

Eat Like a Chef

Canadian chefs choose their favourite ingredients



Good cooking means using the best-quality ingredients, ideally grown, gathered or made as close as possible to the table. When questioned about their favourite ingredients, five chefs shared what makes their dishes desirable. Here are their inspired choices:



Quang Dang,
Executive Chef
Diva at the Met, Vancouver, British Columbia
metropolitan.com

Favourite ingredient: QUINCE

"I really love quince. It has an amazing aroma and flavour, and it's so versatile — both sweet and savoury. In keeping with Diva's 'Cascadian' philosophy, I preserve local quince when it's in season, so I can then use it all year. Although it sounds a little out of the ordinary, scallops with quince are a really great combination."



Jean-François Fortin,
Executive Chef
Library Dining Room,
Fairmont Algonquin
Hotel, St. Andrews,
New Brunswick

Favourite ingredient: DUCK FAT

"You can do anything with duck fat. It's a natural fat and an excellent alternative to butter. I always have a little pot of duck fat in my fridge to turn fresh ingredients into something special. It's easy to obtain by ordering from anyone who carries duck at a market or from butchers."



David Chrystian,
Executive Chef
Victor Restaurant and
Bar, Toronto, Ontario
victorrestaurant.com

Favourite ingredient: FENNEL

"The crunch factor and the surprising anise flavour of fennel give a boost to salads. In appetizers, its freshness opens up the palate and readies a diner for the meal to come. In winter, fennel with fish, poultry or game meats works wonderfully when braised in wine (red or white, depending on protein)."



John Jackson,
Chef/Owner
Charcut Roast House,
Calgary, Alberta
charcut.com

Favourite ingredient: HERITAGE PORK

"Heritage breeds are fatter and more flavourful [than factory-farmed pigs]. Raised with no antibiotics or growth hormones, without confinement, these pigs are happier and healthier, with only one bad day. Just add a few simple ingredients and watch it evolve."



Matthew Batey,
Executive Chef
Terrace Restaurant,
Mission Hill, Kelowna,
British Columbia
missionhillwinery.com

Favorite Ingredients: DUNGENESS CRAB AND STONE FRUIT

"One of the best summertime rituals when I was growing up on Vancouver Island was buying fresh Dungeness crab off the back of day boats. Now that I live in the Okanagan, I pick ripe peaches and nectarines with my kids. There's nothing like beautifully ripened organic fruit." **WA**