

PRESS RELEASE

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PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT, PRIVATE COMPANIES LAUNCH PHILIPPINE CUISINE IN MOSCOW

25 September 2006 — Philippine Ambassador to Russia Ernesto V. Llamas reported to the Department of Foreign Affairs that the Philippine government, working with the private sector, launched in Moscow a collaborative campaign to promote Philippine cuisine around the world through the staging of the *Flavors of the Philippines Food Festival* at the Governor Restaurant on 18 – 23 September 2006.

The Embassy, Department of Tourism (DOT), and Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) – through the Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions (CITEM) – organized the six-day festival in conjunction with DOT's annual participation at the 12th Otdykh Leisure Fair held at the Crocus Expo last week. "This is part of our continuing yearlong celebrations of the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and Russia," Ambassador Llamas said.

Flavors, which was billed as a 'celebration of the finest Filipino tropical culinary traditions,' was made possible by the technical collaboration of the leading chefs of the popular Via Mare traditional Filipino and seafood restaurant in Manila, headed by Glenda Rosales-Barretto, the *grande dame* of Philippine cuisine.

Ambassador Llamas stated that the festival, the first public-private collaboration of its scale in the world for Philippine cuisine, is the first step in the multi-stage *Kulinarya Filipina* program, which combines DOT's flagship program for food and DTI-CITEM's Philippine food export promotion aimed to add another dimension to tourism promotion as well as promote and strengthen the presence and acceptance of Philippine flavors in the international market.

Three events were held to highlight the Philippine food during the festival: a formal *Degustacion* dinner on 14 September for selected members of media; the *Reception* party for tour operators and business leaders on 20 September; and the elite *Cigar Salon*, allowing prominent Russians and expatriates to sample Philippine cigars and rum, *barako* coffee and *muscovado* sugar.

Dole Philippines, Figaro Coffee, Hawaiian-Philippine Company, La Flor de Isabela and Tanduay Distillers, Inc, provided supplies for the events.

The *Degustacion*, held at the Ambassador's residence, was hosted by the Ambassador himself and was attended by editors, columnists, correspondents and food and cigar critics from such English- and Russian-language publications as *Izvestiya* newspaper, *Gastronom*, *Menu*, *Hecho a Mano*, *Cigar Clan*, *Where Magazine*, *Passport Magazine*, *Element Moscow*, *Stolitsa* TV Channel and *Kutuzovsky Prospekt*.

"*Passport Magazine* characterized Filipino cuisine as perhaps the world's first fusion cuisine while Polina Pushkina, the publisher of the weekly events guide *Element Moscow*, said she believed Philippine food would be liked by the Russian public, which favors non-spicy flavors," Ambassador Llamas stated.

He also said that the festival is also sure to help propel forward an emerging boom in Asian cuisine in the Russian capital, which has shifted its attention from European cuisine toward Asian cuisine, which has traditionally been dominated by Japanese and Chinese cuisines but is now leading toward Southeast Asian foods.

Cuisine offerings included different varieties of *Ensaladas* (salads), exotic appetizers and main dishes such as the delectable *Kilawin* (fish marinated in coco vinegar), *Relleno* (stuffed trout), *Sugpo sa Gata* (prawns simmered in coco cream), and the famous *Sinigang na Hipon* (shrimps cooked in shrimp broth).

Various courses of Filipino meat dishes were also served during the *fiesta*-themed banquet. Sumptuous helpings of *Adobong Liempo* (pork ribs stewed in garlic and vinegar), *Lechon* (roast suckling pig), *Bistek Tagalog* (Beef Tenderloin with Lemon and Onions), *Morcon* (Stuffed Beef Roulade), and *Pato sa Mangga at Sampalok* (Roast Duck Breast with Mango-Tamarind Sauce), for example, were complemented by soups such as *Sinigang na Laman Dagat* (Assorted Seafood in Sour Broth), *Bulalo* (Beef Shank and Onion Broth), *Tinolang Manok* (Chicken Consommé with Ginger Threads), and *Pancit Molo* (Stuffed noodles with Shrimp, Pork, Chicken, and Ham).

Desserts and snacks such as *Buko Pie* (with young, chewy coconut strips), *Flan at Mangga* (Layered Flan with Sweet Manila Mango), *Turon* (Fried Banana Rolls), and *Maja Mais* (Blancmange of Corn and Coconut Cream) rounded out a tableau of Philippine food experience.

DTI Assistant Secretary and CITEM Executive Director Felicitas R. Agoncillo-Reyes characterized the public-private collaboration as “a means to capture the interest of the Russian market through food.”

Ms. Reyes said, “food promotion is multi-tiered. In a way, you can not promote food without introducing the whole concept or culture from which it was conceived that is why this Philippine food festival is set against a backdrop of a total country promotion that included the marketing of tourism and wellness services.” END

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