



PROGRAM PLANNING IDEAS FROM THE GLOBAL CULINARY INITIATIVE COMMITTEE



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The Power of Culinary Diplomacy

by The Global Culinary Initiative Committee

Culinary Diplomacy

Diplomacy is the art and practice of cultivating peaceful, international relationships by foreign ministries and diplomats. Culinary Diplomacy, an emerging field in diplomatic studies, uses cuisine and hospitality as powerful tools to engage and unite during official diplomatic functions. At the diplomatic table, good food and good moods are essential to developing cross-cultural understanding, mutual trust, and productive relations. [Hillary Clinton](#) called food “the oldest diplomatic tool.” Historically, it has played a significant role in promoting peace and shaping the world since the time of Greek philosopher Aristotle. Explore “[Culinary Diplomacy: The nexus between food, culture, and international relations](#)” through essays, blog posts, and podcasts, which focus on culinary, cultural, and public diplomacy, food studies, culinary history, communication, and nation branding. A new perspective identifies “[three pillars](#)” of Culinary Diplomacy.

Gastrodiplomacy

[Public Diplomacy](#) is an interactive dimension of Diplomacy in which sovereign countries or organizations communicate directly with foreign citizens. [Gastrodiplomacy](#), an important subset of Public Diplomacy, works in tandem with Culinary Diplomacy. It is practiced through people-to-people connections and builds “soft power” to educate foreign popula-

tions on cultural traditions and foodways, and to promote national image. In 2002, Thailand pioneered the practice of Gastrodiplomacy, followed by Taiwan, South Korea, Peru, the U.S. State Department, and other countries.

Soft Power

[Soft Power](#), a term coined by international relations scholar Joseph Nye, is a persuasive diplomatic approach used by state-channels, non-government organizations, and private citizens and includes the use of cultural influences, values, policies, and reputation.

Conflict Cuisine ®

[Dr. Johanna Mendelson Forman](#) says [Conflict Cuisine](#) and the use of food to persuade and educate is a form of soft power. During the Global Culinary Initiative (GCI) program at LDEI’s 2016 Conference, she discussed two forms of Conflict Cuisine: food in conflict zones and the food of diaspora populations transferred to new countries. Johanna asked, “Is the Kitchen the [New Venue](#) for Foreign Policy? Shift the conversation to the [transformational](#) role food plays as a proxy for understanding the political dynamics of interna-

tional relations. Co-Speaker Lauren Bernstein discussed the Soft Power of food and the role of official ambassadorial entertaining, working lunches, and State Department dinners through Culinary Diplomacy. [Margaret Happel-Perry](#) reviewed the program in the winter issue of the [Quarterly](#) (page 25).

The Migrant Kitchen

The definition of [migrant](#) is broad but generally, it’s a person who leaves his/her country of origin to seek temporary or permanent residence in another country. The word migrant is sometimes used for immigrant. [The Migrant Kitchen](#) in Los Angeles’ explores the booming food scene through the eyes of a new generation of chefs whose cuisine is inspired by the immigrant experience. Seattle’s [Project Feast](#) provides culinary job training for immigrants and refugees (mainly women) so they can find sustainable employment in the food industry. Unlike an immigrant who voluntarily leaves his/her country, a [refugee](#) is compelled to flee to a foreign country or power to escape danger or persecution. [This site](#) further defines the terms emigrate, immigrate, and migrate.

Click on the links to explore a wealth of stories, ideas, and resources. Hospitality, food, and wine are among LDEI’s greatest sources of soft power. Leverage these tools to design chapter programs that allow Dames to embrace and share cultural diversities and promote cross-cultural understanding in communities.

Culinary Diplomacy in Action

- The UN [Delegates Dining Room](#) in New York City offers a chance to dine alongside ambassadors, delegates, and international dignitaries.
- French diplomat Talleyrand told Napoleon Bonaparte, “Give me a good chef and I shall give you good treaties.” The celebratory [state dinner](#) has been used worldwide as the most notable form of culinary diplomacy to engage others in a formal setting.
- “If politics divides people, a good table always gathers them.” The [Club des Chefs des Chefs](#) (CCC) brings together chefs of various heads of state from different countries around the world.
- “Food is our common ground... a universal experience.”—James Beard. In 2012, the [Diplomatic Culinary Partnership](#) launched at the State Department in partnership with the James Beard Foundation, and with the support of [Susan Ungaro](#) (New York), to engage in high-level, formal Diplomacy by collaborating with a network of renowned chefs. Chefs of the American Chef Corps participate in Public Diplomacy programs to bring together foreign publics.
- Culinary Diplomacy is alive and well in [Ottawa](#), Canada, where there are about 130 embassies and high commissions.
- Asif Ahmad, the [British Ambassador](#) to the Philippines, practices effective “Culinary Diplomacy” of a different kind.

Grassroots Diplomacy

- The Gastrodiplomacy campaigns of six nations are [mapped](#) and compared for strategic communication planning in branding themes, message appeals, strategies, and for promoting their national cuisines and culinary cultures to the world.
- As a spin-off of the 2015 Milan Expo World Fair, 105 Italian embassies and consulates around the world planned a Worldwide Week of [Italian Cuisine](#) in 2016 with 1,300 food-related events.
- “Hunger is a weapon of war; food is a weapon of peace.”—World Food Programme (WFP). Rather than handing out generic grain rations, the WFP’s [voucher](#) program allows families, including refugees, to buy ingredients they prefer in order to cook their own meals.
- The Korean government helps spread its influence by supporting Korean people to establish Korean restaurants throughout the world. They also encourage the export and popularization of the most ubiquitous of Korean foods—[kimchi](#). The Korean Cultural Center in Egypt sponsors cultural culinary [contests](#) to promote Korean culture and cuisine.
- China wields “[chopstick diplomacy](#)” to promote Chinese culture throughout Latin America.
- Chef Walter Whitewater from the Diné (Navajo) Nation was one of several Culinary

Diplomats to prepare [Native American](#) cuisine for events in St. Petersburg, Russia in 2016.

- Seattle Dame [Jerilyn Brusseau](#) has done considerable cultural and culinary diplomacy through her nonprofit [Peace Trees Vietnam](#). Jerilyn and her 92-year-old mom, Rae Cheney, honor their brother and son, an Army helicopter pilot shot down in 1969, by building bridges of peace and friendship between the people of Vietnam and the United States.
- [Sweet Home Café](#) at the National Museum of African-American History and Culture in Washington, D.C., gives visitors a first-hand taste of African-American foods and dishes inspired by immigrant populations like the large Caribbean and West Indian communities that settled in the north. Dame [Carla Hall](#) (Washington, D.C.) is the museum’s culinary ambassador.
- In an era of globalization, health issues have become increasingly preeminent in the evolving global health diplomacy agenda, as leaders in academia and policy consider how to structure and use diplomacy for global [health goals](#).

A Dash of Diplomacy

- Kitchens don’t recognize borders. The initiative, [Recipes for Peace](#), aims to discover and raise awareness of similarities between the culinary cultures of Armenia and Turkey. This may contribute to long-term reconciliation efforts.
- Northeast Dame [Dorie Greenspan’s recipe](#) for World Peace Cookies appears in *Dorie’s Cookies*, (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016). Decadent with chopped, bittersweet chocolate and *fleur de sel*, fans believe a daily dose can bring about planetary peace. Dorie says, “What I know for sure is that everyone who has these cookies smiles, and smiles are pretty powerful.”
- An Iranian immigrant [baker](#) finds success through Project Feast.
- An all-woman team of Syrian refugees has become Canada’s hottest new [catering](#) company.
- The Syria Supper Club in New Jersey reaches out to [refugees](#), one dinner at a time.
- [Theresa Lin](#) serves as an unofficial culinary diplomat for Chinese cuisine, and spreads gastrodiplomacy in a foreign policy bid to help global gourmands better understand China’s culture and cuisine.
- Using food as a tool of diplomacy, [German](#) and Turkish women cook together to bridge cultural boundaries. The *Buttercreme und Börek* cookbook is a collection of their recipes.

Resettled Kitchens

- [Eat Offbeat](#) delivers authentic, home-style, “off-the-beaten track” cuisine. Ethnic meals are conceived, prepared, and delivered by those who have resettled in New York City from other countries.
- After the renovation of King Street Station

- a few years ago, Seattle has been trying to find a great use for the building’s second floor. The nonprofit [MarketShare](#) proposed transforming it into “a permanent international street-food market that incubates micro-restaurant startups run by low-income immigrant and refugee entrepreneurs.”
- The [League of Kitchens](#) is an immersive culinary adventure in which immigrants teach [cooking workshops](#) in their homes.
- Culture may be at the heart of a solution to world conflicts. London’s [Conflict Café](#) is a pop-up restaurant serving cuisines from countries that experience conflict. It was organized by the peacebuilding charity International Alert. Diners have the opportunity to break bread together and build bridges.
- [EatWith](#) creates a community of passionate hosts and enthusiastic guests allowing travelers to connect in new ways with locals in countries around the world. There are over 200 cities to dine in including London, Mexico City, Los Angeles, Paris, Vancouver, San Francisco, Milan, and Washington, D.C.

For Further Study

- ◆ American University’s School of International Service offers [coursework](#) in, “Conflict Cuisine: An Introduction to War and Peace Around the Dinner Table.” Food is examined as a form of [Smart Power](#) as well as a driver of conflict.
- ◆ Steizer, Cita. *Dinner With Churchill: Policy Making at the Dinner Table*. Pegasus Books, 2013.

Diplomacy on the Plate

Chapter Ideas to Explore

- Explore the protocols for global diplomatic meals.
- Invite local consulate offices to discuss food and nation branding.
- Seek out and support new ethnic restaurants and refugee chefs who are fleeing from global hot spots.
- Support and partner with a woman chef who is a recent immigrant.
- Participate in the [World Food Programme](#) and [World Food Day](#), celebrated yearly on October 16.



Global Culinary Initiative

GCI Committee Susan Fuller Slack (Charleston) and Roberta Duyff (St. Louis), Co-Chairs; Martha Marino (Seattle); Teresa Farney (Colorado); Trina Kaye (Los Angeles); Gail Forman (Washington, D.C.); Sandy Hu (San Francisco) and Suzanne Brown (Atlanta), advisors.

Cover Art: Flags represent countries with LDEI Chapters. By CiCi Williamson, Lauren Bernstein (L) and Johanna Mendelson Forman; and a GCI workshop. By Susan Slack. The GCI Handbook is available in the member’s section of the [LDEI website](#).