



STATE DINNER

In Honor of
HIS EXCELLENCY SHINZO ABE,
PRIME MINISTER OF JAPAN,
and
MRS. AKIE ABE

THE WHITE HOUSE
April 28th, 2015



Overview

Official Arrival Ceremony

Tomorrow, President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama will host the Prime Minister of Japan, Shinzo Abe, and Mrs. Abe for an Official Visit followed by a State Dinner. This marks the eighth State or Official Visit of the Obama Administration; previous visits include: India in November 2009, Mexico in May 2010, China in January 2011, Germany in June 2011, Korea in October 2011, the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland in March 2012, and France in 2014.

The United States and Japan are strong allies who share vital interests and values, including stability in the Asia-Pacific region and the promotion of political and economic freedoms worldwide. Our Nations share a commitment to supporting human rights and democratic institutions, and this visit will highlight and strengthen our mutual cooperation.

State Dinner

The President and Mrs. Obama will host Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Mrs. Abe for a State Dinner on the evening of April 28, 2015. The State Dinner will be held in the East Room and of the White House. White House Executive Chef Cris Comerford and White House Executive Pastry Chef Susan Morrison have created a select menu featuring delicacies inspired by Japanese and American culinary traditions.

Guest Chef

Masaharu Morimoto is a Japanese chef whose culinary skill has earned him international recognition. Perhaps best known from his television show, *Iron Chef*, Morimoto received practical training in sushi in Hiroshima, then moved to New York City and ultimately rose to head chef at exclusive Japanese restaurant Nobu. He left Nobu to open his own *Morimoto* restaurant in Philadelphia in 2001, and opened another in New York City in 2006. Morimoto seamlessly integrates Western and Japanese ingredients to create his delectable and unforgettable cuisine.

Sake Toast

Guests will enjoy *Dassai*, Asahi Shuzo's signature *Junmai Daiginjo*, a pure-rice sake. Sake is an alcoholic beverage brewed from fermented rice. The Asahi Shuzo brewery, located outside the city of Iwakuni in Yamaguchi prefecture, brews sake year round, a rarity in the sake industry. Asahi Shuzo employs both traditional methods and cutting edge technology in the production of their *Dassai* sake, resulting in a refined, delicate taste enriched by ancient techniques.

The President and First Lady will welcome Prime Minister Abe and Mrs. Abe with a toast of *Dassai 23* in the White House.

Celebrating The Spring

The State Dinner fuses traditional American cuisine with a Japanese influence. This event showcases the diversity of our Nation's food as well as the delicate spring produce grown by farmers from across the country.

The First Course is a nod to the classic American Caesar Salad with a Japanese twist, literally. The salad is wrapped in a clear acetate and tied with a Mizuhiki cord emulating a gift to be opened.

The Soup Course celebrates the first bounties of spring and pays tribute to the First Lady's Kitchen Garden. On April 15th the First Lady, together with students from across the country, planted five varieties of vegetables. Bok Choy is one of the features of this clear consommé paired up with Wailea hearts of palm and bamboo shoots from Hawaii. This is served with a crisp Hawaiian pineapple tempura topped with a sliver of cured ham from Virginia.

The Main Course is Roasted American Wagyu Beef surrounded by early spring vegetables, including young carrots, baby cauliflower, and wild ramps from the farmers' market.



First Lady Michelle Obama joins students for the spring garden planting in the White House Kitchen Garden, April 15, 2015.

Official White House Photo by Lawrence Jackson

Dessert

The main dessert for this year's dinner is a unique take on the American style cheesecake using healthier ingredients such as Silken Tofu and soymilk. This will be complimented with a fruit salad featuring a selection of seasonal berries from Florida. Included is a petit pillow accented with blackened syrup and Honey from the South Grounds.

"A Sip of Tea" is an impression of a celebration of the different varieties of Japanese tea in a petit four selection. A handcrafted sugar blown teapot surrounded by gum paste double bloom pink blossoms symbolizing beauty and honoring the arrival of cherry blossoms.

Dinner Menu



Toro Tartare and Caesar Sashimi Salad

Smoked Salmon – Grilled Chicken – Koji



Vegetable Consommé En Crouste and Shikai Maki

Bamboo Shoots – Wailea Hearts of Palm – Pineapple

Tempura Cured Ham

Freeman Chardonnay “Ryo-fu” 2013



American Wagyu Beef Tenderloin

Spring Vegetables - Maui Onion Veal Jus

Morlet Pinot Noir “Joli Coeur” 2010



Silken Custard Cake

Kuromitsu Sauce – Fresh Fruit - Abekawa Mocha



A Sip of Tea

Matcha Strawberry Square – Sencha Tea Cup

Tea and lemon Cakes – Sweet Tea Chocolates

Iron Horse “Russian River Cuvee” 2007



Décor

The theme of the decor for the Japan State Dinner mirrors the celebration of springtime in Washington, D.C. The famed cherry blossoms, established as a gift of friendship to the People of the United States from the People of Japan, are the first harbingers of spring and the commencement of the season. The beauty of the cherry blossom epitomizes the transformation of Japanese culture throughout the ages.

In 1912, Former First Lady Helen Herron Taft and the Viscountess Chinda, wife of the Japanese Ambassador, planted two Yoshino cherry trees on the northern bank of the Tidal Basin, about 125 feet south of what is now Independence Avenue. At the conclusion of the ceremony, the First Lady presented a bouquet of “American Beauty” roses to Viscountess Chinda. Washington’s renowned National Cherry Blossom Festival grew from this simple ceremony. These two original trees still stand several hundred yards west of the John Paul Jones Memorial located at 17th Street.

For the Japan State Dinner, the windows of the White House will come alive with curtains of crystals evocative of springtime showers, while also symbolizing the short-lived cherry blossom as it falls to the ground and is moved around by rain and wind. This is the time when the blossoms become most appreciated and noted for their elegance.

The Unveiling of the Obama State China Service

A new Obama State China Service will receive its first use at the Japan State Dinner. The unifying color that Mrs. Obama has called “Kailua Blue,” inspired by the waters off the President’s home state of Hawaii, is featured on bands with a crisp motif of relief lines. The line motif also appears on the wide matt gold rim of the service plate. The dinner plate shows relief decoration in white derived from a French dinner service purchased for James Madison in 1806. The gold presidential coat of arms appears on the service plate, dessert plate, and can cup. This service fulfills Mrs. Obama’s goal for a more modern design aesthetic that can complement preceding state services. Eleven-piece plate settings for 320 were made by Pickard China, Antioch, Illinois. The service was donated by the White House Endowment Trust, administered by the White House Historical Association.

Entertainment

Following the dinner, The White House will host a State Dinner Performance featuring members of the film adaptation of the hit jukebox musical, *Jersey Boys* where they will perform songs from the film. *Jersey Boys* recently won several top honors in Japan for Best Foreign Language Film. The cast includes Erich Bergen, Michael Lomenda, Vincent Piazza, and original Broadway Tony Award winner and member of the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities, John Lloyd Young. They will be accompanied by Thomas Faragher.



Performers

Erich Bergen

Singer and Actor

Erich Bergen is an American actor best known for his role as Bob Gaudio, keyboardist of *The Four Seasons*, in the musical film, *Jersey Boys*. Bergen has released two critically acclaimed solo albums and is currently at work on his third. He currently stars as Blake Moran in the hit CBS television drama, *Madam Secretary*.

Vincent Piazza

Singer and Actor

Vincent Piazza is an American stage, film and television actor most recognized for his portrayal as Lucky Luciano in HBO's *Boardwalk Empire* and Tommy DeVito, lead guitarist of *The Four Seasons*, in the 2014 film adaptation of *Jersey Boys*. Piazza has also appeared on *The Sopranos* and *Law & Order*.

John Lloyd Young

Singer and Actor

John Lloyd Young is an American actor and singer best known for his portrayal of the legendary Frankie Valli, lead singer of *The Four Seasons*, in the original Broadway cast of *Jersey Boys*, for which he won the Tony Award for Best Leading Actor. He recreated the role for the 2014 film adaptation of *Jersey Boys*, and also sings lead vocals on the Grammy-winning, certified-Platinum *Jersey Boys* cast album.

Michael Lomenda

Singer and Actor

Michael Lomenda is a Canadian actor who has performed in stage productions across Canada, including *Hairspray*, *Grease*, and *Cabaret*. After portraying Nick Massi, bass singer and bass guitarist for *The Four Seasons*, in the Original Canadian Company of *Jersey Boys* for two years, he went on to portray Massi in the film adaptation.

Tommy Faragher

Producer/Musical Director

Tommy Faragher is one of the most prominent producers, composers, songwriters and arrangers within international entertainment, with numerous chart topping singles and successful soundtracks. Faragher has worked with John Lloyd Young as his musical director, producer/co-writer since 2012, and has directed live shows at The Cafe Carlyle, The Lincoln Center and venues all across the country.



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