

## **Malaysian Chef Is Host In US Food Network Channel**

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**By Nani Rahayu Yusof**

WASHINGTON DC, Oct 21 (Bernama) -- The Food Network Channel has selected Christina Arokiasamy, a Malaysian chef as host for the Bespoke Malaysia Kitchen Premiere, a programme to showcase the unique blend of Malaysian flavours borne of the spice trade last May.

The programme aired last July, enabled Americans for the first time to see thorough cooking demonstrations of the Malaysian cuisine as Arokiasamy demonstrated techniques and tips from her native homeland on national television.

"The programme is a success and the premiere, reaching millions of viewers on the Food Network and Cooking Channel throughout the United States (US) out-performed other shows, by two-and-a-half times, with a 58 per cent better rating," said Andrew Eisner, vice-president of the New Business Development Scripps Network interactive, the network which airs the Food Network and Channel.

The programme also showcased beautiful Malaysia, its culinary heritage and its amalgamation of three cultures in a spoonful.

"Americans have always seen Malaysia presented by a foreign visiting host looking from the outside; this is the first time ever that Americans are seeing our country and cooking styles presented by a native Malaysian with a deep understanding and knowledge of Malaysian cuisine and culture presented first-hand.

"I want everyone to experience how wonderful it can be to create with passion in their kitchens. My style of cooking stimulates all the senses, evoking joyous feelings, early childhood memories and delightful reminiscences of the places I've been to.

"It brings me such great joy and happiness to share this with everyone so they too, can experience this beautiful journey," Arokiasamy told Bernama in a recent interview.

She was appointed by the Malaysian Government and the Malaysian External Trade Development Corporation, (Matrade) under the Malaysian Kitchen programmes as Malaysian Food Ambassador to promote the accessibility and convenience of the country's cuisine and products to American consumers in 2013.

Born and raised in Kuala Lumpur, Arokiasamy is the fifth generation descendent of spice merchants who traded since the might of the British East India Company and grew up in the epicentre of the world's first spice trade.

American media, either in Los Angeles or New York City has been talking, writing and airing about Malaysian cuisine from breakfast to dinner. Making Mee Goreng, Roti Chanai,

Nasi Minyak and many more has been presented 'live' by Arokiasamy to viewers of few major television stations in several states.

O magazine, by the legendary television celebrity, Oprah also featured a few recipes from Arokiasamy.

The TV programme is believed to draw millions of American viewers to the malaysiakitchen.us website where Malaysian food products could be bought to replicate the dishes in their homes.

In addition to promoting Malaysia successfully on the Food Network, Arokiasamy's efforts enabled Malaysian cuisine, for the first time ever, to feature as the top three trending flavors in the US for 2014 by the National Restaurant Association - a testament the popularity of Malaysian cuisine in the country is quickly escalating. As Malaysia's food ambassador, Arokiasamy also launched the e-commerce website, [www.buymalaysianfood.com](http://www.buymalaysianfood.com), which merges all Malaysian food brands under a single home and connects them to the Amazon.com marketplace for sales and distribution.

A few Malaysian brands such as Mak Nyonya, My KualI and Gold Choice have seen a marked increase in sales since the launch of the initiatives.

Other brands that have seen an explosion of interest include Tean Gourmet, Old Town, Adami, Claypot, Julie's, Jefe, Agromas, Lingham's, Tower Mas, Cintan, Munchy's, Nona, Jia Jia Le, Maggi, BOY, Koon Kee, Torto, Sin Hai Ting, Raya, Cobizco, Fruit Plus and Yuen Chun amongst 100 over brands sold online on Buy Malaysian Food.com.

Every month, the programme keeps increasing Malaysian brands. The [buymalaysianfood.com](http://buymalaysianfood.com) project is a MATRADE initiative.

Through Arokiasamy's stewardship, the brands were encouraged to conform their labeling with US Government regulations to market to the US consumers.

"It's costly to get unfamiliar Malaysian products into brick-and-mortar stores and supermarkets, said Arokiasamy, "but with Amazon's fulfillment networks, and 61 nationwide warehouses, consumers can easily purchase a range of Malaysian products 24/7 from the comfort of their own homes."

Arokiasamy encourages Malaysian companies wanting to export and promote food products successfully in the United States, and capitalise on the growing market to get in touch with her at [mfa@malaysiakitchen.us](mailto:mfa@malaysiakitchen.us).

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