

# CHEF ROUNDTABLE

TELL US ABOUT THE LATEST  
FOOD TREND IN CHICAGO  
THAT YOU ARE SEEING RIGHT  
NOW. DOES IT INFLUENCE  
YOUR COOKING?



**EXECUTIVE CHEF  
DAVID FINGERMAN**  
OF ATWOOD

Food halls seem to be taking the city by storm, and it's great! It's easy access to a bunch of great restaurants in one space—communal dining for everyone! Food halls allow me to glean inspiration from different types of cuisine from fellow chefs. We do not have any immediate plans to open another Atwood in a food hall; however, we may have a little pop-up in the works.



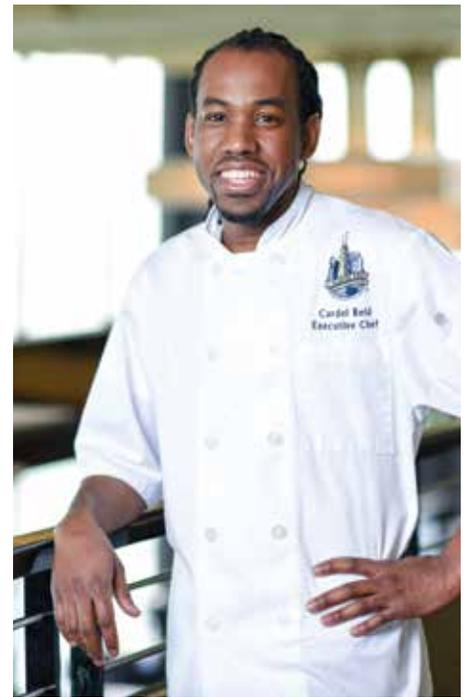
**CHEF DE CUISINE  
NIHAD HAJDARHODZIC**  
OF TORALI ITALIAN-STEAK

The latest trend in the Chicago culinary scene is the use of fermented and sour notes. All kinds of vinegars and fermented items are being used from last year's harvest of items that were pickled and/or fermented. I personally like acidic and bright flavor profiles and I try to use a variety of vinegars to accentuate certain flavors and foods. Acidic food is light and invites you to eat and drink more, allowing you to have a clean palate that is not overwhelmed.



**OWNER AND EXECUTIVE CHEF  
ZACK SKLAR**  
OF BERNIE'S LUNCH & SUPPER

I'm seeing some really cool trends popping up, including the more mainstream use of street foods, a savory approach to traditional pastries, and the broader use of Middle Eastern spices. I love to watch the influence of food trends, but I'm always looking for ways to create new trends rather than following suit. Once I see a new trend latch on, that is when I start reaching for something more outlandish. On top of that, I have personal preferences that are staples to my own cooking and I typically don't stray far from my own true North in that respect.



**EXECUTIVE CHEF CARDEL REID**  
OF THE SIGNATURE ROOM AT THE 95TH®

A modern twist on comfort food seems to be a trend this time of year. A comfort food I enjoyed growing up in Jamaica is malanga; it's a large root vegetable similar to a potato with a creamy and nutty flavor. It's a wonderful alternative to potatoes that has great health benefits. It is low in fat, gluten-free, and high in fiber and potassium. Malanga pairs perfectly with one of our best-selling dishes, Braised Short Rib, which is accompanied with sautéed Brussels sprouts, roasted butternut squash, and finished with short rib jus. It's a hearty dish that brings me back to my childhood and warms me up during the cold Chicago winters.



**OWNER/EXECUTIVE CHEF  
NOY MAKMOK**  
OF RYUU ASIAN BBQ

We do our best to follow food trends that fit within our realm. For instance, there has been a steady craze for avocado, poke, and ramen. We have three very popular dishes based on these trends. RYUU Avocado is our deep fried avocado that's topped with spicy tuna. We also offer a Poke Tuna Rice Bowl (spicy tuna with sesame soy sauce, crispy garlic, carrots, beets, green onions, pickled radish spicy mayo, and unagi sauce over marinated rice). Our RYUU Udon is a play on ramen, which features udon noodles that we make everyday in-house and is served in a clear pork short rib broth. Our customers love it!