

# Celebrating the centennial of a landmark in culinary chemistry

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Billions of people around the world today will unknowingly perform a chemical reaction first reported 100 years ago. And the centennial of the Maillard reaction—which gives delightful flavor to foods ranging from grilled meat to baked bread to coffee—is the topic of a fascinating article in the current edition of *Chemical & Engineering News*. C&EN is the weekly news magazine of the American Chemical Society, the world's largest scientific society.

Sarah Everts, C&EN senior editor, explains in the article that French chemist Louis-Camille Maillard took a first stab at explaining the culinary delight that occurs when proteins and sugars in food interact at high temperature in a 1912 research paper. Focusing on the delicious flavors and appetizing colors that result from that chemistry, the research also established the foundations of modern food science.

Noting that Maillard can stake a claim to being the world's most widely practiced chemical reaction, the C&EN article explains that the reaction has a dark side. It also can produce potential carcinogens in certain foods. And scientists have discovered that the Maillard reaction also occurs spontaneously in the human body, producing substances linked to aging and a variety of diseases.

**More information:** "The Maillard Reaction Turns 100"  
[cen.acs.org/articles/90/i40/Ma ... ction-Turns-100.html](http://cen.acs.org/articles/90/i40/Ma...ction-Turns-100.html)

Provided by American Chemical Society

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