



28TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE
WORLDS OF FLAVOR
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE + FESTIVAL

Napa Valley
November 4 - 6, 2026

**ASIA ON OUR MENUS:
EAST BY SOUTHEAST**

Designs on Deliciousness, from
Japan and Korea to Singapore,
Thailand and Vietnam



Culinary Institute
of America

Introducing the first wave of confirmed chefs and food experts for Worlds of Flavor®. This initial lineup features visionary, influential culinary voices inspired by **Japan, Korea, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam**, representing everything from independent restaurants, pop-ups and bars, to university and fine dining. And this is just the beginning—new presenters will be announced weekly, so check back often. Get ready for three immersive days of deeply informative ideas and techniques, unforgettable flavors, and unmatched networking opportunities.

Kyle Connaughton — SingleThread (Healdsburg, CA and SoNoMa, Kyoto, Japan)

Co-founder and chef of three-Michelin-starred SingleThread, Kyle Connaughton is celebrated for his season-driven, craft-focused cuisine and deep ties to Japanese food culture, now extending his vision to Kyoto with the opening of *SoNoMa by SingleThread*.

Ji Hye Kim — Miss Kim and Little Kim (Ann Arbor, Michigan)

Chef-owner of the acclaimed Miss Kim, Ji Hye Kim is a James Beard Award semifinalist and one of the Midwest's leading voices in Korean cooking; she also recently opened **Little Kim**, a chef-driven vegetarian restaurant exploring plant-forward Asian traditions through Michigan's seasonal harvest.

Ian Kittichai — Issaya Siamese Club (Bangkok, Thailand)

One of Thailand's most influential culinary figures, Ian Kittichai is a celebrated chef, restaurateur, and longtime television personality—serving as Iron Chef Thailand, lead judge on *MasterChef Thailand*, and the creative force behind award-winning Issaya Siamese Club and other acclaimed restaurants..

Elaine Koh '13 — Faculty, Culinary Institute of America Singapore (CIA Singapore)

Elaine Koh is a lecturing instructor of Culinary Arts at the Culinary Institute of America Singapore campus and a CIA alumna whose industry experience spans some of Singapore's most accomplished kitchens, including Odette, JAAN, and Les Amis Group; she brings fine-dining rigor and mentorship to the next generation of culinary professionals.

Jaime Koh, PhD — Faculty, Culinary Institute of America Singapore (CIA Singapore)

Jaime Koh, PhD, is an adjunct professor at the Culinary Institute of America Singapore, where she teaches food history and cultural studies; a trained historian and scholar of Southeast and East Asian culture, she brings rigorous research, storytelling, and historical context to the study of food systems and culinary identity.

Emily Lim '14 — Dabao (San Francisco, California)

Singapore-born chef and James Beard Award semifinalist Emily Lim is the founder of Dabao, a hawker-style concept showcasing Singapore's world-renowned, multicultural food traditions; she is also a Food Network regular and recently opened Dabao's first brick-and-mortar location in downtown San Francisco.

Don Nguyen — Chef and Pitmaster, Khói Barbecue (Houston, Texas)

Chef and pitmaster Don Nguyen is the co-founder of Khói Barbecue, a trailblazing Viet-Tex pop-up concept that bridges Vietnamese flavors with Texas barbecue, earning national acclaim for pushing the boundaries of American smoke-driven cooking.

Alex Ong — Director of Culinary Excellence, UMass Amherst (Amherst, Massachusetts)

Former chef-partner of San Francisco's influential Betelnut, Malaysian-born Alex Ong helped shape modern pan-Asian dining. Now Director of Culinary Excellence at UMass Amherst, he brings global technique, plant-forward innovation, and cultural perspective to one of the nation's top-ranked campus dining programs.

Mai Pham — Lemon Grass and Star Ginger (Sacramento, California)

Chef, restaurateur, and author Mai Pham is the force behind Sacramento's pioneering Lemon Grass and Star Ginger, celebrated for illuminating the flavors of Vietnam and Thailand; she is also the host of the Culinary Institute of America's *Asian Plant-Forward Kitchen* series and a leading voice in Southeast Asian culinary education.

Matt Rodbard — Journalist and Author (New York, New York)

Founding editor of *TASTE* and host of the *This Is TASTE* podcast, Matt Rodbard is a leading voice in food culture and media; he is also the award-winning co-author of *Koreatown: A Cookbook* and *Koreaworld*, honored in 2025 by the IACP and James Beard Awards.

Hiroko Shimbo — Faculty, Culinary Institute of America (CIA New York)

Hiroko Shimbo is an adjunct faculty member at the Culinary Institute of America, where she teaches the Japanese Cuisine and Culture Concentration, and a globally respected authority on Japanese cooking; she is also the award-winning author of *The Japanese Kitchen* and *The Sushi Experience*, foundational texts for chefs studying Japanese cuisine.

Haera Shin — Beverage Director, Columns and Author (New Orleans, Louisiana)

Haera Shin is the beverage director at Columns and a former beverage director for the Momofuku restaurant group; she is also the author of the forthcoming *Korean Cocktails: From Traditional Spirits to Modern Drinks*, exploring the depth, diversity, and cultural context of Korea's sool—from soju and makgeolli to regional and revival spirits and inventive cocktails..

Bo Songvisava and Dylan Jones — Bo.lan (Bangkok, Thailand)

Michelin-starred chef-owners of Bangkok's landmark Bo.lan, Bo and Dylan are renowned for preserving Thailand's culinary heritage through time-honored recipes, deep producer partnerships, and a bold, sustainability-driven approach—featured on *Chef's Table*.

Jongjip Yang '11 — Faculty, Culinary Institute of America (CIA New York)

Jongjip Yang is a full-time faculty member and assistant professor of Culinary Arts at the Culinary Institute of America, where he leads the development of Korean cuisine education, including the HanSik (Cuisine and Culture of Korea) curriculum, advancing Korean gastronomy through rigorous technique, fermentation, and cultural context.

Helene York — Faculty, Culinary Institute of America (CIA California)

Helene York is an adjunct faculty member in the Culinary Institute of America's master's program in food systems and the author of *Incorporating Sustainability into Procurement Decision Making for Food Supply Chains*, a new book translating real-world procurement strategy into practical tools for building resilient, values-driven food systems.