

Ready, set, jerk!

Still high off Olympics spirits, competitors are going for Cook-off gold at the 11th annual Grace Jamaican Jerk Festival scheduled for Sunday, November 11 at Markham Park in Sunrise.

Professional chefs, aspiring amateurs and local celebrities will show off their culinary prowess in the high octane Publix Jerk Cook-off and Celebrity Quick Fire Competitions at the event.

"I'm so thrilled about this year's competitions and demonstrations, because of the many culinary talents that will be on display" says June Minto, Jerk Cook-off organizer, adding that the staging of the area will be more open to engage the audience and allow for increased interaction.

Epic culinary battles in Publix Jerk Cook-off

The "steaks" are high in the fiery Publix Jerk Cook-off, where competitors go head to head from start to finish, whipping up their best jerk recipes in front of a hankering audience. They toe the thin line between authenticity and their personal twist to create delectable jerk dishes. And to sweeten the pot, a cash prize goes to the winner, who also walks away with the prestigious golden Dutch Pot Trophy.

Orette Kintish, who "jerked" the competition last year will be back to defend his title. He will be up against a field which includes some culinary students and Jimmie Jackson, a contestant who claims he makes the best jerk, despite the fact that he is not Jamaican. This is the competition to see! Will Kintish take the Dutch Pot again or will someone out-jerk him?

Featured celebrity top chefs

Chef Jamika Pessoa, co-host and field correspondent for ABC food talk show, "The Chew," will be demonstrating her Fried Jerk Chicken dish - a combination of two of the most loved methods of cooking.

Chef Jamika has cooked for numerous celebrities and athletes in Atlanta, Georgia and impressed on "The Next Food Network Star," season 5. She's the chef host of TLC's "Home Made Simple" and has been featured on the "Today Show," the "Steve Harvey Morning Show," and "The Tom Joyner Morning Show." She grew up in Louisiana to a Trinidadian mother and Jamaican father - a combination that inspires her bold flavors and sassy style.

The celebrity chef, who will also act as one of the Cook-off Judges, says she's super excited to be a part of the event and to judge the competition. "This event celebrates the foods of my heritage. I know true Jamaican Jerk and can't wait to see who can really bring the heat."

Wes Bonner, resident Chef of Publix Apron's Cooking School in Plantation, Florida will add his spice, demonstrating his signature recipes and tasty jerk dishes. He will draw on his experience from working at the Ritz Carlton Coconut Grove, a five-star, five-diamond establishment and London's Mandarin Oriental Hotel Hyde Park among others.

Our own Chef Irie Spice's culinary prowess and engaging personality will be on show for the myriad patrons who will flock to the Publix Cook-off Pavilion to watch these demonstrations and sample the mouthwatering fare. Fine Barefoot Wines will be on hand to "wash it down."

Celebrity Quick Fire Fun!

We love our local celebrities, but can they cook? The Grace Jamaican Jerk Festival puts them to the test in the fiercely battled, interactive Celebrity Quick-fire Competition. This year, two-time winner Kerry Glen, Wide Receiver for the NY Jets/Miami Dolphins, is sharpening his knives and perfecting his skills to take on Chef Gason Yen Nelson, chef to Miami Dolphins running back Reggie Bush. Nelson also cooked for a recent fundraiser for President Obama. Chef Irie Spice will play moderator with the help of NBC6's Jawan Strayder. Who will have bragging rights and the coveted Dutch Pot Trophy? You have to come to find out!

"Patrons should come by the Publix Cook-off Pavilion to watch these chefs at work, sample their creations and meet and greet celebrities like Chef Jamika from ABC's "The Chew" and local TV personalities such as NBC6's Sharon Lawson and ABC's Calvin Hughes and Neki Mohan. The competitions will be fiery and the cooking will be fantastic, not to mention the giveaways," says Minto.

The 11th Annual Grace Jamaican Jerk Festival is presented by Publix and Digicel, with additional support from Western Union, The Jamaica Tourist Board, WAVS Radio, Bigga Sodas, Hot 105, NBC6 and VitaMalt. The event is produced by Jamaican Jerk Festival USA, Inc., in association with Jamaica Awareness, Inc.