



THE RITZ - CARLTON

ALMATY

News

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Executive Chef of The Ritz-Carlton, Almaty Ismail Alcay on changing tastes of guests and the future of fine dining in Almaty.

“We work hard to be the leading trend setter in the culinary world in Kazakhstan”

Culinary field is dynamic and vibrant. The popularity of fine dining has been growing rapidly in Kazakhstan. Executive Chef of The Ritz-Carlton, Almaty Ismail Alcay explaining the latest trends, changing tastes of the local food connoisseurs and reflects on first months of operation of SEVEN Bar & Restaurant.

SEVEN Bar & Restaurant has opened fairly recently. How has the journey been so far? What are you planning to bring for us in the upcoming season?

SEVEN Bar & Restaurant is the first fine dining restaurant, offering signature Michelin star dishes in Kazakhstan. We only use fresh produce and fresh seafood, never frozen. Before locals and visitors could only have a more casual dining experience in the city. 60-65% of our guests are local businessmen and celebrities. We are currently working on a new winter season menu that will feature some seasonal products with interesting flavor pairings and exciting presentations.

You hosted a culinary festival brining renowned Michelin Star chefs. Tell us a little bit about that experience.

We wanted to take people of Almaty on an exciting culinary journey, have them experience something new. We had two Michelin star chefs come and cook at SEVEN Bar & Restaurant so far and it was a great success. We usually spend 2-3 days introducing a guest chef to local traditional food and then go together with a team to a local farmer’s market to get fresh ingredients.

What are some of the changes in tastes that you have observed while working as Executive Chef at The Ritz-Carlton, Almaty?

To name one, preference for fresh ingredients. Nowadays guests ask more often if fish is freshly caught and meat was not previously frozen. Also our audiences know that we offer premium class foods like lobsters, fresh oysters and Kamchatka crabs that are hard to find anywhere else in the city. Knowing that meat is extremely popular in Kazakhstan, we bring the finest steaks from the U.S.

Tell us about the leading trends of the last few years in the industry? Have you experienced any radical changes?

Cooking authentic traditional dishes in a modern unconventional interpretation has definitely been among the most popular fine dining trends. Cooking techniques are constantly changing and evolving. Take tiramisu as an example, the ingredients are the same as in a traditional tiramisu, but presentation is different in fine dining.

Last year you won the best chef in the Award of Culinary Excellence. How did that make you feel?

I felt so honoured to receive that award and be recognized among other five thousand restaurants of Marriott International chain. I am so grateful to be working with my team and it wouldn't be possible without them. For the competition I chose to cook a traditional dish that my grandparents used to make – manti, but came up with my own recipe. The filling was made of lobster meat instead of beef and I served bisque de omar instead of a yogurt sauce.

Now let's talk about inspiration. What inspires you? How do you stay motivated after working in this field for so many years?

I am very passionate about what I do, so it has never been a problem for me to stay motivated. I am always striving to do my best to create unforgettable experiences for Ladies and Gentlemen of The Ritz-Carlton, Almaty, and the team of high-class professionals helps tremendously with that. We work hard to continue being the best guide in the world of culinary experiences of our guests.

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About The Ritz-Carlton, Almaty

The Ritz-Carlton, Almaty is a magnificent symbiosis of modern luxury and traditional oriental hospitality. It is one of Kazakhstan's tallest hotels with a breathtaking panoramic view of the Southern capital. All 145 rooms are located on the upper floors of the Esentai Tower from 21 to 27. The five-star hotel offers its guests not only luxurious and elegant rooms for a comfortable stay, but also an exceptionally high level of service. Thanks to the elegant rooms and apartments, the luxurious Six Senses Spa and the delightful VISTA restaurant, The Ritz-Carlton, Almaty has a unique style, different from other hotels in Almaty. The chic interior, combining modern western design with traditional Kazakh elements of decoration, creates a visual intrigue, while the extensive collection of works of art within the hotel sound as the final note in understanding the rich and dynamic Kazakh culture. For more information about The Ritz-Carlton, Almaty, please visit www.ritzcarlton.com/almaty.

About The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company, LLC

The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company, L.L.C., of Chevy Chase, MD., part of Marriott International, Inc., currently operates more than 100 hotels and over 45 residential properties in 30 countries and territories. For more information or reservations, visit the company web site at www.ritzcarlton.com, for the latest company updates, visit news.ritzcarlton.com and to join the live conversation, use #RCMemories and follow along on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#). The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company, L.L.C. is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Marriott International, Inc. (NASDAQ:MAR). The Ritz-Carlton is proud to participate in Marriott Bonvoy, the new name of Marriott's travel program replacing Marriott Rewards®, The Ritz-Carlton Rewards®, and Starwood Preferred Guest® (SPG). The program offers members an extraordinary portfolio of global brands, experiences on Marriott Bonvoy Moments and unparalleled benefits including earning points toward free hotel stays and nights toward Elite status recognition. To enroll for free or for more information about the program, visit MarriottBonvoy.marriott.com.