



**JAMES  
BEARD  
FOUNDATION**



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**MAYOR EMANUEL AND THE JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION ANNOUNCE  
2015 JAMES BEARD AWARDS WILL BE HELD IN CHICAGO**

*First Time the Ceremony Will Be Held Outside New York City; 25th Anniversary of  
"Oscars of the Food Industry" to Take Place at Lyric Opera of Chicago on May 4, 2015*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel joined Susan Ungaro, President of the James Beard Foundation (JBF), Don Welsh, President and CEO of Choose Chicago, and Sam Toia, President and CEO of the Illinois Restaurant Association, to announce that the James Beard Foundation Awards Ceremony and Gala Reception will be held at the Lyric Opera of Chicago on May 4, 2015. This will be the first year the prestigious JBF Restaurant and Chef Awards Gala will be held outside of New York City.

"There is no greater honor for a restaurant than recognition with a Beard Foundation award, and there is no greater honor for Chicago's culinary community than the decision to host the awards here," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. "Our ability to attract and grow businesses, create thriving communities, and lure more than 48 million tourists a year are a testament to the diversity and quality of Chicago's incredible restaurants. We are excited to team with the Beard Foundation to highlight the best of the best here and throughout the country."

Chicago has a rich history with the Foundation, delivering restaurant and chef winners 23 out of 24 years. In 2009, the James Beard Foundation took its JBF Award nominee breakfast on the road for the first time ever to Chicago's famed Rick Bayless-owned Frontera Grill. The 2014 JBF Award nominee breakfast was held at JBF Award Winner Paul Kahan's The Publican in Chicago.

"The James Beard Foundation has enjoyed a special friendship with the city of Chicago for decades. It's a city that boasts over 40 James Beard Award winners, as well as a special community of chefs

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and restaurateurs who have always supported the work of our Foundation,” said Ungaro. “We believe celebrating our 2015 Awards in Chicago is consistent with our mission to honor excellence all across America.”

The James Beard Foundation Book, Broadcast & Journalism Awards, an exclusive event honoring the nation’s top cookbook authors, culinary broadcast producers and hosts, and food journalists, will remain in New York City in May of 2015.

“The opportunity to welcome America’s greatest culinary leaders to Chicago aligns perfectly with our strategies as we work to achieve Mayor Emanuel’s goal of 55 million visitors annually by 2020,” said Welsh. “Chicago’s culinary diversity and its rising reputation as a culinary epicenter has become a prominent element for both the business and leisure traveler. Hosting the JBF Restaurant and Chef Awards Gala is a tremendous demand generator that will significantly further our efforts. On behalf of Chicago’s entire visitor industry, we are committed to creating a new and memorable experience for this prestigious annual celebration.”

The corporate community has enthusiastically stepped up to support the 25th Annual James Beard Awards. The first two corporate partners to join in welcoming this exciting event to the city are global restaurateur HMSHost, and Mariano's, the Midwest's most exciting food market.

Bringing the James Beard Foundation’s awards ceremony to Chicago is an extension of its continuing efforts to recognize the exciting array of food scenes in America. The Foundation’s other national programs include Taste America, Chef’s Boot Camp for Policy & Change, the Celebrity Chef Tour, and America Cooks with Chefs: The 800 Calorie Challenge. These programs further JBF’s mission to celebrate, nurture, and honor America’s diverse culinary heritage through programs that educate and inspire.

During the JBF Awards event, which is open to the public, awards for the Restaurant and Chef and Restaurant Design categories will be handed out, along with special achievement awards including Humanitarian of the Year, Lifetime Achievement, Who’s Who of Food and Beverage in America, and America’s Classics. A gala reception will immediately follow, featuring top chefs and beverage professionals from across the country.

“It is a tremendous honor to welcome the James Beard Foundation Awards to Chicago,” said Toia. “The decision to bring the Awards here is a testament to the dedicated chefs and restaurateurs who work tirelessly to innovate and shine a bright light on Chicago as a gastronomic hub. This is a very proud moment for them, for the City, and for the Illinois Restaurant Association as we celebrate our 100th anniversary year.”

Established in 1990, the James Beard Awards recognize culinary professionals for excellence and achievement in their fields. Each award category has an individual committee made up of industry professionals who volunteer their time to oversee the policies, procedures, and selection of judges for their respective Awards program. All JBF Award winners receive a certificate and a medallion engraved with the James Beard Foundation Awards insignia. There are no cash prizes.

The Midwest corporate community will join a prestigious list of Foundation partners which this year included: Premier Sponsors: All-Clad Metalcrafters, Lenox Tableware and Gifts; Supporting Sponsors: Acqua Panna® Natural Spring Water, BACARDI 8®, Breville, The Coca-Cola Company, Delta Air Lines®, Lavazza, S.Pellegrino® Sparkling Natural Mineral Water, Stella Artois®, Valrhona; Gala Reception Sponsors: Celebrity Cruises®, Ecolab, Food Network & Cooking Channel, Pernod Ricard USA, Tanqueray No. TEN®, Waldorf Astoria Hotels & Resorts; and Additional Supporting Partners: Chefwear, VerTerra Dinnerware, Visit Orlando®.

For a link to this press release, go to [CityofChicago.org](http://CityofChicago.org) or [JamesBeard.org](http://JamesBeard.org).

### **About the James Beard Foundation**

Founded in 1986, the James Beard Foundation's mission is to celebrate, nurture, and honor 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 the Beard Foundation 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. For more information, please visit [jamesbeard.org](http://jamesbeard.org). Find insights on food at the James Beard Foundation's blog [Delights & Prejudices](#). Join the James Beard Foundation on [Facebook](#). Follow the James Beard Foundation on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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