



Jesse Tyler Ferguson to Host 2017 James Beard Foundation Awards on May 1, 2017

Andrew Zimmern to Host 2017 James Beard Foundation Media Awards on April 25, 2017

2017 James Beard Foundation Awards Are "Powered by Food"

NEW YORK, NY (February 21, 2017) - Today the James Beard Foundation announced that Emmy Award-nominated actor **Jesse Tyler Ferguson** will host the 2017 **James Beard Foundation Awards Gala**, referred to as "the Oscars of the food world" by *Time* magazine. The highly anticipated Awards ceremony and gala reception will take place on **Monday, May 1, 2017** at Lyric Opera of Chicago. On **Tuesday, April 25, 2017**, James Beard Award winner, chef, teacher, writer, and television personality Andrew Zimmern will host the annual **James Beard Foundation Media Awards**. This "Golden Globe-like" celebration will take place at Pier Sixty at Chelsea Piers in New York City.

This year's theme, "Powered by Food", will celebrate the thrilling ways that technology has strengthened our connections through food, from the blog post that sparks a trend, to the Instagram that inspires us, and the shared images that become our portal to cuisine from far afield.

"We're delighted to have Jesse Tyler Ferguson and Andrew Zimmern as hosts for this year's awards," said Susan Ungaro, president of the James Beard Foundation. "Just as technology is able to connect people through a shared love of food, Jesse and Andrew have combined their own personal passions for food with their unique talents, whether it be through television, in a blog post, on stage, or on the plate."

Jesse Tyler Ferguson currently stars as "Mitchell Pritchett" on the award-winning ABC comedy *Modern Family*. Ferguson has received five Emmy Award nominations for Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Comedy Series and three People's Choice Award nominations for Favorite Comedic TV Actor on behalf of *Modern Family*. Additionally, he recently starred on Broadway in *Fully Committed*, a one-man show about a man managing the reservation line at one of New York City's hottest restaurants. When not acting,

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Ferguson explores his passion for food through his personal food blog, where he features a variety of unique recipes developed to encourage a healthy lifestyle, alongside his blogging partner, former *Saveur* magazine staffer Julie Tanous. A longstanding advocate for marriage equality, Ferguson co-founded Tie The Knot in 2012 with his husband, Justin Mikita, where they design limited-edition bow ties with all the proceeds going to various organizations that fight for civil rights for gay and lesbian Americans. In addition to marriage equality, Ferguson is also an advocate and active supporter of the Human Rights Campaign.

Andrew Zimmern is regarded as one of the most versatile and knowledgeable personalities in the food world. As the creator, executive producer, and host of the *Bizarre Foods* franchise on Travel Channel, he has explored cultures in more than 170 countries, promoting impactful ways to think about, create, and live with food. In addition to creating a test pilot that ultimately became *Bizarre Foods*, Zimmern has since formed the production companies Food Works and Intuitive Content; published several books that inspire readers of all ages to travel, explore, and eat the unconventional; launched Andrew Zimmern's Canteen, a quick-service concept licensed at stadiums across the country; contributes to *Food & Wine* magazine; and serves as senior editor at *Delta Sky* magazine. He has been nominated for ten prestigious James Beard Awards, including digital content nominations, and he has won awards for Outstanding TV Food Personality (2010); Best TV Program, on Location (2012); and Outstanding Personality/Host (2013).

Semifinalists for the Restaurant and Chef Award categories were recently announced, and can be found on the James Beard Foundation website at jamesbeard.org/awards. Nominees for all award categories, including Media and Design Awards, will be revealed on March 15, 2017, during a press conference at a.o.c. restaurant in Los Angeles, California. Nominations will also be announced live via the Foundation's Facebook Live video feed at facebook.com/beardfoundation and in real time on Twitter at twitter.com/beardfoundation.

Winners of the 2017 James Beard Media Awards will be announced on Tuesday, April 25, 2017, at an exclusive event honoring the nation's top cookbook authors, culinary broadcast producers and hosts, and food journalists at Pier Sixty at Chelsea Piers in New York City.

Winners of the remaining awards will be announced at the James Beard Foundation Awards Gala at the Lyric Opera of Chicago on Monday, May 1, 2017. During the 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 Humanitarian of the Year, Lifetime Achievement, Design Icon, 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.

Established in 1990, the James Beard Awards recognize culinary professionals for excellence and achievement in their fields and furthers the Foundation's mission to celebrate, nurture, and honor chefs and other leaders making America's food culture more delicious, diverse, and sustainable for everyone. 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 2017 James Beard Foundation Awards are proudly hosted by Choose Chicago and the Illinois Restaurant Association and presented in association with the Chicago Department of Aviation, HMSHost, Illinois Office of Tourism, and Mariano's as well as the following partners: Premier Sponsors: All-Clad Metalcrafters, American Airlines, S.Pellegrino® Sparkling Natural Mineral Water, True Refrigeration®; Supporting Sponsors: Breville®, Lavazza, Robert Mondavi Winery, Skuna Bay Salmon, Valrhona; Gala Reception Sponsors: Ecolab, Kendall College, Windstar Cruises; with additional support from: Chefwear, VerTerra Dinnerware.

About the James Beard Foundation (JBF)

Founded in 1986, the James Beard Foundation celebrates, nurtures, and honors chefs and other leaders making America's food culture more delicious, diverse, and sustainable for everyone. A cookbook author and teacher with an encyclopedic knowledge about food, the late James Beard 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. For more information, please visit jamesbeard.org. Get food news, recipes, and more at the James Beard Foundation's [blog](#), or subscribe to the free digital newsletter [Beard Bites](#). Follow @beardfoundation on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Pinterest](#), and Snapchat. Watch the James Beard House Kitchen Cam, James Beard Awards, and more on the Foundation's [Livestream](#) channel. Find more JBF-related video on the Foundation's [YouTube](#) channels.

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