



MINISTRY OF TOURISM

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Port of Spain, Trinidad – February 22, 2016 – On Monday this week (February 22) the new Trinidad and Tobago Culinary Team was announced at the “**MAKING THE CUTT**” Ultimate Culinary Competition’s Awards Ceremony. Organised by the Trinidad Hotels, Restaurants and Tourism Association, the Awards Ceremony was held at the Port of Spain Ballroom of the Hyatt Regency Trinidad.

The members of the National Culinary Team are:

Brandon Maharaj	- Chef	- Brandon Catering & Gourmet Services
Jeremy Lovell	- Chef	- Courtyard by Marriott
Clinton Ramdhan	- Bartender	- Verve Creations Ltd
Kimberly Jaggasar	- Pastry Chef	- Hyatt Regency Trinidad
Annelca Mendoza	- Junior Chef	- Iesa Events
Adam de Freitas	- Alternate Chef	- The Anchorage
Kishion Guillaume	- Alternate Bartender	- CJ Lounge

The Team Captain is the Executive Sous Chef of the Hyatt Regency Trinidad, Adrian Cumberbatch.



This National Culinary Team will compete against their Caribbean counterparts at the highly prestigious “**TASTE OF THE CARIBBEAN**” culinary competition, organised by the Caribbean Hotel Association (CHTA) which will be held in Puerto Rico from June 6 to 10 this year.

“TASTE OF THE CARIBBEAN” is an annual culinary competition where the competitors cook, mix and present food and drink to be judged on taste as well as execution of skills and presentation.

In congratulating the Team, Deputy Permanent Secretary Mrs. Samdai Rampersad, who represented Minister Shamfa Cudjoe, stated that “the Trinidad and Tobago Culinary Team has long been considered the culinary powerhouse within the Caribbean; being the only team to win Caribbean Culinary Team of the Year an impressive five times - 2004, 2006, 2007, 2009 and 2011”.

Mrs. Samdai Rampersad stressed that tourism offers Trinidad and Tobago a great economic alternative especially given “the Caribbean’s positive tourism performance in 2015. According to the latest report from the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO), the Caribbean outperformed every major tourism region in the world in 2015, setting new arrivals and expenditure records. International tourist arrivals reached 28.7 million, representing a growth of 7% over 2014, while visitors spend reached an estimated US\$30billion, representing a 4.2% increase over 2014”.

It is a well known fact that culinary tourism draws visitors to a destination. People want to travel to experience new and interactive sensations. They have a desire to discover the customs of those who are like them – and also of those who are unlike them. **Trinidad and Tobago has to become that “must see” destination.**

In congratulating all the participants of the **“MAKING THE CUTT”** competition Dennise Demming, Chairman of the Tourism Development Company challenged them on three (3) levels:

- 1) Re-fashion the palettes of citizens ... let us embrace our own foods more... Breadfruit Fries instead of French Fries. In this way we save foreign exchange, encourage a deepening of the linkages with the agriculture sector and stimulate the entire value chain.
- 2) Lead the way in customer service revolution. Positive attitudes are infectious.
- 3) Be an advocate for sustainable environments ... replace Styrofoam and plastic food serving items and promote the use of reusable crockery.



This year was a record breaking one for the national culinary competition as more than 40 competitors registered for the event, including 15 Chefs, 9 Pastry Chefs, 2 Junior Chefs and 14 Bartenders. This turnout was the highest ever recorded. Hereunder are details as regards the culinary awards:

Bartender of the Year - Clinton Ramdhan
Pastry Chef of the Year - Kimberly Jaggasar
Junior Chef of the Year – Annelca Mendoza
Chef of the Year- Brandon Maharaj
Most Creative Vodka Drink – Clinton Ramdhan
Most Creative Rum Drink – Kishion Guillaume

The National Culinary Team will be having practice dinners at the Hilton Trinidad and Conference Centre from March to May as the team prepares for its participation in the premiere regional showcase **TASTE OF THE CARIBBEAN**.

These dinners will be open to the public to allow for direct interaction and feedback opportunities with the culinary team members.

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