NEWS RELEASE

BRAND USA ANNOUNCES INTERNATIONAL CULINARY TOURISM CAMPAIGN AND PARTNERSHIP WITH THE JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION

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- Brand USA's "Flavours of the USA" campaign will help international visitors explore the United States, one dish at a time

Brand USA, the destination marketing organization for the United States charged with increasing international tourism into the United States, announced it will launch its culinary tourism strategy in conjunction with its participation at the James Beard Foundation Awards Ceremony and Gala Reception on Monday, May 4, at the Lyric Opera of Chicago. Brand USA President and CEO Christopher L. Thompson will serve as the presenter for the evening's"2015 America's Classics Awards," which will celebrate five regional establishments treasured for their delicious food, authentic character and timeless appeal.

As part of the launch of the culinary tourism strategy, Brand USA will also unveil its "Flavours of the USA" digital platform on its consumer website at www.DiscoverAmerica.com/flavours. This new culinary content hub will include gastronomic-inspired travel offerings from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the five territories. The site will provide international travelers easy access to culinary-inspired U.S. travel itineraries, a calendar of U.S. food festivals, events, and wine and beer trail details, as well as recipes of regional cuisine from top chefs, tips on dining etiquette and more. Much of the featured content on the site is being provided by the James Beard Foundation through its partnership with Brand USA. The content provided by the James Beard Foundation focuses primarily on recipes from the James Beard Foundation website jamesbeard.org and videos from restaurants who have received the James Beard America's Classics Award, an honor James Beard bestows to regional establishments, often family-owned, that are treasured for their quality food, local character, and lasting appeal.

"Culinary tourism is a way for international visitors to experience the diversity of America through our cuisine," said Brand USA President and CEO Christopher L. Thompson. "By promoting exceptional gastronomic offerings, such as those created by the America's Classics Awards recipients, we hope to inspire travelers from around the world to visit and experience the USA, one dish at a time."

Brand USA has also developed a "Flavours of the USA," guidebook filled with mouth-watering recipes and content by well-known American chefs, such as John Besh and Sara Jenkins, provided by the Diplomatic Culinary Partnership, a collaboration between the U.S. Department of State's Office of Protocol and the James Beard Foundation. The Diplomatic Culinary Partnership helped to create the American Chef Corps, a program that champions American chefs abroad, promotes American food products, and fosters an interest in American culinary culture and history through international programs and initiatives. "From the Northeast's Gingerbread Whoopie Pies to Midwestern Cider-Braised Brisket and South Western Texas BBQ Shrimp, the guidebook will inspire even the most discerning taste buds," said Thompson.

Brand USA's "Flavours of the USA" campaign will also launch via broadcast through partnerships with Food Network International and The Travel Channel International. The Food Network will feature "30 Chefs, 30 Days," which will include vignettes of notable American chefs showcasing the cuisine of the region they live/work in, and why that cuisine is part of the experience of visiting their respective destination. The vignettes will air in 98 EMEA countries (Europe, Middle East and Africa) during a month of Americana-themed programming in July 2015. The Travel Channel will broadcast a series of road trip food adventures from the Jeni & Olly show.

Brand USA is also taking American cuisine direct to international consumers during Expo Milano 2015, the Universal Exhibition (often referred to as the "World's Fair") in Milan, Italy, from May 1 to October 31, 2015, where more than 20 million visitors will sample the flavors of over 140 countries and international organizations. The USA Pavilion is a signature project of the Office of Public Diplomacy of the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs of the U.S. Department of State, with input and support from the U.S.D.A., the Department of Commerce and other key government agencies.

As an exhibiting partner in the USA Pavilion at Expo Milano, Brand USA and its partners will be a prominent part of one of the USA's

United States. The edible exhibit will include six custom-built food trucks serving up regional American street foods—both traditional and creative interpretations with a focus on wholesomeness, sustainability and health. Through its participation in Food Truck Nation at the USA Pavilion, Brand USA and its participating partners, including Louisiana Office of Tourism, Travel Oregon, Visit California, Beaches of Fort Myers and Sanibel, will present diverse and interesting culinary offerings from various regions of the United States to entice visitors to visit the USA and discover those authentic experiences for themselves.

For more information, visit www.DiscoverAmerica.com/flavours. Consumers are encouraged to share their American food and culinary travel experiences on social media platforms using the hashtag #TasteUSA.

About the James Beard Foundation (JBF)

Founded in 1986, the James Beard Foundation celebrates, nurtures, and honors America's diverse culinary heritage through programs that educate and inspire. A cookbook author and teacher with an encyclopedic knowledge about food, James Beard, who died in 1985, was a champion of American cuisine. He helped educate and mentor generations of professional chefs and food enthusiasts, instilling in them the value of wholesome, healthful, and delicious food. Today JBF continues in the same spirit by administering a number of diverse programs that include educational initiatives, food industry awards, scholarships for culinary students, publications, chef advocacy training, and thought-leader convening. The Foundation also maintains the historic James Beard House in New York City's Greenwich Village as a "performance space" for visiting chefs. In September of 2012, JBF launched the Diplomatic Culinary Partnership with the U.S. Department of State's Office of Protocol and helped create the American Chef Corps as a way to champion American chefs abroad, promote American food products, and foster an interest in American culinary culture and history through international programs and initiatives. One such project is the next world's fair, Expo Milano 2015, for which the James Beard Foundation is co-leading the effort for the State Department to design and produce the USA Pavilion, a global gathering of 147 countries addressing the challenges of how we will feed ourselves in the future. The pavilion, whose theme will be "American Food 2.0: United to Feed the Planet," will showcase America's contributions to global food security and gastronomy. For more information, please visit jamesbeard.org. Find insights on food at the James Beard Foundation's blog. Join the James Beard Foundation on Facebook. Follow the James Beard Foundation on Twitter and Instagram.

About Diplomatic Culinary Partnership

Launched by the Department of State in 2012, the Diplomatic Culinary Partnership is 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, the American Chef Corps was established - 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 and at home. 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.

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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.