



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 18, 2026

Traverse City Food & Wine Announces 2026 Lineup

*Ticket sales start Wednesday for world-class culinary experiences in
Northern Michigan*

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. — Traverse City Tourism today announced an initial event lineup for the second annual Traverse City Food & Wine, presented by 4Front Credit Union. The public can purchase tickets beginning Wednesday, May 20 at noon at TraverseCityFoodAndWine.com.

Building on the enthusiastic response to the celebrated inaugural year, Traverse City Food & Wine will return for five days, August 19–23, 2026. Guests are invited to come to Traverse City to savor the region's finest produce, agricultural products, and remarkable flavors crafted by award-winning chefs – all set against the stunning backdrop of West Grand Traverse Bay in the peak moments of summer.

The 2025 Traverse City Food & Wine featured more than 80 events, most of which sold out, and drew visitors from 34 states. The 2026 program is poised to be more expansive, with highlights including:

- **James Beard Foundation Dinner** — Wednesday, August 19: The festival's opening night features an elegant al fresco dinner celebrating culinary excellence, with nine Michigan James Beard finalists teaming up to craft the wine-paired affair benefiting the James Beard Foundation.
- **The Grand Tasting** — Saturday, August 22: An afternoon event that includes chef demonstrations, dozens of local bites, and more than 100 locally made beers, wines, and spirits, returns as the festival's signature centerpiece at the Traverse City Open Space. The Grand Tasting will include a fully-redesigned VIP area with a curated beverage selection and numerous local award-winning chefs who will feature dishes exclusive to the VIP area.
- **Bubbles by the Bay** — Thursday, August 20: Toast the sunset over the bay with some of northern Michigan's finest wines crafted in the *Méthode Champenoise*, paired with decadent desserts and small bites.
- **Dirt to Glass Walk-Around Tasting** — Thursday, August 20: An immersive experience connecting guests to learn from a side-by-side tasting of Michigan wines with benchmark wines that are cited as some of the best in the world.

- **Wine & Cheese Masterclass with Afrim Pristine** — A lively, expert-led exploration of artisan cheeses and regional wines led by one of North America's most celebrated cheesemongers and food storytellers.
- **Fine Dining Meals featuring Guest Chefs** — Intimate chef-hosted dinners featuring acclaimed culinary voices, including **Aarti Sequeira**, **Abra Berens**, **Omar Anani**, and **Ji Hye Kim**, offering guests an up-close experience with some of the country's most celebrated cooking talents.
- **National Writers Series Conversations** — Thursday and Friday, August 20 and 21: Literary and culinary worlds collide in onstage conversations with celebrated food writer **Ruth Reichl** and cookbook author and baker-next-door, **Martin Sorge**.
- **Coldwater Kitchen Film Dinner** — Saturday, August 22: Screening of James Beard Award-winning documentary *Coldwater Kitchen*, accompanied by a dinner and a live conversation with the film's featured chefs and director.
- **An Opening Night Patio Party** – Wednesday, August 19: Enjoy music, cocktails, appetizers, beautiful breezes, and camaraderie from the lakeside patio at the Delamar – a lively and flavorful opening evening to the festival
- **Cooking Demonstrations and wine-tasting classes** — Hands-on and interactive sessions throughout the week featuring top regional and national culinary talent as well as wine experts such as **Susan Kostrewsa**.

"The unparalleled variety of freshly grown and harvested fruits, vegetables, grains, and proteins gives the Traverse City area a unique agricultural story to tell, and our region's wines and craft beverages are making waves in the industry," said Whitney Waara, Chief Operating Officer of Traverse City Tourism. "The first year of the event was a resounding success, and we've seen that chefs, tastemakers, growers, and all the participants are enthusiastic about returning. We can't wait to welcome guests back this August to savor the very best of summer."

Through a variety of special events, guests are invited to indulge in bold bites from renowned chefs and restaurants, sip on local wines and craft beverages, taste foods that are distinctly "up north," and learn from chefs, winemakers, and experts — all set against the stunning coastline of Lake Michigan.

The talent joining in the 2026 Traverse City Food & Wine includes:

- Cooking show host and cookbook author **Aarti Sequeira**
- **Ruth Reichl**, notable food writer at the New York Times and Gourmet, critic, and chef
- Cheese Master and star of *Cheese: A Love Story*, **Afrim Pristine**
- **Martin Sorge**, home baker, cookbook author, writer, and winner of the Great American Baking Show
- **Sarah Welch** and **Cameron Rolka**, notable Michigan chefs and owners of the newly opened Umbo in Traverse City
- Traverse City chefs such as **Andy Elliott**, **Emily Stewart**, **Jennifer Blakeslee**, **Eric Patterson**, **Myles Anton**, **Sarah Bobier**, **Tony Vu**, and **Adam McMarlin**

- An array of Michigan's top culinary talent, including **Andy Hollyday, Abra Berens, Ji Hye Kim, Omar Anani, and Anthony Lombardo**
- Expertise on wines will come from **Madeline Triffon**, Master Sommelier, **Susan Kostrewsa**, and **Amanda Danielson**

Tickets can be found at [TraverseCityFoodAndWine.com](https://traversecityfoodandwine.com). Additional events will be added to the schedule in the coming weeks; given that the majority of 2025 events sold out, early purchase is strongly encouraged. Follow social media and the website for additional announcements and ticket offerings as they become available.

Traverse City Food & Wine is presented by 4Front Credit Union and organized by Traverse City Tourism.