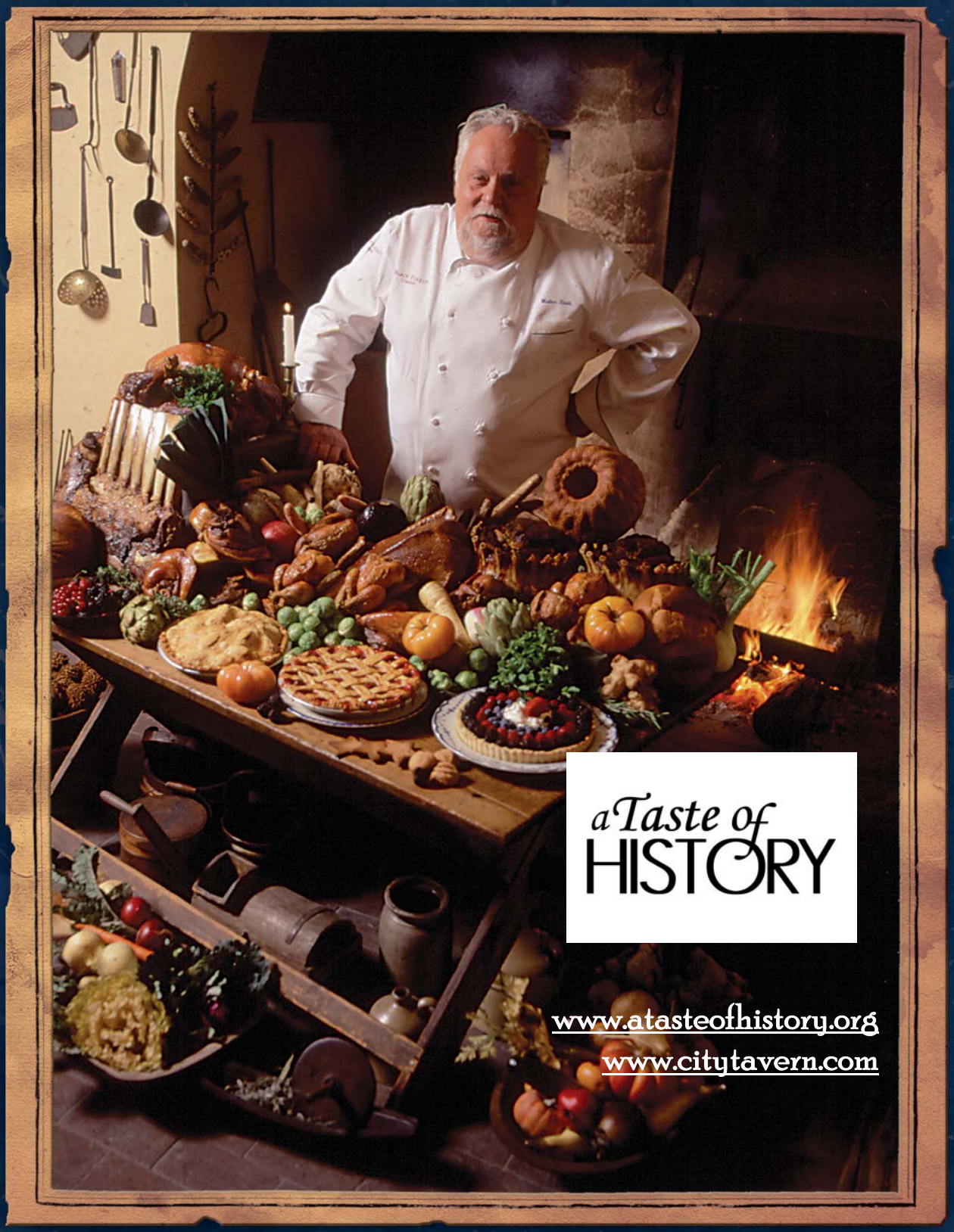
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Chef Walter Staib

A third generation restaurateur with over four decades of culinary experience, Staib began his career in Europe. He received formal training in many of Europe's finest hotels restaurants before coming to the United States.

As founder and President of Concepts By Staib, Ltd. (est. 1989), a globally operating restaurant management and hospitality consulting firm, Walter Staib is currently the driving force behind one of the nation's most unique dining establishments: Philadelphia's City Tavern (independent), a faithful recreation of an original 18th century tavern and Concepts By Staib, Ltd.'s flagship operation.

In addition to being a top chef, restaurateur and consultant, Chef Staib has also authored four cookbooks, *City Tavern Cookbook* (1999), *City Tavern Baking & Dessert Cookbook* (2003), *Black Forest Cuisine* (2006, and *City Tavern: Recipes from the Birthplace of American Cuisine* (2009). Walter Staib has made numerous appearances on local and national cooking shows, such as *The Food Network's* 'Cooking Live with Sara Moulton,' and *CBS* 'Chef on a Shoestring,' & 'The Chef's Kitchen.

In January 2008, Chef Staib's cooking television cooking show, 'World Cuisine of the Black Forest', filmed on location in Germany and the United States, debuted on Comcast's CN8 and received two Emmy Award nominations in August 2008. Currently, Staib is planning the second season of 'A Taste of History' based which explores America's culinary beginnings through the lens of the venerable City Tavern.

His passion for culinary excellence has earned him numerous awards—among them the prestigious Chevalier de l'Ordre du Mérite Agricole de la République Française. In 1996, was also appointed the First Culinary Ambassador to the City of Philadelphia. In July, 2006, he was named Culinary Ambassador to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. German President Dr. Horst Köhler conferred the Knight's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany upon Staib in May, 2007.

Among Walter Staib's most recent awards are the 2009 Entrée of the Year by *Philadelphia Magazine*, the 2007 National Restaurant Association Keystone Humanitarian Award (Pennsylvania) the 2008 Award of Leadership & Service from the German-American Chamber of Commerce, Inc. and the 2006 Seven Stars & Stripes Award for Excellence in Hospitality.

City Tavern Restaurant
Philadelphia, PA

A Brief History

When John Adams arrived in Philadelphia in August of 1774, to attend the First Continental Congress, he was greeted by leading citizens and immediately taken to the tavern he would call "the most genteel tavern in America." The tavern Adams referred to, City Tavern, was not yet a year old and was already caught in momentous events. A few months earlier, Paul Revere had ridden up to the tavern with the news of the closing of the port of Boston. Now, some of the most influential men in the colonies gathered in Philadelphia to decide a common response to this and other "intolerable acts." For the next decade, the City Tavern would be a familiar sight to the leading figures of the American Revolution.

The tavern was built "for the convenience and credit of the city" by a group of eminent Philadelphians who felt that their hometown deserved a fine tavern which reflected its status as the largest, most cosmopolitan city in British North America. When the tavern was completed in 1773, it was one of the most elegant buildings in the city. Situated on Second Street, a main thoroughfare, the City Tavern was constructed in the latest architectural style and stood three stories high. Inside, it "boasted" of several large club rooms, two of which thrown into one make a spacious room of nearly fifty feet in length, for public entertainment. There were "several commodious lodging rooms, two large kitchens, and every other convenience for the purpose." In addition, there was a Bar and also a Coffee Room, which was supplied with British and American newspapers and magazines.

The new tavern immediately became a social and economic center for the city. The club rooms hosted various benevolent and social organizations, including the St. George's Society, the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick and the Jockey Club. The elegant Long Room was the setting for gala entertainment and balls. Downstairs, in the Bar and the Coffee Room, important business affairs were conducted by principal merchants of the city.

In 1774, as the breech with great Britain widened, politics were the dominant topic of conversation at the City Tavern. In May, leading citizens held a meeting in the Long Room to shape Pennsylvania's response to the "intolerable acts." Three months later, as the delegates to the First Continental Congress began to arrive, the tavern was thrust center stage in the dispute with England.

From that time until the close of the century the City Tavern knew the patronage of the great and near-great of the American Revolution. It became the practice of the members of the Second Continental Congress to dine together each Saturday at the tavern. Eight of the delegates, Randolph, Lee, Washington, Harrison of Virginia, Alsop of New York, Chase of Maryland, and Rodney and Read of Delaware chose to form a "table" and dine there daily. No doubt, matters of momentous importance were discussed and decided over a glass of Madeira and steaming roast of venison.

The war years brought change and turmoil to the City Tavern. There was grand entertainment, such as the Continental Congress's first Fourth of July celebration in 1777. After the war, the Tavern settled into a more sedate existence which was not interrupted until the opening of the Constitutional Convention in 1787. Once again, these leaders enjoyed the hospitality of the City Tavern. It was fitting that the adjournment of the convention in September, delegates gathered for one final dinner at the City Tavern.

In the 1790's, the City Tavern began to lose its place of prominence to newly constructed "hotels." For the next half century, it underwent a number of changes, serving primarily as a merchant's exchange until 1834. In 1854 it was demolished to make way for new brownstone stores. A newspaper of the time noted the passing of the tavern, and remarked that in a generation or two, "The City Tavern will not be remembered except by some curious delver into the past."

Chicken Noodle Soup

From *The City Tavern: Recipes from the Birthplace of American Cuisine*, ©2009 by Walter Staib

In colonial times, chickens were raised mainly for their eggs, which were prized for baking. Older chickens that no longer produced eggs were then used in stews and soups like this one. These chickens normally were fattier than younger hens, and colonial housewives used this to their advantage by rendering the fat to use as a flavorful alternative to butter or lard in other dishes. Adding egg noodles, a traditional German preparation, lent texture to the soup and served as a means of transforming the soup into a more hearty meal that could feed an entire family.

Serves 6 to 8
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
1 medium onion, peeled and chopped
3 ribs celery, chopped
2 large carrots, peeled and chopped
3 quarts Chicken Stock
1 sprig fresh thyme
1 pound boneless chicken (white or dark meat), cooked and chopped
8 ounces Egg Noodles , cooked and drained
Salt
Freshly ground black pepper
Chopped fresh parsley, for garnish

In a medium saucepan, sauté the onion in the butter over medium heat, until softened and translucent, about 3 to 5 minutes.

Add the celery and carrots, and sauté for 3 to 5 minutes more, until softened.

Stir in the stock and thyme, and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to low, and simmer for about 30 minutes, until the stock is reduced by one-third.

Lift out the thyme and add the chicken and egg noodles. Simmer until heated and season with salt and pepper.

Serve the soup in a tureen or in individual bowls garnished with parsley.