BRAND USA

NEWS RELEASE

Brand USA announces Culinary Initiative at Destination & Travel Foundation Dinner

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Brand USA, the public-private partnership responsible for launching the United States' first-ever nationally coordinated tourism-marketing effort, unveiled its culinary initiative. The announcement was made at the twenty-first annual Destination & Travel Foundation Dinner, which honored the James Beard Foundation with the annual Spirit of Hospitality Award.

The new initiative will kick off in July this year with the launch of a culinary guide to the United States. The guide will be a high-quality and enticing publication that inspires the world to discover the destinations and tastes of the United States like never before. It will bring together some of the best-known American chefs and dishes with the destinations they represent. The guide is being put together with the State Department's Diplomatic Culinary Partnership, which is an exciting collaboration with James Beard-recognized chefs and others. "Breaking bread unites people across cultures and languages. It is a welcoming act and it embodies the diversity and possibility of the United States," said Christopher L. Thompson, President and CEO of Brand USA. "It's no surprise that culinary and food-related tourism is a major driver of inbound travel to the United States and one of the highlights of our popular culture."

The culinary guide will be launched at Independence Day celebrations at several U.S. embassies and consulates around the world. Chefs from the Diplomatic Culinary Partnership will travel to several of these embassies for a week of culinary diplomacy and travel promotion. These efforts will be accompanied by a robust digital and social platform to drive interest in culinary experiences across all regions of the United States. Thompson added, "It's a great example of all that a public-private collaboration can be."

The Destination & Travel Foundation Dinner and Dream Auction is the Foundation's largest fundraiser of the year and attracted nearly 1,000 industry professionals to celebrate the universal power of destinations, travel and food. The award is the highest recognition presented annually to individuals and organizations that show exceptional dedication and commitment to the travel and tourism industry.

Victoria Isley, COO, Destination Marketing Association International; and Executive Director, Destination & Travel Foundation, noted that "the bond between food, restaurants, culture and travel runs deep. The James Beard Foundation has been the spiritual leader in the global movement of culinary tourism. We are proud to recognize the important role that chefs and restaurateurs play in telling the story of destinations around the world."

About the Diplomatic Culinary Partnership

In 2012, the US State Department launched the Diplomatic Culinary Partnership as a public-private partnership program that seeks to elevate the role of culinary engagement in America's formal and public diplomacy efforts. Through a partnership with the James Beard Foundation, they created the American Chefs Corps - a network of over 100 of America's most renowned chefs. The program seeks to foster cross-cultural exchange to promote the American culinary culture through programs that use the shared experience of food to engage foreign audiences abroad. It also promotes American food exports in a way that encourages trade and investment in American goods. Importantly, it also supports the President's Executive Order to increase international visitation by highlighting regional American cuisines and foods, and attracting new travelers to the U.S.

About The Destination & Travel Foundation

The Destination & Travel Foundation is a complementary organization to Destination Marketing Association International. The mission is to enhance the destination marketing and travel professions through research, education, visioning and development of resources and partnerships for those efforts. The Destination & Travel Foundation is classified as a charitable organization, under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Service Code of 1954. Donations to the Foundation are tax deductible as charitable contributions.

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About Brand USA
Brand USA is the nation's destination marketing organization, dedicated to attracting legitimate international inbound travel to strengthen the U.S. economy, increase exports, create quality jobs, and promote community prosperity. By running data-driven campaigns and unifying messaging across industry and government, Brand USA positions the United States as a top global destination while providing current visa and entry information.

Over the past 13 years Brand USA has driven 11.3 million additional international visitors who spent $38.1 billion in the United States, leading to $82.9 billion in total economic impact and sustaining an average of more than 40,000 jobs each year. These efforts have generated nearly $11 billion in attributable tax receipts at the federal, state, and local levels.