

# Interview with Christopher Galarza

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Meet Chef Christopher Galarza of Forward Dining Solutions. He is developing a new initiative – an [EcoChef certification](#) for professional cooks and chefs seeking to align their healthy/organic/slow food/farm-to-table values with kitchen electrification and sustainability. Chris has just published, “[Understanding the Green Industrial Revolution](#),” which serves as a textbook for EcoChef.

### Q: Tell us about why you first became interested in induction stoves as a chef.

As a chef, my journey into the world of induction stoves began with a transformative experience during the construction of Chatham University’s Eden Hall campus. Prior to this encounter, induction cooking was a relatively unknown concept to me. However, the introduction to this innovative technology sparked a realization of its remarkable capabilities and potential impact on our industry. It was a moment of revelation that ignited my curiosity about the broader implications for enhancing culinary operations.

The transition to induction cooking marked a significant shift in my perspective as a chef. It dawned on me that the traditional challenges and discomfort associated with kitchen environments could become relics of the past. The prospect of practicing our craft in a more comfortable and efficient manner without compromising performance was truly compelling. Moreover, the substantial cost savings it brought to my operation reinforced my belief in its value proposition.

Inspired by my experience, I began advocating for induction cooking among my peers in the culinary community. What started as conversations with fellow chefs soon evolved into a nationwide dialogue, as I shared my enthusiasm for the transformative potential of this technology. Induction cooking became more than just

a culinary innovation—it became a catalyst for positive change within our industry.

### Q: What are the pros and cons of induction stoves versus gas stoves? What health risks are associated in cooking with gas? Any with induction?

#### Pros and Cons of Induction vs. Gas Stoves:

##### Induction stove pros: (there’s a lot so I’ll keep it to a few)

- **Energy efficiency:** Induction stoves are highly efficient, as they directly heat the cookware, reducing heat loss and energy consumption. (gas stoves are around 30% efficient while induction is 90%+)
- **Precise temperature control:** Induction technology allows for precise temperature adjustments, resulting in more accurate cooking outcomes. If you set your induction range to 180F to poach eggs for example you can rest assured that you will be within 1 degree of that mark. As a chef that means I can now write my recipes to be followed by my staff that with precision usually reserved for pastry chefs.
- **Safety:** Since induction stoves heat only the cookware and not the surrounding surface, they pose a lower risk of burns and fires.
- **Thermal comfortability** – Because there’s no loss of heat and that 90+ percent of the energy is directed towards the cooking vessel the kitchens in which these are installed will be far cooler and comfortable making the experience of being in a kitchen far more enjoyable.
- **Increased performance** – An induction range can cook up to 70.9 Pounds of food per hour where a gas range at best can only cook 38.6 pounds per hour. This means that chefs can produce far more food with less meaning increased profitability.
- **Decreases operational costs** – From energy efficiency, gas reduction, water usage reduction, chemical purchasing reduction, and more there’s no doubt to the benefits and savings associated with induction cooking.

##### Cons of Induction Stoves:

- **Initial cost:** Induction stoves can be more expensive to purchase upfront compared to gas stoves.

Although depending on where you live there are incentives to bring down this cost.

- **Compatibility:** Induction stoves require cookware with ferrous metal bottoms to function properly. So if you're accustomed to buying cheap aluminum pans that can barely withstand the flames of a commercial gas range then you'll have to upgrade your pans.

#### **Pros of Gas Stoves:**

- **Traditional cooking experience:** Many chefs prefer the tactile experience of cooking with gas flames.

#### **Cons of Gas Stoves: (there's a lot but I'll keep it to a few)**

- **Energy inefficiency:** Gas stoves can be less energy-efficient compared to induction stoves, as they generate heat that can escape into the surrounding environment.
- **Safety concerns:** Gas stoves produce combustion byproducts such as carbon monoxide and nitrogen dioxide, which can pose health risks if not properly ventilated. It also has a much greater chance of causing serious burns and bodily harm to those who use it.
- Slower to heat up and cook
- Less accurate and more difficult to control
- Creates a hotter kitchen thus raising your costs to cool the building
- Ruins your pots and pans and thus

#### **Health Risks Associated with Cooking:**

- **Gas Stoves:** There's a lot to be written on this subject but to keep it short, cooking with gas stoves can release pollutants such as carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, and particulate matter into the air, which can contribute to respiratory issues and exacerbate existing health conditions.
- **Induction Stoves:** Induction stoves are generally considered safe to use, as they do not produce combustion byproducts or emit harmful gases during operation.

### **Q: What does cooking sustainably mean to you?**

Cooking sustainably to me means adopting practices that minimize environmental impact while maximizing resource efficiency. This includes using energy-efficient equipment like induction stoves, sourcing locally and seasonally, and minimizing food waste. All of these practices can

be implemented in any operation without compromising quality while also benefiting your operation, employees, and your local economy.

### **Q. What are the biggest barriers to chefs adopting induction stoves on a broader scale?**

The biggest barrier to adoption is making sure our professionals are educated and have access to this equipment. Outside of that these are the three most common barriers I've encountered over the years.

- **Initial Cost:** The upfront cost of purchasing induction stoves and compatible cookware can be a barrier for some chefs, especially in smaller establishments with limited budgets.
- **Training and Familiarity:** Some chefs may be hesitant to adopt induction stoves due to a lack of familiarity or training with this technology.
- **Infrastructure:** In some cases, existing kitchen infrastructure may not support the installation of induction stoves, requiring costly renovations.

### **Q: What was the inspiration behind your book "Understanding the Green Industrial Revolution"?**

The inspiration behind my book, "Understanding the Green Industrial Revolution: An Interdisciplinary Look at the Hospitality Industry," stemmed from a recognition of the urgent need for comprehensive guidance in navigating the complex intersection of sustainability and the hospitality industry. As a chef and sustainability advocate, I observed a growing demand for practical strategies and actionable insights to drive meaningful change across diverse sectors.

With a diverse audience in mind—ranging from architects and engineers to political scientists, hospitality professionals, and culinary artists—I sought to create a roadmap that transcends disciplinary boundaries. I envisioned a resource that would serve as a unifying platform, fostering collaboration and dialogue among professionals from disparate fields who share a common goal of advancing sustainability within the hospitality sector.

The book offers a holistic perspective on the challenges and opportunities inherent in the pursuit of sustainability. By taking an interdisciplinary approach, it seeks to bridge

gaps in understanding and facilitate informed decision-making across various domains.

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Ultimately, my aim with my book is to empower professionals to become catalysts for change within their respective fields. Whether you're an architect designing eco-friendly structures, an engineer implementing energy-efficient systems, a policy maker shaping sustainability initiatives, or a chef championing environmentally conscious culinary practices, this book provides the tools and insights needed to drive transformative action and pave the way towards a greener future for the hospitality industry.

Furthermore, "Understanding the Green Industrial Revolution" seamlessly transitions into the EcoChef™ standards, which offer actionable steps for professionals in the industries outlined above and operations to follow in their journey towards sustainability certification. By adhering to the EcoChef™ standards, kitchens can undergo certification, signaling their commitment to sustainability and responsible business practices.

EcoChef™ certification serves as a badge of honor, signifying to guests and stakeholders that a kitchen prioritizes environmental stewardship and ethical conduct. This certification opens doors to a growing segment of consumers who value sustainability and seek out businesses that align with their values.

In addition to certification, EcoChef™ offers professional accreditation at various levels, catering to individuals in various disciplines at different stages of their sustainability journey from. From entry-level EcoChef™. Associate accreditation to the culinary focused EcoChef™ Culinarian, and the advanced EcoChef™. Practitioner designation, professionals can enhance their skills, knowledge, and credibility in sustainable culinary practices.

By integrating the principles outlined in "Understanding the Green Industrial Revolution" with the actionable steps provided by EcoChef™, professionals and operations can not only achieve certification but also thrive in an increasingly conscious market, attracting guests who prioritize sustainability and responsible business practices.

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