

President Fernando De la Fuente
Dear friends and colleagues,
Dear juniors,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to Chile, welcome to Latin America, welcome to the 34th WACS Congress,

It is the dream of many that has come true today as this is the first time the World Chefs come together in Latin America to discuss the global culinary issues, share knowledge and network.

This is happening in Santiago, Chile this week. This beautiful city and country. I have had the honour to be a guest here two times before and I hope that many of you will try to stay longer and get some experience of this country. The food is great, the people are lovely and the scenery, fantastic.

I am pleased to know that members from all over the world have found time and funds to make their way to Chile. This shows how important the WACS work is and how dedicated you the members are to coming together to make decisions and finding solutions for today's issues in our industry.

I am also thrilled and happy to see how many countries have sent a Junior Chef to participate in the Bill Gallagher Junior Chefs Forum. We made the decision to focus on Juniors at the beginning of our term and with hard work from many colleagues around the world, under the guidance of Dr. Bill Gallagher, we are reaching this goal.

My friends, this week you will be working on and discussing many issues related to our profession, the voluntary work we do around the world and WACS, our association itself.

1. You will be part of history.
2. You will be part of the future.
3. You will hear about and discuss Global education, cooks, chefs, master chefs and how important it is to have standards at all levels of education.
4. You will hear about how important humanitarian aid through our association is and how much we can do if we work together.
5. You will hear about our young people that not only are here but also all over the world waiting for educational opportunities.
6. You will discuss equal rights of women and men in the kitchen.
7. You will hear about Competitions on the national, regional and international levels.
8. You will hear about judging seminars and how important it is to have the same standard around the world.
9. You will hear about the Halal industry, what it is and why it is important for you to know about it.
10. You will hear about Genetically modified foods,
11. about food waste.
12. about food and wine pairing,
13. about coffee and food pairing,
14. about the Chilean Culture and cuisine,
15. about communication,
16. and finally, about new goals, visions and dreams for WACS.

And the best part is that you will be asked to take part in these discussions. We want you to help in making the statement we will give out after this congress because we truly need to show the world that we are the voice of Chefs around the world. We as chefs of the world with alliances in over 90 countries and with a membership of over 10 million, we can send out a message if we work and speak together of our view on the global culinary issues.

The small steps we take this week may help many around the world to get educational opportunities and may even help many to have food on the table tomorrow. We should never take too lightly our power to make a difference.

Ladies and Gentleman,

This is only a small preview of the activities we will have this week.

The social networking, continuing of friendships and making of new ones is all part of the congress, also this week we will show respect and honor to people that have done outstanding work in our industry. All this will help us to move forward and go home full of hope and new ideas.

The only thing I ask of you is to BE OPEN, listen, share and talk to each other. If you do not agree, then debate, come with constructive feedback, and be sure to look at all angles before judging. Silence is not our friend. We are all in this profession so don't be afraid to rise up and share and talk. This is what I want you to do this week because our future is in front of us and we need to choose and plan together what it will look like.

Thank you.