***LIDIA CELEBRATES AMERICA: THE RETURN OF THE ARTISANS***

**Premieres Friday, December 20, 2019 at 9:00 p.m. ET on PBS (Check Local Listings)**

**—World Renowned Chef Lidia Bastianich Meets Food Artisans Around the USA Keeping Traditions Alive and Training New Apprentices in Artisanal Crafts in New TV Special—**



NEW YORK(November 14, 2019)– Join Lidia Bastianich this holiday season, as the renowned chef, author and food ambassador journeys across the country to host a new television special—exploring how food artisans and artisanal crafts are gaining momentum in the U.S.

***LIDIA CELEBRATES AMERICA: The Return of the Artisans*** premieres on Friday, December 20 at 9:00 p.m. ET on PBS (check local listings).

In ***LIDIA CELEBRATES AMERICA: The Return of the Artisans,*** a new one-hour special co-produced by WGBH Studio Six and Tavola Productions, Lidia travels to Tennessee, California, Colorado, Michigan, Wisconsin and New Jersey to meet with American makers who are mastering the art of meat curing, coopering, coppersmithing, jam-making, cider-making, and more—and finds out what inspires and fuels them.

*Credit: Meredith Nierman/WGBH*

The American work and education landscapes are evolving, and artisans are gaining in cultural relevance. With a renewed focus on vocational training and working apprentices, artisans and the trades are making a comeback here in the United States. ***The Return of the Artisans*** looks at how this new generation of craftspeople is training today. From vocational high schools to apprenticeships to incubator programs, Lidia observes firsthand how young people are looking to artisanal crafts and small business as a fulfilling way to earn their livelihoods, and how many young craftsmen are bringing their skills back to their own communities.

“In ***The Return of the Artisans,*** we take viewers on an intimate journey to see traditions that have been kept alive for hundreds of years, skills passed down from generations with pride, passion and love—now being passed on to new apprentices,” says Bastianich, who grew up amid Italian food artisans as a revered part of the culture. “The beauty of these apprenticeships is not just the quality goods from using time-honored, hand-crafted methods, but the viable employment opportunities and a sense of community and belonging for the craftspeople who master the skills.”

“***LIDIA CELEBRATES AMERICA*** is all about how food bonds us and helps to build community,” says Laurie Donnelly, WGBH Executive Producer. “In ***The Return of the Artisans,*** Lidia crisscrosses America to show how artisans and craftspeople are enriching their own lives and impacting their communities in myriad positive ways—and underscores how this kind of food art and way of working are increasingly valued by chefs, consumers and society.”

All of the stories in ***The Return of the Artisans*** focus on artisans and craftspeople in the food and food-related industries. First stop for Lidia is **Madisonville, Tennessee**, where she catches up with **Allan Benton, of** **Benton’s Smoky Mountain Country Hams,** who has spent 45 years mastering the art of curing meat and making traditional country ham, slow-smoked bacon and sausage using century-old techniques rather than modern technology—customs that spring from his Appalachian upbringing. Allan is committed to passing on his knowledge and has been mentoring young people in the fine art of dry-curing, which is sought after by chefs around the country. Lidia then heads to **Knoxville, TN** to sample the end results in some of the local eateries.

Next, Lidia goes to the **Napa Valley** to look at the ancient art of coopering, practiced today by only a few dozen masters around the world**. Ramiro Herrera, of Caldwell Vineyard** is one of them. He began his apprenticeship as a teen and devoted four years of intensive training. Now he heads production and trains others. He shows Lidia how he assembles American oak into barrels by hand, and also demonstrates the complex art of toasting a barrel—a process which is as integral to wine-making as the grapes, since the level of roast in a barrel determines the flavors imparted to the wine. The nose knows—or it must to ply this trade, since it’s essential to becoming a master. Lidia puts hers to the test to see what aromas she can detect.

In **Denver, Colorado,** Lidia pays a visit to the **Comal Heritage Food Incubator**, where budding chefs can take their family recipes and elevate them for public consumption through a restaurant and catering business. The incubator offers a diverse menu—from Mexican to Middle Eastern—and has become a Denver hotspot. It’s also a training program for people passionate about food—where trainees work in both the kitchen and the front of house to learn cooking techniques as well as business acumen and how to deal with customers in order to open their own small businesses. The locally grown program provides an incredible model that can be duplicated in other rural and urban areas around the country. Because workers are paid for their work as they train, it breaks the cycle of foregoing income to pursue education.

From there, Lidia heads up to the northern fruit lands, on the banks of Lake Michigan, where small businesses like **American Spoon**, **in Petoskey, MN,** offer a rigorous training program to teach workers how to produce the finest fruit preserves while remaining committed to using centuries-old cooking techniques. Founded by **Chef Larry Forgione** and foraging expert **Justin Rashid**, it resembles “Willie Wonka’s” jam line—using small copper kettles and wooden paddles and locally sourced ingredients from over 100 area family farms in the woodlands of northern Michigan.

If it’s copper cookware you need, just ask **Sara Dahmen at House Copper in Grafton Village, Wisconsin.** Shecreated her own apprenticeship opportunity by reaching out to a local craftsman preserving a dying art—creating tin, iron and copper cookware using centuries old techniques. Lidia connects with Sara-- one of the only female coppersmiths in the world—to see where she and the master tinsmith create cooking utensils and pots using tools from the 1700’s and 1800’s.

***LIDIA CELEBRATES AMERICA: The Return of the Artisans*** culminates with Lidia hosting a special celebration meal to give back to the artisans who’ve generously opened their lives to her. The dinner is held at **Ironbound Farm in New Jersey**, home of Ironbound Hard Cider, which creates meaningful, skilled jobs for the chronically underemployed by training them to be farmers and educators, and which works to cultivate an interconnected community of local food artisans at the farm.

Lidia’s menu includes some of her own dishes and highlights the artisanal products and dishes inspired by her travels and experiences across the country—including foraged mushrooms, green beans with mint pesto, polenta, roasted beet salad, short ribs and country ham, and fruit tart made from preserves.

**Series Description**

***LIDIA CELEBRATES AMERICA*** is a lively exploration of the rich diversity of cultures across the United States, and the vibrant ethnic and religious customs and traditions observed by various groups—in which food is a common denominator that connects all human beings. Previous programs have focused on the different ways Americans celebrate weddings, holiday traditions, independence, and life’s milestones. The most recent specials pay tribute to America’s heartland and the charming rural communities that also hold thriving new immigrant communities. Two specials have earned special distinction, winning the prestigious James Beard Award. Both programs honor U.S. troops by celebrating the ways in which veteran farmers continue to give back to our country. For more program information, visit the website [pbs.org/lidiacelebratesamerica](http://www.pbs.org/lidiacelebratesamerica). To view recipes featured in the series, go to PBS Food: [pbs.org/food](http://www.pbs.org/food). ***Lidia Celebrates America***series DVDs, *Best of Lidia: Pastas* DVD, *Mastering the Art of Italian Cuisine* cookbook and more are available at shoppbs.org. Every purchase supports PBS.

For images and additional up-to-date information on this and other PBS programs, visit PBS Press Room at [pbs.org/pressroom](http://pbs.org/pressroom).

To download recipes, watch video previews, and view behind-the-scenes images and stories, go to [pbs.org/lidiacelebratesamerica](http://pbs.org/lidiacelebratesamerica).

**PRODUCTION CREDITS:**

Underwriter: Corporation for Public Broadcasting

Producers: WGBH Boston and Tavola Productions

Executive producers: Lidia Bastianich and Laurie Donnelly

***LIDIA CELEBRATES AMERICA: The Return of the Artisans*** is a production of WGBH Boston and Tavola Productions. Lidia Bastianich is host. Executive Producers are Lidia Bastianich and Laurie Donnelly.

Funding for ***LIDIA CELEBRATES AMERICA: The Return of the Artisans*** is provided by The Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

**About Lidia Bastianich**

Lidia is an Emmy award-winning public television host, a best‐selling cookbook author, a successful restaurateur, and owner of a flourishing food and entertainment business. Most importantly, Lidia has accomplished all of this by marrying her two passions in life – her family and food, to create multiple culinary endeavors alongside her two children, Joseph and Tanya. Lidia has published 13 cookbooks, co-authored with her daughter Tanya, and companion books to her Emmy winning television series Lidia’s Kitchen, Lidia’s Italy in America and Lidia’s Italy. Lidia’s recently published her memoir: *My American Dream: A Life of Love, Family, and Food*, as well as her new cookbook, *Felidia*, released on October 29, 2019. Lidia is the owner/co-owner of three acclaimed New York City restaurants ‐ Felidia, Becco and Del Posto, along with Lidia’s Kansas City. She is also a partner in Eataly NYC, Chicago, Boston, Los Angeles, Las Vegas and Sao Paolo, Brazil. Together with Tanya and son-in-law Corrado, Lidia also has developed a line of artisanal pastas and all-natural sauces, called LIDIA’S. Lidia is a member of Les Dames D’Escoffier and founding member of Women Chefs and Restaurateurs, two non-profit organizations of women leaders in the food and hospitality industries. She is also a champion for the United Nations Association of the United States of America’s Adopt-A-Future program, in support of refugee education.  Among the numerous awards and accolades Lidia has earned are seven James Beard Awards (Outstanding Chef, Television Food Show, Best Chefs in America, Who’s Who of Food & Beverage in America, Specials 2016, Special 2017 and 2018), and two Emmy Awards for Outstanding Culinary Host (2013 and 2018).

**About Tavola Productions**

Founded by Lidia Bastianich, Tavola Productions, an entertainment company that produces award-winning broadcast productions of quality, including *Lidia’s Kitchen, Lidia’s Family Table, Lidia’s Italy* and *Lidia’s Italy in America.*

**About WGBH**

WGBH Boston is America’s preeminent public broadcaster and the largest producer of PBS content for TV and the Web, including *Masterpiece*, *Antiques Roadshow, Frontline, Nova, American Experience,* *Arthur* and more than a dozen other primetime, lifestyle and children’s series. WGBH’s television channels include WGBH 2, WGBX 44, and the digital channels World and Create. WGBH TV productions focusing on the region’s diverse community include *Greater Boston*, *Basic Black* and *High School Quiz Show.* WGBH Radio serves listeners across New England with 89.7 WGBH, Boston’s Local NPR®; 99.5 WCRB Classical Radio Boston; and WCAI, the Cape and Islands NPR® Station. WGBH also is a major source of digital content and programs for public radio through PRI/PRX, including*The World*and*Innovation Hub,*a leader in educational multimedia with PBS LearningMedia™, providing the nation’s educators with free, curriculum-based digital content, and a pioneer in services that make media accessible to deaf, hard of hearing, blind and visually impaired audiences. WGBH has been recognized with hundreds of honors: Emmys, Peabodys, duPont-Columbia Awards and Oscars. Find more information at [wgbh.org](http://www.wgbh.org/).

**About PBS**

[PBS](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__pbskids.us8.list-2Dmanage.com_track_click-3Fu-3De788bfd38eb46ba512b198ebf-26id-3D880ed9a39a-26e-3Da1d877fd2f&d=DwMFaQ&c=QX2OfGk7aRC3kh1nmtbeQQ&r=t-3d-yedQwMAeBeITmIPZA&m=Btn-boHXAw_aF5fxF348JQeGP5zcQGR5MHKTl7UX9aM&s=QNdzRTLS-wIOjuRyOii-jCxHLgqIgmn7HW8yxp3AzZ4&e=), with more than 330 member stations, offers all Americans the opportunity to explore new ideas and new worlds through television and digital content. Each month, PBS reaches over 120 million people through television and 26 million people online, inviting them to experience the worlds of science, history, nature and public affairs; to hear diverse viewpoints; and to take front row seats to world-class drama and performances. PBS’s broad array of programs has been consistently honored by the industry’s most coveted award competitions. Teachers of children from pre-K through 12th grade turn to PBS for digital content and services that help bring classroom lessons to life. Decades of research confirms that PBS’s premier children’s media service, PBS KIDS, helps children build critical literacy, math and social-emotional skills, enabling them to find success in school and life. Delivered through member stations, PBS KIDS offers high-quality educational content on TV— including a 24/7 channel, online at [pbskids.org](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__pbskids.us8.list-2Dmanage.com_track_click-3Fu-3De788bfd38eb46ba512b198ebf-26id-3D8704bb1cf2-26e-3Da1d877fd2f&d=DwMFaQ&c=QX2OfGk7aRC3kh1nmtbeQQ&r=t-3d-yedQwMAeBeITmIPZA&m=Btn-boHXAw_aF5fxF348JQeGP5zcQGR5MHKTl7UX9aM&s=cqBP0s7eXr0CLaadrr3wRwbo3o8Y03iROsgrwKi2dPU&e=), via an array of mobile apps and in communities across America. More information about PBS is available at [www.pbs.org](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__pbskids.us8.list-2Dmanage.com_track_click-3Fu-3De788bfd38eb46ba512b198ebf-26id-3D1da363ed23-26e-3Da1d877fd2f&d=DwMFaQ&c=QX2OfGk7aRC3kh1nmtbeQQ&r=t-3d-yedQwMAeBeITmIPZA&m=Btn-boHXAw_aF5fxF348JQeGP5zcQGR5MHKTl7UX9aM&s=44tV3FDz3Kh394OnAibq2UoAZuL3dLHbMmcAPhxqklo&e=), one of the leading dot-org websites on the internet, or by following [PBS on Twitter](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__pbskids.us8.list-2Dmanage.com_track_click-3Fu-3De788bfd38eb46ba512b198ebf-26id-3Dbe43ede843-26e-3Da1d877fd2f&d=DwMFaQ&c=QX2OfGk7aRC3kh1nmtbeQQ&r=t-3d-yedQwMAeBeITmIPZA&m=Btn-boHXAw_aF5fxF348JQeGP5zcQGR5MHKTl7UX9aM&s=RPwlgjSRHNRs8JBw7d6kOJ3Q22Nt5iK6Df47fzaujJc&e=), [Facebook](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__pbskids.us8.list-2Dmanage.com_track_click-3Fu-3De788bfd38eb46ba512b198ebf-26id-3D7f290c5b96-26e-3Da1d877fd2f&d=DwMFaQ&c=QX2OfGk7aRC3kh1nmtbeQQ&r=t-3d-yedQwMAeBeITmIPZA&m=Btn-boHXAw_aF5fxF348JQeGP5zcQGR5MHKTl7UX9aM&s=BrrM7TZVsrtjv0xRuMC9QkldN1KHPl2zMPs6iUH_7UY&e=) or through our [apps for mobile and connected devices](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__pbskids.us8.list-2Dmanage.com_track_click-3Fu-3De788bfd38eb46ba512b198ebf-26id-3De8998f364e-26e-3Da1d877fd2f&d=DwMFaQ&c=QX2OfGk7aRC3kh1nmtbeQQ&r=t-3d-yedQwMAeBeITmIPZA&m=Btn-boHXAw_aF5fxF348JQeGP5zcQGR5MHKTl7UX9aM&s=Q6797ed88xCEF2o7lKuCNTBo9qUN-CTejYkmqibch1A&e=). Specific program information and updates for press are available at [pbs.org/pressroom](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__pbskids.us8.list-2Dmanage.com_track_click-3Fu-3De788bfd38eb46ba512b198ebf-26id-3D5b7473cb3b-26e-3Da1d877fd2f&d=DwMFaQ&c=QX2OfGk7aRC3kh1nmtbeQQ&r=t-3d-yedQwMAeBeITmIPZA&m=Btn-boHXAw_aF5fxF348JQeGP5zcQGR5MHKTl7UX9aM&s=MTue_8mscDarXbKPv_9sOI3g1ntSMmCE1GqAgG5yaIg&e=) or by following[PBS Pressroom on Twitter](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__pbskids.us8.list-2Dmanage.com_track_click-3Fu-3De788bfd38eb46ba512b198ebf-26id-3Dcd08505e8d-26e-3Da1d877fd2f&d=DwMFaQ&c=QX2OfGk7aRC3kh1nmtbeQQ&r=t-3d-yedQwMAeBeITmIPZA&m=Btn-boHXAw_aF5fxF348JQeGP5zcQGR5MHKTl7UX9aM&s=5L0X1Iwu6v2_2clNF56mPouY0_j4_1K9-pxs9U7LkTE&e=).

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