

Right on the heels of the Olympic Games, which started in 1896 in Athens, was the formation of the IKA. In German, it was the Internationale Kochkunst Ausstellung, or, translated to English, the International Culinary Art Exhibition. It was started in 1900 in Frankfurt, Germany. This was the first event of its kind, in which international teams of chefs cooked live in front of the public. This was one of the world's best-kept secrets until now. One man had the vision to create this incredible event. His name was Matthaeus Carl Banzer (1867–1945). This culinary art competition was preceded by a culinary art fair organized by Queen Frederick (1840–1901) in 1894 in Frankfurt, Germany. That's what this book is centered on: how this unimaginable culinary event was started in the first place.

Then, some seventy-three years after the IKA started in Germany, the US Army created a culinary competition event that began in 1973 in Fort Lee, Virginia. This location boasts the biggest military culinary competition for North America held annually. Although this event has not been around like its counterparts, it has happened every year with two exceptions (in 1991, due to Desert Storm, and 2003, due to Operation Iraqi Freedom). This ranks under the world's best-kept secrets as well! The organizers are making this event more known to the world, as the event is open to the public every year. Out of this competition, the team members are picked for the United States Army Culinary Arts Team (USACAT). This team goes around the world competing at the Culinary Olympics, only held in Germany, and the Culinary World Cup, only held in Luxembourg, along with the Fort Lee competition.

This all-military competition started out as an all army competition organized by Lieutenant General John D. Maclaughlin (1917–92). It was held at the Maclaughlin Fitness Center from March 9 to 13, 2020. There will be more on this crucial event, with emphasis on Berlin, Germany, because it was something I stumbled upon by accident, and it became an unexpected turn of events for this book.