

Rockwood International Food Fair and Tempeh Celebration

New Perspectives on Culinary Diplomacy

Gresham, Oregon

On **Friday March 31 and Saturday April 1** in the Rockwood community in Gresham, Oregon, a gathering of local Rockwood and Portland area residents will prepare their favorite traditional dishes from around the world. Rockwood occupies a small geographical area at the western edge of the city of Gresham, but boasts over 80 languages from around the globe. This rich cultural diversity combined with economic development strategies in place supported by local government and non-profits makes Rockwood an ideal location to introduce food related businesses reflecting the tastes and flavors of the local community.

Friday March 31st, we will explore and discuss a high protein fermented food native to the island of Java, Indonesia called tempeh. Speaker sessions will focus on this extremely healthy and quite versatile protein that has an ability to adapt to international culinary traditions. Tempeh is currently being intensively studied by microbiologists and food scientists in several countries outside of Indonesia. Tempeh in Indonesia is consumed by tens of millions of people on a daily basis as their primary protein source.

Saturday April 1st, small businesses, food makers and micro-entrepreneurs will share and showcase their products from around the world. These international foods will also have the option to incorporate tempeh in their traditional recipes.

As Americans navigate escalating levels of social and economic divisiveness in our lives, this multicultural event demonstrates the benefits of **culinary diplomacy** as a powerful vehicle for cultivating humility and compassion for our neighbors. Indonesian people will be excited to see Americans enjoy their cuisine and learn more about their amazing country.

The Indonesian people living in the world's largest archipelago nation will be proud to know that their native food can help brand their country in a positive light abroad. Tempeh has an important historical role in Indonesia as a staple food for hard working rural people. Tempeh can feed hungry Americans and strengthen social cohesion in these challenging times in our country. Culinary diplomacy extends opportunities to sit with people from a different religion and enjoy fellowship and a meal together. Developing food manufacturing jobs in Rockwood can be a direct result of community events such as this one.

This event is an outstanding opportunity to feature the positive momentum currently underway such as the **Rockwood Rising** project adjacent to the Sunrise Center. High level dignitaries from the Indonesian government and Oregon elected officials will receive a formal invitation to the event once official sponsors and others logistical details have been confirmed.

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