebrations are steeped in symbolism and cultural significance. Each dish carries its own meaning, often linked to the region's history, agricultural practices, and culinary heritage.

Pan de Muerto

One of the most iconic foods associated with Día de los Muertos is pan de muerto, or "bread of the dead." This sweet, soft bread is often shaped like a skull or decorated with dough bones, symbolizing the cycle of life and death. The bread is typically flavored with orange blossom or anise and dusted with sugar. Families bake this bread as an offering and also enjoy it during the celebrations, often accompanied by hot chocolate or atole, a traditional warm corn-based beverage.

Sugar Skulls

Calaveras de azúcar, or sugar skulls, are another popular treat. These colorful skull-shaped confections are made from sugar and decorated with vibrant icing, reflecting the joyful and celebratory nature of the holiday. Each skull is often inscribed with the name of a deceased loved one, personalizing the offering. While sugar skulls are primarily decorative, they symbolize the sweetness of life and are often consumed as a reminder of the fleeting nature of existence.

Tamales

Tamales are a staple in Mexican cuisine and play a significant role during Día de los Muertos. These are made from masa (corn dough) filled with various ingredients such as meats, cheeses, or vegetables, and wrapped in corn husks before being steamed. The preparation of tamales is often a communal activity, bringing families together in the kitchen to share stories and laughter as they work. Tamales served during the celebration may include special fillings or be shaped in unique ways to honor the deceased.

Mole

Mole, a rich and complex sauce often made from chiles, chocolate, nuts, and spices, is a dish that showcases the

depth of Mexican culinary tradition. During Día de los Muertos, families may prepare mole to serve on special occasions, particularly when honoring their ancestors. The dish varies regionally, with each area boasting its own unique recipe and preparation method, making it a fitting representation of the diverse cultural landscape of Mexico.

Fruits and Drinks

Fruits like oranges, pomegranates, and apples are often included on the altar, symbolizing the cycle of life and death. Atoles, along with hot chocolate, are commonly served as warm beverages to accompany the food offerings. These drinks not only provide comfort but also create a warm atmosphere for family gatherings.

The culinary traditions of Día de los Muertos are a testament to the rich cultural heritage of Mexico. Through food, families express love, remembrance, and the continuity of life. The flavors and aromas that fill homes during this celebration are more than mere dishes; they are a bridge connecting the past with the present, allowing loved ones to be honored and remembered. As families come together to prepare and share these meals, they participate in a timeless ritual that embodies the essence of life, death, and the enduring bonds of love. Through these culinary practices, the spirit of the departed lives on, celebrated in every bite.

A Traditional Recipe: Pan de Muerto

4 cups all-purpose flour
1 cup sugar
1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened
1/2 cup milk, warmed
4 large eggs
2 teaspoons active dry yeast
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon orange blossom water (or vanilla extract)
1/2 teaspoon anise seeds (optional)
1 egg (for egg wash)
Extra sugar (for dusting)

In a small bowl, combine warm milk and yeast. Let it sit for about 5-10 minutes until frothy.

In a large mixing bowl, combine flour, sugar, and salt. Make a well in the center and add the yeast mixture, eggs,

orange blossom water, anise seeds (if using), and softened butter.

Mix until a dough forms, then knead for about 10 minutes on a floured surface until smooth and elastic.

Place the dough in a greased bowl, cover with a cloth, and let it rise in a warm place for about 1-2 hours, or until doubled in size.

Punch down the dough and divide it into two parts: one larger for the main loaf and a smaller portion for decoration (bones). Shape the larger piece into a round loaf and form the smaller piece into bone shapes to place on top.

Place the shaped dough on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Cover and let it rise again for about 30-45 minutes.

Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C).



Beat the extra egg and brush it over the bread for a shiny finish.

Bake for 25-30 minutes, or until golden brown. Let cool on a wire rack. Once cooled, dust with sugar to finish.

Pan de muerto is best enjoyed fresh, often served with hot chocolate or atole. It can be placed on the altar as an offering or shared among family members during the celebrations.

TREASURER'S REPORT

October 8, 2024

The BCCASA financial report for our previous school year from July 1st, 2023 to June 30th, 2024 is as follows:

- On July 1st, 2023 we had a balance in our accounts of \$ 13,702.03. At the end of the school year on June 30th, 2024 our balance was \$13,396.32.
- Our income is largely based on a BCTF grant for \$6,000., Conference grant was \$3,000. and our PSA membership fees \$2,674.00
- Our expenses in total \$30,262.96 mostly for conference costs of \$23,868.29 for Vernon and \$1,698.92 for Squamish. The remainder was used for meetings, chapter support, office supplies sunshine fund and other miscellaneous costs.

The full breakdown for our receipts (income) and disbursements (expenses) can be seen in the BC Culinary Arts Specialist Association Y075 Statement from the BCTF, and the BCTF Expense Report for the month ending June 30, 2024. This will be attached to the minutes of this AGM and posted on our BCCASA website.

The BCCASA financial report for this school year from July 1st, 2023 to September 30th, 2024 is as follows:

- On July 1st, 2023 our balance was \$13,702.13 and our most recent report on October 8th, 2024 has our balance at \$13,396.32.



BC CULINARY ARTS SPECIALIST ASSOCIATION Y750**STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS (Note 1)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED June 30, 2024
(Unaudited)**

	2023-24	2022-23
Balance, July 1	\$ 13,702.03	\$ 23,783.35
<u>Receipts</u>		
BCTF grant	6,000.00	6,000.00
Membership/subscription fees	2,674.00	881.00
Interest income	607.66	616.47
Conference fees	16,695.59	18,262.58
Conference grants	3,000.00	-
Conference miscellaneous	980.00	-
	<u>29,957.25</u>	<u>25,760.05</u>
<u>Disbursements</u>		
Meeting-executive	1,752.47	2,425.39
Meeting-table officers	389.53	-
TTOCs-executive meetings	-	465.00
TTOCs-general	271.18	-
Operating expenses	83.08	293.60
Furniture & equipment purchase	1,808.32	140.96
Projects	-	29.00
Scholarships	1,100.00	(1,100.00)
Miscellaneous expenses	1,239.49	1,691.00
Conference-operating	3,195.09	9,849.01
Conference-facilities	576.00	1,300.00
Conference-catering	17,634.58	20,108.97
Conference-committee costs	1,110.60	28.78
Conference-miscellaneous	166.62	9.66
Conference-speakers	936.00	600.00
	<u>(30,262.96)</u>	<u>(35,841.37)</u>
Balance, June 30	\$ 13,396.32	\$ 13,702.03

Notes:

1. This statement reflects only funds held by the BC Teachers' Federation on behalf of the BC Culinary Arts Specialist Association.

NOTES FROM THE BACK OF HOUSE

...great thoughts on what we do

'Troubling' amounts of lead found in U.S. cinnamon samples, but brands not sold in Canada

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency is 'not currently aware of any Canadian distribution' of the 12 worst offenders flagged by Consumer Reports

By Laura Brehaut

Published Sep 16, 2024

Accessed at

<https://nationalpost.com/life/food/cinnamon-lead>

The season of all thing's cinnamon is upon us, and a new study likely has Americans checking their brands before adding a dash to their pumpkin spice. A Consumer Reports study found high levels of lead in one-third of the cinnamon powders and spice blends tested.

Food safety scientists from the nonprofit consumer organization tested 36 ground cinnamon products found at major grocery stores and smaller markets, including spice blends that contain cinnamon, such as garam masala and five-spice powder. They found 12 that measured above one part

per million (ppm) of lead, with the highest levels detected in Paras cinnamon powder (3.52 ppm) and EGN cinnamon powder (2.91 ppm). Several of the brands that fared worst in the testing didn't respond to a request for comment.

The study follows 2023's U.S. Food and Drug Administration recall of cinnamon apple puree and applesauce products identified as the cause of lead poisoning in more than 500 children. None of the brands Consumer Reports studied came close to the "astronomical" amount in last year's lead-contaminated cinnamon apple pouches — the highest of which reached 5,110 ppm.

Still, James Rogers, the director of food safety research and testing at Consumer Reports, said that a quarter teaspoon of the products with the highest level of contamination contains more lead than a person should consume in a day and recommends throwing them away. "Even small amounts of lead pose a risk because, over time, it can accumulate in the body and remain there for

years, seriously harming health."

According to the study, the world's cinnamon comes mainly from Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. Lead occurs naturally in the environment and can enter the food supply through water or the earth. Trees growing in contaminated soil or old machinery used in processing are some of the ways lead could enter the spice supply chain.

An EGN distributor told The Washington Post that it had removed the company's cinnamon powder from stores, and a representative for a former distributor of Paras cinnamon powder, Apna Wholesale, reportedly said that it "immediately sent a recall letter" following the consumer group's report. "We also stopped buying or importing any cinnamon powder," they told The Washington Post. "We have taken all the necessary steps."

Consumer Reports identified 24 other cinnamon products, from brands such as 365 by Whole Foods Market, Sadaf, McCormick and Simply Organic,

as fine to use. The six posing the lowest risk included 365 Whole Foods Market Ground Cinnamon, 365 Whole Foods Market Organic Ground Cinnamon, Sadaf Cinnamon Powder and Sadaf Seven Spice blend.

“These products demonstrate that it’s possible to produce cinnamon with no lead or extremely low levels,” said Rogers.

According to the BC Centre for Disease Control, “There is no safe level of lead in the blood.” Children under five are especially vulnerable to lead’s adverse health effects. However, some experts say you’d have to eat a lot of cinnamon for the level of lead contamination found in Consumer Reports’ study to pose a problem.

“It’s a question of how much you’re swallowing, how old the child is, and the concentration, of course,” Jack Caravanos, a clinical professor of environmental public health sciences at New York University, told The Washington Post. “If I was advising my daughter feeding her kids, I would say I wouldn’t quite worry about this right now. I would stay with name-brand products and spices.”

The Codex Alimentarius Commission, an international food standards body, set a limit for bark spices at 2.5 ppm, according to Ars Technica, and the European Union adheres to a maximum allowable lead concentration of 2 ppm. According to the CFIA, Health Canada doesn’t have an “established maximum limit for

lead in spices.” The two agencies “routinely monitor the concentrations of lead in a wide variety of foods sold in Canada.”

The CFIA told the National Post by email that it’s aware of the reports “and has been in contact with U.S. authorities, who are currently investigating.” The agency will notify the public of any recalls on the recalls and safety alerts website if new information comes to light and encourages consumers to sign up for food recall notifications.

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Have something to share?

Response to an article?

Great recipes?

Wanna join the Executive?

LET US KNOW!

Please send any
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It is important that we keep
BCCASA current,
Sharing the ideas and voice of Chef Instructors
throughout British Columbia

