**Grilling and Marinating Secrets**

**Chef Todd Leonard CEC**

**Understand Heat!**

Grilling is a dry heat cooking method, the flavor of the grill we love so much comes from char or caramelizing of the product. Picking the meat to be grilled is very important. Choose meats that have good fat content to them. The Fat will melt as the dry heat cooks the meat keeping it moist, good fatty meats such as a rib eye may not need more than a good seasoning to be a great grilled item. Other meats that may contain less fat and juice need assistance in cooking with “Moping and Basting”. Marinating and seasoning of meat should always be done with the purpose to enhance the natural flavor of the meat or vegetables not to mask or take away from the product itself. It is important to understand heat, bigger pieces of meat need lower heat and longer cooking time or the outside will char or caramelize to quickly leaving it over cooked and the middle still raw. TURN IT DOWN. Low and slow with moping and finishing techniques during the cooking process will make grilling become a love of your cuisine!

**The 3 Basics of Marinating**

1. ***Flavor*** – Rubs, herbs, garlic, salt, pepper and don’t forget the “Pit Seasoning”
2. ***Acidity*** – Citrus, vinegar, wine, Worcestershire, hot sauces
3. ***Fat*** – Oils, butter, larding, barding

\*Using marinades to mop and baste with is appropriate as long as the liquid has a chance to cook thoroughly as the meat cooks.

**Finishing Techniques**

Generally all meats need to be finished with a flavorful liquid at the end of cooking to help keep moisture and shine to the meats. Simple ideas are as follows.

1. Butter or flavored butters rubbed on meats or served with grilled meats
2. Fresh olive oil marinades not contaminated with raw meat.
3. One of chef Todd’s Favorites is a mixture of butter or olive oil, lime juice and Cholula hot sauce
4. Glaze = BBQ, Teriyaki, Sweet and Sour or savory meat
5. Fruit juices – specially good on fish, or white meats

**Don’t be a Flop, use your Mop!**