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French in Culinary and Pastry Arts

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Abstract

The purpose of this project was to find out the impact of the French jargon used in the culinary and pastry industry and its origin. I investigated this topic through reading online articles that were based on the research of others. I found out that after the French Revolution, the French language as well as its culture was influenced many parts of Europe. Prior to that, other cultures influenced Europe, but regarding cooking, French was the one that stuck around to this day. It was shocking to hear those other cultures like Italian and German had a large impact on Europe when today their culture is not as popular in the kitchen like French cooking. French words are used in the kitchen globally and not translated because usually is one word or less words than other languages to describe a certain technique. French words are also used for recipe names which are also typically not translated into other languages for simplicity. It may seem the influence the French had should have been greater as if they are the world leaders of cooking since that's the way the world seems so see it. However, it is less complicated than expected. The French chefs were the only ones that recorded these techniques and recipes in a way that they could be shared with other parts of Europe. From these records, other countries became exposed to the jargon the French used. They followed it since it seemed easier with fewer words to describe a technique or recipe.

Introduction

As a Hospitality student I've seen many recipes and terms that are strictly in French. Jargon like *mise en place* and *mirepoix* or recipes like *Pâte à choux* are known worldwide by chefs in French. As an aspiring chef, I learned these terms and what they meant, but always wondered why some words had to be in French. I thought it would be easier for each country to translate these words into their own language to keep developing a nation's identity and their cuisine. My curiosity led to discovering the origin of these words and when France led the way in the kitchen while the rest of Europe followed.

Method

I investigated when the French had the language and cuisine begin to become well known throughout the world, starting with Europe. I began my search for articles with looking for the general influence the French language had on culinary/pastry arts. Then after reading some articles more in depth, I started to see that the French Revolution really changed the lives of French chefs before these chefs impacted the rest of Europe. So, I took note of the lives of French chefs before and after the French Revolution. Then I further investigated how and why other European countries kept French terms within the culinary/pastry industry instead of keeping the translated version of this words in their language.

French Chefs
Before French
Revolution



French Chefs
After French
Revolution



Why French?

Result

The major impact the French language had on the culinary/pastry began after the French Revolution. Before that, other European countries affected the development of the surrounding nations. "The Italian influence in the first period of printing had to do with the high position Italian culture generally occupied during the Renaissance." (Notaker) "In Bohemia, Italian food was so highly regarded that it became a target for moralists, who felt that foreign food habits undermined the old, local, and less extravagant traditions of the region." (Notaker) Italian culture in all aspects including art and literature were looked up to during the 14th century even though it seems that among European cultures, German cuisine really shaped the cuisine of many countries. "Yet despite the significant Italian impact on culinary culture, the first printed recipe books in Central and Eastern Europe seem more influenced by German cuisine than Italian, and the same is true for Denmark, where the first cookbooks were translations from German books." (Notaker) During this time "before the revolution, all French chefs were obliged to follow specific rules according to what their guild instructed them. There was no space for creativity, and you were not allowed to prepare and share any food product." (Stavridou) These rules applied within France to these chefs while they had a French monarchy. After the revolution, the monarchy was overthrown, and ideas were formed like rights for women and slaves. Here France begins to influence other European nations with this social and political reform. "After the revolution, the guild system collapsed, and so did its rules. The French chefs were now free to create whatever they wanted. However, at that time many top chefs who were working for the royalty were left without a job. As a consequence, many of them left France and moved to different countries across Europe, searching for work among the aristocrats and the royalty of their European neighbours." (Stavridou) By many French chefs moving to other countries in Europe in search of work, they carried their cooking style with them and showed other people what French cooking is. The French documenting the rules of cooking and food preparation are what caused their language to spread in the culinary and pastry industry. One of the first chefs that did this was Francois Pierre La Varenne when he wrote the "Le cuisinier françois" in 1651. Later on, "Georges Auguste Escoffier updated La Varenne's rules and added new ones, regarding the kitchen and food division and management like the *mise en place* technique. All these new rules were included in Escoffier's book 'Le Guide Culinaire,' which was published in 1903." (Stavridou)

Many of these French rules and words are used today in the industry. They are taught in culinary colleges or institutions and learned by all chefs. For example, from La Varenne's book, "he divided the kitchen into five stations, each responsible for different components of a dish. The *garde manger*, for example, prepared cold dishes; the *saucier* made soups and sauces." (Clarke) "And that's why professionals and amateurs alike *sauté* instead of 'cook quickly in oil,' *julienne* instead of 'cut into thin strips,' and *purée* instead of 'blend into liquid.'" (Clarke) The French made the lives of chefs all over the world easier by helping everyone understand and follow the same cooking rules as well as having shared their terminology that became universal due to simplicity.

Discussion

French chefs affected other countries' cooking style and terminology after the spread across Europe once the French Revolution ended. French cuisine is probably very popular because it was through French cookbooks like "Le cuisinier françois" that taught other Europeans the rules and French terminology of French cooking. As a chef knowing these French words used in the industry as well as the cooking rules that have been established world-wide is very essential. Investigating the origin of the French language's involvement in the industry jargon is important to know the basic foundation of cooking throughout the whole world. It may to be necessary to speak fluent French as a chef, but knowing this foundation, chefs are aware of why French cooking is so praised. The rest of the world followed the ways of French cooking because French chefs were the only ones that really recorded and spread their knowledge. This information could potentially help get a better understanding of not just French cuisine, but the food of other countries as well that have adapted their cooking to the rules of the French chefs.

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