

Rick Bayless



Most people know Rick Bayless from winning the title of Bravo's *Top Chef Masters*, beating out the French and Italian with his authentic Mexican cuisine. His highly rated Public Television Series, *Mexico—One Plate at a Time*, has wrapped its 11th season and is broadcast coast to coast. In 2012, Rick was nominated for a Daytime Emmy for Best Culinary Host.

Rick has nine cookbooks. His second book, *Mexican Kitchen*, won the Julia Child IACP cookbook of the year award in 1996, and his fourth book, *Mexico—One Plate at a Time* won James Beard Best International Cookbook of the Year award in 2001. *Fiesta at Rick's* spent a number of weeks on the New York Times best seller list.

Rick's side by side award-winning restaurants are in Chicago. The casual **Frontera Grill** was founded in 1987 and received the James Beard Foundation's highest award, Outstanding Restaurant, in 2007. The 4-star **Toplobampo** served its first meals in 1991. And the wildly popular, LEED GOLD-certified, fast-casual **Xoco** has been around since 2009, serving wood-oven tortas, steaming caldos, golden churros and bean-to-cup Mexican hot chocolate. Rick's quick-service **Tortas Frontera** have changed the face of food service at O'Hare International Airport, while **Frontera Fresco** has brought Frontera flavors to several Macy's stores and Northwestern University. His award-winning **Frontera** line of salsas, cooking sauces and organic chips can be found coast to coast.

In 2016, he opened two new restaurants in Chicago's bustling West Loop neighborhood — the Baja-inspired, wood-fired **Leña Brava** and the adjacent **Cervecería Cruz Blanca**, a craft brewery and Oaxacan-style taquería. Both have earned critical acclaim. Also in 2016, he opened **Frontera Cocina** in Disney Springs.

Rick and his staff established the **Frontera Farmer Foundation** in 2003 to support small Midwestern farms. Each year, grants are awarded to farmers for capital improvements to their family farms, encouraging greater production and profitability. To date, the Foundation has awarded nearly 200 grants totaling nearly \$2 million. In 2007, Bayless and his team launched the **Frontera Scholarship**, a full tuition scholarship that sends a Mexican-American Chicago Public School student to Kendall College to study culinary arts. In 2007 Rick was awarded the Humanitarian of the Year by the International Association of Culinary Professionals for his many philanthropic endeavors.

Rick has received a great number of **James Beard Award** nominations in many categories, and he has won seven: Midwest Chef of the Year, National Chef of the Year, Humanitarian of the Year, Who's Who of American Food and Drink, Best Podcast, plus two for his cookbooks.

The Government of Mexico has bestowed on Rick the **Mexican Order of the Aztec Eagle**—the highest decoration bestowed on foreigners whose work has benefitted Mexico and its people.

Recently, Rick finished up a sold-out 5-week run on stage at Lookingglass Theatre, where he created **Cascabel**—offering theatergoers the story of a meal, told through flavor, memory, song, dance and amazing physical feats.