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The Authority of Culinary Expertise: Why Experience Does Not Confer a Right to Certainty

Culinary Judgment and Taste Chemistry — Ahmad Issam Maadarani

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This essay connects expertise, confidence and reviewability. A judge’s authority is grounded in the quality of reasons and acknowledgement of knowledge boundaries, while retaining the genuine value of long training.

1. Expertise is ability, not immunity

Experts develop vocabulary, pattern recognition and speed in noticing differences beginners may miss. These abilities have domains and conditions; they do not make every inference correct. Someone may excel at one texture yet know little about another culinary context. Identify the domain where expertise has demonstrated value instead of treating a career history as a comprehensive guarantee.

2. Confidence and evidence

A statement may sound certain because its speaker is accustomed to speaking, rather than because its evidence is strong. A cautious judge may provide an accurate observation. Review should ask about the evidence, alternatives and task boundaries, not tone. Confidence clarifies commitment but becomes a liability if it prevents naming uncertainties that could change the result.

3. Hypothetical example

A judge attributes dryness definitely to overcooking; a colleague suspects storage. Without observing preparation, these are competing explanations. The panel can evaluate dryness against the task while leaving its cause unresolved. It need not suspend every decision; it must narrow the claim. Expertise includes recognising what can be settled, rather than closing every question simultaneously.

4. Accountable practice

Each judge offers examinable reasons without invoking rank. Discuss independent observations before adopting a collective interpretation and allow objections with comparable evidential demands on everyone. Seek preparation information under equal rules when needed. Review must not become a contest of eloquence or seniority. Record whether a revision changed the observation or only its interpretation.

5. The fear of indecision

Reservations need not weaken resolution. “The texture fails the announced condition; its cause is unresolved” can support a clearer decision than an unsupported causal accusation. Correcting an earlier explanation improves the record when the judgment is revised appropriately. Professional standing does not require defending every first impression.

6. A proposed conception of authority

Expert authority is an epistemic commitment: let others trace the route from sample to decision and accept correction supported by better reasons. This does not equate

expertise with its absence; it gives expertise a way to demonstrate value. Progress makes knowledge useful, teachable and reviewable rather than comprehensible only through the speaker’s name. The argument’s practical impact remains to be tested.

7. A Discussion Worksheet

Field	Question	What to Record
Domain	Expertise in what?	Boundaries of the relevant skill.
Confidence	What supports certainty?	Recorded evidence and alternatives.
Correction	When should the decision change?	A reason and review route.

Philosophical arguments belong to the author. Applications and worksheets are unvalidated proposals, and examples are hypothetical. This article presents no new experimental dataset, claim of worldwide priority or claim that this text has undergone peer review.

8. References and Source Limits

A philosophical analysis by the author; its arguments are not attributed to experimental findings.

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