

Off the Beaten Path in Indonesia: Chefs from Two Ends of the Ancient Spice Trade Route Come Together on a Culinary Journey

Qatari and Indonesian Master Chefs Explore Culinary Traditions as Part of the [Qatar-Indonesia 2023 Year of Culture](#)

Doha, Qatar – As Qatar and Indonesia celebrate each other’s cultures and traditions during the Qatar-Indonesia 2023 Year of Culture, an annual international exchange designed to deepen understanding between nations and their people, shared food culture and culinary experiences are taking center stage.

The Years of Culture initiative, a bilateral cultural exchange program launched by Qatar Museums over a decade ago, is organizing a culinary journey for two Qatari chefs through Indonesia from Jayapura, to Medan, and Bali, culminating at the Ubud Food Festival taking place at Taman Kuliner from June 30 - July 2.

[Chef Noof Al Marri](#), owner of the Desert Rose Cafe at the National Museum of Qatar, and Chef [Hassan Al Ibrahim](#), known as Captain Chef due his pilot training, will explore the length of Indonesia through unique gastronomic experiences - enjoying unique street food and ethnic cuisine, learning traditional cooking techniques by preparing home-cooked meals in residents’ homes and learning about sustainable foods. Coming together at the Ubud Food Festival, the chefs will surprise attendees with unique recipe ideas from both ends of an ancient spice trade route from the Arabian Peninsula to Indonesia.

A Carefully Curated Journey from West to East

Medan is a melting pot of the many cultures in Indonesia. Here, dishes are made with Acehnese, Malay, Chinese, and Indian influences. Chef Noof and Chef Hassan will visit an incredible array of restaurants and food stalls. First up is the *peranakan* beef and chicken curry restaurant Rumah Makan Tabona. *Peranakan* refers to the combination of Chinese and Malay cultures with Islamic influences. The chefs will also sample sweet confections at the oldest traditional dessert spot in the city called Putu Bambu Sudi Mampir; and try dinner dishes at a famous local street food spot Kwetiau Medan. A highlight of the trip will be the search for authentic Batakese dishes made by the indigenous people of Medan at Ruma Makan Marikena.

Chef Noof and Chef Hassan will be accompanied in Medan by [Chef Arsyian Dwianto](#) known for his third-place win on “Masterchef Indonesia Season 9.”

Jayapura, the easternmost capital city in Indonesia, is known for its *sago* staple food used in similar manner to rice. Cuisine in this region is traditionally made of ingredients that can be foraged from the forests. Chef Noof and Chef Hassan will visit the Skouw Sae village just in time for the famous Hari Sagu Papua festival celebrating the *sago* harvest.

[Jungle Chef Charles Toto](#) will guide Chef Noof and Chef Hassan on their journey through Jayapura. Toto’s focus is on actively preserving the culinary culture native to Papua, using various natural ingredients from his native land.

No culinary journey of Indonesia will be complete without Balinese cuisine. [Chef Wayan Kresna](#)

[Yasa](#), who is a passionate ambassador of Balinese food and cooking, will guide Chef Noof and Chef Hassan on a special tour of traditional Balinese [cooking demonstrations](#), cocoa plantation, and markets.

The journey concludes at the [Ubud Food Festival](#) (June 30 - Jul 2, 2023) where Chef Noof and Chef Hassan will pay homage to soil, *tanah*, as this year's theme. Together, Noof and Hassan will partner with Chef Charles Toto and Chef Devina Hermawan, known for her role on "Master Chef Indonesia," for a series of culinary demonstrations and panel discussions about the impact of land resources on the types of food chefs in Qatar and Indonesia specialize in. Follow the delicious journey on [Years of Culture](#) channels @yearsofculture.

###

About Years of Culture

Culture is one of the most effective tools to bring people closer together, encourage dialogue, and deepen understanding between nations.

Under the leadership of its Chairperson Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Qatar Museums (QM) developed the annual "Years of Culture" initiative — an international cultural exchange that deepens understanding between nations and their people. Though formal programming lasts only one year, the ties of friendship that are strengthened and formed are long-lasting.

Qatar-Indonesia 2023 Year of Culture has been developed in collaboration with leading organizations in Qatar, including Doha Film Institute, Education Above All, Katara Cultural Village, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Qatar Charity, Qatar Cycling Federation, Qatar Foundation, Qatar Museums, Qatar National Library, Qatar Tourism, with assistance from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia, Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Qatar and the Embassy of the State of Qatar in Indonesia.

Previous Years of Culture have included: Qatar-Japan 2012, Qatar-UK 2013, Qatar-Brazil 2014, Qatar-Türkiye 2015, Qatar-China 2016, Qatar-Germany 2017, Qatar-Russia 2018, Qatar-India 2019, Qatar-France 2020, and Qatar-USA 2021. In celebration of its 10th anniversary, the 2022 Year of Culture celebrated the entire Middle East, North Africa and South Asia (MENASA) region as Qatar welcomed the world for the Arab region's first FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™.

Past sponsors include Qatar Airways, Vodafone, Qatar Gas, Shell, Ooredoo, Shangri-La Hotel and Resorts, Lulu Group International, Qatar Financial Centre, Qatar Petroleum, and ExxonMobil.

About Qatar Museums

Qatar Museums (QM), the nation's preeminent institution for art and culture, provides authentic and inspiring cultural experiences through a growing network of museums, heritage sites, festivals, public art installations, and programs. QM preserves, restores, and expands the nation's cultural offerings and historical sites, sharing art and culture from Qatar, the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia (MENASA) region with the world and enriching the lives of citizens, residents, and visitors.

Under the patronage of His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, and led by its Chairperson, Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, QM has made Qatar a vibrant centre for the arts, culture, and education in the Middle East and beyond. QM is integral to the goal of developing an innovative, diverse, and progressive nation, bringing people together to ignite new thinking, spark critical cultural conversations, educate and encourage environmental stewardship and sustainable practices, and amplify the voices of Qatar's people. Since its founding in 2005, QM has overseen the Museum of Islamic Art and MIA Park, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, the National Museum of Qatar, QM Gallery Al Riwaq, QM Gallery Katara, and 3-2-1 Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum. Museums under development include Dadu, Children's Museum of Qatar; Qatar Auto Museum; Art Mill Museum, and the Lusail Museum.

Through its newly created Creative Hub, QM also initiates and supports projects—such as the Fire Station Artist in Residence, the Tasweer Qatar Photo Festival and the creative hub for innovation, fashion and design M7— that nurture artistic talent and create opportunities to build a strong and sustainable cultural infrastructure.

Animating everything that Qatar Museums does is an authentic connection to Qatar and its heritage, a steadfast commitment to inclusivity and accessibility, and a belief in creating value through invention.

FIND US ONLINE:

Qatar Museums

Twitter: [@YearsofCulture](#) | *Instagram:* [@YearsofCulture](#) | *Facebook:* [@YearsofCulture](#)

Press Contacts

MENASA Region & Qatar

Salma Sadek, ssadek@qm.org.qa

International

Julia Esposito, julia.esposito@finnpartners.com