

Melissa Kings brings California flavor to nation's capitol

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TV personality, entrepreneur and philanthropist Chef Melissa King will travel to Washington, D.C. to help celebrate the lighting of the U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree. The 2021 People's Tree is provided by the Six Rivers National Forest in California. A Bay-area resident, King brings her unique style of cooking that combines modern California cuisine with Asian flavors to the festivities.

Following the tree lighting ceremony, a celebratory reception will be held with support from Visit California and Choose Outdoors. Guests will enjoy a menu influenced by Chef King and a signature bite of duck congee at a special chef station. Inspired to create a duck congee made from Sonoma's Liberty Ducks who produce larger and meatier ducks from fourth generation duck farmers, King also incorporates local wild rice into this innovative take on a traditional Chinese comfort food dish. California is also the largest producer of wild rice in the country. The duck congee will be garnished with puffed California wild rice, Sichuan chili oil and cilantro. In attendance at the reception will be members of the California delegation, US Forest Service staff, project sponsors, and special guests.

“Beyond just the Six Rivers, the U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree represents the people, culture and communities of the state that it comes from”, said Ted McArthur, Six Rivers National Forest Supervisor. “We are grateful to Chef King for sharing her time and talent in celebrating the final step in the tree’s journey from California to D.C.”

To complement the menu, a specialty cocktail with gin created from the boughs of “Sugar Bear”, the nickname for this year’s tree, will be provided by Humboldt Craft Spirits, along with libations from Old Growth Cellars, Septentrio Winery, Lost Coast Brewery, Six Rivers Brewery, SeaQuake Brewing, Humboldt Cider Company and Port O Pints Brewing. Additionally, California-based Harris Ranch will provide short ribs and poultry provided by Foster Farms with support from the California Poultry Federation.

“I’m honored to be a part of this American tradition while also representing all that makes California such a diverse and magnificent place”, said Chef King. “As a Chinese Californian, I wanted to tie in some of my cultural roots with a comforting, home style rice porridge that’s perfect for a wintery day in DC to celebrate the holidays.”

Chef King is best known as the winner of Bravo’s Top Chef All-Stars: Los Angeles Season 17 and the winner of All-Star’s Fan Favorite. She can currently be seen on Top Chef Family and was recently a judge on Top Chef Season 18 Portland and the new competition series, Top Chef Amateurs. She placed as a finalist on Top Chef Boston Season 12. She holds more challenge wins than any other competitor in the history of Top Chef. She has been recognized as “one of the best female chefs in San Francisco” and “40 under 40: Rising Star”. King completed a B.A. in Cognitive Science at the UC Irvine and attended the Culinary Institute of America graduating at the top of her class. She is also a certified level 1 sommelier. Along with being a chef, television personality, activist, model, and brand partner, she actively participates in speaking panels supporting women’s empowerment, sustainability, food education, and entrepreneurship.