

Meetings Focus south

CELEBRITY CHEF ANTHONY Bourdain once remarked, “The history of the world is on the plate,” and this is resoundingly true in Georgia, its soulful, sweet-toothed culinary narrative written in international influences and ingredients.

Low Country cuisine, shared with South Carolina, mixes Creek Indian origins with West African, Spanish, French and British elements. North America’s first-recorded barbecue may have happened along Georgia’s Ocmulgee River in 1540, where Spanish conquistadors, familiar with Caribbean “barbacoa,” discovered Native Americans grilling meat on a raised platform. Shrimping, once Georgia’s premier seafood industry, was pioneered by Sicilians, Greeks and other nationalities. Scottish and Irish accents define Georgia’s Appalachian menu.

Unabashedly flavorsome and filling, Georgia comforts palates with the familiar—fried chicken, mac and cheese, black-eyed



The Sweet and Savory South

Georgia’s array is pleasing to the palate

peas, grits, biscuits and peach cobbler—while tempting taste buds with intriguing options such as red-eye gravy, rabbit eyes (blueberries), Brunswick stew and native muscadines and scuppernongs (both grapes).



700 KITCHEN COOKING SCHOOL AT THE MANSION ON FORSYTH PARK, SAVANNAH

www.mansiononforythpark.com

As knowledgeable about food as he is engaging and entertaining, Darin Sehnert, chef and culinary director at 700 Kitchen, holds interactive, hands-on classes and tailored culinary events that are a must for Savannah groups. For starters, 700 Kitchen resides in one of the South's most prestigious hotels, the AAA Four Diamond Mansion on Forsyth Park. With design flourishes including pink marble columns and cut-crystal chandeliers, this 126-room grande dame from 1888 offers more than 13,000 square feet of flexible function space, including the elegant 700 Drayton Restaurant and swank Casimir's Lounge.

"Cooking between the lines," Sehnert's approach is to demonstrate the "why" behind the "how" of Low Country cooking. An avid student and passionate teacher, he'll tell you, for example, how Georgia's signature peanut actually derives from South America and originally served animals before Civil War shortages put it on the human menu.

"We want to share ideas and experiences that translate into your cooking at home," Sehnert says.