

# The Food Forever Experience heads to London to celebrate the diversity of our foods for a more sustainable, delicious future



London, United Kingdom

On 27 November, algae, hemp, and uncommon ingredients from around the world will be on the menu at the Food Forever Experience London - the next stop in a global event series aiming to drive action for a more resilient food system.

Taking place at Google London, the Food Forever Experience will showcase what we might be eating in the future if we embrace some of the fascinating foods yet to break into the UK culinary mainstream. Guests will have an opportunity to 'rediscover' and try new ingredients, as chefs and leaders from business and politics get together to taste the future of food.

Over a dozen notable chefs, including Thomasina Miers (Wahaca), Brett Graham (The Ledbury), Arthur Potts Dawson (Omved Gardens), Asma Khan (Darjeeling Express) and Lauren Lovatt (Plant Hub) will create unique and inspiring dishes using a range of curious ingredients. Along with Liberian wild rice, event-goers can expect to taste crops such as lion's mane, a toothed mushroom with a rich and savory lobster-like flavor touted for its nutritional properties; enset, a banana wild relative native to Ethiopia known as the "banana on steroids" for its many uses and high yields; and British lop pig, a heritage breed renowned for surviving on little and making use of otherwise unproductive land.

The chef challenge, organised by the Food Forever Initiative, aims to highlight the importance and urgency of conserving and making use of the vast diversity of our foods. The Food Forever Initiative is an awareness-raising campaign linked to the UN's goal of achieving zero hunger and improved nutrition as part of SDG 2.

**Marie Haga**, Food Forever Champion and Executive Director of the Crop Trust says: “A sustainable, nutritious and affordable food system cannot be achieved unless we go back to building blocks of agriculture – the diversity of our foods – one of the most important global common goods in the world but one which we speak about the least.”

“We're currently facing a lack of biodiversity in our food systems, meaning that the valuable environmental traits found within these untapped varieties go uncared for and eventually face extinction. This not only robs farmers of valuable options for ensuring livelihoods but also eaters of delicious, nutrient-dense foods and flavours. Chefs can be instrumental in bringing biodiversity higher on the international agenda and in the minds and hearts of their consumers. That's why it's wonderful to see so many amazing chefs here today, committed to advocating for these important ingredients and having a bit of fun along the way.”

Many of the foods available to taste at the event are grown, studied and conserved at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, a world leader in plant and fungal science working in over 100 countries around the world to better understand the resources we need to protect for the future.

**Richard Deverell**, Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and a Food Forever Champion, says: “At the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew we have an intrinsic relationship with food. As well growing amazing seasonal foods in our gardens and sharing them with our millions of visitors, we have been discovering, collecting, researching and conserving edible plants and fungi from around the world for hundreds of years. Botanical science can unlock ways to tackle some of the biggest challenges facing humankind today, including how to feed a growing population in a changing climate. We're excited to be part of Food Forever London to showcase diverse foods with talented chefs harnessing the culinary potential of plants and fungi.”

Many of the chefs participating in the Food Forever Experience London are also part of the Chefs' Manifesto, a chef-led project under the SDG 2 Advocacy Hub that brings together chefs from around the world to explore how they can help deliver a sustainable food system.

**Paul Newnham**, Director of the SDG 2 Advocacy Hub and Facilitator of the Chefs' Manifesto says: “By actively championing biodiversity inside and outside the kitchen, chefs can play a key role in creating interest in and a market for more diverse ingredients, helping to support farmers' livelihoods, improve diets and strengthen our food systems. That's the power of the chef, and it's great to see so many chefs already committed to creating a better food future.”

The Food Forever London event is invitation-only. You can follow the event using the hashtag #FFXLondon and at @FoodForever2020.

## **ENDS**

**List of spokespeople and participating chefs below.**

### **Contact details**

**For media enquiries and to arrange interviews:**

Erin Rodgers, RBG Kew press office on [pr@kew.org](mailto:pr@kew.org) or call + 44 (0)20 8332 5607

**For more information on the event:**

Cierra Martin, Global Crop Diversity Trust on [Cierra.martin@croptrust.org](mailto:Cierra.martin@croptrust.org) or call +49 (0) 171 1165036

**General photos can be found [here](#)**

**Event photos can be found here on 28 November**

### **Notes to Editors**

#### **Participating Chefs**

- Anjula Devi
- Arthur Potts Dawson
- Asma Khan
- Brett Graham
- Cyrus Todiwala
- Dennis The Prescott
- James Tagg
- JB Dubois
- Justin Horne
- Lauren Lovatt
- Neal's Yard Dairy
- Romy Gill
- Thomasina Meirs
- Tim Blake
- Union Roasted Coffee

#### **Featured Foods**

- Beremeal
- Pearl Millet
- Salsify
- Hemp

- Kalette
- Lion's Mane
- Enset and many more...

## **Food Forever London - Organising Partners**

### **About the Food Forever Initiative**

The Food Forever Initiative works to highlight the urgency of safeguarding and using crop and livestock diversity in support of Target 2.5 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal on Zero Hunger. It is led by the Crop Trust, the Government of the Netherlands and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and implemented in partnership with high-level Champions from politics, business and civil society as well as a diverse set of relevant partner organizations. The initiative is chaired by the Vice President of Peru, Mercedes Aráoz. [www.food4ever.org](http://www.food4ever.org)

### **About Google**

The vision of the Food team at Google is to contribute to feeding the world responsibly and sustainably through food@work program leadership and by building upon Alphabet's ecosystem. Partnering with other organizations who truly believe in helping to feed the world sustainably allows us to all work toward our shared goal and make a meaningful impact that neither of us could make alone. Hosting this event at Google London gives the Food team at Google the opportunity to contribute to sharing the story of a variety of diverse crops that can affect food security worldwide.

### **About the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew**

The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew is a world-famous scientific organisation, internationally respected for its outstanding collections as well as its scientific expertise in plant diversity, conservation and sustainable development in the UK and around the world. Over 300 scientists currently work at Kew and produce State of the World's Plants and Fungi reports, which track the progress and decline of species at a time when one in five plant species are estimated to be threatened with extinction worldwide.

Kew Gardens is also a major international and a top London visitor attraction, with its 132 hectares of landscaped gardens and sister site at Wakehurst attracting over 2.3 million visits every year. Wakehurst is home to Kew's Millennium Seed Bank, the largest wild plant seed bank in the world, storing 2.3 billion seeds, which in the future, if required, can be germinated and reintroduced to the wild or used in scientific research.

Kew is a charity, receiving approximately one third of its funding from Government through the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and research councils, with further funding from donors, membership and commercial activity.

### **About The Chefs' Manifesto**

The Chefs' Manifesto is a chef-led project that brings together chefs from around the world to explore how they can help deliver a sustainable food system. As chefs bridge the gap between farm and fork, the Chefs' Manifesto empowers chefs with a framework tied to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. As a clear action of Chefs' Manifesto Area 2: Protection of Biodiversity & Improved Animal Welfare, the Chefs' Network for the Global Goals is partnering with Food Forever 2020 to support the Food Forever Experience. This is facilitated by the SDG2 Advocacy Hub.

### **About The Rediscovered Foods Initiative**

The Lexicon of Sustainability, a US-based NGO that provides communications strategy on food and agriculture with a focus on sustainability is working in partnership with the Food Forever Initiative and other stakeholders around the world, to bring much-needed awareness to the diversity in food systems. The Lexicon conceived Rediscovered Foods as a campaign to highlight 25 forgotten smart foods which could feed the world in 2050. The campaign will share success stories of farmers, scientists and chefs from 14 countries. Some of these "Rediscovered" foods are featured in the Food Forever Experience.

### **Spokespeople**

#### **Marie Haga, Executive Director, Crop Trust, Food Forever Champion**



Marie Haga joined the Crop Trust as Executive Director in March 2013. She had previously been member and Deputy Chair of the Crop Trust Executive Board. Marie has a background from Foreign Service as a career diplomat from politics and private sector. She has held various positions in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including the Norwegian Mission to the United Nations in New York and the Embassy in New Delhi. Marie has also held three Ministerial positions: Minister of Cultural Affairs (1999–2000),

Minister of Local Government and Regional Development (2005–2007) and Minister of Petroleum and Energy (2007–2008). Additionally, Marie has been on several boards, including as Chair of the Governing Board of the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research (NINA) and Chair of the Governing Board of the Industrial Development Corporation of Norway. She was

elected Chair of the Norwegian Peace Research Institute in 2015 and is still holding this position.

### **Rodrigo Barrios, Food Forever Campaign Manager**



Rodrigo is a Peruvian economist with a BSc from the Pacifico University. After working for several years in Apoyo, a local economic consultancy firm in Lima, Rodrigo joined the staff of the current Vice President of the Republic of Peru, Mercedes Araoz, for whom he worked as a consultant during her time as President of the Council of Ministers (2017- 2018) During this period, he was appointed as a member of the Special Delegation of Peru to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), focusing on environmental and biodiversity-related issues. Since 2018, Rodrigo has been the Manager of the Food Forever Initiative.

### **Cierra Martin, Food Forever and Crop Trust Communications**



Cierra is a communications professional from the United States with a BA from Rhodes College. She is passionate about healthy, affordable and sustainable food and has a love for connecting people and pursuing innovative ideas. Cierra brings these two qualities together at the Crop Trust where she coordinates all aspects of the Food Forever Initiative and Crop Trust's communications outreach. Prior to joining the Crop Trust, Cierra spent four years working on food access issues in Memphis, Tennessee, connecting farmers and chefs to low-income communities. She has been awarded fellowships for food, agriculture and environmental work in Dublin, Cuenca and Valdez.

**Richard Deverell, Director Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew**



Richard is the fifteenth Director of Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. He has devoted his career to leading innovative and ambitious improvements to public engagement and education. Prior to Kew, Richard worked at the BBC where he revamped the Children's channel, CBBC. At Kew he has led the refresh of Kew's strategy, bringing expertise from Kew's global science into sharper focus and more actively engaging the public with contemporary science and conservation in Kew's beautiful historic gardens. He is a passionate advocate for the power of plants and fungi to help solve the critical challenges

facing humanity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. He is also an official Food Forever Champion for Food Forever, the global initiative that aims to secure biodiversity for the benefit of food security around the world.

**Paul Newnham, Director of the SDG 2 Advocacy Hub**



Paul Newnham currently heads up the SDG 2 Advocacy Hub, an initiative bringing together NGOs, advocacy groups, civil society, the private sector and UN agencies to coordinate global campaigning and advocacy to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2. To this end, the Hub has worked with a community of 312+ chefs from 56 countries to create a Chefs' Manifesto- a framework outlining how chefs can contribute to the SDGs. Paul has over 20 years' experience in National and Global roles with a focus on Campaigning, Youth Mobilisation, Advocacy, Marketing and Communication. As a dynamic and strategic innovator, Paul brings teams together to achieve planned objectives.

Through inspirational and evocative leadership, Paul is able to enthuse and motivate others, achieving goals beyond expectation.

**Dr Aaron Davis, Senior Research Leader, Coffee Specialist, RBG Kew**



Aaron started work at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew in 1997, researching coffee and the coffee plant family. He is currently Senior Research Leader of Plant Resources at Kew, managing a team focusing on harvestable plant products, including various crops, timbers and forage, and covering a broad range of research disciplines. Aaron is the world's leading authority on wild coffee species, and the author of 20 new coffee species. He has travelled widely in Africa, Madagascar and

Asia to study wild coffee species *in situ*, and across the coffee farming landscapes of Africa to understand coffee production sustainability. His work includes climate change, climate resilience, sustainability and livelihoods, diversity studies, and conservation science.

**Dr Tiziana Ulian, Senior Research Leader of Diversity & Livelihoods, RBG Kew**



Tiziana leads a research group developing plant diversity approaches to support communities in locations and economies where nutritional, income and biodiversity issues are of paramount importance. She is a plant ecologist with a wide range of research interests aiming to support the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources. Tiziana works to maximise conservation benefits through a holistic approach linking conservation and livelihood, and has a strong interest in the *in situ*

conservation and reintroduction of threatened species of plants.

**Dr Chris Cockel, Crop Wild Relatives Project Coordinator, Millennium Seed Bank, RBG Kew**



Chris' work supports the development and implementation of seed collecting partnerships, with the goal of improving global food security and livelihoods through the Adapting Agriculture to Climate Change Project (Crop Wild Relatives – CWR). The CWR Project is co-managed by the Global Crop Diversity Trust and is funded by the Government of Norway. Kew's role is to provide technical support in seed viability and seed longevity; to organise the collection of seed from priority crop wild relatives and to

provide samples of material for research and pre-breeding by partners. Chris previously worked as the Interim Coordinator of the UK Native Seed Hub at Kew's Millennium Seed Bank and as a volunteer in the Herbarium at Kew on the Sampled Red List Index Project (SRLI).

**Dr Oliver White, Post-doctoral researcher of Natural Capital and Plant Health, Enset Specialist, RBG Kew**



Oliver is a post-doctoral researcher based at the Jodrell laboratory in The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, with keen research interests in plant evolution and domestication. He uses modern sequencing technology to address questions relating to plant diversity, while also identifying genes responsible for adaptation. Currently, Oliver is investigating the diversity of cultivated *Ensete* (false banana) in Ethiopia and identifying locally adapted varieties that are well suited to given environmental conditions. With this knowledge, we hope to inform variety selection and good farming

practices to improve the livelihoods of impoverished communities in Ethiopia.

**Hélène Dove, Botanical Horticulturist, Kitchen Garden, RBG Kew**



Hélène manages the Kitchen Garden at The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, which is managed organically using no-dig techniques and companion planting. Hélène trained in horticulture on the Historic and Botanic Gardening Training Scheme and studied her RHS qualifications at Writtle College. After working at Langthorns plantery, she became the Kitchen Gardener at Myddelton House Gardens in Enfield, London: an Edwardian Kitchen Garden consisting of an Orchard, Peach House and Cut Flower Garden.

Hélène has written for magazines including Garden News and The Plant Heritage, and has introduced many to the Kitchen Garden at Kew onsite, including chefs from The Chefs' Manifesto on a recent visit.