



Office of Public Affairs

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Smithsonian Exhibition Explores the Diverse Food Traditions of America

The food on the American table may not define exactly *what* we are as a nation, but the traditions surrounding our foods speak volumes about *who* we are. Our foods are staggeringly diverse and constantly evolving. “Key Ingredients: America by Food,” a new Smithsonian traveling exhibition, delves into the historical, regional and social traditions that merge in everyday meals and celebrations of the American table.

The newest exhibition from Museum on Main Street, a partnership of the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES) and state humanities councils, “Key Ingredients,” will tour communities in five new states this summer; Alabama, California, Kentucky, Mississippi and Tennessee.

Through a selection of artifacts, photographs and illustrations, “Key Ingredients” examines how culture, ethnicity, class, landscape and tradition influence the foods and flavors we enjoy across the nation. The exhibition also looks at the evolution of the American kitchen and how food industries have responded to the technological innovations that have enabled Americans to choose an ever-wider variety of frozen, prepared and fresh foods. The exhibition also addresses the entrepreneurial spirit on which many food production companies are based, such as food pioneers Heinz, Campbell and Borden.

An interactive website, www.keyingredients.org, has been developed in conjunction with the exhibition. The site invites people across the country to share their family recipes and food stories, learn about other food traditions and identify favorite small town eateries.

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SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION Washington DC 20560-0706 202.633-3120 Telephone www.sites.si.edu Web site

The exhibition is part of the Museum on Main Street, which serves museums, libraries and historical societies in rural America. The SITES-Federation of State Humanities Councils partnership, established in 1991, was formed as a creative response to the challenge faced by rural museums to enhance their own cultural legacies. This year, Museum on Main Street celebrates 10 years on the road.

Each year, SITES shares the wealth of Smithsonian collections and research programs with millions of people outside of Washington, D.C. One of the Smithsonian's four National Programs, SITES makes available a wide range of exhibitions about art, science and history, which are shown not only in museums but wherever people live, work and play: including in libraries, science centers, historical societies, community centers, botanical gardens, schools and shopping malls. Exhibition descriptions and tour schedules are available at www.si.edu/sites.

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For additional information about the tour in individual states please contact the following representatives:

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