

Choctaw Native Chef Skinner Showcases Indigenous Live Fire Cooking at ISHTIA in Kemah, TX

ISHTIA, the eagerly awaited indigenous restaurant by renowned Choctaw Chef David Skinner, officially opens Thu. June 27th, in the bayside town of Kemah, Texas.

HOUSTON, TEXAS, UNITED STATES, June 27, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [ISHTIA](#) is more than a

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Chef David Skinner

dining destination; it is a sanctuary of food, culture, and community. Located on a tranquil street in Kemah away from Houston’s hustle and bustle, at the former site of "eculent" the celebrated modern gastronomy restaurant, ISHTIA stands out in the Houston dining scene, attracting guests from far and wide. Inside, the scents of mesquite and sage blend with the rich aromas of roasted corn and smoked meats and fish, transporting visitors to another world. The intimate 18-seat restaurant presents a [20-course tasting menu](#) that takes guests on a cultural culinary journey, featuring modern dishes crafted from ancestral ingredients native to both North and South

America. Set in a warmly lit and relaxed ambiance, this gastronomic experience allows guests to unwind and indulge in a diverse and meticulously curated flavor expedition.

Chef David Skinner, a proud Choctaw tribal member, has realized his childhood dream of creating ISHTIA, which means “to begin” in Choctaw. Inspired by his ancestors' stories, his vision is to immerse people in indigenous culture through storytelling and food. He believes every dish tells a story, and at ISHTIA, these culinary chronicles come to life.

“Throughout my journey to becoming a chef, from my early days in Oklahoma and opening my first restaurant at 16, I have always remembered that my origin story and its authentic ingredients came from my Choctaw ancestors,” said Chef Skinner. “I am grateful that the culinary landscape in America is now ready to honor and celebrate such historical accounts and experiences here in Kemah, TX.”

ABOUT THE MENU

The restaurant's 20-course tasting menu celebrates the diversity and richness of indigenous

cuisine, featuring dishes from Chef Skinner's heritage and his explorations of distant lands. Each dish combines traditional ingredients with both ancient and modern culinary techniques. The Summer menu showcases a refined selection of dishes rooted in the ancient practice of live fire cooking, honoring indigenous traditions by infusing each dish with rich, smoky flavors from open flames. The DNA from eculent is clearly evident in the inventive dishes created by Chef Skinner and his team. Dishes such as an edible smudge stick, "deer in the woods" made from venison cheek to look like a caterpillar served in a tall grass plant, and a fried corn sphere that explodes in your mouth. The menu also includes culturally significant dishes such as Tanchi Labona a corn and pork dish, and Chukfi Vlhbñni, a fire roasted rabbit. Each dish is carefully crafted from ethically sourced ingredients from a network of indigenous producers, inviting guests to embark on a culinary journey that deeply connects them to a rich and often forgotten native heritage.



Chef David Skinner. Photo: JIA Media

THE EXPERIENCE

ISHTIA offers an intimate dining adventure with just 18 seats and one seating per night, ensuring each guest receives a personalized and immersive experience. The journey begins on the second floor of the onsite winery and distillery located behind ISHTIA (Clear Creek Vineyard and Meticulous Spirits are also owned by Chef Skinner). On arrival guests are greeted with a welcome beverage and a selection of small bites/amuses bouche. Guests are then escorted as a group through the live fire kitchen to the dining room. Over the course of about three hours Chef Skinner and his team personally guide the guests on a culinary journey not to be forgotten.

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