

#sharing_our_passion



WHAT'S COOKING

An MCTC Magazine

- **Nutrition · Training · Wellbeing**
For Our People

OPENING NOTES

- Credits & Contributors **p.5**
- Message from the CEO **p.7**
- Message from the Editorial Team **p.9**

TRAINING & GALLEY EXCELLENCE

- Sailing with Knowledge: The Impact of Culinary Training at Sea **p.10**
- Galley Do's and Don'ts: A Guide for Training Participants **p.12**
- Galley Design Innovations **p.15**
- Galley Equipment Hacks **p.18**
- Revolution Below Deck: Inside the Elite Secrets of Maritime Culinary Efficient Food Storage Onboard **p. 20**
- Maritime Meal Cycle: Life Cycle of a Maritime Meal From Port to Plate **p.22**

SUSTAINABILITY & INNOVATION

- Greener Alternatives to Plastic Pallet Wrap **p.24**
- Beyond Compliance: How MCTC Ensures Food Safety & Well-being at Sea **p. 27**
- A Dish That Tells a Story **p.28**

HEALTH & WELLBEING

- Seafarers' Health and Nutrition: Smart Eating at Sea' **p.30**
- Guidelines for Long Voyages **p.33**
- Eating for Energy **p.34**
- Crew Health Monitoring and Health Screening **p.36**
- Well-being Challenges for Mixed Nationality Crews **p.38**

CULTURAL & REGIONAL FOCUS

- India: Global Training Hub Focus **p.40**
- Embracing Cultural Diversity in the Workplace **p.42**
- Cross-Cultural Communication in the Galley: Reflections from Singapore **p.43**

RECIPE CORNER

- Filipino Comfort Food at Sea **p.45**
- The Story of Arroz Caldo in the Philippines **p.48**
- Plant Based Cooking for Maritime Settings **p.50**
- Seafood Orzo Risotto **p.52**
- Sweet at Sea: Desserts from Around the Globe **p.55**



Credits

Contributors

Issue 02 - "What's Cooking: An MCTC Magazine"

We are thrilled to share the second issue of our 'What's Cooking' magazine. This issue wouldn't be possible without our amazing contributors who dedicated their time, creativity and expertise into bringing this edition to life. Thank you for sharing your stories.

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Become one of our Contributors

Have a story to tell, an idea to share, or a project worth highlighting? We would love to hear from you.

This magazine is a platform for the entire **MCTC community**, and **Your Voice Matters**.

To contribute or learn more, contact us at marketing@mctconsultancy.com

01

Message from the CEO



Dear Readers,

Welcome to the latest edition of **'What's Cooking: An MCTC Magazine'**. We are delighted to share with you another issue full of fresh stories, insights and highlights from across the MCTC Community.

Building on the success of our previous issue, this edition offers a deeper look into our activities, initiatives and collaborations. It is a space where the voices of our team, clients and global partners come together to celebrate achievements and exchange ideas and as we work toward excellence in maritime catering, nutrition, wellness, training and crew wellbeing.

Thank you for continuing to be part of our journey.

Warm Regards,
Christian Ioannou
CEO

02

Message from the Editorial Team



Dear Readers,

We are thrilled to be back with another edition of **'What's Cooking: An MCTC Magazine'**.

Since launching this magazine, our goal remains the same: to bring the MCTC Community closer together. Whether you are a crew member at sea, a colleague in the office, a partner or a collaborator 'What's Cooking' is your space to celebrate achievements, spotlight ideas and showcase the people who shape MCTC.

Just as food connects cultures and people this magazine also serves as a bridge, bringing us all together through shared experiences. In these pages we hope you will find once again inspiration and a sense of belonging within our broader MCTC community.

Thank you for joining us for another issue. We invite you to keep sharing your stories and making 'What's Cooking' a true reflection of all of us.

Warm Regards,
The Editorial Team



Sailing with Knowledge: The Impact of Culinary Training at Sea

Maria Georgiadou,
Culinary Training Administrator



Nutritious food and culinary craftsmanship do more than fill plates and bellies; they transform the experience of life while at sea.

Training is, in many ways, a voyage of its own, with a destination different from the vessel you sail on. Every training session, whether delivered onshore or during vessel visits, begins with a single mission: to improve life onboard through knowledge and cooperation.

Our Training Team 'sails' alongside every participant, ensuring they have the confidence to bring their best to the table daily. Culinary Training Consultants are seasoned professionals familiar with the challenges crews face, from tight schedules and limited supplies to the constant rhythm of ship life. Even small changes, like introducing a new dish, can positively shift the onboard atmosphere, enhancing mood and quality of life. Often working quietly in the background, the training team is the backbone of the process, an "invisible engine" keeping every learning journey on track. They anticipate challenges, provide seamless support, and ensure no participant feels stuck. From troubleshooting the learning platform to guiding someone through a complex course, they handle the details so crews can focus entirely on growth.

To ensure comfort and confidence, the Training Team conducts pre-embarkation briefings, setting goals, outlining objectives, and tailoring sessions to each crew's needs. Post-training debriefs identify areas of improvement, celebrate goals met, and provide objective assessments of a participant's progress. Evaluations aren't just about ticking boxes, they help participants realize their own potential. For instance, a Messman or aspiring Chief Cook struggling with bread-making may, with support, produce fresh rolls that become the highlight of the crew's breakfast.

We've witnessed countless instances where devoted cooks, who had lost confidence after years of repetitive menus, rediscover the joy of cooking and pass it on to their teams through encouragement and new menu-planning skills.

Every detail matters. Here are a few examples of how our team supports crew development:

- Technical support: Assisting with offline training modules when vessel internet connectivity is limited.
- Operational support: Coordinating between vessel and training administration to resolve missing documentation issues quickly.
- Career growth: Offering tailored guidance for cooks aspiring to become Chief Cooks, including course recommendations and assessment preparation.
- Follow-up care: Scheduling post-training check-ins to ensure routines and new skills are sustained.

From the first briefing to the final debrief, the Training Team shapes not just culinary skills, but the culture of life onboard. Small interventions, a new recipe, a more efficient workflow, or a word of encouragement, can ripple outward, strengthening teams and creating lasting change.

The true impact of training is not just in dishes prepared or certificates earned, but in the confidence, pride, and inspiration every crew member carries forward on their journey across the vastness of the sea.





Galley Do's and Don'ts: A Guide for Training Participants

Georgia Kapela,
Culinary Training Administrator

Preparing for onshore training is not just about sharpening cooking skills, it's also about developing habits that ensure safety, hygiene, teamwork, and professionalism both in theory and practice.

DOs - Practical Part

1. Maintain proper personal hygiene be freshly groomed, with trimmed nails and good oral care.
2. Wear the right protective gear: gloves, clean aprons, chef hats, proper uniform, and safety shoes.
3. Avoid jewellery or accessories that could contaminate food or cause accidents.
4. Keep uniforms and clothing clean and presentable.
5. Handle all tools and equipment with care, following safety standards.

DOs - Theoretical Part

1. Come prepared with a solid base of culinary knowledge.
2. Share real challenges from onboard experience so instructors can provide practical solutions.
3. Ask questions freely to deepen your understanding.
4. Engage in discussions, your insights help everyone learn.
5. Stay focused and motivated, as MCTC provides goal-oriented learning.

DON'Ts

1. Do not arrive late, punctuality is essential for teamwork and discipline.
2. Avoid ignoring instructions, always follow orders and procedures.
3. Don't neglect hygiene rules, this puts the entire crew at risk.
4. Do not disrupt lessons or distract others during training.
5. Avoid careless mistakes: treat both theory and practice with professional seriousness.



Turning Don'ts into Opportunities

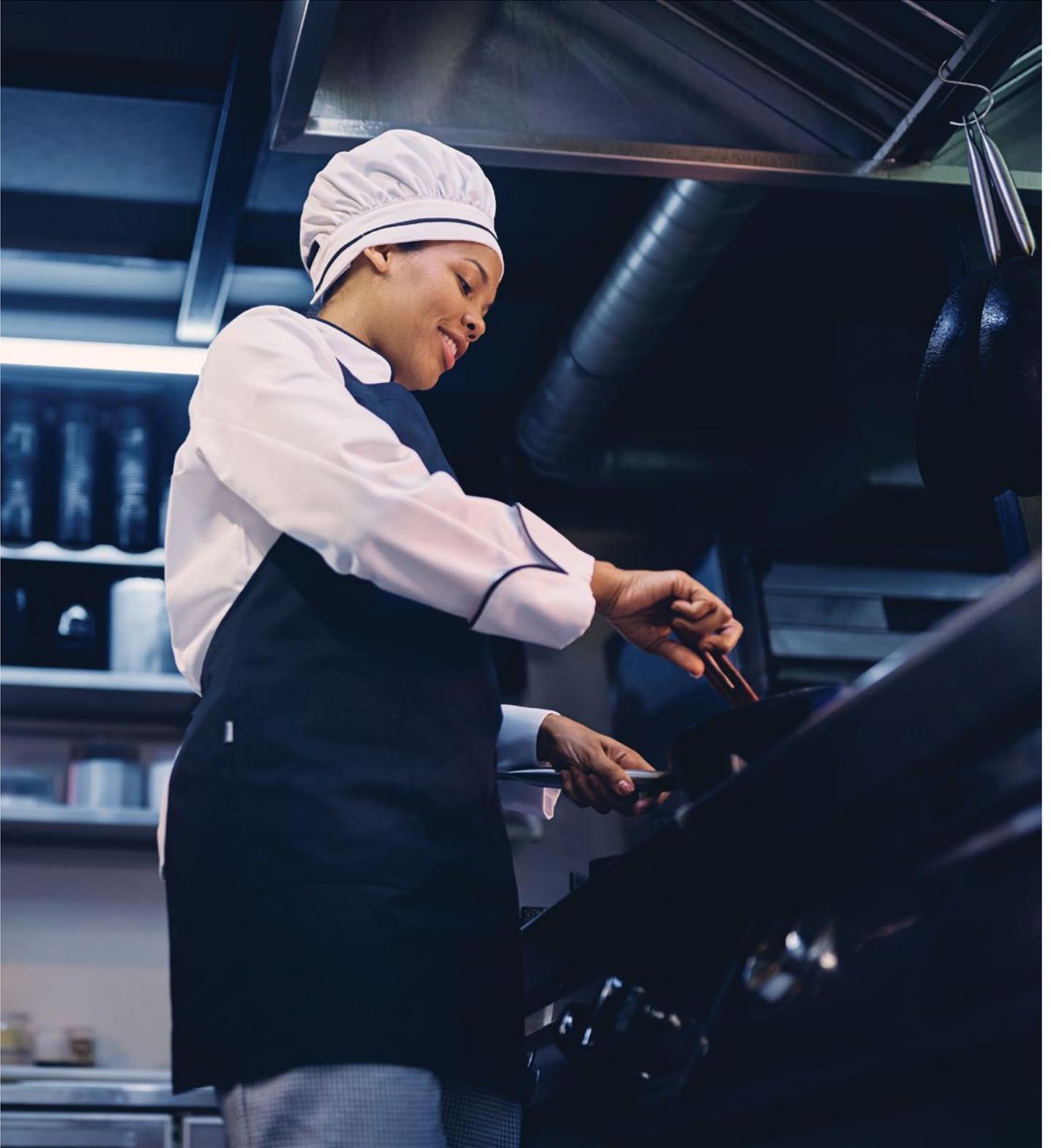
At MCTC, every don't is seen as an opportunity for improvement. Through continuous coaching, mentoring, and hands-on training, participants learn to replace bad habits with best practices. By the end of the course, every crew member is fully prepared to deliver excellence in the galley.

Onshore Training



Healthy, diverse and expertly crafted.
Onshore training for Chief Cooks and
Messmen to master culinary excellence and
bring the comforting taste of home to sea.





Galley Design Innovations

| Tonia Drousiotou,
Culinary Training Supervisor



Having worked closely with galley crews through training and onboard visits, I see both the opportunities and the challenges they face every day. There's a lot of conversation about "innovative" and "eco-smart" galley designs, but for many cooks, the reality onboard is quite different. Outdated spaces, demanding workloads, and limited tools are just a few of the obstacles.

"The galley is the heart of the ship, yet too often it's left behind when it comes to modernization."

While technology and ideas are available, they have not yet become standard practice across the industry. Many challenges faced by cooks are not about effort, they are about working under tough conditions with limited resources. Some of the most common issues include:

- Cross-contamination risks: Poor separation between raw and cooked foods or improper use of cutting boards and utensils
- Poor storage practices: Food stored at the wrong temperatures, leading to spoilage and waste
- Inventory management errors: Missing records, expired products in use, or overstocked items that go to waste
- Crew stuck in old habits: Many cooks have years of experience but have not undergone recent training to adapt to new equipment or procedures
- Poor time management: Often caused by limited organizational skills or by a single person running the entire galley

These challenges remind us that cooks are doing their best with what they have. That's why MCTC places strong emphasis on training, support, and development, empowering crews to overcome obstacles and thrive.

Where Change Is Needed Most

- Modernization of galley layouts: Clear separation between raw food preparation, cooking, and storage reduces cross-contamination, improves workflow, and raises hygiene standards.
- Better storage solutions: Innovative refrigeration, cold-room systems, and smart sensors tracking temperature and humidity should be more widely used.
- Training for today's galleys: Updated programs on food safety, new equipment, inventory management, and time efficiency help crews adapt and maximize their tools.

- A culture of organization: Proper labelling, disciplined mise en place, and vertical storage improve efficiency and morale.
- Standardization onboard: Clear systems for hygiene, storage, and inventory reduce errors and create consistency across fleets.

Examples of innovation include hydroponic systems for fresh greens, water filtration systems to reduce plastic use, multi-functional equipment that saves space, and tablets to support inventory and menu planning. While these tools make life at sea easier, they are still rare.

Looking ahead, key trends shaping the future of galleys include:

- Sustainability: Eco-friendly practices are increasingly expected by ship owners and charterers.
- Digital integration: Tablets, smart monitoring, and digital inventory systems are emerging, though adoption remains limited.
- Artificial intelligence: AI tools can support menu planning, nutrition balance, and predictive inventory management, helping reduce waste.
- Crew well-being: Ergonomic layouts, better lighting, and improved ventilation enhance performance and morale.
- Standardization: Consistent practices across fleets reduce inefficiencies and safety risks.

Real change is needed not only in equipment and design but in training, support, and standardization of galley operations. Smarter layouts, eco-friendly technologies, consistent systems, and continuous training can make kitchens safer, more efficient, and more sustainable.

Above all, this is about people. By focusing on the development of cooks and giving them the tools, systems, and confidence to adapt, galleys can be modernized and truly fit for the future of life at sea.



A Night of Food, Collaboration, and Connection at MCTC Flame Masters: Hamburg

Wilhelmina Steffen
Media & Visual Communications Officer



Where Food Meets Teamwork

On the 25th of September 2025, thirty of our valued clients rolled up their sleeves and tied on their aprons to come together at La Cocina in Hamburg for MCTC Flame Masters Germany.

The concept behind this event is simple yet powerful: bring people together around food, blend teamwork with creativity, and transform cooking into both a challenge and a celebration. This spirit filled the atmosphere throughout the evening, friendly competition mixed with warmth, energy, and laughter. It was less a "stiff tournament" and more, as our menu suggested, a "kitchen party."

Cooking Up Connections

What stood out most as the night unfolded wasn't the competition itself, but the way the kitchen became a space for genuine connection. There was an effortless camaraderie, participants offered tips, shared laughs, and turned small mistakes into moments of fun.

When everyone finally sat down to taste the dishes they had prepared, it became clear how food can break down barriers and spark real bonds. That, after all, is the heart of cooking, and the essence of what Flame Masters is all about.

The Beginning of a Global Journey

What made the Hamburg event especially exciting is that it was only the beginning. This gathering marked the launch of a global initiative, the MCTC Flame Masters series.

From Germany, the Flame Masters experience will travel across continents, bringing together clients, colleagues, and partners in kitchens around the world. Next stops on the culinary journey:

- MCTC Flame Masters Singapore in November
- MCTC Flame Masters Greece in December

These events will round off our 2025 season on a high note, continuing to build bridges through food, collaboration, and creativity.

Looking Ahead

The global journey of MCTC Flame Masters is about more than just cooking. It's a celebration of shared values, a chance to promote healthy choices, celebrate cultural diversity, and strengthen connections across the MCTC family.

As the Flame Masters series continues, one thing remains certain: wherever in the world it goes, it will bring people together, one dish, one laugh, and one unforgettable experience at a time.



Chef's Corner: Galley Equipment Hacks for Flavour & Efficiency

Dominique Beato-Kampitan,
Culinary Training Manager - MCTC Philippines



Resourcefulness, an adjective not often associated with great chefs. Yet in the modern culinary world, nearly every kitchen gadget has a purpose, from speeding up chopping to decorating dishes. But a great chef doesn't need all the fancy tools to produce delicious, heartwarming meals. Here are some tips to bring out resourcefulness in your galley or home kitchen.

Piping Bag - For Hot Dishes

Originally used in the 19th century for pastries and desserts, the humble piping bag has evolved. Today, it's also ideal for hot dishes. Want to add a beautiful design of mashed potato? Make your mash smooth and lump-free, place it in a piping bag, and pipe your desired design directly onto the plate. Fried spring rolls, for example, are delicious but hand-rolling dozens can tire your fingers. Use a piping bag to evenly extrude meat onto wrappers. Place the wrapper on a flat surface, fill the bag with meat (using a plain round tip), and pipe an even layer. Roll seamlessly. No piping bag? A sturdy zip lock bag works just as well.

Condiment Bottles - As Rolling Pins

During the pandemic, many home bakers discovered that baking doesn't require fancy tools. If you don't have a rolling pin, an empty glass condiment or wine bottle works perfectly. Remove labels, clean the bottle, and optionally cover with cling film. Adding water can give it extra weight for flattening dough. Centre the dough and roll from the centre outward. This works well for bread, tart dough, or pastries—just use bottles with an even glass body.

Spoon and Fork - Beyond Utensils

The everyday spoon and fork can be repurposed for kitchen efficiency.

- Spoon: Ideal for peeling ginger. Its curves reach the crevices knives cannot, reducing waste and preserving more of the root.
- Fork: Perfect for poking holes in pizza or pie dough to release steam, crimping pie edges, creating cookie designs, or tenderizing meat for better marinade absorption.

A Gentle Reminder

Explore your pantry and see what other tools can be repurposed. Gourmet meals don't always require expensive gadgets, creativity and resourcefulness go a long way.

HAPPY COOKING!

MCTC Flame Masters: Germany





Revolution Below Deck: Inside the Elite Secrets of Maritime Culinary Efficient Food Storage Onboard

Dumitrel Gheorghita Craciun,
Culinary Training Consultant

In the high-stakes world of maritime hospitality, where the beauty of service masks the challenges below deck, operations must be both efficient and ingenious. Excellence often starts with the smallest detail, and nowhere is this more evident than in food storage.

The backroom operations frequently determine frontline success. In a maritime galley, where space and resources are limited, and the stakes are high, proper food storage is critical. Compliance may be the standard, but the best crews set benchmarks.

“At sea, storing food is not a back-office task, safety, effectiveness, and professionalism are defined by this core competency.”

For professionals who want to set the standard rather than just “get it right,” the tactics, tools, and attitudes that characterize elite maritime food storage are outlined below.

Temperature Zones: Accurately Command

Each food item on board thrives in a particular climate. The three core zones of a high-performing galley are:

- Chill Zone (0-4°C): For produce, dairy, and fresh proteins.
- Frozen Zone (-18°C or lower): Ideal for long-term protein storage and prepared meals.
- Dry Zone (10-21°C): For dry spices, grains, flour, oil, and canned goods.

Leaders ensure employees are trained to interpret and record temperature data and provide each zone with digital thermometers. This guarantees accountability, safety, and consistency, even under pressure.

FIFO: Rotation at the Elite Level

First In, First Out (FIFO) is a golden rule, not just a guideline. Every item brought onboard must be:

- Labeled with date and content
- Stored by type and zone
- Used in the correct order

This method prevents unattended containers, minimizes food waste, and safeguards inventory. Elite teams check for FIFO compliance daily.

Inventory Intelligence: Make the Switch to Digital

Manual expiry logs are a thing of the past. Leading maritime kitchens now use cloud-based inventory tools, including:

- Alerts for expiration dates
 - Sensor-equipped smart refrigerators with remote control
- These tools transform the galley into a finely tuned operation, using data to predict needs, minimize overstock, and prevent loss.

Non-Negotiable Protocols for Preventing Cross-Contamination

Cross-contamination is one of the most hazardous risks in

any kitchen. At sea, mistakes can lead to illness, operational disruption, and reputational damage. Top crews ensure:

- Raw meats are stored in leak-proof containers on bottom shelves
- Separate areas and utensils are used for allergenic foods
- Surfaces are sanitized multiple times daily with food-safe chemicals

Airflow & Humidity: The Invisible Game-Changers

Dry storage isn't just about keeping items cold. It requires continuous airflow and regulated humidity (50-60%). Poor air circulation encourages mold and condensation, while high humidity attracts pests and damages packaging. Elite crews treat their pantry as a controlled environment, not a storage closet.

Perfect Packaging: Increased Shelf Life

Each container matters. Leaders use:

- Vacuum-sealed bags for proteins
- Airtight, BPA-free containers for dry goods
- Clear labels for easy identification and tracking

Proper packaging prolongs supply usability, prevents cross-contamination, and maintains freshness, essential for long voyages.

Portioning and Batching: Ready for Accuracy

Pre-portioning, labelling, and storing products by date increases efficiency and safety. In the event of a recall or contamination alert, this approach enables traceability, a critical quality indicator for inspectors and customers.

Clean Storage = Clean Reputation

Weekly deep-cleaning covers bins, corners, floors, doors, shelving, and areas beneath equipment. Professional kitchens assign tasks, post a weekly sanitation checklist, and record completion with timestamps and signatures. Clean storage demonstrates pride, discipline, and care.

Know the Code: MLC 2006 and Beyond

Compliance with the Maritime Labor Convention (MLC) 2006 is required, but elite kitchens go further:

- Regular safety exercises
- Internal audits
- Error-free external inspections

The MLC addresses galley hygiene, food variety, and quality. Leaders train crews thoroughly, ensuring expertise inside and out.

Act Like a Legend, Store Like a Leader

Proper food storage sets the standard for excellence, unity, and morale on vessels transporting crews from all countries and cultures. Master these concepts and you will not only store efficiently, but also command attention, earn trust, and lead from the kitchen out.

Remember: Keep it cold; keep it clean; keep it compliant.



Maritime Meal Cycle: Life Cycle of a Maritime Meal - From Port to Plate

Stelios Strouthou,
Fleet Supervisor

The journey of a meal onboard a vessel is a complex and carefully managed process that goes far beyond the kitchen. It involves strategic planning, logistical coordination, strict adherence to safety and environmental standards, and the goal of nourishing an international crew. Below is an outline of the life cycle of a maritime meal, from planning in port to enjoyment at sea.

1. Meal Planning & Budgeting

Every meal begins with a carefully crafted plan. Catering teams design menus that balance nutritional value, cultural diversity, and financial constraints. For multinational crews, menus must also consider dietary preferences, religious requirements, and regional tastes.

Weekly Menu Planning - 4 - Week Cycle

- Each day in the cycle offers a different menu; the sequence repeats monthly.

Benefits include:

- Organizing the cook's workload
- Reducing daily galley workload
- Ensuring nutritious meals with diverse ingredients
- Supporting ordering procedures and inventory management
- Following proper food safety plans, including correct thawing
- Reducing food wastage

MCTC provides tailor-made 4-Week Cycle Menus for all vessels, considering crew nationalities, feeding rates, trading areas, and principal requirements.

2. Provision Sourcing & Procurement

Purchasing teams coordinate with local suppliers in port cities. Key considerations:

- Seasonality and ingredient availability
- Vessel port schedule
- Stocking at the most convenient port for quality and cost
- Supplier reliability and standards
- Ensuring goods remain fresh throughout the voyage

3. Port Delivery & Inspection

Upon arrival, provisions are carefully inspected and handled:

- Quality & Quantity Check: Confirm items match the order
- Temperature Control: Frozen meat/fish $\leq -18^{\circ}\text{C}$; chilled items $0-5^{\circ}\text{C}$

Expiration Dates:

- Frozen Meat/Fish/Poultry: 6 months
- Dry Items: 6 months
- Fresh Fruits & Vegetables: 3-4 weeks
- Frozen Vegetables: 6 months
- Tinned Products: 1 year
- Damaged or spoiled items must be returned if possible, and reported to MCTC
- Storage Priority: Perishables stored first

Storage Guidelines:

- Dry: $10-22^{\circ}\text{C}$, cool and dry
- Refrigerators: $0-5^{\circ}\text{C}$, avoid overloading
- Freezers: -18°C or lower, avoid overloading and keep doors closed

4. Storage & Inventory Management Onboard

Proper stock rotation and segregation are critical:

- Segregate dry, chilled, and frozen goods
- Conduct monthly full inventories and weekly spot checks
- Use scales for weight-based items and follow FIFO (First In - First Out)
- Ensure at least two people manage inventory; reports submitted accurately

5. Meal Preparation

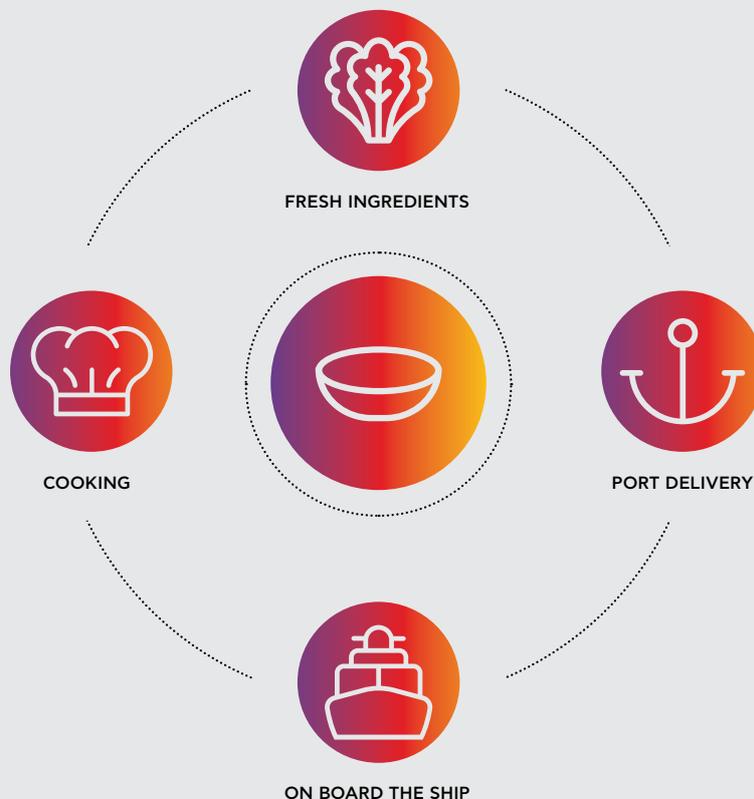
Cooks oversee preparation, ordering, cost control, inventory, cleaning, and galley management. Using a structured menu improves efficiency and quality.

Key Considerations:

- Crew nationalities and dietary preferences
- Inventory levels and ingredient availability
- Trading routes, weather, and voyage conditions
- Special dietary requirements (medical, religious)

Portioning and Cost Control:

- Accurate measurements (e.g., 200 g per beef striploin steak)
- Portion control ensures adherence to recommended ratios to avoid waste
- Careful handling prevents processing losses; maximize yield
- Save trimmings for other dishes and store properly



6. Waste Management

Food waste management is essential for cost control and environmental compliance:

Planning & Portion Control:

- Accurate portion sizes prevent over-serving
- Careful preparation minimizes losses

Leftover Utilization:

- Store leftovers 2-3 days in the refrigerator
- Repurpose for sandwiches, pies, rice dishes, stocks, or soups
- Cool hot leftovers before refrigeration and cover properly

Environmental Responsibility:

- Segregate waste according to MARPOL guidelines
- Compost or recycle organic waste when possible
- Monitor storage and disposal to reduce spoilage

Crew Engagement:

- Train crew on reducing food waste
- Encourage innovative use of surplus food
- Collect feedback to refine menus and portion control

7. Feedback & Adjustment

Crew feedback refines all stages of maritime catering, including:

- Menu balance and cultural appropriateness
- Inventory management effectiveness
- Supply chain arrangements
- Waste reduction and leftover utilization
- Overall satisfaction and morale

Feedback informs the next cycle of meal planning, provision arrangements, preparation, and portion control, ensuring continuous improvement.

Conclusion

The life cycle of a maritime meal demonstrates the complexity and interconnection of seafaring operations. Each stage, from planning and procurement to storage, preparation, and service, requires close collaboration between offshore and onshore teams.

Proper management ensures the nutritional well-being of the crew, enhances morale, fosters community, and promotes sustainability. The success of a maritime meal reflects teamwork, foresight, and dedication, providing crews with the nourishment and energy needed to meet the unique challenges of life at sea.

Greener Alternatives to Plastic Pallet Wrap

Eleni Kyriacou,
Sustainability Officer

Plastic film wrap is one of the most widely used packaging materials in the supply chain, offering stability, affordability, & weather resistance. However, concerns are growing about its environmental & health impacts, particularly the role of microplastics in ecosystems & human health. As sustainability becomes a global priority, the shift away from traditional pallet wrap is both necessary & achievable.



Thanks to advancements in packaging technology, a range of alternatives are now available that are better for the environment and safer for people. Here's a closer look at the most promising options in maritime catering and palletised deliveries.

Reusable Pallet Wraps

Durable and designed from heavy-duty mesh or elasticated fabric, reusable pallet wraps can be used hundreds of times while maintaining strength and stability. They secure provisions tightly, even on mixed or irregular loads, and fold easily for storage. Some are insulated or weather-resistant, making them ideal for frozen or temperature-sensitive products.

Insulated and Reusable Containers

Insulated containers are perfect for transporting dry and temperature-sensitive goods, including chilled and frozen items. They come in various sizes, are easy to clean and sanitize, and help maintain food safety standards. Their sturdy construction also makes them reliable for crane-handled deliveries.

Jumbo Bags for Crane Deliveries

Also known as big bags or FIBCs (Flexible Intermediate Bulk Containers), jumbo bags offer a reusable alternative that can replace both pallets and plastic wrap. Instead of wrapping boxes on a pallet, suppliers place entire loads directly into these bags. They simplify handling, reduce waste, and work especially well for bulk dry goods.

Sustainable Single-Use Film Alternatives

When reusable options aren't feasible, eco-friendly single-use films are available, including recyclable, biodegradable, and compostable types.

- Recyclable films can be collected and reprocessed, but only where proper recycling systems exist.
- Biodegradable films break down naturally over time, depending on environmental conditions, and require proper disposal.
- Compostable wraps break down into non-toxic components, usually in industrial composting facilities.
- Important Note: Simply being "biodegradable" or "compostable" doesn't mean the product can go into general waste. Correct sorting and disposal are essential to achieve environmental benefits.

Other Eco-Friendly Single-Use Materials

Innovations have led to paper- and cardboard-based alternatives, both recyclable and plastic-free:

- **Paper-stretch wrap:** Made from certified fibres to prevent deforestation, fully recyclable, and offers stretchability and tear resistance.
- **Cardboard pallet wrap:** Compatible with existing stretch-wrapping machinery and fully recyclable.

Both options provide the stability and protection needed for palletised deliveries, making them excellent solutions for reducing plastic use without compromising performance.

The Bottom Line

As the maritime supply chain evolves and technology advances, replacing plastic wrap with greener alternatives is increasingly feasible. These options benefit not only the environment, but also human health and overall company performance.

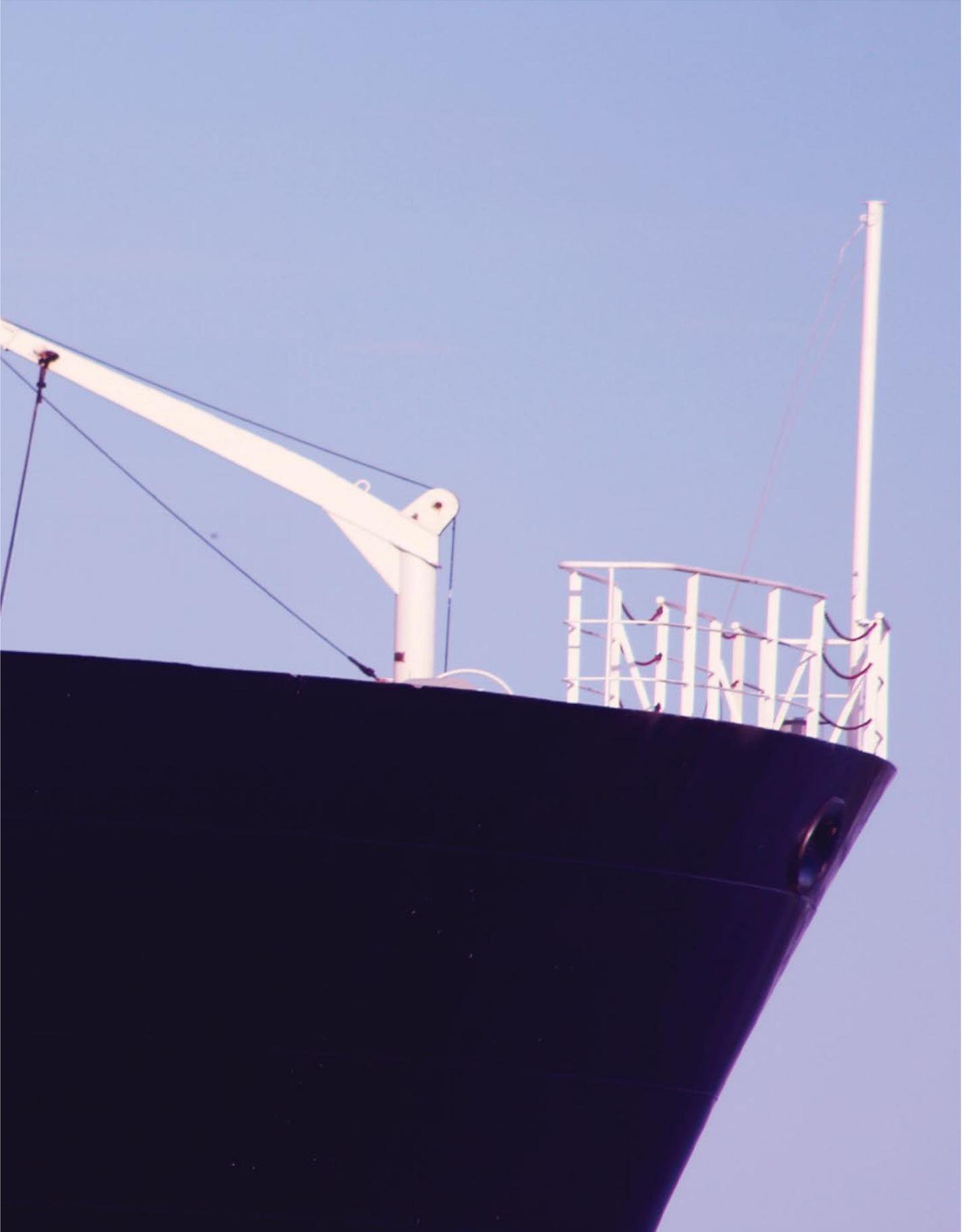
CalmWaves Podcast



Powered by MCTC.

Where we discuss people, ideas, and changes that shape the future of the maritime industry.





Beyond Compliance: How MCTC Ensures Food Safety & Well-Being at Sea

Maria Kalogirou,
Quality Assurance Officer

A Commitment to More Than Just Meals

At MCTC, we recognise that food is more than just a service item. It directly affects the health, morale, and well-being of the crew onboard. Ensuring that seafarers receive safe, high-quality, and properly handled provisions is central to our mission.

Our supplier audits are designed to support this goal by verifying that food safety standards are met at every stage of the supply chain.

Verifying Standards and Certifications

The audit process begins with a thorough review of supplier qualifications and certifications. We verify that internationally recognised systems such as ISO 9001:2015, ISO 22000:2018, and ISO 14001:2015 are not only in place but effectively implemented through clear documentation and consistent practice.

In addition, we assess supplier compliance with HACCP-based food safety procedures and alignment with relevant maritime standards such as the ISSA Quality Standard and IMPA.

Food Safety and Hygiene Under the Microscope

Food safety and hygiene are at the core of our evaluations. We closely examine:

- The condition of facilities
- Adherence to cleaning schedules
- Pest control effectiveness
- Employee hygiene training
- Proper temperature monitoring for frozen, chilled, and dry storage

The correct handling of perishable items, especially fresh produce, is of particular importance.

Storage and Stock Management

Proper storage and stock rotation practices are essential to maintaining freshness and preventing waste. Products must be organised according to the First In, First Out (FIFO) principle. Chilled, frozen, and ambient items should be stored separately, with reliable temperature monitoring systems in place and proper traceability for all goods.

Transportation and Cold Chain Integrity

Transportation plays a critical role in ensuring food safety. Delivery vehicles must be sanitised, well-maintained, and suitable for transporting food safely.

Temperature control must be maintained throughout transportation, with clear separation between frozen and chilled items. Maintaining and monitoring the cold chain is vital to food quality and safety.

Traceability and Documentation

We assess order preparation and delivery accuracy, whether suppliers use digital ERP systems or manual logs. The focus remains on traceability and documentation.

Supporting records such as packing lists, photos, and temperature readings must be available to confirm what was delivered, when, and how.

Compliance with Maritime Requirements

Compliance with maritime-specific regulations is of paramount importance. We review how suppliers meet local port regulations, customs processes, and any restrictions related to onboard waste removal or packaging recovery.

The Importance of Accurate Records

Comprehensive documentation and record-keeping are non-negotiable. We review logs for temperature checks, cleaning schedules, staff training, submitted complaints, and product recalls. These records must be current, complete, and reflect the supplier's actual practices.

Continuous Improvement and Corrective Actions

Corrective actions are an integral part of the audit cycle. When areas for improvement are identified, suppliers are expected to respond with clear action plans, root cause analyses, and preventive measures.

We actively follow up to ensure that corrective actions are implemented effectively. Non-compliance or insufficient progress impacts overall evaluation results and may influence future business engagement.

This follow-up process ensures long-term improvement, accountability, and continuous alignment with MCTC's quality and safety standards.

Building Partnerships Through Audits

Our audits are not merely compliance checks, they are opportunities to build partnerships and promote best practices. We often share practical suggestions that make a real difference, such as:

- Implementing traceability logbooks
- Improving English labelling for mixed-nationality crews
- Adopting more environmentally responsible packaging
- These initiatives strengthen the supply chain and improve the daily lives of seafarers on board.

A Reflection of MCTC Values

At MCTC, our audit programme reflects our values of responsibility, collaboration, and care for those at sea.

Every audit conducted is part of our broader commitment to food safety, transparency, and crew welfare. These efforts contribute to a more reliable, transparent, and responsible supply chain, one that safeguards and uplifts the well-being of seafarers, which remains at the heart of everything we do.



A Dish That Tells a Story: Sustainability on a Plate

Perry Mason Arzadon, Culinary Training Consultant &
Eirini Konstantinou, Marketing Coordinator



At MCTC, our commitment to Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles goes beyond business practices, it's a mindset that shapes everything we do, including the food we create.

As part of this commitment, our culinary team designed a special dish that embodies our values:

Oven-Roasted Salmon on Carrot Purée with Garden Greens and Black Caviar. More than just a meal, it symbolizes balance, mindfulness, and respect for nature—harmony between land and sea, and between tradition and innovation.

"More than just a meal, it symbolizes balance, mindfulness, and respect for nature."

The salmon, gently oven-roasted to preserve its natural tenderness and rich omega-3s, reflects the purity of the ocean, a resource we deeply value and strive to protect. It rests on a smooth carrot purée, offering a warm, earthy contrast and a tribute to the richness of the land.

Colorful accents, beetroot, avocado, cucumber, red radish, and sweet potato, add vibrancy and depth. Each ingredient represents biodiversity, thoughtful choices, and the nourishment that comes from respecting what nature provides. The final touch, black caviar, lends subtle brininess and sophistication, uniting all elements in a single harmonious bite.

"Even the smallest choices, like what we serve on a plate, can reflect our values."

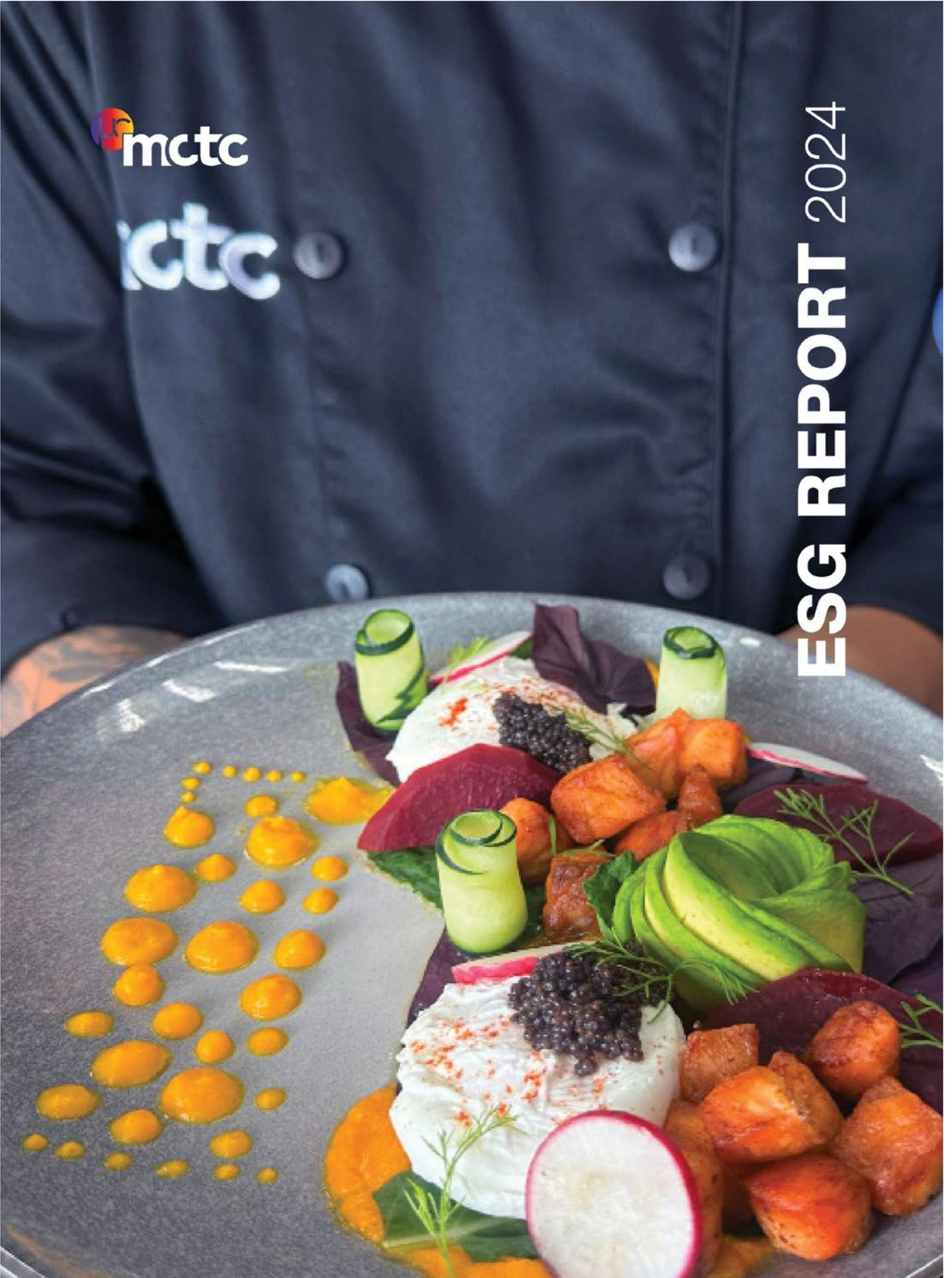
This dish is a celebration of sustainability and a reminder that even the smallest choices, like what we serve on a plate, can reflect our values. It brings our ESG principles to life, showing care not only for exceptional food but also for people and the planet alike.

That's why this dish was chosen as the cover feature of our ESG Report 2024.



mctc

ESG REPORT 2024



Seafarers' Health & Nutrition: Smart Eating at Sea

Nichole Stylianou,
Health & Wellbeing Consultant, Dietitian - Nutritionist



Maintaining health and nutrition onboard is not just about eating it's about sustaining energy, supporting mental wellness, & optimizing performance in challenging maritime environments. Here, we explore how AI is helping personalize nutrition, practical strategies for healthy eating, & tips for managing diet at sea.

1. The Role of AI in Personalizing Crew Nutrition

AI is transforming how seafarers approach nutrition. By analysing individual health data, dietary preferences, and environmental factors, AI can suggest personalized meal plans and highlight nutrient gaps. However, AI is an educational tool, not a replacement for professional guidance. All recommendations must be reviewed by qualified dietitians or healthcare professionals to ensure safety and effectiveness.

2. Opportunities and Challenges of Tech-Based Nutrition Solutions at Sea

Opportunities

- AI can suggest nutrient-rich meals that enhance immunity and mental well-being.
- Data-driven insights help optimize menu planning and reduce nutrient deficiencies.

Challenges

- Inconsistent or incomplete health data can lead to inaccurate guidance.
- Limited connectivity at sea may restrict real-time updates.
- Systems may be vulnerable to cyberattacks, risking crew privacy.
- Over-reliance on AI may reduce crew's manual decision-making skills.
- Collecting personal health data raises questions about consent and data protection.

3. Current Tools and Trends

- Apps now exist that generate personalized meal plans by analysing dietary patterns, health history, and location.
- AI can predict potential nutrient deficiencies and suggest proactive dietary adjustments.
- Despite innovations, expert oversight remains essential to ensure recommendations are accurate and safe.

MCTC Approach

- All health and nutrition recommendations are verified by certified professionals.
- AI serves as a supportive tool, complementing-but never replacing-expert judgment.



4. Ask the Dietitian: Practical Tips for Life at Sea

Staying Energized During Long Shifts

- Maintain daily physical activity to boost circulation and reduce fatigue.
- Prioritize meals rich in lean proteins (fish, legumes), whole grains, and vegetables.
- Healthy snacks like nuts, yogurt, and dried fruits help maintain energy levels.
- Establish a consistent sleep routine and limit screen time before rest.

Hydration in Hot Climates

- Drink water regularly; don't wait until you're thirsty.
- Avoid excessive caffeine, which can increase fluid loss.
- Consume water-rich foods like cucumbers, watermelon, tomatoes, and oranges.
- Proper hydration supports energy, cognition, and prevents heat-related illnesses.

Managing Salt and Sugar Intake

- Read labels for hidden sugars (corn syrup, fructose, maltose).
- Choose whole fruits over canned or sweetened desserts.
- Replace candy and pastries with nuts, dark chocolate, or dried fruits.
- Limit processed meats and high-sodium snacks; use herbs and spices instead of salt.

Healthy Snack Ideas While at Sea

- Peanut or almond butter on whole-grain cracker or celery sticks
- Roasted chickpeas or edamame
- Hard-boiled eggs or tofu cubes
- Watermelon or pineapple slices for hydration
- Cucumber sticks with hummus
- Smoothies with almond milk, banana, and oats
- Date and nut balls for protein and fibre
- Rice cakes with avocado and nut butter
- Oatmeal cups with dried fruits and seeds for sustained energy

Conclusion

By combining AI-supported insights with practical dietary strategies, seafarers can maintain energy, boost immunity, and support overall well-being while at sea. MCTC's approach ensures that technology enhances, rather than replaces, professional guidance, empowering crew members to make informed, healthy choices on board.



Nutritional Guidelines for Long Voyages

Fylios Avgousti,
Purchasing Officer

Good nutrition is essential for energy, focus, and overall health at sea. Long voyages can challenge even the most experienced crew, but with a few mindful choices, it's possible to stay nourished, energized, and motivated. These guidelines are designed for all seafarers, with additional notes for Chief Cooks planning meals onboard.

For All Seafarers

Respect Special Diet Needs

If you have food allergies or special dietary requirements, inform the Chief Cook at the start of the voyage. If certain foods are off-limits, ask for suitable substitutions to ensure you're eating safely.

Cut Down on Processed Foods

Instant noodles, chips, and sweet snacks may be convenient, but they lack nutrition and can drain energy over time. Whenever possible, choose balanced meals with proteins, vegetables, and whole grains.

Watch the Salt

High-sodium foods, such as canned or pickled items, can cause bloating, dehydration, and high blood pressure. Use table salt sparingly, opt for flavour from pepper, lemon, vinegar, or chili flakes instead.

Time Your Meals Wisely

- For night shifts: Avoid heavy meals before sleep; lighter options like fruit or a boiled egg are best.
- Don't skip meals, even a short break with a small snack helps maintain steady energy levels.

Stay Hydrated

Aim for 8-10 glasses of water daily, especially when working in hot environments like the engine room or on deck. Limit soft drinks and caffeinated beverages, which can increase dehydration.

For Chief Cooks

Plan for Dietary Diversity

Include vegetarian and religious-friendly options in every main meal. Rotate protein sources, fish, chicken, eggs, legumes, to avoid menu fatigue and ensure balanced nutrition.

Limit High-Sodium and Processed Ingredients

Minimize processed meats such as sausages and luncheon meats. Incorporate frozen or tinned vegetables when fresh produce is limited, boosting fibre and vitamin intake.

Smart Flavouring Techniques

Rely on natural flavour enhancers, garlic, onion, citrus, vinegar, and spices. This reduces the need for added salt while keeping meals vibrant and tasty.

Meal Timing & Night Shift Options

Prepare lighter snack trays or "midnight meals" for crew on watch, such as sandwiches, fruit, or yogurt. Coordinate with duty schedules so warm meals are available to everyone.

Support Hydration

Place water dispensers or jugs near common duty stations. On particularly hot days, provide electrolyte drinks or diluted fresh juices to prevent dehydration.

Encourage Nutrition Awareness

Label food in the mess area with simple markers like "High in Protein" or "Low Sodium". Offer fresh fruit or nuts as dessert alternatives to promote healthier habits.

Conclusion

Balanced nutrition at sea isn't about complicated diets—it's about making practical, thoughtful choices with the resources available. With mindful eating and well-planned menus, crews can maintain energy, safeguard their health, and improve overall wellbeing throughout long voyages.

Eating for Energy: Boosting Focus & Reducing Fatigue

Avgoustina Panagiotou,
Culinary Training Administrator



Ever feel like a zombie before lunch or a deflated balloon by 3 p.m.? Your energy isn't just about how much coffee you slam down, it's what (and when) you eat. Before reaching for that candy bar or another espresso, try these simple, food-based hacks to keep you buzzing all day long.

Don't Ghost Breakfast

Skipping breakfast is like trying to drive your car without gas. Spoiler alert: it won't work. Your body needs fuel to get going. Eating a balanced breakfast kickstarts your metabolism and stops you from feeling sluggish later.

Try these easy breakfast winners:

- Oatmeal with banana and chia seeds - brain food in its glory
- Greek yogurt with berries and almonds - sweet & crunchy combo
- Whole grain toast with avocado and a boiled egg - hello, fancy brunch vibes
- Smoothie with spinach, frozen berries, almond butter, and protein powder - green energy machine

Carbs Aren't the Enemy, Just Pick the Right Ones

Carbs often get a bad rap, but they're your body's best energy buddies. Steer clear of simple carbs (pastries, white bread) that spike your blood sugar and then drop it like a bad habit.

Power-up with these complex carbs:

- Sweet potatoes - basically the superhero of carbs
- Brown rice, quinoa, or whole grain pasta - slow-digesting and steady energy
- Whole grain bread or crackers - the classics that work
- Lentils and beans - plant power to the rescue

Lunch Ideas That Won't Let You Down

- Quinoa & roasted veggie bowl - a veggie party with quinoa as the DJ
- Grilled chicken wrap with whole wheat tortilla - tasty and energy-packed
- Brown rice and bean salad - fresh, filling, and zesty

- Sweet potato and lentil curry with brown rice - comfort food with a boost
- Whole grain pasta with pesto, veggies, and feta - carbs with a green twist

Drink Up: Water Is Your Best Friend

Feeling tired? You might just be thirsty. Even mild dehydration can turn your brain to mush.

Sip on these energizers:

- Water with lemon or cucumber - because plain water deserves a glow-up
- Coconut water - nature's sports drink
- Herbal teas like peppermint or ginger - caffeine-free and calming
- Green tea - mild caffeine plus antioxidants
- Smoothies with juicy fruits like watermelon or pineapple

Snack Like a Pro

Chips and candy? Nope. Grab snacks that balance protein, fibre, and healthy fats to keep your energy stable.

Snack winners:

- Apple slices with almond butter - sweet and nutty combo
- Hummus with veggie sticks - dip your way to energy
- Handful of mixed nuts - crunch power
- Hard-boiled eggs - protein bombs
- Greek yogurt with a drizzle of honey or dark chocolate, treat yourself, guilt-free

Get Your Iron Game On

Low iron equals tired you. Iron helps deliver oxygen to your muscles and brain, so keep your stores up, especially if you're a woman.

Iron-rich foods to add:

- Spinach or kale - Popeye was onto something!
- Lentils and chickpeas - plant superheroes
- Red meat in moderation - yes, you can have it!
- Pumpkin and sunflower seeds - snack attack approved
- Fortified cereals - breakfast bonus points

Love Your Fats - They're Brain Fuel

Healthy fats give you slow-burning energy and support brain power. Don't fear them, embrace them.

Fatty favourites:

- Avocados - creamy goodness
- Chia or flaxseeds - tiny but mighty
- Fatty fish, like salmon - brain food from the sea
- Extra virgin olive oil - Mediterranean magic
- Natural nut butters - peanut butter lovers, unite!

The Bottom Line

You don't need a nutrition degree or endless energy drinks to feel great. Just eat smart, stay hydrated, and snack wisely. Your body and mood will thank you. Now go crush that day like the energy boss you are!

Catering Management

Fresh and expertly sourced.

We manage every aspect of catering onboard, from supplies to menus, ensuring quality, consistency, and operational efficiency.



Crew Health Monitoring and Health Screening

Nichole Stylianou
Health and Wellbeing Consultant, Dietitian - Nutritionist



In the demanding and often unpredictable maritime environment, monitoring and screening crew health is critical for ensuring not only individual wellbeing but also the overall safety and performance of the vessel. With constant climate changes, physical labour, and the close quarters of long voyages, proactive health practices help prevent illness, detect early signs of medical issues, and promote a healthier work culture onboard.

“Monitoring crew health helps in early detection of illness and reduction of downtime due to sickness.”

Life at sea involves many challenges: limited access to medical care, exposure to changing environmental conditions, lack of sleep, irregular schedules, mental stress, and physical exhaustion. Routine health screening onboard should include:

- Vital signs checks - monitoring blood pressure, heart rate, and temperature
- Fitness assessments - evaluating strength, endurance, and mobility
- Body Mass Index (BMI) and weight control - tracking nutritional status and risk of chronic disease
- Mental health checks - screening for stress, anxiety, and fatigue
- Medical history reviews - spotting recurring conditions and risk factors

Some of these screenings occur during pre-employment medical exams, routine checkups, and emergency evaluations onboard. Mental health is as important as physical health because it shapes how we think, feel, and act, influencing everything from daily decision-making to long-term wellbeing.

According to the World Health Organization, health is defined as the state of complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing, not merely the absence of disease. Mental and physical health together create balance between body and mind, supporting smooth organ function and overall resilience.

“Health monitoring and screening are essential for maintaining smooth operation and medical emergency prevention.”

Practical steps to support crew health include:

- Maintaining a health log for all crew members
- Using secure digital tools to track medical records
- Keeping well-stocked and updated medical kits onboard
- Encouraging healthy lifestyle habits through meal planning and fitness routines
- Scheduling health education sessions for awareness and prevention
- Following procedures for telemedicine consultations in emergencies

Investing in crew wellness through regular health assessments and supportive systems improves vessel performance, boosts morale, and fosters teamwork. Modern health technology onboard can provide valuable support, helping seafarers monitor their wellbeing in real time.

“Wearable health technology offers proactive mental health support and actionable insights for seafarers.”

Beyond physical health, wearable devices can play a key role in managing mental health:

- Stress level tracking - based on heart rate trends, skin temperature, and sleep patterns
- Sleep quality reports - offering actionable recommendations for rest and recovery
- Mood and energy insights - helping crew recognize early signs of burnout, anxiety, or depression

These tools encourage crew members to adjust workloads, seek social support, and engage in relaxation practices. Wearable technology allows aggregation of health data and personalized recommendations to improve safety, productivity, and overall wellbeing.

Smartwatches and fitness trackers also help detect irregularities:

- Heart rate and rhythm tracking - detecting arrhythmias or sudden increases in heart rate
- Activity tracking - monitoring movement and physical activity status
- Some devices even provide prompts to rest, hydrate, or adjust activity levels

However, constant monitoring can sometimes fuel anxiety or perfectionism, particularly in vulnerable individuals. Sleep trackers, for example, may cause stress about sleep quality. Users should be cautious of biases in device algorithms, where gender or health status may affect readings. All data must be clinically validated before acting on it, and privacy policies should be reviewed. Treat wearable data as guidance, not diagnosis, and adjust usage frequency if it causes stress.

Prevention helps avoid downtime, maintains operational efficiency, and promotes a culture of care where health is prioritized. All aspects of health matter, whether monitoring stress, managing workload, or using wearables to detect irregularities. Remember to take technology-free time, wearables should support wellness, not dominate it. By integrating thoughtful health practices and technology, seafarers can stay ahead of potential issues, take early action, and maintain long-term physical and mental wellbeing.

Well-being Challenges for Mixed Nationality Crews

Evi Alexandrou,
Fleet Supervisor

In today's global maritime industry, vessels often host crew members from diverse cultural, linguistic, & national backgrounds. While this diversity enriches the onboard environment, it also introduces complex well-being challenges that can impact morale, teamwork, and overall performance. Recognizing and addressing these challenges is key to fostering a healthy & productive crew.



Language Barriers and Miscommunication

Effective communication is the foundation of safe operations and healthy relationships at sea. Yet, in mixed-nationality crews, language barriers are a common source of miscommunication, leading to misunderstandings, frustration, or even safety risks. While English is the standard working language on board, varying fluency levels can prevent some crew members from fully participating in discussions or understanding instructions clearly. This not only affects job performance but can also result in feelings of exclusion or embarrassment. Encouraging patience, using plain language, visual aids, and ensuring comprehension through feedback loops are practical steps that can help bridge this gap.

Cultural Misunderstandings and Stereotyping

Culture influences everything from communication style and conflict resolution to food preferences and personal space. When crew members are unaware of or insensitive to these differences, tensions may arise. For example, what one culture considers direct and efficient communication may seem rude or abrupt to another. Similarly, jokes or gestures considered harmless in one culture may be offensive in another. Creating opportunities for cultural exchange, such as celebrating national holidays, introducing shared meals from different cultures, or simple storytelling, can reduce stereotyping and foster mutual respect.

Social Exclusion and Group Clustering

It is natural for individuals to gravitate toward those who speak the same language or share similar cultural backgrounds. However, when this results in exclusive cliques, it can breed division and leave others feeling isolated. Crew members who are in the minority may struggle to find a sense of belonging, impacting their mental well-being and job satisfaction. Leaders on board play a crucial role in encouraging inclusive activities and mixing of groups, such as team games, shared duties, or meal rotations, to build camaraderie and break down social barriers.

Nationality Bias and Unequal Treatment

Another well-being challenge is the perception, or reality, of favoritism based on nationality or language fluency. When promotions, job tasks, or even informal recognition seem skewed toward specific national groups, resentment and low morale can follow. Even unintentional biases can create long-term divisions among the crew. Fairness, transparency in decision-making, and continuous training for supervisors in diversity management can help mitigate this issue and ensure all crew members feel equally valued.

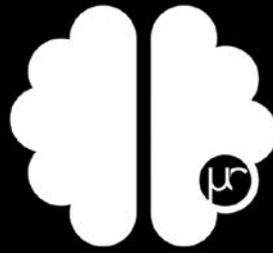
Nutrition: A Universal Yet Personal Need

Food is not just fuel; it is also a source of comfort, identity, and community. Catering to the diverse dietary preferences, religious restrictions, and cultural expectations of a mixed crew is no easy task. A meal enjoyed by one group may be unfamiliar or unappealing to another, and failing to account for these differences can lead to dissatisfaction and nutritional imbalances. Including crew members in meal planning, offering variety within budget constraints, and rotating cultural menus can make dining a more inclusive experience. Access to basic nutrition education for cooks and feedback from crew can also ensure meals meet both health and cultural expectations.

Conclusion

Promoting well-being on board is not only about complying with regulations—it's about recognizing the human side of seafaring. Addressing the challenges of mixed-nationality crews with empathy, structure, and ongoing support can transform diversity into a strength rather than a hurdle. After all, when every crew member feels heard, respected, and included, the entire vessel moves forward as one team.

My BALANCE



Fueling crew health, from the inside out.

Our Health and Wellbeing Consultants provide personalised nutrition plans and achievable goals to empower crew and support safer, more efficient operations.



My Mind



My Body



My Soul



Global Training Hub Focus: India

Arjay Ravindran,
Business Development Manager & Fleet Supervisor

Training programmes in India equip galley crew with diverse culinary skills, foster cultural adaptability, enhance morale, and ensure high standards of food safety onboard multinational vessels.



Innovative and Specialized Training

MCTC's programmes in India are distinguished by their innovative and specialised offerings. A prime example is the Filipino Cuisine Course, delivered by an MCTC Culinary Training Consultant from the Philippines. Training galley crew in cuisines such as Filipino and European, which they may be less familiar with, equips them to prepare meals that resonate with multinational crews onboard.

By being able to provide "a piece of home" to crew members of different nationalities, Indian galley staff contribute to improved morale. Moreover, the training incorporates structured menus and efficient preparation techniques that reduce galley workload while maintaining high-quality standards.

Feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive. Crew members emphasise that the skills gained broaden their culinary repertoire and directly support the cohesion of diverse teams. Most importantly, MCTC ensures that galley staff apply global best practices in food safety and hygiene, a cornerstone of safe and healthy vessel operations.

India has emerged as one of the world's most important centres for shipping manning, underpinned by several key factors:

- A vast seafaring workforce, with over 285,000 active seafarers in 2023, serving on both Indian and foreign-flagged vessels
- Extensive coastline and strategic location along major global shipping routes
- Government initiatives such as Maritime India Vision 2030 (MIV 2030), driving growth, infrastructure development, and international participation
- Investments in port expansion, digital logistics, and sustainable practices, including green energy and hydrogen projects

Against this backdrop, MCTC plays a crucial role in the training and development of India's large pool of seafarers, with a particular focus on galley professionals. India contributes a significant proportion of the global galley workforce, making it a vital hub for MCTC's continuous training programmes. These initiatives not only ensure operational excellence but also safeguard food safety and hygiene standards onboard.

Year on year, MCTC has recorded rising participation in its training programmes in India, reflecting the country's central role in global crewing and the steady expansion of MCTC's managed fleet.

By strengthening its training footprint in India, MCTC underscores its commitment to supporting one of the world's most important maritime talent hubs. Through specialised culinary and professional development programmes, MCTC continues to shape competent, adaptable, and motivated galley professionals who contribute not only to crew morale and operational efficiency, but also to the highest standards of safety and wellbeing at sea.

Embracing Cultural Diversity in the Workplace

Yagmur Seval Bozkurt,
Business Development Manager & Fleet Supervisor



As someone from Turkey, a country at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, I've always been exposed to a blend of cultures. This background gave me a natural curiosity and appreciation for diversity, which became especially valuable when I joined an international team in my current workplace.

When I first started working with colleagues from various countries, each with different communication styles, work habits, and perspectives, I quickly realized that cultural awareness wasn't just a nice-to-have, but essential for team harmony and success.

At first, there were small challenges

- Misunderstandings due to language nuances
- Different attitudes towards hierarchy
- Varied interpretations of deadlines

Instead of letting these differences become obstacles, we used them as learning opportunities.

For example, in Turkish culture, relationships and trust are key in professional settings. I brought that mindset into my team by initiating informal check-ins and encouraging open dialogue.

This helped build stronger bonds among teammates, especially those from more task-focused or individualistic backgrounds. At the same time, I learned to adapt to more direct feedback styles and structured planning methods, which are less common in Turkey.

Over time, these cultural exchanges helped our team evolve.

We became

- More empathetic
- More flexible
- More innovative

By embracing our differences, we discovered new ways to approach problem-solving and decision-making. Our diversity didn't divide us, it strengthened our collaboration.

Looking back, I'm proud to have contributed to a team culture that respects and leverages each person's background. Working across cultures isn't always easy, but when done with openness and respect, it becomes one of the greatest strengths a team can have.

Cross-Cultural Communication in the Galley: Reflections from Singapore

Marina Mesimeri,
Culinary Training Consultant

During my recent vessel visits in Singapore, I was reminded of how central the galley is to life onboard. More than just a place where meals are prepared, it is a hub of cultural expression and interaction. As a female Culinary Training Consultant from a different cultural background myself, I observed how communication, respect, and inclusivity play out in this unique environment, where food becomes both a comfort and a bridge across cultures.



“The galley is truly the heart of the vessel, where cultural differences can either divide or unite.”

On most vessels I visited, the galley team typically consists of just two people: the Chief Cook and the Messman. In some cases, these two may come from different nationalities, adding complexity to how they collaborate. Interestingly, on the vessels I visited in Singapore, the Chief Cook and Messman shared the same nationality, which made coordination and communication smoother. A shared understanding of methods, flavours, and expectations allowed them to work almost seamlessly together. But while communication may be easier within the galley team when members share a background, the real challenge often lies in meeting the needs of the wider crew. Crews onboard are usually multinational, with diverse food preferences and cultural expectations. Chief Cooks often rotate menus or adapt dishes so that everyone, regardless of nationality, feels acknowledged. For example, Asian crew members may prefer rice-based meals, while European crew look for bread, potatoes, or pasta. Balancing these preferences plays a vital role in keeping morale high.

“Chief Cooks’ ability to balance diverse preferences keeps morale high and fosters unity onboard.”

Differences in language and culture can lead to small misunderstandings. Something as simple as the meaning of a dish, what “curry” or “stew” looks like, can vary widely between backgrounds. These moments can create tension, but they also

open the door to learning.

I observed crews overcoming this by finding creative ways to communicate. One galley team used a menu board with simple English descriptions alongside phrases in Tagalog and Hindi, making it easy for everyone to understand what was being served. A small adjustment, but it encouraged conversations, reduced frustration, and strengthened camaraderie. I also witnessed genuine curiosity from crew members willing to try food outside their comfort zones, further uniting the team.

“Food becomes both a comfort and a bridge across cultures.”

As a woman entering this space, I am conscious of how gender dynamics can shape interactions. Initially, some male crew may hesitate when I ask about food practices. But once dialogue begins, the pride they take in their cooking and hospitality usually shines through.

From my visits in Singapore, a few key strategies stand out as effective in fostering better communication and inclusivity in the galley:

- **Menu Rotation:** Fairly rotating dishes to reflect different nationalities’ preferences helps everyone feel included.
- **Simple Communication Tools:** Using boards, notes, or translation apps bridges gaps and avoids misunderstandings.
- **Shared Tasting and Feedback:** Encouraging crew to try different cuisines and share opinions builds mutual respect.
- **Active Listening:** Asking crew members directly about their food preferences builds trust and morale.

My time onboard in Singapore reinforced that the galley is truly the heart of the vessel. Whether it’s two galley crew working side by side from the same background, or a team striving to meet the needs of a multinational crew, the galley is where inclusivity becomes real served one meal at a time.



RECIPE CORNER

Filipino Comfort Food at Sea

Gil Carlos Gatus,
Culinary Training Consultant, MCTC Philippines

Arroz Caldo for 2 People

Filipino Chicken Rice Porridge

Ingredients	Amount (grams)	Notes
• Chicken (thigh or breast, boneless)	200g	Cut into bite-sized pieces
• Glutinous rice (or jasmine rice)	100g	Washed and drained
• Water or chicken broth	800g	Can mix both for richer flavour
• Ginger (fresh, sliced)	20g	Thinly sliced
• Garlic (minced)	10g (2 cloves)	Optional: reserve some for crispy topping
• Onion (chopped)	50g	About 1 small onion
• Fish sauce	15g (1 tbsp)	Adjust to taste
• Cooking oil	10g (2 tsp)	For sautéing
• Salt	To taste	Optional
• Pepper	To taste	Optional

OPTIONAL

Garnisher	Amount
• Boiled egg	1 egg
• Boiled egg	5g
• Fried garlic	5g
• Spring onion	1 piece
• Calamansi or lemon	15g
• Toasted garlic chips	Optional

INSTRUCTIONS

- Sauté aromatics**
In a pot, heat oil. Sauté garlic, onion, and ginger until fragrant (about 2-3 minutes).
- Cook the chicken**
Add chicken pieces and cook until they start to brown (5-7 minutes).
- Add rice**
Stir in the rice and coat it well with the oil and flavours.
- Add water or broth**
Pour in the 800g of water or broth. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to simmer.
- Simmer and stir**
Simmer for 30-40 minutes, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking, until rice breaks down and thickens. Add more water/broth if too thick.
- Season**
Add fish sauce, salt, and pepper to taste.
- Serve hot**
Ladle into bowls. Top with boiled egg halves, fried garlic, spring onion, and a squeeze of calamansi or lemon.

OKOY - Recipe for 2 pieces

Filipino Shrimp Fritters

Ingredients	Amount (grams)	Notes
• Small shrimps (with shell)	50g	Wash and pat dry
• Sweet potato, squash or papaya	100g	Peeled, julienned
• Bean sprouts (optional)	30g	Rinsed and drained
• Onion (red or white)	30g	Thinly sliced
• All-purpose flour	40g	For the batter
• Cornstarch	10g	Makes it crispier
• Water	60g (about 4 tbsp)	Adjust consistency
• Egg	1 small egg	Light binder
• Salt	2g (about 1/3 tsp)	Adjust to taste
• Ground black pepper	To taste	Optional
• Annatto powder (optional)	1g	For color
• Cooking oil	Enough for frying	At least 1 cup in a small pan

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Prepare the batter

In a bowl, whisk together flour, cornstarch, water, egg, salt, pepper, and annatto powder (if using) until smooth.

2. Mix the vegetables and shrimp

Add julienned sweet potato, onion, and bean sprouts into the batter. Mix well to coat everything evenly.

3. Add shrimps

Mix in most of the shrimp, reserving 2-4 pieces for topping.

4. Heat oil

In a small frying pan, heat oil over medium heat.

5. Fry the Okoy

Scoop half the mixture (1 fritter's worth) and gently spread into a round patty in the hot oil.

Press 1-2 shrimp on top for presentation. Fry 3-4 minutes per side or until golden brown and crispy. Repeat for the second one.

6. Drain and serve

Place on paper towels to drain excess oil.

7. Serve with dipping sauce

Typically served with spiced vinegar (sukang maanghang) or a mix of vinegar, garlic, and chili.







The Story of Arroz Caldo in the Philippines

Gil Carlos Gatus,
Culinary Training Consultant, MCTC Philippines

Arroz Caldo is a beloved Filipino comfort food- a warm, hearty rice porridge infused with ginger, garlic, and chicken, often topped with boiled egg, fried garlic, and a squeeze of calamansi. The name itself is derived from Spanish: "arroz" meaning rice and "caldo" meaning broth. However, its true roots go deeper, blending Chinese and Filipino culinary traditions.

Origins and Cultural Influence

Arroz Caldo likely evolved from the Chinese dish congee, a rice porridge widely consumed across Asia. When Chinese immigrants brought congee to the Philippines centuries ago, Filipinos adapted it by adding local flavours, such as ginger, fish sauce, and calamansi, while Spanish influence gave it a new name and some touches in preparation.

During the Spanish colonial period, Chinese-Filipino families began to create a localized version of congee to suit Filipino tastes. Over time, it became known as Arroz Caldo, and it stood out from its Chinese counterpart because of the use of glutinous rice, native chicken, and distinct seasonings.

Why It Became Popular

Arroz Caldo gained widespread popularity in the Philippines for a few key reasons:

- Affordable and accessible - Made with simple ingredients like rice, chicken, and ginger, it became a staple food in homes and roadside eateries (karinderyas).
- Comfort during sickness - Its mild flavour, warmth, and soft texture make it a go-to meal for people recovering from illness or needing something gentle on the stomach.
- Rainy-day favourite - During the Philippines' long rainy season, a hot bowl of Arroz Caldo is perfect for warming up.
- Flexible and nourishing - It's easily customizable with toppings and is filling enough to serve as a full meal.

Today, Arroz Caldo is deeply embedded in Filipino food culture. Whether served at home, in school cafeterias, or sold by street vendors in early morning markets, it remains a timeless dish that brings comfort, nostalgia, and Filipino warmth to every bowl.

The Culinary Impact of Okoy in the Philippines

Okoy (also spelled Ukoy) is a traditional Filipino shrimp fritter, a crunchy, golden snack made by deep-frying a mixture of small whole shrimp, vegetables (often sweet potato or mung bean sprouts), and batter. Though simple in form, Okoy has made a lasting impact on Filipino culinary culture for several important reasons:

1. Showcase of Filipino Ingenuity with Local Ingredients

Okoy represents how Filipinos creatively use affordable, accessible ingredients from their environment- such as:

- Tiny whole shrimps (including heads and shells)
- Root crops like kamote (sweet potato) or kalabasa (squash)
- Leftover or surplus vegetables like toge (mung bean sprouts)

By turning these humble ingredients into a crispy, flavourful dish, Okoy highlights the resourcefulness and practicality of Filipino cooking.

2. A Bridge Between Everyday Food and Street Cuisine

Okoy plays an important role as a bridge between home-cooked meals and street food:

- In homes, it's often served as a side dish or afternoon snack (merienda).
- In local markets and roadside stalls, it's a popular street food, usually served on banana leaves with a side of spiced vinegar.

Its crunchy texture, savoury taste, and portability made it an ideal grab-and-go food, especially in rural provinces and public markets - helping to shape the identity of Filipino street cuisine.

3. Cultural and Regional Adaptability

Throughout the Philippines, different regions have put their own twist on Okoy:

- Some versions use grated squash or cassava.
- Coastal towns might use different types of shrimp or small fish.
- Others experiment with batter styles- from purely cornstarch-based to egg-heavy mixtures.

This adaptability shows how Filipino dishes can be personalized by region, reflecting local flavours and traditions while keeping the soul of the dish intact.

4. A Comfort Food with Social Memory

For many Filipinos, Okoy is tied to childhood memories, from being cooked by a lola (grandmother) on a lazy afternoon, to being a favourite treat after school. It's not just a dish, it's a symbol of home, family, and simplicity.

In the modern culinary scene, Okoy has even found its way into fusion restaurants and upscale interpretations, proving its versatility and continued relevance in Filipino food culture.

Conclusion

Okoy may be small and crispy, but its impact on Philippine cuisine is large. It's a testament to Filipino creativity, regional identity, and the love for communal, flavour-packed food. Whether served in a modest home or reinvented in a modern kitchen, Okoy continues to be a cherished part of the Filipino culinary heritage.

Plant-Based Cooking for Maritime Settings

Maria Pitsillidou,
Purchasing Officer (ex. chef)

Plant-based cooking offers a sustainable and inclusive approach to feeding maritime crews. Whether for ethical, religious, health-related, or environmental reasons, more crew members are embracing plant-based diets. This guide explores how traditional meals can be adapted, ingredients can be smartly substituted, and how galley teams can prepare nourishing plant-based meals on board, even with limited resources.

Adapting Traditional Dishes, Respecting Cultural Roots

Traditional dishes hold strong cultural significance. Adapting them into plant-based versions doesn't mean sacrificing flavor or identity. The key lies in preserving cooking methods and spice profiles while using plant-based proteins and dairy alternatives. Many seafarers find comfort in dishes from home. Adapting these culturally rich meals to be plant-based can retain their flavour and identity, while making them suitable for a wider crew.

Traditional Dish	Plant-Based Version	Main Substitutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greek Moussaka • Filipino Adobo • Indian Butter Chicken • Mexican Tacos al Pastor • Japanese Ramen with Pork • Middle Eastern Kofta • Thai Green Curry • Italian Bolognese • Shepherd's Pie (UK) • Moroccan Tagine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mushroom or lentil moussaka • Tofu or mushroom adobo • Butter tofu • Jackfruit tacos • Tofu miso ramen • Lentil or chickpea kofta • Vegetable and tofu curry • Lentil or soy protein Bolognese • Lentil shepherd's pie • Chickpea & veggie tagine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minced meat → mushrooms/lentils, soy béchamel sauce • Chicken → tofu/mushrooms; same marinade • Chicken → tofu; dairy → coconut cream • Pork → marinated jackfruit • Pork → tofu/mushrooms; veg broth & miso • Minced lamb → mashed lentils/chickpeas • Chicken → tofu; same curry paste & coconut milk • Mince → lentils/TVP; tomato base stays the same • Meat → lentils/mushrooms; topped with mashed potato • Lamb → chickpeas; same spices



Smart Substitutions for Animal Products

When cooking at sea, replacing animal products with shelf-stable and nutritious plant-based alternatives is key:

- Eggs → Mashed bananas, flaxseed meal, or aquafaba (chickpea water)
- Minced meat → Lentils, mushrooms, or textured vegetable protein (TVP)
- Dairy milk → Soy, oat, or powdered coconut milk
- Cheese → Nutritional yeast, cashew cheese, or tofu-based spreads
- Butter → Coconut oil or plant margarine
- Yogurt → Soy or coconut-based yogurt
- Fish sauce → Soy sauce mixed with seaweed or mushroom broth
- Cheese (garnish) → Nutritional yeast or vegan cheese powder
- Chicken (cubed) → Firm tofu, jackfruit, or tempeh
- Fish → Seaweed-flavored tofu or banana blossom (optional)

Storage Tips for Plant-Based Staples

Plant-based ingredients often have long shelf lives, making them perfect for ships with limited storage. Legumes, grains, and dry tofu products are easy to stock and require minimal refrigeration. Properly sealed oils and powdered milk alternatives can last months. Label, date, and rotate stock regularly to reduce waste.

Storage & Shelf-Life Tips Onboard

Galley space and power are limited, so smart provisioning is key. Here's how to optimize:

- Legumes (lentils, beans, peas): Store dry in sealed containers; last 12+ months
- Tofu: Use vacuum-packed or shelf-stable UHT versions
- Grains (rice, oats, quinoa): Long shelf life; store in dry areas
- Plant oils (sunflower, olive): Use in dark bottles to avoid oxidation
- Nuts & seeds: Keep vacuum-sealed; avoid moisture
- Coconut milk / plant milks: UHT-packed, long shelf life before opening

One-Pot, Plant-Based Meals for Batch Cooking

Efficient cooking is essential on board. Here are simple, hearty meal ideas that work well in one pot:

- Lentil and vegetable stew with cumin and lemon
- Coconut chickpea curry with rice
- Tomato and white bean pasta
- Thai green curry with tofu and potatoes
- Spanish-style chickpeas with smoked paprika and peppers
- Chili Sin Carne - Red beans, corn, tomato paste, onion, paprika, cumin
- Vegetable Biryani- Basmati rice, frozen veg mix, spices, raisins
- Stir-Fried Udon with Tofu
- Udon noodles, tofu, cabbage, carrots, soy sauce

Final Thoughts on the Plant-Based Diet at Sea

Plant-based eating is more than just a dietary trend, it's a sustainable, inclusive, and health-conscious approach to nourishment. By embracing whole foods like legumes, grains, vegetables, and plant proteins, crews can enjoy flavorful meals that support long-term wellness, reduce food waste, and respect diverse beliefs and backgrounds. In maritime settings, where resources are limited and community matters, offering balanced plant-based options is a simple but powerful way to care for the crew, body, mind, and planet.





Seafood Orzo Risotto Recipe

Kleitos Kleitou,
Culinary Training Consultant

A Mediterranean Twist on a Classic

Inspired by the coastal flavors of the Mediterranean, this twist on traditional risotto uses tender orzo pasta instead of rice.

Cooked slowly in a garlic, white wine, and tomato-infused broth, it's finished with succulent shrimp and mussels. Quick to prepare, comforting, and bursting with fresh flavors - perfect for any kitchen!

Ingredients

- 1 cup orzo pasta
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- ½ cup dry white wine (optional but recommended)
- 1 can (14 oz) diced tomatoes, drained
- 3 cups seafood or vegetable stock, kept warm
- 200g (7 oz) peeled shrimp
- 200g (7 oz) mussels, cleaned and debearded
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- Fresh parsley, chopped (for garnish)
- Lemon wedges (for serving)

Preparation

- Heat olive oil in a large skillet or sauté pan over medium heat. Add the minced garlic and chopped onion; sauté until soft and fragrant, about 3-4 minutes.
- Add the orzo pasta to the pan. Toast lightly for 1-2 minutes, stirring frequently, until the pasta turns slightly translucent.
- Pour in the white wine and cook for 2-3 minutes, allowing the alcohol to evaporate and the orzo to absorb the flavour. Stir in the diced tomatoes.
- Gradually add the warm seafood stock, one ladle at a time, stirring continuously. Allow the orzo to absorb the liquid before adding more. Continue this process for about 15 minutes, until the orzo becomes creamy and tender.
- When the orzo is nearly cooked, place the shrimp and mussels on top. Cover the pan with a lid and cook for 5-7 minutes, until the shrimp are pink and opaque, and the mussels have opened. Discard any unopened mussels.
- Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste. Gently stir to combine all ingredients.
- Garnish with chopped fresh parsley and serve immediately with lemon wedges on the side.





Sweet At Sea: Desserts from Around the Globe

Victoria Pino,
Purchasing Officer (ex. Pastry Chef)

Delight your crew with a taste of international desserts! From the United Kingdom to Latin America, these recipes are designed to bring joy, flavour, and a touch of home to life at sea.

UNITED KINGDOM

Sticky Toffee Pudding Tray Bake with a Twist

Ingredients

Date Mixture

- 750g dates, pitted and chopped
- 750 ml water
- 15g bicarbonate of soda

Cake Batter

- 375g unsalted butter, softened
- 600g sugar
- 6 eggs, room temperature
- 720g all-purpose flour
- 15g baking powder

Final Soaking Topping

- 45 g butter
- 200g light brown sugar
- 200g granulated sugar
- 375 ml maple syrup
- 200 ml water

Method

Step 1 - Date Base

- Boil water in a saucepan.
- Remove from heat, add dates and bicarbonate of soda, stir, and let cool slightly.

Step 2 - Cake Batter

- Beat butter and sugar until creamy and fluffy.
- Add eggs one by one, ensuring each is fully incorporated.
- Gradually mix in flour and baking powder.

Step 3 - Combine & Bake

- Fold date mixture into cake batter.
- Pour into a greased 35 × 23 cm baking dish.
- Bake at 170 °C (fan oven) for 40-45 minutes.

Step 4 - Soaking Topping

- Combine butter, sugars, maple syrup, and water in a saucepan.
- Boil gently until sugars dissolve, then pour over semi-cooled cake.
- Allow to soak overnight.

Serving

- Cut into portions, reheat 10-15 seconds in the microwave, and serve warm with vanilla ice cream.



UNITED STATES**Not Your Classic Brownie****Ingredients**

- 525g dark chocolate (buttons)
- 338g butter
- 9 eggs
- 338g sugar
- 113g all-purpose flour
- 7g baking powder
- Optional: nuts, berries, or white chocolate

Method

- Preheat oven to 170 °C. Grease and line a 28 × 23 cm baking dish.
- Melt chocolate and butter over simmering water, stir smooth, and cool slightly.
- Whisk eggs and sugar until slightly thickened, then gradually add to chocolate mixture.
- Fold in sifted flour and baking powder; add optional nuts or berries.
- Pour batter into the dish and smooth the top.
- Bake 15-18 minutes; edges should be set while the centre remains slightly wobbly.
- Cool at least 2 hours, refrigerate overnight, cut into squares, and serve with vanilla ice cream.

LATIN AMERICA

Tres Leches Cake (Three-Milk Cake)

Ingredients

Cake

- 120g all-purpose flour
- 1 ½ tsp baking powder
- ¼ tsp salt
- 5 large eggs, separated
- 200g granulated sugar (divided)
- 80 ml whole milk
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

Milk Mixture

- 400g sweetened condensed milk
- 360 ml evaporated milk
- 240 ml whole milk or heavy cream

Topping

- 240 ml heavy whipping cream
- 2 tbsp powdered sugar
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- Optional: ground cinnamon or fresh fruit for garnish

Method

- Preheat oven to 175 °C. Grease and flour a 23 × 33 cm baking dish.
- Beat egg yolks with 150 g sugar until pale and thick: fold in milk and vanilla.
- Gently fold in flour mixture.
- Whip egg whites until soft peaks form, gradually adding 50 g sugar until stiff peaks form.
- Fold whites into yolk-flour mixture, pour into pan, and bake 25-30 minutes. Cool completely.
- Mix sweetened condensed milk, evaporated milk, and whole milk/cream.
- Poke holes in cake and pour milk mixture evenly; refrigerate 2 hours or overnight.
- Whip topping ingredients until soft peaks form, spread over cake, and garnish as desired.
- Slice and serve chilled.



These desserts bring comfort, culture, and creativity to life at sea, offering crew members a sweet escape from routine meals.



Sharing our passion

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