

# MINISTRY OF TOURISM

THRTA, Final Practice Dinner of the National Culinary  
Team

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Monday 23 May 2016 at 7:00PM at Trinidad Hilton,  
Savannah Terrace

Remarks

Salutations

- Mrs. Samdai Rampersad, Acting Permanent Secretary,

## Ministry of Tourism

- Representatives from the Board of Directors of the Tourism Development Company
- Mr. Keith Chin, Chief Executive Officer of the Tourism Development Company
- Mr. Andrew Welch, President of the Trinidad Hotels Restaurants and Tourism Association (and other Board members)
- Mr. Brian Frontin, Chief Executive Officer, Trinidad Hotels Restaurants and Tourism Association
- Mrs. Lorraine Pouchet, President, Trinidad and Tobago Incoming Tour Operators Association
- Sponsors

- Members of the Trinidad and Tobago 2016 National Culinary Team
- Members of previous National Culinary Teams
- Members of the Media
- Ladies and Gentlemen

## **Introductory Remarks**

It indeed a privilege to be invited to deliver remarks at this auspicious event, the Final Practice Dinner of the Trinidad and Tobago National Culinary Team.

I have been following your activities and I must say that you, are truly champions. We are all very proud of you and we extend our greatest love and support as you proceed to Florida next month to fly our flag high and make us winners for yet another time.

The ‘Taste of the Caribbean’ initiative has a sound reputation for highlighting the art of Caribbean cooking,

bringing together the region's top chefs and bartenders to compete for honours in food and beverage competitions.

'Taste of the Caribbean' also promotes professional development through seminars, workshops, tastings and demonstrations, created to enhance performance, style and the profitability in the Caribbean culinary industry.

### **Caribbean rich in cuisine**

Caribbean cuisine is often described as a melting pot of extra-ordinary cultures and exotic, vibrant island flavours.

Authentic Caribbean cuisine is a true representation of all the different cultures that have graced the shores of the

islands and is an exciting fusion of European, African, Chinese and East Indian cuisines.

**Trinidad and Tobago is the epicentre of this.**

Our rich and diverse history has resulted in a culture and heritage that distinguishes us from all our competitors. I like to call us the Cultural Capital of the Caribbean.

And our food is the best representation of our rainbow nation. Our fusion of blends and flavours has created an eclectic cuisine that is nothing short of exciting, mouth-watering and simply irresistible.

From the world's best spices to the best coffee, rums, beers and tropical fruits, our national cuisine is an important part of our destination and our identity.

We can offer, anything your heart desires. Our delightful culinary offerings can satisfy the palette of even the most discerning traveller.

The Trinidad and Tobago Culinary Team has earned recognition as a culinary powerhouse in the Caribbean, and retains the great honour of being the only country to have won the much coveted Caribbean Culinary Team of the Year five (5) times

This is a testament to the diligence, creativity, consistency, commitment, and grit of our flag-bearers.

I congratulate the THRTA and the TTHTI for their outstanding work in raising the performance and

professional standards in the tourism sector, and more notably and specifically in the food and beverage industry.

### **Importance of food tourism**

FOOD and beverage industry has always been a defining component of the tourism sector, and plays a major role in creating the overall experience of a destination.

Today's tourist is better informed, more cultured, well travelled and is looking not just for new experience but for one that is authentic and of superb quality. Food is one sure gateway into other cultures through taste, preparation and the whole eating environment.

In light of this, our local cuisine significantly enhances our tourism product.

Some travellers would return to the same destination just to savour its unique food experiences that you create for them through your imaginative variations of delightful local fare.

All indications are that our local cuisine holds much potential:

- ✓ To enhance sustainability in tourism;
- ✓ Contribute to the authenticity of our destination and
- ✓ Strengthen our economy.

The International Culinary Tourism Association states that on average, food travellers spend around USD1,200

per trip, with over one-third of their travel budget going towards food-related activities.

Destination Marketing campaigns are now focusing on the food element as a central part of its destination tourism product.

Tourists are sharing millions of Food and Beverage themed photos daily across social platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and especially Flickr.

This increases travel consumers awareness of different cuisines and cultures and it fuels their desire to experience the same.

So as chefs, bartenders, and food tourism stakeholders, you have a critical role to play, and there is much room at the table for you.

### **Tourism prospects**

Over the past 6 years, Caribbean Tourism has been experiencing significant growth. As a region we continue to outperform the rest of the world both in terms of arrivals and expenditure records. With a 2015 record of 28.7 million in international arrivals and an estimated visitor spend of 30 billion US dollars, we remain in a rather enviable position and we continue to be a force to be reckoned with.

International tourism has certainly reached new heights. The possibilities are endless, and the opportunities are beyond our imagination. The robust performance of the sector is expected to get better and better, with the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) prediction that that in the year 2020, the number of international tourists will reach approximately 1.6 billion.

This means economic growth, job creation, poverty alleviation and revenue generation for any country, stakeholder, organization or entrepreneur prepared to seize the opportunity.

**All stakeholders need to identify their roles**

**The Chef the bartender...has to see himself as a stakeholder, a producer**

**It requires a different approach, a different mind set, a different commitment, and a different kind of investment...**

**We both have our work to do.**

**Our business is to get them here, your business is to show them a good time, make them spend, and be wow them to the point of returning again and again.**

**We are trinidadians, that's what we do...we bring the fire, we bring the energy, we bring creativity, and know how**

to show you a good time....lets get out there and do what we know how to do oh so well.

It is in this vein that we approach the National Culinary Competition-Final Practice. And it is in this vein that we press on to taste of the Caribbean.

We didn't just come to compete we entered to win , and win we will.

I wish to assure all those gathered here today of the Ministry of Tourism's commitment to supporting the development of the culinary tourism niche in Trinidad and Tobago.

We are ready and willing to work with all our tourism partners.

I know our team has worked hard to refine their skills.

## **Annelca**

I want to congratulate them on reaching this far and I want to extend to them my best wishes for their success.

You are an energetic team. I declare you champions indeed.

Trinidadians and Tobagonians are full of energy, it is part of who we are and it is a part of our tourism product offering.

Let that energy fuel how you perform at this competition.

Remember in order to succeed, you must first believe that you can.

So believe it even now.

We certainly have every confidence in you.

I commend the Trinidad Hotels Restaurants and Tourism Association and all other stakeholders on a job well done.

This is a beautiful event.

And I assure you of my steadfast and unwavering support.

Go out there and do your best, have fun, and make us proud.

Thank you!