



SPECIAL PRESS INVITATION

1ST ANNUAL TASTE OF LIBERIA CULTURAL FESTIVAL SPANS AMERICAN AND LIBERIAN INDEPENDENCE DAYS

EVENTS CONTINUE JULY 26

Dear Colleague:

"Taste of Liberia," a cultural festival showcasing innovators in the culinary arts, music, entrepreneurship, sustainability and tourism, got underway on Sunday July 5 at the popular nightspot Tangiers, 116 N. 1st Avenue in Minneapolis. Celebrating the shared cultural heritage of Liberia and the USA, "Taste of Liberia" continues on Sunday July 26.

"Taste of Liberia" hosts its 1st Annual Gala Celebration, 6pm to 9pm, at The Lodge (Stage 81) in the Robbinsdale Town Center. Complete with red carpet, Liberian buffet, and an awards ceremony recognizing American and Liberian individuals and organizations pivotal in the Ebola relief effort, the gala features keynote speaker [Rugie Barrie](#), a Liberian food innovator and entrepreneur. Gala honorees will be [Global Health Ministries](#), [Minnesota African Task Force Against Ebola](#), and [Kou Queeglay-Farnqalo](#). The evening's raffle and fundraising proceeds will go to The Minnesota African Taskforce Against Ebola to benefit the Ebola Orphans in West Africa. Among the festival sponsors is Uniting Distant Stars, a youth-focused non-profit from Minnesota working in Liberia.

Preceding the ceremony, from 1pm to 3pm, also at The Lodge, will be a first-of-its kind Liberian innovative cuisine juried cooking competition. The Taste of Liberia "Taste-Off" invites both professional and amateur chefs of any background or nationality to interpret traditional Liberian dishes and cuisine using ingredients commonly used by Liberians over the past 168 years. The competition's blue-ribbon jury will include award-winning chef and author [Amalia Moreno-Damgaard](#), community leader [Patwin Lawrence](#) and [Suzanne Madison](#), co-founder of Lena Youth Connect.

The "Taste-Off" is open to the public with sampling opportunities. The categories are Collard Greens, Corn Bread, Jollof Rice, Best Traditional Liberian Dish, and Best Nouvelle Liberian Creation. Cash prizes will be offered for the best in each category.

"Taste of Liberia" is produced by Nextainment, LLC, original producer of the popular Afrifest annual pan-African celebration in the Twin Cities. "In this celebration of our resilient Liberia," says [Nathan S. White](#) the event's executive producer, "we will go beyond highlighting Liberia's cultural and historical ties with the United States, which are many. We want to make clear that we have unique and precious cultural and natural assets, like our foods and unbelievable welcoming culture. The country also has much untapped potential for sustainable cultural and eco-tourism. We still are the home of some of West Africa's last surviving rain forests, wild life and exotic plants. 'Taste of Liberia' will let us put these treasures front and center and show them in a very positive light."

As Africa's only republic founded by free African-Americans, and the only African nation never colonized by outside countries, Liberia is truly a one-of-a-kind African country. Its tempestuous 168-year history, American-influenced cultural heritage, and breathtaking wealth of under-leveraged natural (non-energy) resources, make Liberia a potentially priceless country for Americans to explore and get to know. Liberia's Day of Independence is July 26.

White adds, "The goal of this project is to foster a common pride and appreciation of all Liberians for their homeland, and to educate young African-Americans especially about our shared history and values." For complete schedule and information visit www.tasteofliberia.com

Sincerely,

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