

Fusion and creative infusion with gategroup

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Molly Brandt, Executive Chef of Culinary Innovation, gategroup North America

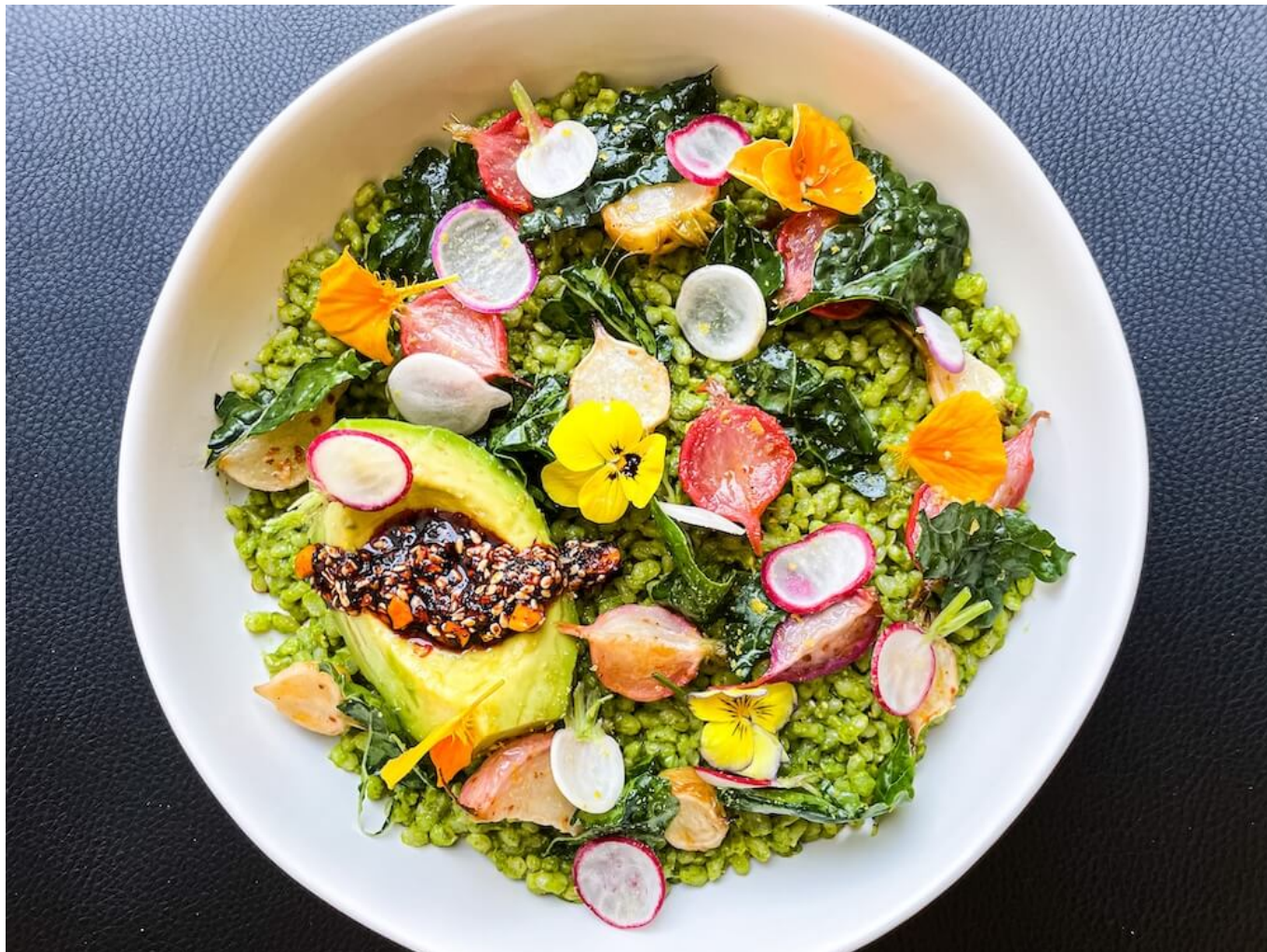
The airline catering industry is one that is always evolving to keep up with the trends that passengers adopt on the ground. Leveraging its expertise in the kitchen, gategroup chefs create dishes that not only captivate the passenger but take them on a journey of flavours and feelings.

At the head of this charge at [gategroup](#) North America is Chef Molly Brandt, Executive Chef of Culinary Innovation. She is tasked with crafting dishes that will be featured in lounges, on flights and anywhere the customer requires them. From brand new dishes to twists on nostalgic classics, Brandt is skilled at combining flavors and ingredients in ways never thought of before.

“For me, innovating new dishes or developing inspired riffs on familiar ones is a combination of keeping a close eye on trends, and educating myself on the cuisine of the customers we serve,” Brandt tells *PAX International*.

gategroup boasts a large global community of culinary experts and talents, brought together to discuss, think and pioneer the future of culinary arts. The chefs possess extremely high skills in traditional cuisine from their countries and a deep knowledge of local hero ingredients which allows them to infuse innovation and creativity into every dish.

“Creativity is like a muscle—if you don't constantly flex it by immersing yourself in your craft and related influences, it becomes hard to innovate,” says Brandt.



The Farm Vegetable Grain Bowl by Chef Molly Brandt

Fusion cuisine is a common way for gategroup's chefs to innovate. This blending of culinary traditions from different cultures has been a dynamic part of the culinary world since the 1970s, Brandt explains, but gategroup chefs continually look for new and flavourful ways to combine cultures and ingredients.

“The end result should still be recognizable to guests, using the best ingredients, bold flavours and creative presentation. It needs to strike a balance between being familiar enough for airline passengers—given the challenges of inflight catering—and offering something fresh and original,” she explains.

gategroup chefs are passionate about food that tells a story; innovating and shaping the future of culinary offerings to its customers worldwide through the aesthetic and taste of creations. Infusing creativity into every dish allows the caterer to adapt to passenger habits and the needs of the airline catering industry.



Chef Molly Brandt's Caponata Cabbage Wedge

The creation of dishes is a process that can take weeks and months at a time. Focusing on a specific flavour to evoke a particular emotion takes time to perfect, especially when chefs are combining ingredients in new ways. Not everything works the first time, and it takes a team to put together the right balance of ingredients to find the sweet spot where everything comes together in a symphony for the tastebuds, Brandt explains.

Creating new dishes is not just the only way gategroup chefs innovate. Because there are limitations within the way the food is prepared and used for inflight service, the dish itself must undergo a unique creation process. It must be able to be put together by anyone working in the kitchen, not just an executive chef. It needs to be mass produced, efficiently in large quantities.

Within these considerations, gategroup finds new ways of streamlining the process, sometimes through kitchen hardware or through use of AI technology to help with the assembly process, monitoring consistency, accuracy and efficiency.

Every aspect of the meal creation process is looked at and developed to give customers the best possible product, concludes Brandt.



The vegan BBQ Lentil Loaf created by gategroup's Chef Molly Brandt