

# FLAVOR FORAYS

*Thank You Notes from Charleston Participants in the 8th Annual Grits, Gullah and the 3 O’Clock Dinner, February 5 to 7, 2024*

My Dearest Lovers of The Bloodline,  
(Chef Shaun Brian at CudaCo showed us how to butcher the bloodline from a tuna and turn it into a skewered snack.)

Wow, where do I even begin? I feel like I’ve just completed a culinary marathon, but instead of medals, I’ve earned a few extra pounds and a heart full of gratitude. Thank you hardly seems sufficient for the gastronomic extravaganza we’ve embarked upon together.

Firstly, a heartfelt thank you for not judging me as I shamelessly devoured my weight in South Carolina history. You’re the real MVPs of the foodie world.

To our fearless leader (yes, that’s you-Barbara, and Beverly!), thank you for guiding us through the labyrinth of culinary delights with wit, wisdom, and an unyielding sense of direction (mostly towards GET ON THE BUS-we’re late!). You’ve truly mastered the art of balancing food-induced euphoria with just the right amount of laughter and camaraderie.

And to my fellow food enthusiasts, thank you for sharing your appetite, your laughter, and your stories. Every bite was savored just a little bit more because it was shared with you.

As I reflect on our foodie odyssey, I can’t help but feel a profound sense of gratitude for the memories we’ve created and the friendships we’ve forged. The stomachaches may fade, but the laughter and camaraderie will linger on.

So here’s to good food, great company, and the indelible memories we’ve created together. May our next foodie adventure be even more epic (and perhaps a tad less waist-line-expanding-but highly doubtful). Please know, if your ever in LA, we would love to share a meal with you or at least return the kindness you have extended to me.

With heartfelt thanks and a slightly tighter belt,  
xoxo  
Kim Floresca  
VP Culinary  
Goop Kitchen

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Good Morning Flavor Forays Team!

I say team, because I feel like we are literally all a team now, that has bonded over the magical experience that is Flavor Forays. I left Charleston feeling connected not only to the people, but to the land, farmers, chefs, food, culture, and history. This culinary and cultural immersion was nothing short of a borderline spiritual experience. Barbra and Beverly are master curators and connectors in a world where their skills and passion are much needed. I will cherish this experience forever and hope to remain connected to you all in the future.

Chef Bintu is a West African culinary treasure. Her commitment to connecting the dots within the diaspora (on each plate) made me feel at home at her table. I am excited to see what the future holds for her and the food pathways of Charleston and South Carolina. She is in her rightful place and her talent was appreciated and resonated with us all.

Meeting Chef BJ Dennis and the entire Joseph Fields Farm family was a wonderful blessing. We connected over Afro-Caribbean culinary and agricultural traditions that run deep in my genetics, ancestry, and culture.

The hospitality at Firefly was exceptional and the BBQ was truly tasty.

The tea! The tea and the history of the Charleston Tea Garden was beyond phenomenal. As someone who has been growing my own tea for years, this was very educational. Shout out to Bigelow Tea and the lovely host Lisa!

Farms hold a special place in my heart, and it was great to meet the Kiawah River team and hear their story. Their animals are loved, and it is quite evident. It is amazing to see all female farm leadership in action. I am reminded of my great grandmother and her legacy.

Chef Shaun runs an impeccable operation. It's hard to do seafood at a high level and so right. He is a master of his craft. I was happy to hear him share about his Caribbean upbringing. We love our fresh ocean fish!

Maya Restaurant and their entire staff were the epitome of hospitality and the guac and the ceviche demonstration were tremendously memorable.

The Spectator Hotel was tremendous in every way. They are a true beacon of southern charm and hospitality executed at the highest level.

Honey Suckle Rose and Chef Heather, all I can say is wow. Beautiful restaurant space and Chef Heather is an artist. I think that she has transcended the title of pastry chef quite honestly.

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Edmund's Oast was such a great restaurant to end at. Chef was so gracious, and his team was very attentive.

All of our sponsors were superb. I look forward to connecting with each of them within the coming weeks.

Barb, Peter and his wife were such welcoming hosts. It was a treat to break bread in their lovely home. Such lovely people.

Onto Kay. Kay was phenomenal. She set the tone for the entire trip and was so thoughtful, knowledgeable and an all-around spectacular human being. I will be back for another tour.

Nanette, is a skilled artist. I thank her for chronicling and capturing these wonderful moments that I will treasure forever. We will definitely chat soon.

This past week was in fact a true Foray into Flavors, culture and history. Thank you all for your time and beautiful energies which made for a cultural food extravaganza. I look forward to connecting with everyone in the coming weeks.

I hope I got it all! I could literally write a book about this experience, but I have to get back to work. Lol

I end my short story on a note of enormous gratitude for the opportunity to be a part of this experience and be the beneficiary all of your hard work. I am inspired.

Love and light for a wonderful year.

Laurel Elliott  
Director of Culinary Outside Services,  
Entegra

It was a great experience and nice to meet everyone. Thanks again to Barb, Bev, and the whole team for such a great event. It was an amazing experience and hope to do it again. Appreciate you all and all you all do.

If anyone needs anything or I can help in anyway, let me know.

Tony Riley  
Regional Chef Chart House Restaurants

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It was great to meet you all and spend a few fantastic days in Charleston together! Barbara and Beverly, thank you for a great few days and your hospitality.

Serena Crutchfield  
VP Marketing and Communications, Restaurant Associates

Hey everyone! What an amazing food and history extravaganza in Charleston! I want to express my gratitude to you all, especially Beverly, Barbara, and all of the chefs, artists, historians, farmers, and Charleston folks that guided us along the way. Learning about all of the food, Gullah-Geechee, and history around Charleston culture was an unforgettable experience. I am honored to have shared this experience with you great people.

Jason Hovan

Hello Friends,

To say this was an amazing experience would be an understatement. I was unsure what to expect when first signing on to the trip but was immediately blown away by the level of hospitality of our Hosts, as well as, our lovely sponsors. It was a well-thought-out event and was engaging from beginning to end. Even when plans changed due to the elements the flow of the trip did not skip a beat.

As for the Flavor Foray Chefs and farmers who allowed us to invade their space and welcome us into their homes. I can't thank you enough for who you are and the culture that you creating and protecting. I have come home not only a better Chef but a better person because of the knowledge and culture that you shared with us.

For my fellow Chef's who went on this journey with me. You all are amazing and I could not have expected how close we all would come during this foray. We all connected so quickly, with so many awesome moments and laughs. Thank you all for being so open and fun to be around. Also, Major shout out to Chef Terry and his golden voice serenading us through the night.

Barbara and Bev, you two are such a dynamic duo. I loved both of your energy and the passion you have for the industry. It is people like yourselves that drive curiosity, interest, and excellence to our industry.

Before this gets too winded and a novel, I just want to thank you all one last time. If any-

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one is ever in the LA area please do not hesitate to contact me. I would love to connect.

If you ever need anything always feel free to reach out.

Thank you all,

Monte Brentham  
Supervisor Kitchen Operations R&D  
The Cheesecake Factory Inc

Sorry that it has taken me so long to get to send this email, but I do want to extend my gratitude for being able to do such a fun and inspiring experience with all of you! It was more than just the food (which was absolutely amazing), but learning the roots of where we were.

I am very glad this was my prize, which it truly was. Thank you Barbara and Beverly for creating this amazing experience! Thank you everyone for making it fun!

Stay blessed everyone,

Kandice Symister  
Moana Surfrider Westin Resort  
Associate Chef