

Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies
News Release

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2009 Inaugural Luncheon Details Announced

Washington, DC -- The Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies today announced the details for the 2009 Inaugural Luncheon, which will follow the swearing-in of President-elect Barack Obama and Vice President-elect Joe Biden.

The luncheon, hosted by the members of the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies, has been a tradition for more than a century. Approximately 200 guests including the new President, Vice President, members of their families, the Supreme Court, Cabinet designees, and members of Congressional leadership will attend the event in Statuary Hall.

The details of the luncheon have been designed to reflect the theme of the 2009 Inaugural ceremonies, "A New Birth of Freedom," which celebrates the bicentennial of the birth of President Abraham Lincoln.

The menu, created by Design Cuisine, a catering company based in Arlington, Virginia, draws on historic ties to the Presidency of Abraham Lincoln. Growing up in the frontier regions of Kentucky and Indiana, the sixteenth President favored simple foods including root vegetables and wild game. As his tastes matured, he became fond of stewed and scalloped oysters. For dessert or a snack, nothing pleased him more than a fresh apple or an apple cake.

The wines to be served during the luncheon were produced by some of the finest winemakers in California, the home state of Senator Dianne Feinstein, the Chairman of the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies. Each wine was selected to complement the flavors of the luncheon ingredients.

The 2009 Inaugural Luncheon Menu

First Course: Seafood Stew
 Duckhorn Vineyards, 2007 Sauvignon Blanc, Napa Valley

Second Course: A Brace of American Birds (pheasant and duck), served with Sour Cherry
 Chutney and Molasses Sweet Potatoes
 Goldeneye, 2005 Pinot Noir, Anderson Valley

Third Course: Apple Cinnamon Sponge Cake and Sweet Cream Glacé
 Korbel Natural "Special Inaugural Cuvée," California Champagne

The first course will be served on replicas of the china from the Lincoln Presidency, which was selected by Mary Todd Lincoln at the beginning of her husband's term in office. The china features the American bald eagle standing above the U.S. Coat of Arms, surrounded by a wide border of "solferino," a purple-red hue popular among the fashionable hosts of the day.

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The floral arrangements, designed by JLB Floral of Alexandria, Virginia, will feature hydrangeas in shades of purple and blue, Hot Mojolica spray roses, bright Red Charlotte roses and light blue Delphinium in a footed brass compote. After the luncheon, the floral arrangements will be given to the Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

The backdrop for the luncheon will be a painting, chosen for occasion, and borrowed from the New-York Historical Society. The painting, "View of the Yosemite Valley," by Thomas Hill, reflects the majestic landscape of the American West and the dawn of a new era. The subject of the painting, Yosemite Valley, represents an important but often overlooked event from Lincoln's presidency -- his signing of the 1864 Yosemite Grant, which set aside Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias as a public reserve.

During the Inaugural Luncheon it is traditional for the President and Vice President to be presented with gifts by the Congress on behalf of the American people. The President and Vice President will each be presented with a framed official photograph taken of their swearing-in ceremony by a Senate photographer, as well as flags flown over the U.S. Capitol during the inaugural ceremonies.

The President and Vice President will also receive one-of-a-kind engraved crystal bowls, created by the Lenox Company of Bristol, Pennsylvania. President Obama will receive a bowl depicting the White House on a crystal base inscribed with "Barack H. Obama, The Presidential Inauguration, January 20, 2009." Vice President Biden will receive a bowl depicting the United States Capitol, on a crystal base inscribed with "Joseph R. Biden Jr. , The Vice Presidential Inauguration, January 20, 2009." The bowls were designed by Timothy Carder and hand-cut by master glass-cutter Peter O'Rourke.

Each guest at the Inaugural Luncheon will receive a crystal vase etched with a depiction of the U.S. Capitol, designed by Paula Skene, an artist in Emeryville, California, and handcrafted by Evergreen Crystal of Montrose, Colorado.

The Smithsonian Chamber Players, who are artists in residence at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, will provide music for the Inaugural Luncheon. The ensemble, directed by cellist Kenneth Slowik, is renowned for its performances of period music on the musical instruments in the Smithsonian's collection.

Members of the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies are Senator Dianne Feinstein, Chairman; Ranking Member of the Senate Rules Committee Bob Bennett; Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid; Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi; House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer; and House Minority Leader John Boehner.

For more information on the Inaugural Luncheon, including recipes for the luncheon menu, and images of the painting "View of the Yosemite Valley," the Lincoln Presidential china, the floral arrangements and the official gifts, visit <http://www.inaugural.senate.gov/luncheon>.

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