Culinary competitors all across the U.S. are getting ready to try out for a spot on ACF Culinary Team USA and the chance to represent American chefs in international competition. Do you see yourself as a member of this dedicated team of chefs?

WHAT DOES IT TAKE?
Being a member of ACF Culinary Team USA is more than having excellent culinary skills and techniques. Team members must perform to perfection under immense pressure, and ideal candidates will thrive in those conditions. They want to experience the thrill of competing at the highest level, representing not only themselves and the team, but an entire nation. As culinary leaders, they inspire chefs to do their best work and raise the standard of culinary skills. If you want to feel your heart thumping as you anxiously wait to find out if your team won gold at the most prestigious culinary competition in the world, then take the next step and apply to try out.

WHY MAKE THE COMMITMENT?
As an individual, you will experience personal growth and push yourself to limits you didn’t know you were capable of. You will be exposed to new techniques and refine existing skills, taking them a higher level. This is your opportunity to be a part of the team that sets trends and is a leader in the culinary industry. You will work and train with knowledgeable, talented coaches and advisors. You will learn about international cuisines and observe chefs from different culinary backgrounds. The experience will enhance your culinary skills and take your career to new heights.

WHAT’S INVOLVED?
Being on ACF Culinary Team USA is more than just being on a team; it’s a way of life. As a team member, you will eat, sleep and breathe food. You will constantly be thinking about ways to perfect a technique or enhance flavors in a dish. There are monthly team practice sessions and individual assignments to work on in between. It’s hard work, both mentally and physically, and it will affect your personal and professional life. You’re constantly pushing yourself to exceed expectations. But in the end, you will be stronger as a person and a chef.

WHAT’S NEXT?
Are you ready for the experience of a lifetime? Applications will be accepted through April 15, 2013, with cold-food tryouts tentatively scheduled for June 1-2 in Denver and June 15-16 in Charlotte, N.C. Those chefs selected during tryouts will then compete in a final cook-off. For more information, and to download an application, visit www.acfchefs.org/team.

TRYOUT TIPS
Joseph Leonardi, CEC, ACF Culinary Team USA manager, has this advice for those participating in cold-food tryouts:

• The clock is your enemy. Manage your time wisely. You will have one hour for kitchen setup followed by 12 hours to work on your items and five hours the next morning to finish and display.
• Showcase your best work. You will be judged on technical skills, organizational skills, cleanliness of work area and safe handling of food.
• Make sure your menu development makes sense. Is there a theme?
• It’s not only about the food. Your personality and how you handle stress will play a large part in the selection process.
• This is a learning experience. Take the critique you receive and make improvements.

If you have questions, email Leonardi at leonardi.joseph@yahoo.com. He will be happy to answer your questions and discuss all aspects of international culinary competition with you.