

20 May 2024

Government House to host free hāngi as part of Visa Wellington On a Plate

Wellington's Government House will be the stage for one of the highlights of the Visa Wellington On a Plate 2024 programme, Hākari Fusion, which will see a feast combining traditional and modern Māori cuisine prepared on the grounds of the property for the first time.

Hosted by the Rt Hon Dame Cindy Kiro, GNZM, QSO, the event on Saturday 10 August is a rare opportunity for members of the public to enjoy a meal at this historic residence. It will utilise hāngi pits that have been constructed on the venue's grounds, which will remain as a permanent fixture after the event.

Guests will watch as a hāngi is lifted, while enjoying drinks and canapés, before being served a delicious dinner prepared by the Hāngi Master Rewi Spraggon and the chefs at Government House.

Tickets to Hākari Fusion will be free, with tickets for the limited capacity event managed by ballot. Entries for the ticket ballot will be open from 20 May to 12 June, with ticket holders notified on 13 June.

Visa Wellington On a Plate Manager Beth Brash says this once-in-a-lifetime free event has been years in the making and is unlike anything that's featured in the festival before.

"I'm thrilled that this truly special event will be part of our 2024 festival programme - but more than that, it's something that anyone will have the opportunity to attend" she says.

"Welly on a Plate has always been about more than delicious culinary experiences, it is a platform for the people, cultures and creativity of our communities in Te Whanganui-a-Tara and Aotearoa."

Dame Cindy (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Hine, Ngāti Kahu) is the first wāhine Māori to be appointed as Governor-General and says it's wonderful to be able to welcome members of the public to enjoy this experience.

“One hundred and fourteen years after Government House was built, we’re delighted to lay down hāngi pits on a permanent basis and give everyone the opportunity to enjoy traditional Māori kai at Government House.”

Hāngi Master Rewi Spraggon is a chef and television presenter who has cooked Māori kai around the world and is on a mission to keep the art of hāngi alive in Aotearoa.

“To be able to put the oldest dish in New Zealand on the menu here at Government House is pretty buzzy,” Spraggon says.

“In 1980 every 15 year old Māori male around the country could do a hāngi, now how many can? So I want to bring it to the forefront, to have it on the menus in our top restaurants, as street food, as community food, and for people just to understand the process of hāngi.

“For people to be able to come to this event and to see the process of the food being prepared first hand is really awesome because a lot of people may have tried hāngi but haven’t seen the cooking side of it.”

Those wishing to attend Hākari Fusion at Government House will need to enter the ballot for tickets at visawoap.com between 10am on Monday 20 May until 11.59pm on Wednesday 12 June 2024.

Hākari Fusion is one of 100 events in this year’s Visa Wellington On a Plate festival, which runs from 1 - 31 August. The full festival programme will be released on 5 June 2024.

- ENDS -

Images are available [here](#)

For interviews, images, and further media enquiries please contact:

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About the Wellington Culinary Events Trust

The Wellington Culinary Events Trust is a not-for-profit trust established in 2014 to run iconic culinary events including Visa Wellington On a Plate and Beervana.

www.wcet.org.nz

About Government House

Government House Wellington is one of two official residences of New Zealand's Governor-General, the Rt Hon Dame Cindy Kiro, GNZM, QSO.

For more information, visit: <https://gg.govt.nz/government-house>

About Rewi Spraggon, Hāngi Master

Chef, TV presenter and owner of Hāngi Master, Rewi Spraggon wants to bring the ancient traditions of hāngi cooking back to mainstream Aotearoa. Rewi has been around food service all his life, his mother was head of the wharekai and his father taught him the ancient traditions of hāngi. He has worked in some of the greatest kitchens around the world and helped to bring Māori kai to the forefront of New Zealand cuisine through his TV shows. Hāngi Master exists to reconnect the people of Aotearoa with the art of real hāngi. For more information, visit:

<http://hangimaster.co.nz/>