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MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES 38TH ANNUAL TASTE OF CHICAGO RESTAURANT LINEUP

73 vendors, including 26 new restaurants, will participate in the world's largest free food festival

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) today announced the restaurant lineup for the 38th Annual Taste of Chicago. This year 73 vendors, including 38 five-day vendors, 22 pop-up restaurants and 13 food trucks will participate at this year's festival from July 11 – 15 in Grant Park.

"Taste of Chicago brings together renowned restaurants from across the city to offer visitors and residents the opportunity to sample some of the greatest food in the world," said Mayor Emanuel. "With both new restaurants and long-time favorites, it will be clear this summer why Chicago is the global culinary capital."

There will be 26 new restaurants at Taste of Chicago this year, a more than 50 percent increase from 2017. Two long time favorites, Buona Beef and Original Rainbow Cone, will return after a brief hiatus. The new vendors, which include 8 five-day restaurants, 15 pop-ups and 3 food trucks, are:

- Arun's Thai Restaurant
- Aunty Joy's Jamaican Kitchen
- Esperanza's Kitchen Delights
- Garifuna Flava: A Taste of Belize
- Output Lounge & Sports Bar
- Premier Rollin BBQ
- Turtle's Bar & Grill
- Yum Dum
- Aloha Wagon
- Bee Nana LLC
- bettyBOT Shop
- BITES
- Blackwood BBQ
- Chiya Chai Café
- Classic Cobbler
- Get Off The Couch Catering
- Grill City (Seafood City)
- Josephine's Cookin'

- Papa Luke's Gravy Balls
- So Forking Great
- Sun Wah Barbecue Restaurant
- These Wingz?
- Wood Fire Counter
- CheSa's Gluten Free Food Truck
- Lawrence's Fish

Chicago's diverse culinary scene will be showcased this year, with more than 300 menu items offered to suit every palate. The 73 vendors will offer signature items, as well as the popular "Taste Of" portions priced at \$3.00 or less, allowing guests the opportunity to sample an even greater variety of items. Many will also include healthier selections as well as gluten-free and vegetarian options. Admission to the Taste of Chicago is free, and tickets for food and beverages can be purchased in strips of 14 tickets for \$10

"Taste of Chicago showcases the city's stellar culinary scene by uniting a diverse set of restaurants, food trucks and pop-ups," said Sam Toia, president and CEO of the Illinois Restaurant Association. "The Association has been a part of Taste since its inception, and we're proud to welcome visitors to beautiful Grant Park year after year. It's a time-honored summer festival that truly captures Chicago's hospitable spirit and exciting range of culinary offerings."

This year a record-breaking number of applications were received from vendors across the city and beyond, representing a wide variety of cuisines. The Pop-up program is proving to be as popular as ever with a 114 percent increase of new pop-up vendors in the 2018 event versus 2017.

The Taste of Chicago has seen a surge in popularity since it was shortened to five days and new elements added, including the Taste Oasis private lounge, pop-up restaurants, food trucks, chart-topping musical acts and cultural programming. In 2017, Chicago's iconic festival served culinary delights to 1.6 million visitors. Additionally, up to 3,000 people were employed by Chicago restaurants and vendors, and more than 600 artists and performers were hired to entertain Taste-goers over the five-day festival. The event contributes an estimated \$106 million annually in total business activity to the Chicago economy.

Taste of Chicago is produced by the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events in coordination with the Illinois Restaurant Association, which manages food and beverage operations. The festival is sponsored in part by 93XRT, Bud Light, CH Distillery, Chicago Transit Authority, Chicago Tribune, CLTV-Chicagoland's Television, Communications Direct, Eli's Cheesecake, IL Lottery, Lifeway Foods, Pepsi, Shoreline Sightseeing, Southwest Airlines and WGN-Television.

The 38th Annual Taste of Chicago is July 11–15 in Grant Park with hours 11 a.m.–9 p.m., Wednesday–Friday, and 10 a.m.–9 p.m., Saturday and Sunday. For more information on the FREE admission festival, visit tasteofchicago.us. To plan your trip to Chicago, visit choosechicago.com. Join the conversation on Facebook at Taste of Chicago and follow us on Twitter, @TasteofChi (#TasteofChicago) and Instagram, @ChicagoDCASE (#TasteofChicago).

Taste Oasis

The new Taste Oasis will offer Taste goers the opportunity to enhance their festival experience with access to an air conditioned lounge in Butler Field offering tasty bites, a private cash bar, music, refreshing water and much more. Classic cocktails created by CH Distillery include an Old Fashioned and Grey Hound. Day passes for this exclusive area are \$50 and can be purchased at tasteofchicago.us. Also included in the cost are "Taste bites" prepared by Washburne Culinary Academy will be served Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, from 3 to 6 p.m. and on Saturday and Sunday from 2 to 5 p.m. Taste Oasis will be open throughout normal Taste of Chicago festival hours, but it's particularly a great spot to hang out before and after the Petrillo Music Shell concerts.

Concerts at the Petrillo Music Shell

Taste of Chicago will also present a diverse mix of national and international artists at nightly concerts at the Petrillo Music Shell that include Brandi Carlile, Juanes, yasiin bey & Talib Kweli are Black Star, The Flaming Lips and George Clinton Parliament Funkadelic—plus the best of Chicago's local music scene on the Bud Light Stage. Tickets for the seating area at the Petrillo Music Shell start at \$18 and are on sale now at the Taste website, tasteofchicago.us. As always, admission to the Taste of Chicago is free, as is lawn seating during the concerts.

Arts and Family Programming

Taste of Chicago will present an assortment of local cultural programming that includes the Artist Garden featuring live painting by local artists, Chicago SummerDance with live music & social dancing on Buckingham Fountain Plaza, Kids Eat Chicago presented by Chicago Parent, the March of the Puppets daily musical procession through the festival grounds, pop-up performances by local artists in various locations and more.

CH Vodka Cocktail Lounge plus the Beer and Stella Rosa Wine Gardens

The CH Vodka Cocktail Lounge will offer mixology specials to enjoy by Buckingham Fountain. The specialty cocktail menu during the Taste of Chicago will include CH's Fresh Ginger Mule, Tropical Rum Punch, Raspberry Lime Ricky, Bourbon Pineapple Smash and other specialty drinks. The Beer Hall and Stella Rosa Wine Gardens will offer additional scenic areas on Buckingham Fountain Plaza for Taste goers to enjoy unique beers and ciders from around the world and an array of wine varietals including Bodega Sangria, Stella Rosa, Mariella Rose and Maddalena from the Riboli Family Wine Estates.

Lifeway Foods Taste Kitchen

The Lifeway Foods Taste Kitchen dishes up a full menu of cooking demonstrations by local and national chefs on Buckingham Fountain Plaza. New this year, the area will feature a different theme each day. Highlights include, Chef Kevin Hickey of Duck Inn on Wednesday, July 11 during Chicago Neighborhood Day representing Bridgeport. Executive Chef and Bravo Top Chef Season 15 Winner, Joe Flamm of Spiaggia will be featured on Friday, July 13 as part of the lineup for Pairing Day. On Sunday, July 15 the Emmy Nominated Chef, Jeff Mauro—Food Network's "Sandwich King"—will be hosting Sandwich Smackdown Day featuring friendly sandwich showdowns with two chefs battling it out for sandwich supremacy. The full schedule of Chef demonstrations will be announced in June.

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Illinois Restaurant Association

Founded in 1914, the Illinois Restaurant Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting, protecting, educating and improving the restaurant industry in Illinois. The Association manages the food and beverage portion of Taste of Chicago for the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events. Visit illinoisrestaurants.org and follow on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events

The Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) is dedicated to enriching Chicago's artistic vitality and cultural vibrancy. This includes fostering the development of Chicago's non-profit arts sector, independent working artists and for-profit arts businesses; providing a framework to guide the City's future cultural and economic growth, via the 2012 Chicago Cultural Plan; marketing the City's cultural assets to a worldwide audience; and presenting high-quality, free and affordable cultural programs for residents and visitors.