

CARIBBEAN HOTEL & TOURISM ASSOCIATION UNVEILS CULINARY TEAMS FOR *TASTE OF THE CARIBBEAN*

Scheduled for November 18-20, the event is the region's premier gathering for culinary excellence and F&B professional development



Miami, FL — November 7, 2024 – The Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association (CHTA) is proud to announce the participating culinary teams for this year's highly anticipated *Taste of the Caribbean*, taking place from **November 18-20** at Florida International University's Kovens Conference Center. As the region's premier cultural and gastronomic showcase, the event offers not only spirited, friendly competition but also **valuable educational sessions**, allowing food and beverage professionals to refine their skills and increase the value of their businesses. This year's teams will represent Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, Bonaire, Puerto Rico, Turks & Caicos, St. Lucia and U.S. Virgin Islands.

"*Taste of the Caribbean* is not only a premier event for showcasing Caribbean culinary talent, but also a valuable opportunity for professional development," said Vanessa Ledesma, CHTA's chief executive officer. "Food and beverage professionals can refine their skills through specialized workshops, learn from industry leaders, and stay ahead of culinary trends, all while contributing to the growth and global recognition of Caribbean cuisine."

Here are the teams competing in the 2024 edition:

Representing Antigua & Barbuda:

- **Senior Chef:** Ronald Wilson, Blue Waters Resort & Spa
- **Junior Chef:** Azarie Crump, Antigua and Barbuda Hospitality Training Institute
- **Pastry Chef:** Britanya McLaren, Hermitage Bay
- **Bartender:** Altino Spencer, Boardwalk Casino

Representing Barbados:

- **Senior Chef:** Rynaldo Joseph, Sea Breeze Beach House
- **Junior Chef:** Dejuan Toppin, Caribbean Cuisine Culinary Institute
- **Pastry Chef:** Rickeena Kirton, The Rockley by Ocean Hotels
- **Bartender:** Alex Chandler, Cocktail Kitchen

Representing Bonaire:

- **Senior Chef:** Rhashindra Donge, Krioyo Fusion
- **Junior Chef:** Akeesha Cicilia, Sweeti Bakery & Blue Lagoon Restaurant
- **Pastry Chef:** Elise Weerstand, Sweeti Bakery & Blue Lagoon Restaurant
- **Bartender:** Eddy Trenidad, Rum Runners Restaurant & Cocktail Bar

Representing Puerto Rico:

- **Senior Chef:** Kevin Sánchez, Hotel Verdanza
- **Pastry Chef:** Neftali Carrero, Restaurante Julio César
- **Bartender:** José “Yeye” Ortega, Hotel Fairmont El San Juan

Representing Turks & Caicos:

- **Senior Chef:** Andre Maragh, Seven Stars Resort
- **Pastry Chef:** Kenyatta Forbes, The Palms TCI
- **Bartender:** Ronel Charles, Seven Stars Resort

Representing St. Lucia:

- **Senior Chef:** Neville Joseph, Jade Mountain
- **Junior Chef:** Kayla Joseph, Sir Arthur Lewis Community College
- **Pastry Chef:** Emmany Hippolyte, Anse Chastanet
- **Bartender:** Ninus Charlouis, Ladera Resort

Representing the U.S. Virgin Islands:

- **Senior Chef:** Kerish Robles, UVI Cell
- **Pastry Chef:** Azamat Sabyrkulov, The Ritz Carlton

- **Bartender:** Putrice Bush, The Buccaneer

The three-day event will culminate in the prestigious *Taste of the Caribbean Awards*, which will proudly honor outstanding culinary talent, recognizing the *Caribbean Chef of the Year*, *Caribbean Junior Chef of the Year*, *Caribbean Bartender of the Year*, *Caribbean Pastry Chef of the Year*, and the ultimate recognition—the *Caribbean National Team of the Year*.

Taste of the Caribbean runs concurrently with [CHIEF, the Caribbean Hospitality Industry Exchange Forum](#). CHIEF brings together hospitality thought leaders, with sessions on sustainability, culinary tourism, and marketing innovation led by prominent industry figures such as:

- **Amy Martin Ziegenfuss** – Chief Marketing Officer, Carnival Cruise Line
- **Carmen Portela** – Executive Director, Fundación Amigos del Yunque
- **Craig Marshall** – Regional Commercial Director, West Indies, Blue Diamond Resorts
- **Calvin Tilokee** – Founder & Creative Director, Revpar Media
- **Mike Hampton, Ed.D.** – Professor & Graduate Faculty Member, FIU Chaplin School of Hospitality & Tourism Management
- **Kirk Elliott** – Master Photographer, Sustainable Tourism Ambassador & National Geographic Certified Educator
- **Chef Shorne Benjamin** – Culinary Expert, Fat Fowl
- **Brittany Brathwaite** – Chief People and Development Strategist, Montrose Group of Companies
- **Adam Mogelonsky** – Partner, Hotel Mogel Consulting Ltd

CHTA would like to thank the *Taste of the Caribbean* official event partners, including Mastercard, Anything But Advertising (ABA), Interval, TAG, Certified Angus Beef, and the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF), whose support makes *the event* possible.

For more information on Taste of the Caribbean, please visit www.chtataste.com. To learn more about the CHTA, visit www.CaribbeanHotelandTourism.com.

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