



Nelson Millán



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Executive Chef
San Antonio (Texas) Country Club

*World of Flavors: Bringing the
Latin American 'Revolution' to
American Kitchens*

Tuesday, March 7

Born in Rio Grande, Puerto Rico, in one of the last remaining rain forests of the world, "El Yunque," Nelson Millán, Executive Chef of San Antonio (Texas) Country Club since 2010, began his professional career at an early age in his homeland. But cooking was not his initial career choice.

Chef Millán was just a year away from finishing his studies in Political Science at the University of Puerto Rico when an opportunity arose at the School of Hotel and Tourism in San Juan. Twenty-five culinary scholarships were offered to the most qualified applicants; Chef Millán applied and was accepted from among 364 applicants. Over the next two years, he studied intensely in the classroom as well as the kitchen, and upon graduation, Chef Millán accepted an internship with Hilton Hotels.

Chef Millán's career began to take off when he started to compete nationally and internationally as part of the Junior, and later Senior, Team of the American Culinary Federation. Following numerous competitions in Puerto Rico, South Carolina and New York, and after winning several gold and silver medals, Chef Nelson continued his travels within the Hilton organization—a journey that took him from the Caribe Hilton in San Juan to the Aruba Hilton and ultimately the Noga Hilton in Geneva, Switzerland.

He then left Hilton to return to Puerto Rico, where he opened and operated a very successful casual restaurant in downtown Rio Grande for three-and-a-half years. However, his heart was still in the hospitality industry, which he then re-entered as Chef Garde Manger of the Westin Grand Rio Mar Beach Resort & Spa in Rio Grande. After joining this property, he soon worked his way up to the Assistant Executive Chef position for its country club.

In 1999, Chef Millán moved to Coronado, Calif., to take the position of Chef Garde Manger at the prestigious Forbes 5-star/AAA 5-diamond Hotel Del Coronado. At this property, he soon progressed to become Chef de Cuisine for the hotel's fine-dining and casual restaurants.

In 2002, Nelson moved to Key Largo, Fla. with his family to join Ocean Reef Club's elite culinary team as Chef Garde Manger. In 2004, he traveled to New York City with a select few Ocean Reef Club chefs to cook a memorable Latin Caribbean dinner at the prestigious James Beard House. In 2005, Chef Millán was appointed Chef de Cuisine at Ocean Reef, to open its newly rebuilt Galley restaurant.

In 2007, Chef Millán moved up the Atlantic coast to open the New Beach Club at The Cloister on Sea Island, Ga., where he was part of the team that made history in 2009, when the Sea Island Company became the first company in the world to have four of its properties rated as Forbes 5-Star and AAA 5-Diamond.

Chef Millán has been Executive Chef of San Antonio Country Club since August 2010. He has also been an adjunct professor, teaching Latin Caribbean Cuisine, at the Culinary Institute of America's San Antonio campus.

This is Chef Millán's second appearance as a Chef to Chef Conference presenter; for the 2014 Conference in San Antonio, he presented on "Innovative Buffet and Brunch Presentations That Please the Eyes, Palate—and P&L," and also treated attendees to a dazzling ice-sculpting demonstration.

In addition to his culinary talent, which combines French techniques with his Latin Caribbean roots, Chef Millán is a very accomplished musician. He also enjoys reading, business entrepreneurship and spending quality time with his wife and two children.