

**BLACK
WOMEN
IN FOOD
SUMMIT**
BY DINE DIASPORA

**April 26, 2024
12:00PM - 5:00PM
Eaton Hotel, Washington DC**

**HOST:
Chef Vicky V
"Queen of Yum,"
CEO of Houston Hosts**

#BWIFSummit #BlackWomeninFood

REGISTRATION | 1st Floor, Across from Library

12:00 PM

VENDOR MARKET OPENS | 1st Floor

1:00 PM

MARKETPLACE EXPERIENCES

Wellness Workshop

Hosted by Eaton Hotel
Room: Eaton Wellness/2nd Floor
Sign-up required

12:30PM - 1:30 PM

Vendor Market

Room: Crystal

1:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Pitch Competition by New Voices Foundation

Room: Cinema
Seating is limited

3:30 PM - 5:00 PM

Host: Queenstar Akrong,
Founder, Queenstar Media

Poetry

Room: Wild Days/Rooftop

6:00 PM - 9:00 PM

BLACK WOMEN IN FOOD SUMMIT

BY DINE DIASPORA

April 27, 2024
8:00AM - 5:30PM
Eaton Hotel, Washington DC

HOST:
Chef Vicky V "Queen of Yum,"
CEO of Houston Hosts

**HEY GIRL! YOU ARE WHERE YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE.
NOW, LETS GET STARTED!**

#BWIFSummit #BlackWomeninFood

REGISTRATION OPEN | 1st Floor, Across from Library

8:00 AM

MORNING BITES | 2nd Floor

8:30 AM

PORTRAIT STUDIO

by Chi-Chi Ari | Room: Crystal A

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Get your portrait taken!

OPENING PLENARY

Room: Beverly Snow

9:30 AM

Welcome + New Voices Foundation Pitch Competition Announcement

Nina Oduro & Maame Boakye,
Black Women in Food Founders

Breathing Moment

Imani Joye Samuels, Founder and CEO, HURU

Serving Success - Leaders Making Waves Across the Food Industry

Room: Beverly Snow

Moderator: Afua Osei, Director of Strategic
Partnerships, Foreign Policy

Panelists:

- **Nyasha Arrington**, Co-star of FOX's Next Level Chef
- **Elle Simone Scott**, Food Stylist and Executive Editor, America's Test Kitchen
- **Lesley Riley**, Founder and CEO, Mama's Biscuits

From renowned chefs to entrepreneurs, our panelists will share their insights, challenges, and triumphs on their paths to success. They will delve into navigating obstacles, carved out their niches, and charting their own path in an industry historically dominated by men.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

11:05 AM -12:05 PM

Get Your Shine: Leveraging Media for Growth in the Food Industry

Room: Crystal C

Moderator: Korsha Wilson, Writer and Founder, of A Hungry Society

Panelists:

- Osayi Endolyn, Writer, Editor, and Producer
- Eden Hagos, Creator, Black Foodie
- Paola Velez, Chef, Author, Dōeki Dōeki and Bodega Bakes
- Aba Kwawu, President and Founder, TAA Public Relations

You've Got Options: Navigating Diverse Culinary Career Paths presented by Thompson Hospitality

Room: Salon

Moderator: Mboone Umbima, EVP, Brand Strategy, David Rio Chai & Tea

Panelists:

- Benita Thompson-Byas, SVP & Vice Chairman, Thompson Hospitality
- Catina Smith, Chef and Co-Owner, Our Time Kitchen
- Jeanine Prime, Restaurateur, Owner of Cane & St. James
- Sherry Ephraim, Sr. Director of Business Development, ISS Guckenheimer

Nourishing Our Bodies: Connecting the Black Diaspora for Health, Wellness, and Sustainability in Food sponsored by WANDA

Room: Crystal A-B

Moderator: Tambra Raye Stevenson, Founder, WANDA

Panelists:

- Rev. Dr. Angelique Walker-Smith, Strategist for Pan African and Orthodox Faith Engagement, Bread for the World
- Adebukola Ajao, Marketing Director, Destiny African Market
- Agatha Achindu, Wellness Architect, Life Unprocessed™
- Farrah Barrios, Director of Global Food Security, The White House, NSC

Flavors of the Future: Innovations and Trends in Food and Beverage

Room: Barnett B

Moderator: Audarshia Townsend, Food & Beverage Insider

- Cathy Barnes, Consultant, PIC Agency
- Nadia Kemal, Co-Founder & Managing Partner, Tamamie Group
- Tia Glave, Co-Founder & President, Food Safety Catalyst
- Adaeze Okoli, Chief of Staff, Rethink Food

Leveraging media effectively can be a game-changer for growth in the food industry. This panel brings leaders at the intersection of food and media to share experiences and best practices for using media as a catalyst for growth. From social media to print media, the panel will delve into the diverse landscape of media platforms available and highlight the power of storytelling, visual content, and engaging narratives to captivate audiences.

Explore the myriad opportunities within the culinary world, from traditional culinary arts to food service and entrepreneurship. This panel features a diverse spectrum of culinary specialties including chefs, restaurateurs, and food service executives and professionals that will share their insights on navigating diverse culinary career paths. Whether you dream of owning your own restaurant, working as a chef, or forging a career in food service, this session will provide invaluable guidance and inspiration.

As Black communities worldwide grapple with health disparities, this discussion delves into the perspectives, practices, and initiatives from the Black diaspora to address these disparities. The panelists will examine how historical experiences, cultural heritage, and systemic inequities have shaped dietary patterns, food access, and health outcomes. They will spotlight innovative strategies and initiatives led by individuals and organizations within the Black diaspora to promote health, wellness, and sustainability in food systems.

Join industry leaders and innovators as they delve into the ever-evolving landscape of the food and beverage industry. From plant-based alternatives to sustainable packaging solutions, this panel will explore the latest trends shaping consumer preferences and driving innovation. Discover how technology, cultural shifts, and consumer demand are influencing product development, marketing strategies, and the overall future of food and beverage.

LUNCH

2nd Floor

12:20 PM -1:25 PM

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

1:40 PM -2:40 PM

Advisors Lab | Group Advising Sessions

Room: Beverly Snow

Advisors:

- Dawn Padmore, Vice President of Awards, James Beard Foundation
- Valerie Wilson, Vice President, Culinary and Culture, MMGY Wagstaff
- Désirée Younge, Founder and CEO, Conscious Catalyst Group Inc
- Tandra Raye Stevenson, Founder & CEO, Women Advancing Nutrition Dietetics And Agriculture (WANDA)
- Lauren C. Nelson, Founder, The Powerhouse Era
- Auzeais Bellamy, Founder and CEO, Blondery
- Tim Cole, Co-Founder, Milwaukee Wine Academy

Be A Reel Queen: Perfecting Short Form Video Storytelling

Room: Barnett B

Instructor: Eden Hagos, Creator of Black Foodie

In this session, participants will meet in small groups with experts of their choice on a topic and use the time to get in-depth advice and insights on questions pertaining to their personal and professional development.

Short form videos have emerged as a highly effective way to engage with audiences to build your brand. This interactive workshop will equip you with the skills and knowledge to create compelling short form videos for social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook. By the end of the workshop, you will leave with a reel that will help you leap in your social media content skills.

Level Up Your Food Styling Game: Charcuterie Boards presented by Niman Ranch

Room: Crystal

Instructor: Elle Simone Scott, Food Stylist & Executive Editor, America's Test Kitchen

Embark on an immersive journey as our expert instructor guides you through the art of creating the perfect charcuterie masterpiece. This hands-on workshop will provide you with the secrets behind assembling a stunning charcuterie board. Our expert instructor will assist you with the principles of balance, texture, and flavor pairing, empowering you to craft a board that is as visually stunning as it is delicious. You'll explore an array of premium meats by Niman Ranch and combine them with flavors and textures to elevate your charcuterie game.

Recipe for Wellness

Room: Salon A-B

Instructor: Mitanni Hughley, Instructor, HURU

Step into a nourishing interactive workshop, where we'll delve into holistic approaches to self-care and mental well-being. You will walk away with tangible practices and personalized strategies for nourishing your minds, bodies, and spirits that you can implement in your daily life.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

2:55 PM -3:55 PM

Getting Published: Navigating Diverse Publishing Journeys

Room: Crystal

Moderator: Crystal Jones, Food Content Creator

Panelists:

- Courtnee Futch, Founder, Maillard Culinary Creative
- Osayi Endoyn, Writer, Editor, and Producer
- Jillian Knox, Stylist and Art Director
- Maya-Camille Broussard, Chef and Owner, Justice of the Pies

Publishing a book is a significant milestone in the food industry. This panel brings together authors with diverse experiences in the food industry to provide insights and practical advice on navigating the publishing journey, from self-publishing to working with major publishers. Panelists will share their experiences and tips on navigating publishing a food-focused book.

Be A Star: Accessing & Navigating TV Opportunities for Growth

Room: Salon A-B

Moderator: Aba Kwawu, President, TAAPR

Panelists:

- LP O'Brien, Mixologist, TV Personality, Entrepreneur
- Fariyal Abdullahi, Executive Chef, Hav & Mar
- Amber Croom, Founder & Chef, And 4 Dessert Confectionery Studio; Chef & Partner, Beye Beignets

Television remains a powerful platform to reach broad audiences in the food industry. From features on cooking shows and competitions to hosting, television offers an array of opportunities. Yet, accessing these opportunities can be challenging. This panel brings together industry leaders who have leveraged television to expand the reach of their work to discuss their journeys.

Marketing Mavericks: Strategies for Big Business and Brand Opportunities

Room: Barnett B

Moderator: Kiano Moju, Author, AfriCali and Executive Director, Jikoni Recipe Archive

Panelists:

- Alex Hill, Recipe Developer, TV Host and Content Creator
- Earlecia Richelle, Founder, studioER
- Margaret Nyamumbo, Founder and CEO, Kahawa 1893 Coffee

Join a powerhouse lineup of industry players as they reveal their top trends and tips for leveraging marketing to secure major business and brand opportunities. Hear firsthand from individuals who have successfully navigated the industry landscape and capitalized on marketing strategies to propel their careers and businesses forward.

The State of Black Women and Funding: Varying Funding Opportunities for Growth

Room: Cinema

Moderator: Désirée Younge, Founder and CEO, Conscious Catalyst Group Inc

Panelists:

- Amanda Mack, Chef- Owner, Crust By Mack
- Ehime Eigbe-Akindele, Founder and CEO, Sweet Kiwi
- Stefanie Thomas, Managing Director, Pre-seed Vehicle, Zeal Capital Partners
- Rachel Wilson, Managing Partner, The BFM Fund

Explore the complex landscape of funding for Black women entrepreneurs amidst ongoing challenges to diversity, equity, and inclusion. From venture capital to grants and beyond, discover the diverse range of funding avenues available and strategies for accessing them. Join us as industry experts discuss the state of funding, share success stories, and provide insights to empower you in securing the resources you need for growth and success.

FIRESIDE CHAT

4:05 PM

Room: Beverly Snow

Jamila Robinson, Editor in Chief at Bon Appetit & Epicurious in conversation with Audarshia Townsend, Content Director at Food and Beverage Insider

TOAST RECEPTION

5:20 PM

Room: Beverly Snow

Remarks

Nina Oduro & Maame Boakye,
Black Women in Food Founders

DINE AROUND DC

Room: Beverly Snow

Registration required

7:00 PM UNTIL

Connect and dine with other Summit attendees at our partner restaurants and bars. Must pre-register.

SPEAKERS

Fariyal Abdullahi, Executive Chef, Hav & Mar

Fariyal Abdullahi hails from Ethiopia and earned a bachelor's degree in Clinical Child Psychology before switching career paths. Since becoming a chef, Abdullahi has worked at the three-Michelin-star eatery, Noma, in Copenhagen, and was previously the culinary manager at five Hillstone Restaurant Group locations. Her dishes tend to include nods to her Ethiopian roots and have been featured in spaces such as the Met Gala and Vogue. She is currently the Executive Chef at Hav & Mar in NYC, which was named top 12 restaurants by the New York Times and Forbes All Star Eatery. Abdullahi has been named a James Beard semi-finalist. Outside of the restaurant, you can watch her judging on several Food Network shows such as Chopped and Beat Bobby Flay. Abdullahi has also partnered with some friends and heads a non-profit organization that builds schools and gives access to water to families in rural parts of Ethiopia.

Agatha Achindu, Wellness Architect, Life Unprocessed™

Agatha Achindu is a wellness architect focused on helping her audience find a clear path toward what matters most: a long and fulfilling life. As the founder of Life Unprocessed™, a boutique wellness coaching and consultancy, Agatha helps clients uncover, unlearn, and unleash their unique, optimal lifestyle design. She is the author of Bountiful Cooking, a cookbook of wholesome everyday meals released by Hachette Book Group, is a Certified Integrative Nutrition Health Coach and Yoga instructor, and founded Yummy Spoonfuls, the first organic baby food line to be nationally distributed. She has appeared in notable media outlets such as the Today Show, Marie Claire, New York Times, CNN, CBS, Forbes, Fortune, and People Magazine and her work has been published in Parents, Washington Post, and more.

Adebukola Ajao, Marketing Director, Destiny African Market

Adebukola Ajao is a freelance writer-turned-digital media entrepreneur whose passionate about storytelling and driving awareness through powerful marketing campaigns. With over 7 years of brand marketing experience, she's enthused to equip small businesses with tools to compete in the market. When she isn't media consulting, you'll find her teaching undergraduate/graduate marketing courses at northeastern University and mentoring young people, preparing them for their digital first futures!

Queenstar Akrong, Founder, Queenstar Media

Queenstar Akrong is a mission-oriented storyteller and speaker with over a decade of experience crafting innovative social impact initiatives for the nation's most impactful education, tech, and health organizations. She has worked for and with organizations such as The College Board, NBCUniversal, National Minority Quality Forum, HBCUs, and more. She's a serial entrepreneur leading two companies as the Founder & CEO of No Debt Degree, an organization that provides college-affordability advising and workshops to students to decrease student loan debt, and Queenstar Media where her video podcast interviews with industry leaders reach thousands of viewers annually. She holds a B. A in International Affairs from Notre Dame of Maryland University and a Master's in Education Entrepreneurship from the University of Pennsylvania.

Victoria Andrews, CEO, Houston Hosts

Meet Chef Vicky V, queen of Yum! 🍴 As a Travel Chef and Foodie Queen, she's a Cultural+Brand Enthusiast, infusing her passion into the realms of food, beverage, and hospitality. With #Yumcrumbs™, she tantalizes taste buds and leaves a flavorful legacy. As the Host+Consultant with a keen business acumen, she's the CEO of @houstonhosts, a General 🍷 in the industry. Her wanderlust takes her on culinary adventures, making her not just a chef but a globetrotter. Dope AF 💋, Chef Vicky is the epitome of culinary excellence and wanderlust.

Nyesha Arrington, Co-star of FOX's Next Level Chef

Nyesha Arrington is the co-star of FOX's hit culinary competition show Next Level Chef. She is also the host and producer of the digital series Plateworthy on Eater. Nyesha started her culinary career at Michelin starred restaurants Mélisse in Santa Monica and L'Atelier and The Mansion in Las Vegas. She went on to open restaurants Leona and Native in Los Angeles, where she was celebrated for using farm fresh, locally and responsibly sourced ingredients. She has been named to Zagat's Best Chef 30 Under 30 List as well as Eater's LA Chef of the Year. Nyesha hit the national stage as a fan favorite on Bravo's Top Chef season 9 and has been a household name ever since. Her credits include FOX's MasterChef and Hell's Kitchen, Food Network's Tournament of Champions, Guy's Grocery Games and Diners, Drive Ins and Dives and ITV's Next Level Chef U.K.

SPEAKERS

Cat Barnes, Consultant, PIC Agency

Cathy Barnes currently works as a Mid-Atlantic Field Marketing Manager for Eat the Change and an advocate for the growth of small businesses. With nearly 10 years of experience in the food and beverage industry, Cathy has engaged with a wide array of brands, contributing her expertise to areas spanning from marketing, branding field development, and sales. Prior to Eat the Change, Cathy worked at Soupergirl, where she orchestrated the successful launch of the brand's first US packaged goods certified Fair Food. Cathy maintains an unwavering commitment to discovering innovative solutions that empower her network of CPG brands, facilitating their expansion beyond regional boundaries.

Farrah Barrios, Director of Global Food Security, The White House, NSC

Farrah Barrios serves as the Director for Global Food Security and Development Planning in the Development, Global Health, and Humanitarian Response Directorate at the National Security Council (NSC) of The White House. In this role, she directs the interagency on global food security assistance and has helped to steer policy and nearly \$10.2 billion in assistance this year through international fora like G7, United Nations General Assembly, and the G20. She has held senior positions as an international economist at the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), at the U.S. Treasury Department, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), The Federal Reserve Board of New York, the private sector and led microfinance programs in Cambodia, East Timor-Indonesia, and Laos and has traveled to over 110 countries. She holds an M.A. in International Relations and Economics from Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), and Wharton Business School at University of Pennsylvania as well as her B.S. in Political Science and Economics from Plattsburgh State University in New York.

Auzerais Bellamy, Founder and CEO, Blondery

The synthesis of passion and experience has fueled what Auzerais believes is her magnum opus: Blondery, a seasonal collection of handmade blondies launched in November 2016. While Auzerais has held titles at some of the finest kitchens around the globe- including Sous Chef at Bouchon Bakery - the most fulfilling has been that of Founder and CEO of Blondery. Blondery is a one-of-a-kind, virtual bakery that presents limited-release, seasonal blondie collections throughout the year to our nearly 10K (and counting) waitlist members. Blondery has been featured on CBS mornings and in publications such as the New York Times, Cosmopolitan, and Eater. Blondery has been trusted to deliver exceptional product quality by brands like Netflix, Spotify, and Viacom.

Maya-Camille Broussard, Chef and Owner, Justice of the Pies

Maya-Camille is the chef and owner of Justice of the Pies, a bakery that specializes in sweet and savory pies, quiches and tarts. Located on the South Side of Chicago, Justice of the Pies is a social-mission based bakery that considers itself to be a steward for fairness and equality and focuses on initiatives surrounding food issues. Maya-Camille is one of the stars of Bake Squad, which aired its second season in January 2023 on Netflix. She was handpicked by Chef Christina Tosi of Milk Bar and has been anointed the "Flavor Maven" for a keen sense of smell and taste. Broussard was also a Finalist under the Outstanding Baker category for the 2022 James Beard Foundation Restaurant and Chef Awards. In the winter of 2023, Maya-Camille was named "Pastry Chef of the Year" by Esquire magazine and has been nominated as a Pastry Chef of the Year by the Jean Banchet Chef Awards.

Tim Cole, Co-Founder, Milwaukee Wine Academy

Drawing from his background in fintech, nonprofit work, and international business, Tim Cole offers a distinct perspective. Beyond his professional roles, he embodies the spirit of a renaissance man, passionately exploring global cultures and regions. Tim's deep appreciation and expertise in the world of wine make him a charismatic event host, ensuring a consistently exceptional experience.

Amber Croom, Founder & Chef, And 4 Dessert Confectionery Studio; Chef & Partner, Beye Beignets

Chef Amber Croom, a culinary virtuoso hailing from Birmingham, Alabama, embarked on her gastronomic journey after diverting from a career in Naval Architecture & Marine Engineering to pursue her true passion for baking. Her passion for chocolate led her to become Head Chocolatier at a premier catering company in Washington, D.C. Her culinary talent has graced national stages, where she competed in Food Network's Holiday Baking Championship and Chopped Sweets, ultimately emerging victorious as a Chopped Champion. Additionally, she has been featured on prestigious platforms such as Beat Bobby Flay and Fox's Crime Scene Kitchen Season 2, where she and her partner Yassmeen Haskins secured the championship. Now based in Baltimore, Maryland, Amber is the creative force behind And For Dessert, celebrated for its decadent visuals and innovative flavors. Her dedication to her craft is evident in her latest venture, Beye Beignets, where she collaborates with Chef Yassmeen Haskins.

SPEAKERS

Osayi Endolyn, Writer, Editor, and Producer

Osayi Endolyn is a writer, editor, producer, and curator whose work centers narrative, visual, and experiential culture-driven storytelling. Osayi's work is featured across myriad prominent media and entertainment platforms, and she is a two-time James Beard Award-winner in journalism and broadcast media. She is a contributor to multiple books on food culture and is also the writer on Ghetto Gastro Presents: Black Power Kitchen, and Marcus Samuelsson's The Rise: Black Cooks and the Soul of American Food.

Sherry Ephraim, Director of Business Development, ISS Guckenheimer

Sherry Ephraim is a visionary Director of Business Development at ISS Guckenheimer, a provider of workplace culinary programs focused on transforming the landscape of food service. Sherry focuses on identifying, connecting with, and marketing the company's food services to new clients, while bringing fresh innovative ideas, collaborating seamlessly with regional leaders, sector experts and internal teams. Sherry harnesses her deep market expertise to curate transformative nutritious programs that engage employees and create positive work environments. These initiatives not only nourish employees with nutritious. Sherry is a trailblazer leaving an indelible impact on the industry as she paves the way for a new era of business development and extraordinary culinary experiences for her clients.

Courtnee Futch, Founder, Maillard Culinary Creative

Courtnee Futch is a Culinary Creative Director and Chef whose work lives at the convergence of storytelling, food and community. As the Founder of Maillard Culinary Creative, Courtnee helps brands tell their food stories with compelling recipes and short and long-form video. Her corporate career features impactful brand marketer and culinary partnership roles at major food startups, including HelloFresh, Blue Apron and EatOkra. At the same time, Courtnee has balanced her creative culinary endeavors, producing engaging culinary content for brands like Haven's Kitchen, Food Network and Bon Appétit. Her self-published debut cookbook, Early Enough, is her love letter to brunch with 101 creative recipes for sweet and savory bites and their perfectly-paired cocktail companion.

Tia Glave, Co-Founder and President, Food Safety Catalyst

With over a decade of experience in large and small food manufacturing, food retail, and start-up food environments, including supporting iconic General Mills brands like Pillsbury and Yoplait, and leading food safety and quality at Milk Bar, the nostalgic sweet shop founded by Christina Tosi, Tia is passionate about helping all-sized manufacturing and retail organizations build and strengthen their food safety and quality programs and culture.

Eden Hagos, Creator, Black Foodie

Eden Hagos is an Ethiopian-Canadian creator, host & producer with a passion for African and Caribbean cuisine & travel. Her content explores identity, food, and culture across the African Diaspora and she has successfully built a community of over half a million foodies. From interviewing the Prime Minister of Canada to producing Black Foodie Guides around the world, she's always on a fun food adventure!

Alex Hill, Recipe Developer, TV Host and Content Creator

Alex Hill is a Washington, D.C. born now Los Angeles based self-taught cook with a passion for making food that's filled with flavor, functional and achievable. Alex is the host of the new cooking show Spice Spice Baby on the Tastemade streaming channel where she spices up your usual mealtime routines by embracing out-of-the-box flavors, tangy spices, and satisfying sauces to create bright and innovative recipes everyone will be dying to try!

Mitanni Hughley, Instructor, HURU

Mitanni, formally known as NikHYA, is both a native Angeleno and transplant Washingtonian with a profound love for the arts and their healing abilities. Through her perseverance in overcoming adversities in her home community she served, she was awarded for her efforts in mentorship and giving back, by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. Mitanni found purpose in mentorship centered around wellbeing and furthered her education, receiving a Bachelor's in Health Science from Howard University and a Master of Art in Teaching. Applying her cumulation of her community outreach experiences, coupled with an appetite for ownership and being the change she wanted to see, has led her to newly founding SOLTRÉ: a heart space dedicated to advocating for self-prioritization and self-accountability as a call to heal, through yoga instruction, sound healing, therapeutic art and gentle reminders.

SPEAKERS

Crystal Jones, Food Content Creator

Crystal Jones is a DC metropolitan area native, having worked in the food service industry for over 20 years. She highlights local restaurants on social media as a content creator, as well as some recipe development on her personal blog. She also writes as a freelance food critic for Washington City Paper, covering takeout restaurants in DC.

Nadia Kemal, Co-Founder & Managing Partner at Tamamie Group

Nadia is an experienced food-tech entrepreneur passionate about food security, innovation, and intersectionality. Nadia's focus on agricultural technology stemmed from her Ethiopian grandparents' involvement in farming and the country's lack of resources. She kickstarted her career as a Harry J. Ott fellow with Coca-Cola, diminishing carbon footprint and water usage in developing countries. Since then, she has worked as a aquaculturist at Mote Laboratory before starting her own cell-based seafood company in collaboration with Cornell Tech, as a method of fish production without harm to the environment. Nadia now globally incubates sustainable food and beverage brands through her boutique firm called the Tamamie Group, as Co-Founder and Managing Partner. She studied International Relations with a focus on Africa at the University of Florida.

Jillian Knox, Stylist and Art Director

Jillian Knox is an interdisciplinary polymath artist who hails from Washington, DC and is based in San Francisco, California. Although she has a BFA in photography (Savannah College of Art and Design), she works primarily as an Art Director and Stylist in food, fashion and prop styling. Jillian's greatest joy is telling cultural stories; honoring food, lifestyle, and history through visual media is important to her, as it creates permanence and artifacts for future generations. Her work has appeared in Food & Wine, Bon Appetit, Real Simple, and a variety of cookbooks such as: Black Food by Bryant Terry, Arabiyya by Reem Assil, Diasporican by Illyanna Maisonet, My Everyday Lagos by Yewande Komolafe, Praisesong for the Kitchen Ghosts by Crystal Wilkinson, and recently-- Anything's Pastable by Dan Pashman.

Aba Kwawu, President and Founder, TAA Public Relations

Aba Kwawu is the founder and president of TAA|PR, a results-oriented public relations, marketing, and special events agency dedicated to the fashion, design, entertainment, hospitality, and luxury lifestyle sectors. TAA|PR was recently named one of America's Top PR Agencies by Forbes. Kwawu earned her bachelor's degree from the University of Pittsburgh and her master's degree from the University of the Arts- London College of Fashion. Today, TAA PR in its 20th year of business continues to advise and serve brands seeking expertise in media relations, event production, experiential marketing, and social media. The agency's regional, national, and international clients span various industries and have included Cirque du Soleil, Rosewood Hotels, Ladurée, Kering (the global luxury group), Chanel, chefs Gordon Ramsay, Wolfgang Puck and Daniel Boulud, Shake Shack, hospitality for The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Tysons Galleria, CityCenterDC, the Smithsonian Institution and more.

Amanda Mack, Chef-Owner, Crust By Mack

Amanda Mack, Chef-Owner of Crust By Mack Bakery pulls inspiration from her childhood, ancestors and community of Baltimore, to create pastries that evoke nostalgia and honors African American Culture. She was named Cook of the Year by Southern Living Magazine, published in Bon Appetit, Food & Wine, Cherry Bombe Magazine and many more. Her bakery was also awarded Best New Food & Best Crab dish in Maryland! She recently opened a new BakeHouse in Harbor Place in downtown Baltimore & was awarded Best Black Bakery in Baltimore by the Baltimore Times. Her love for Baltimore transcends beyond the table, as she has spent the past decade as a vehicle for change in food and social justice. Her work with The Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, The Federal WIC Program and Local CSAs has significantly increased food access to low-income communities across the city.

Kiano Moju, Author, AfriCali and Executive Director, Jikoni Recipe Archive

Kiano Moju is a Kenyan/Nigerian American producer, director, video host, and author, with her debut cookbook AfriCali publishing this summer. Kiano's culinary identity draws on her Kenyan and Nigerian heritage, her upbringing in the melting pot of California, and her travels abroad. Until 2019, she was a creative video producer at BuzzFeed's food video vertical, Tasty, where she amassed over 100 million cumulative video views in recipe content. After departing from BuzzFeed, Kiano started her own media company, which led her to launch a nonprofit organization called The Jikoni Recipe Archive. It celebrates the rich cuisine of Africa and across its diaspora by documenting the legacy of traditional and modern cooks, while amplifying its vibrant food culture. Kiano also opened her own production company in Los Angeles called Jikoni Studios.

SPEAKERS

Lauren C. Nelson, Creator, The Powerhouse Era

Named by New York Times Mag as the "Go-To Branding Strategist to Create Impact", Lauren C Nelson is a personal branding strategist, coach and international speaker on a mission to take women and people of color from invisible leaders to in-demand, highly paid experts. After being laid off from her corporate job as a strategic management consultant, Lauren set out to start her own consulting and coaching business - she quickly realized that years of "moving in silence" only set her back in the marketplace. She overcame her fears of visibility, created and launched her own powerhouse personal brand which landed her in LA WEEKLY, NY Times Mag, WomLEAD, in less than 4 months. She created a personal branding system and program called The Powerhouse Era to help women professionals and entrepreneurs go from being the best kept secret to one of the best paid authorities in their industry.

Margaret Nyamumbo, Founder & CEO, Kahawa 1893 Coffee

Margaret is the founder & CEO of Kahawa 1893, a coffee company with a mission to revolutionize the global coffee supply chain and close the gender gap in the industry. She hails from a coffee growing family in Kenya where she observed that 90% of the labor in coffee comes from women but they are not adequately compensated. Margaret has been featured and received an investment on the TV Show Shark Tank. Margaret holds an MBA from Harvard Business and studied Economics at Smith College and the London School of Economics.

LP O'Brien, Mixologist, TV Personality, Entrepreneur

LP O'Brien is a highly decorated and award-winning Afro-Boricua mixologist. Her dedication to education, innovation, and cultural integration through cocktail creations led her to establish LP Drinks. LP was famously crowned the winner of Netflix's new television series, Drink Masters, and has been recognized by DISCUS, Global Bar 100 Industry People To Know, and the Dame Hall of Fame. She is a proud co-owner of Siponey Spritz Co.™, the first B Corp-certified spirits-based canned cocktail company.

Adaeze Okoli, Chief of Staff, Rethink

Adaeze Okoli is a dedicated nonprofit leader deeply passionate about fostering a healthier and more sustainable food system for both people and the planet. With a commitment to catalyzing positive change within the food industry, Adaeze leverages her diverse skill set to make a meaningful impact.

She started her career as a researcher at the Urban Institute. In this role, she collaborated with foundations, governments, and nonprofits to evaluate the impact of their policies across various sectors, such as affordable housing and workforce development. Adaeze has also been fortunate to work with several social enterprises in sub-Saharan Africa, supporting the scaling of innovative solutions for the future of food in the region. She currently serves as Chief of Staff at Rethink Food, an innovative food rescue organization based in New York City. She leads strategy and operations at Rethink, supporting the distribution of 40,000 meals weekly to food-insecure communities across the city.

Afua Osei, Director of Strategic Partnerships, Foreign Policy

Afua Osei is a policy advisor and media entrepreneur with global experience driving digital trade and women's economic empowerment. Her career focuses on cultivating global partnerships and leveraging strategic communications for inclusive impact. She currently serves as a Director of Strategic Partnerships at Foreign Policy, one of the leading global affairs media companies based in Washington DC. Afua previously served as the Co-Founder of She Leads Africa, management consultant at McKinsey & Company in Nigeria and consultant to Albright Stonebridge Group, Technoserve and Financial Times. Named by Forbes as one of Africa's Youngest Power Women, she was a Fulbright Scholar in Malaysia and has delivered keynote talks at SXSW, Google, Microsoft and Salesforce.

Dawn Padmore, Vice Presidents of Awards, James Beard

Dawn Padmore serves as the Vice President of Awards at the James Beard Foundation, where she works closely with volunteer committees, staff, and the Board of Trustees to shape the future of the James Beard Awards. Since 2021, she has led the Foundation's Awards mission to recognize exceptional talent and achievement in the culinary arts, hospitality, media, and broader food system, as well as a demonstrated commitment to racial and gender equity, community, sustainability, and a culture where all can thrive. She oversees a team that worked to relaunch the 2022 James Beard Media Awards, Leadership Awards and Restaurant & Chef Awards - the first since groundbreaking changes were made to policies and procedures under her leadership. She has been lauded for helping to drive systemic change in the food and beverage industry.

SPEAKERS

Jeanine Prime, Owner, Cane and St. James

Dr. Jeanine Prime is owner of Cane and St. James, two Caribbean restaurants in Washington, DC. Opened in collaboration with her brother, Chef Peter Prime, in April 2019, Cane pays tribute to their native Trinidad and Tobago, and the food focuses heavily on East Indian traditions central to the country's unique and diverse cuisine. After Peter's departure in late 2021, Jeanine continued to operate Cane and in May 2022, opened St. James, a modern Caribbean restaurant boasting a menu that is reflective of the region's melting pot of cultures, highlighting African, East Indian, Chinese, Portuguese and French influences. In the four years since its opening, Cane has gained both national and regional recognition including the RAMMY Best New Restaurant award from the Restaurant Association Metropolitan Washington, Michelin's Bib Gourmand, and features in Bon Appetit, Food & Wine, and the New York Times. After its first year of operation, St. James received a coveted mention in Michelin's Washington, DC Guide, also earning a place on Washingtonian's "100 Very Best Restaurants List" as well as Washington Post food critic Tom Sietsema's 2023 Spring Dining Guide.

Earlecia Richelle, Founder, studioER

A cultural architect and multidimensional strategist, Earlecia Richelle infuses brand worlds with purpose and play. Her journey from an intern at Essence Magazine to a marketer at Bacardi North America showcases her rarified command of aesthetics and experiential storytelling. In 2023, she founded studioER, a consultancy that specializes in disruptive brand building for the fashion, food & beverage, and hospitality industries, leveraging creative strategy, multi-sensory experiences, and cultural branding. Earlecia has graced national and global stages, expanding and diversifying conversations on branding, innovation, and culture marketing. She's an avid traveler based in Brooklyn, NY, using the world as a living mood board to fuel her creative practice.

Jamila Robinson, Editor in Chief, Bon Appétit and Epicurious

Jamila Robinson is the editor in chief of Bon Appétit and Epicurious. She leads an award-winning team that shapes the culinary world and the way global audiences think about food through ambitious recipes and storytelling about culture, cooking, and restaurants. Robinson serves as the North American East Academy Chair for the World's 50 Best Restaurants, selecting the voting panel for one of the highest honors in the restaurant industry. Recognized as one of the most influential people in food media, Robinson was most recently the assistant managing editor for food and culture at The Philadelphia Inquirer, where she led the digital transformation of its food and dining coverage and won an Emmy Award for Wildest Dreams, a multiplatform project on the Black experience. Robinson has also held senior leadership roles at Atlantic Media and the USA Today Network where she directed strategy across dozens of media brands.

Imani Joye Samuels, Founder and CEO, HURU

Imani Joye Samuels is a spiritual thought leader, speaker, and advocate for stillness and rest as means to find peace. As a champion of the practice of rest, Imani founded HURU, an organization on a mission to ensure every American has access to rest. Through her work, Imani dreams of a world that celebrates stillness as a means to discover peace. Imani is also the creator of The Serenity Act, which challenges employers, government officials, and industry leaders to enact paid mental health leave. Her efforts to lead solo, group, and corporate rest retreats have helped thousands of individuals and organizations across North America, Nigeria, South Africa, Senegal, Taiwan, UAE, and the UK. Beyond her work with Huru, Imani is part of the Harvard Divinity School's working group "Past and Futures." She also serves as a consultant and speaker, promoting the importance of rest and stillness in personal and professional lives. Before embarking on her journey as a spiritual thought leader, Imani directed Loyalty marketing at AARP and account management at a host of advertising agencies. She holds a Master of Arts degree in Public Communication from American University and is a graduate of the Spirituality Mind Body program at Teachers College, Columbia University. She is also a graduate of Howard University where she studied democratization and dance at Stellenbosch University, South Africa.

Elle Simone Scott, Chef, Food Stylist and Executive Editor, America's Test Kitchen

Food-styling guru Elle Simone Scott is a trailblazer who makes food both stunning and approachable. She shapes the visual aesthetic for the Cook's Country brand, and her work appears across ATK media platforms. Elle was recently a judge on America's Test Kitchen: The Next Generation, which aired on Amazon Freevee, and is an on-screen test cook for America's Test Kitchen. Elle is the star of a new show currently in production—Entertaining with Elle showcases her skills as a cook, a teacher, and a stylist and will premiere in 2024. Elle provided food styling and expert advice for Boards: Stylish Spreads for Casual Gatherings (2022), a best-selling, highly regarded Cookbook, as well as her newest release, Food Gifts: 150+ Irresistible Recipes for Crafting Personalized Presents.

SPEAKERS

Catina Smith, Chef and Co-Founder, Our Time Kitchen

Catina Smith, known as Chef Cat is Baltimore native and chef, cooking for over 18 years in all facets of the culinary industry. Ranging from small cafes, hotels, universities, catering, and fine dining. Cat graduated from Baltimore International College with a degrees in Professional cooking, Hotel and Restaurant Management, and Bachelor's in Organizational Management. Catina is also a Airforce veteran. Chef Cat is the founder of Just Call Me Chef, a culinary sisterhood building relationships amongst Black Women Chefs. Most recently Catina bought a 3 story building with her partner Kiah Gibian, and converted it into a commissary kitchen, and community hub; that hosts over 26 small food businesses. "Our Time Kitchen" is radically changing kitchen culture, helping small woman owned food business thrive and grow, with women of color in mind.

Tambra Raye Stevenson, Founder & CEO, WANDA: Women Advancing Nutrition Dietetics and Agriculture

Featured in Forbes, The Washington Post, and the Voice of America, Tambra is the visionary force behind Women Advancing Nutrition, Dietetics, and Agriculture (WANDA). Her mission is to cultivate a generation of empowered Black women and girls who drive transformation in the food system, fostering healthier communities through education, advocacy, and groundbreaking innovation. At WANDA, Tambra established the WANDA Academy, successfully obtained a design patent for the WANDA doll, authored an illuminating children's book series, developed the Sisterhood Supper program, the WANDA scholarship program, and initiated Food as Medicine fellowships and policy reports informing the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health. Furthermore, she spearheaded the WANDA's Food Shero awards program to honor and support Black women in the food sector across Africa and the diaspora. Stevenson is fifth-generation Oklahoman with deep agricultural and nutritional roots and is a powerhouse in the global nutrition and agriculture sectors. Her journey began as a card-carrying member of the Future Farmers of America, a testament to her deep-seated connection with agriculture from a young age.

Stefanie Thomas, Managing Director, Pre-seed Vehicle, Zeal Capital Partners

Stefanie Thomas is a Managing Director of Zeal Capital Partners, a mission-driven, venture capital firm based in Washington, D.C. that aims to bridge the wealth, skills, and opportunity gaps that exist in the United States. Zeal Capital Partners invests in early-stage technology businesses with diverse management teams and a focus on education, employment pathways, financial wellness, and health equity. Stefanie is responsible for spearheading the firm's strategic growth in pre-seed investments. She oversees the firm's expanded commitment to Inclusive Investing™ through the newly launched Barclays Black Formation Investments (BBFI) initiative. Stefanie is dedicated to democratizing capital access and identifying groundbreaking ideas that unlock value. She's an early-stage investor with a decade of venture deal-making experience, from pre-seed to Series B. Prior to joining Zeal, she served as a founding member and investor at Impact America Fund (IAF) and helped grow the investment company from \$7 million to \$110 million assets under management with a thesis of driving economic power to communities of color. She worked on one of IAF's landmark investments, led by Andreessen Horowitz.

Benita Thompson - Byas, SVP & Vice Chairman, Thompson Hospitality

Benita Thompson-Byas is Vice-Chair, and Sr. Vice President of Joint Ventures and Business Development for Thompson Hospitality, the Nation's largest minority-owned food service company. In her current role, she is responsible for contracted food and facilities management accounts operated jointly between Compass Group and Thompson Hospitality across all business sectors. Under her direct leadership, this division has grown from approximately 90 accounts with a managed volume of \$800M, to more than 200 accounts with a managed volume exceeding \$2.3B. Additionally, she oversees the areas of diverse supplier utilization, operational accountability, and community outreach and engagement. Benita is an alumna of The University of Virginia, with a B.A. in English and a minor in Sociology. She resides in Great Falls, VA with her husband, Jeff., and they are the proud parents of 2 college students.

Audarshia Townsend, Content Director, Informa Markets/SupplySide/Food & Beverage Insider

A lifelong Chicagoan, Audarshia Townsend is a veteran food and beverage journalist who serves as the content director for the Food & Beverage Insider brand. Her experience as a visionary editor and writer spans 30 years, with an emphasis in print and digital magazines. Audarshia's professional passion is to champion and amplify underserved business communities. She also appears regularly on local and national media outlets to discuss food and beverage trends, most notably FOX-32 Chicago, WGN-TV, WXRT-FM, NPR-Chicago and the Travel Channel. She is often called on to serve as a judge for prestigious food, beverage and restaurant awards, including the James Beard Foundation, NEXTY Awards and most recently, Black Women in Food. She continues to write for Chicago magazine, and previously she has written for the likes of the Chicago Tribune, Eater Chicago, Esquire, Essence, Playboy, Time Out Global and World's Best Bars.

SPEAKERS

Mboone Umbima, EVP, Brand Strategy, David Rio Chai & Tea

Mboone Umbima is a dynamic and seasoned speaker renowned for her expertise in leadership, marketing, and organizational development. With over 15 years of experience spanning diverse industries, including banking, philanthropy, and hospitality, Mboone brings a wealth of knowledge and real-world insights to her audiences. As an executive leadership coach and brand strategist, Mboone has earned acclaim for her innovative approach to driving change and fostering inclusive cultures within organizations. Her unique blend of passionate leadership and strategic vision has made her a sought-after speaker at conferences and events worldwide. Passionate about social responsibility and wildlife conservation, Mboone's speaking engagements often highlight the intersection of business leadership and global impact. Mboone is passionate about the impact of effective leadership and cares deeply about Africa's Wildlife. She loves super spicy masala chai and is a proud mother of two 8-year-old boys - Trevor, who resides in the United States, and Ambo, an elephant orphan rescue living in the Tsavo National Park in Kenya.

Paola Velez, Chef, Author, Dōekī Dōekī and Bodega Bakes

"Paola Velez is an award-winning chef, entrepreneur, community activist and soon to be author—her debut cookbook is set to publish in the fall of 2024. Growing up between the Bronx and the Dominican Republic, Velez is known for combining the flavors of her childhood and heritage and reinterpreting them through her years as a professionally trained pastry chef. Her ingenious creation of pecan-plantain sticky buns catapulted her to the pages of Food & Wine—where she was also named a "Best New Chef"—and brought her national recognition in the form of a Rising Star Chef nomination by the James Beard Foundation and "Pastry Chef of the Year" from Esquire. Velez created the viral, grassroots and (unofficially) largest bake sale in the world with Bakers Against Racism, a lighthouse organization raising millions of dollars for crucial social justice causes. A graduate of Le Cordon Bleu, Velez started her culinary career under famed chocolatier Jacques Torres. She then moved to Washington, D.C. to work with Christina Tosi when Milk Bar first entered the market and has since cooked in some of the city's most acclaimed kitchens. With her infectious positivity, quirky social media videos and keen eye on the micro-trends of the moment, Velez is a sought-after chef with appearances on the HBO Max shows "Selena + Chef" and "What Am I Eating" with Zooey Deschanel.

Rev. Dr. Angelique Walker-Smith, Strategist for Pan African and Orthodox Faith Engagement, Bread for the World

Rev. Dr. Angelique Walker-Smith is Senior Associate/Strategist for Pan African and Orthodox Faith Engagement at Bread for the World in Washington D.C. She brings extensive global, national and local experience as a faith and public engagement thought leader, journalist, speaker, broadcaster, scholar, preacher and author. Recently she was elected President of World Council of Churches from North America-Turtle Island becoming the first woman from the Historic Black Churches elected in this role. She is also the Co Convener for Pan African Women of Faith/Pan African Women's Ecumenical Empowerment Network (PAWEEN) and a Staff Convener for the Pan African Farmers' Network at Bread for the World.

Rachel Wilson, General Partner, The BFM Fund

Rachel brings over a decade of diverse global experience spanning multiple industries, including Food & Beverage, Automotive, Tech, Healthcare, Music, Fashion, and Media. Managing Partner of The BFM Fund she orchestrated the fund's operational and governance processes. She recently led operations for Collab Capital, a diverse-owned fund with an AUM of \$80M. Rachel's role encompassed investor relations, fund reporting oversight, impact metrics strategy, as well as comprehensive governance responsibilities, including legal and HR management. Rachel has a B.A. in Economics & Business from Agnes Scott College and an M.S. in Industrial Engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology.

Valerie Wilson, Vice President, Culinary and Culture, MMGY Wagstaff

Valerie first worked with Mary 20 years ago when she was tapped by Wagstaff to open their Chicago office. 20 years later, she has rejoined the agency where she will lend her considerable experience in storytelling for diverse voices in the hospitality and lifestyle categories. With her company ValincPR, Valerie played an instrumental role in building Harlem's hospitality and culinary scene and premier hospitality brands by raising their visibility through strategic media and branding execution. Her work attracted top brands and personalities to her client roster like Uber and Uber Eats, Shea Moisture, The James Beard Foundation, Shake Shack, LeRone Wilson, and celebrity chef JJ Johnson. Valerie has a broad capacity and capability for storytelling and brand shaping that represents unique and creative voices in hospitality and lifestyle.

SPEAKERS

Korsha Wilson, Writer and Founder, of A Hungry Society

Korsha Wilson is a food journalist and the host/founder of A Hungry Society, a media company and podcast that takes a more inclusive and diverse look at the food world. She has written for numerous publications including the New York Times, Eater, Bon Appetit, Food & Wine Magazine and was included in 2020's Best American Food Writing anthology. She is a 2019 Southern Foodways Alliance Smith fellow and was part of Jack Jones Literary Arts' inaugural #Culture,Too fellowship. Korsha is also the co-author of two cookbooks due out in 2024.

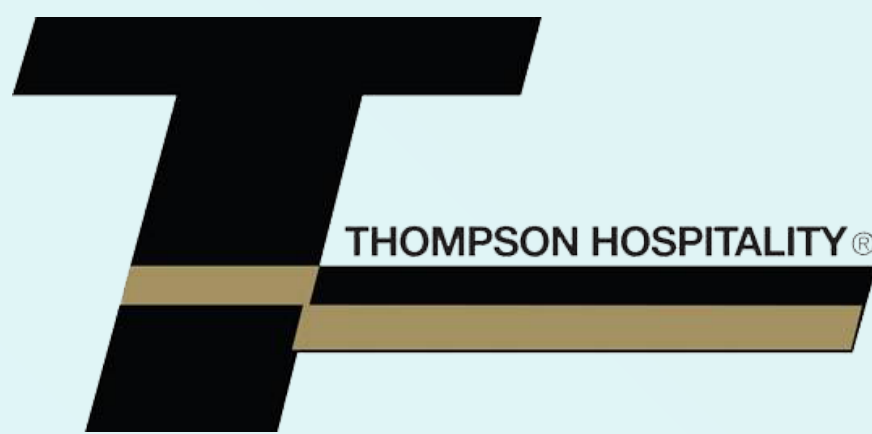
Désirée Younge, Founder and CEO, Conscious Catalyst Group, Inc.

Ms. Désirée Younge is the Founder/CEO of Conscious Catalyst Group, Inc., a consulting company. Conscious Catalyst Group collaborates with Start-Up and Growth companies, delivering tailored business and leadership solutions using strategic and tactical approaches that generate measurable financial, environmental and social returns. Désirée has over two decades of experience as a cross-sector senior executive in philanthropy, for-profit and nonprofit sectors. Her professional experience encompasses entrepreneurship, leadership development, poverty alleviation and economic development, practiced through venture philanthropy and impact investing business models. With a career dedicated to designing, launching and scaling programs specifically impacting entrepreneurs, she has led high-performing teams globally, working with cross-sector stakeholders including corporate partners, government entities, and diverse funders, from angel and impact investors and venture capital firms to family foundations. Désirée's education accolades include a TRIUM Global Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA), awarded by London School of Economics & Political Science, NYU Stern School of Business, and HEC Paris School of Management. She also holds a Master of Arts (MA), International Affairs and a Bachelor of Arts, Business Administration.

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