

Precious metals and land were not the only treasures sought by these early adventurers—so, too, were flavorful spices and herbs. The Greeks brought home food-related “treasures” from their travels in Egypt, Persia, Babylon, and India. These **culinary** treasures were later passed on to the Romans. In fact, at the height of the Roman Empire, the typical Roman cook was a male slave brought from overthrown Greece, where cooking skills and **cuisine** were highly developed. The Romans’ appetites for pleasurable indulgences placed these cooks in high demand and raised the status of cooking to an art form.<sup>6</sup>

As the world moved into the so-called Dark Ages, travel began to diminish. The art of cooking, however, was preserved during this period because most of the rich cooking styles and the books that discussed foods and beverages were guarded in monasteries. Outside monastery walls, people continued to prepare rough, simple dishes that had been passed down unchanged for generations. The revival of travel by the wealthy during the Grand Tour Era after the end of the Middle Ages had a significant impact on foods and beverages. When the noble classes began to expand their travels into new territories, they encountered and brought home many new foods, beverages, and methods of preparation.<sup>7</sup>

As Europeans began to travel to the Americas and West Indies, they returned with many native foods from those regions such as chocolate, chilies, beans, corn, tomatoes, and potatoes. Some of these items were initially avoided and treated with suspicion because they looked different and were often regarded as poisonous. Through the efforts of pioneers such as French agronomist Antoine-August Parmentier and American scientist George Washington Carver, deep-seated fears and misconceptions about different foods were dispelled. Parmentier successfully spearheaded a campaign begun in 1774 that made potatoes a staple on the French dinner table.<sup>6</sup> Research efforts led by Carver resulted in over 300 products including cheese, milk, flour, and coffee made from peanuts.

Once people began emigrating from Europe to the “New Worlds” of North America, they brought along their favorite drinks, breads, desserts, herbs, spices, and fruits. These old favorites were combined with new foods, creating distinctive regional cuisines from New England clam chowder to hominy grits. Now, in the 21st century, the majority of people in industrialized countries can afford to travel for pleasure and, through tourism, enjoy new foods and dining experiences. These experiences continue to influence the development of menus and service styles for F&B operations as international and regional cuisines are blended together.

In the same way that travel has driven their development, foods and beverages now drive many travel choices, especially food-themed travel choices. F&B events attract tourists in increasing numbers to resorts, festivals, theme parks, casinos, and many other destinations. For example, travelers come from all over the world to enjoy the sights, sounds, and delights of Oktoberfest celebrations throughout Germany or Fiesta Days in San Antonio, Texas. In fact, pleasant memories of foods and beverages enjoyed as part of a trip often linger and are remembered more often than any other part of the travel experience.<sup>8,9</sup> Just as travel and the quest for new experiences have awakened our taste buds, science and technology have continued to advance, so we can enjoy these newfound treats wherever and whenever we desire.

## Science and Technology

Now more than ever before, F&B professionals can deliver on the promise “your wish is my command.” If a meeting planner wants to arrange a closing celebration banquet for a sales conference in Arizona in January with live lobster and fresh corn on the cob, no problem! Scientific advances and new technologies have made it possible to transport highly perishable foods safely over great distances. Products such as strawberries and asparagus can now be enjoyed anywhere and at any time of the year. Advances in farm technology have increased the quantity, quality, variety, and availability of foods, expanding menu choices all over the world. For example, **aquaculture** now brings high-quality seafood such as shrimp, salmon, and oysters to the kitchens of the world 365 days a year.