



Samurai Tea at Willard InterContinental Honors 150th Anniversary of Japan's First Delegation to United States

Authentic edibles by Kushi, Minamoto Kichoan, Tea by ITO EN, President Buchanan figure by Madame Tussauds DC, Ikebana florals and Koto music.

Washington DC, May 5, 2010 -- The Willard InterContinental in cooperation with the Embassy of Japan presents Samurai Tea on May 22 and 23, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. The special afternoon tea honors the 150th anniversary of the Japanese delegation's historic first visit to the United States. Commemorating the Willard's history as host hotel for the delegation, Executive Chef Luc Dendievel has joined with some of Japan's leading purveyors to feature the finest authentic Japanese fare. These include savories by DC's Kushi restaurant, Japanese confections by Minamoto Kichoan of Tokyo and New York and tea by ITO EN. Cost from the tea is \$39 excluding tax and tip, additional \$10 for Plum Wine cocktail. For reservations call 202-637-7350.

Menu savories will include Chicken Breast Maki (chicken breast with boiled scallion) Morokyu, Veggie soy sheet Futomaki: okra, avocado, shiitake mushroom, cucumber, kanpyo, gobo root (cucumber topped with fermented miso) Temari Sushi (tuna and shrimp) and sweets include Aya shirabe (Condensed milk and sweet white beans paste wrapped in Japanese crepe) Fuku fukusa (Sweet red beans wrapped in light-fluffy cake). Guests will enjoy dining on tea service china from the Ambassador of Japan's residence in the hotel's Peacock Alley.

The tea will feature presentations by costumed Samurai and hosts, Ikebana Japanese floral arrangement by Ikebana master Sachiko-san, and Madame Tussauds' newest figure, President Buchanan, who met with the delegation in 1860. In fall 2010, Madame Tussauds will debut an unparalleled interactive exhibit, The Presidents Gallery, which will feature life-sized wax figures of all 44 Presidents from George Washington to Barack Obama. Live music by the Toho Koto Society will provide the musical accompaniment to the tea.

In 1860, The Willard opened a new decade with the historic arrival of the first group of Japanese ever to leave their island kingdom. Commodore Matthew Perry helped open Japan to the world and pave the way for the first trade agreement between Japan and the United States. The treaties had been signed in Japan, but protocol demanded that Japan send officials to have agreements ratified in America. A delegation of three Samurai ambassadors and their retinue of 74 arrived at The Willard Hotel where they stayed for nearly a month.

The Japanese visitors kept extensive diaries and drew numerous sketches of their surroundings in The Willard. Wrote one delegate; "The hotel is seven or eight stories high, of brick, with no posts in any room. It extends along the side of a block and contains two bars, a drugstore, a barbershop, tobacco shop and bookstore. All the rooms are furnished with mirror, clock, pictures, beds, chairs, bureaus, mantle, fireplaces, statues and such. It is wonderful."