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# JESSE TYLER FERGUSON TO HOST THE 2019 JAMES BEARD AWARDS ON MAY 6, 2019

## “GOOD FOOD FOR GOOD™” IS THIS YEAR’S AWARDS THEME

NEW YORK, NY (March 5, 2019) – The James Beard Foundation announced today that Jesse Tyler Ferguson will return to host the 2019 James Beard Awards. Ferguson previously hosted the Awards to rave reviews in 2017, and will return to this year’s awards ceremony and gala, taking place on Monday, May 6, 2019, at Lyric Opera of Chicago.

Ferguson is a five-time Emmy nominee for his work on the landmark ABC comedy *Modern Family* which will be entering his 11<sup>th</sup> and final season next year, making it one of television’s longest running and most awarded comedies. He is also an accomplished stage actor having recently appeared on Broadway in the one-man solo show, “Fully Committed”. Ferguson continues to explore his love of food and cooking on his recipe-driven food blog, *Julie + Jesse*, in partnership with former *Saveur* magazine recipe tester 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 LGBTQ Americans.

“I am so excited to be coming back to the wonderful city of Chicago to be a part of this year’s James Beard Awards,” said 2019 host Jesse Tyler Ferguson. “Even if it doesn’t go as well as the last time I hosted, at least I know I’ll leave well-fed.”

This year’s theme, “Good Food For Good™” is synonymous with the James Beard Foundation’s mission. It is the simple summation of what the organization stands for, from unique and delicious dining experiences at the James Beard House and around the country, to scholarships, mentorships, and a variety of industry programs that educate and empower leaders in the food community. The Foundation has built a platform

for chefs and asserted the power of gastronomy to drive behavior, culture, and policy change around food. With this theme, the annual Awards aim to bring attention not only to its deserving winners but to the Foundation's overall mission as well.

"We're absolutely thrilled to welcome Jesse Tyler Ferguson back as the host of the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual James Beard Awards," said Clare Reichenbach, CEO of the James Beard Foundation. "He brought an infectious vitality to the 2017 program, and we're eager to work with him again to shine a spotlight on the winners and our platform of good food for good."

To commemorate his return to the James Beard Awards, Ferguson's Tie The Knot will be re-releasing a limited-edition James Beard bowtie, previously available for his 2017 turn as the event's emcee. Proceeds of this year's sales will support LGBTQ and broader diversity programs amongst various non-profits within the culinary community. The James Beard bowties will be available on April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at [www.TieTheKnot.com](http://www.TieTheKnot.com) and retail for \$25.

Tickets go on sale March 27, 2019, and the Awards will be broadcast live via the James Beard Foundation's Twitter.

### **About the 2019 James Beard Awards**

The 2019 James Beard Awards celebrations begin in New York City on Friday, April 26, 2019, with the James Beard Media Awards, an exclusive event honoring the nation's top cookbook authors, culinary broadcast producers and hosts, and food journalists that will take place at Pier Sixty at Chelsea Piers.

The events then move to Chicago, beginning with the Leadership Awards dinner on Sunday, May 5, 2019, at which honorees will be recognized for their work in creating a more healthful, sustainable, and just food world. The James Beard Awards Gala will take place on Monday, May 6, 2019, at the Lyric Opera of Chicago. 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, and America's Classics. A gala reception will immediately follow, featuring chefs and beverage professionals from across the country, including past JBF Award winners and many who are involved in the Foundation's Impact Programs, from Smart Catch Seafood to Women's Leadership programs and the James Beard Chefs Bootcamp for Policy and Change. The VIP Dinner chefs, those who cook a multi-course dinner and create an experience in the balcony boxes during the Awards show, will be chefs from the esteemed Union Square Hospitality Group.

The 2019 James Beard Awards are proudly hosted by Choose Chicago and the Illinois Restaurant Association and presented in association with Chicago O'Hare and Midway International Airports and Magellan Corporation as well as the following partners: Premier Sponsors: All-Clad Metalcrafters, American Airlines, HMSHost, Lavazza, S.Pellegrino® Sparkling Natural Mineral Water ; Supporting Sponsors: Hyatt, National Restaurant Association™, Robert Mondavi Winery, Skuna Bay Salmon, TABASCO® Sauce, Valrhona, White Claw® Hard Seltzer, Windstar Cruises; Gala Reception Sponsors: Dogfish Head Craft Brewery, Ecolab, Front of the House®, Kendall College, Segura Viudas USA with additional support from Chefwear, Locker and VerTerra Dinnerware.

Established in 1990, the James Beard Awards recognize culinary professionals for excellence and achievement in their fields and further 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 programs. All James Beard Award winners receive a certificate and a medallion engraved with the James Beard Foundation Awards insignia.

## About the James Beard Foundation

The James Beard Foundation's mission is to promote *good food for good*<sup>™</sup>. For more than 30 years, the James Beard Foundation has highlighted the centrality of food culture in our daily lives. Through the James Beard Awards, unique dining experiences at the James Beard House and around the country, scholarships, hands-on learning, and a variety of industry programs that educate and empower leaders in our community, the Foundation has built a platform for chefs and asserted the power of gastronomy to drive behavior, culture, and policy change around food. To that end, the Foundation has also created signature impact-oriented initiatives that include our Women's Leadership Programs, aimed at addressing the gender imbalance in the culinary industry; advocacy training through our Chefs Boot Camp for Policy and Change; and the James Beard Foundation Leadership Awards, which shine a spotlight on successful change makers. The organization is committed to giving chefs and their colleagues a voice and the tools they need to make the world more sustainable, equitable, and delicious for everyone. For more information, please visit [jamesbeard.org](http://jamesbeard.org) and follow @beardfoundation on [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [Facebook](#).