



## The 2015 Meijer LPGA Celebrity Chef Cookoff presented by Kraft Pairs Chef Mario Batali with Returning Culinary Expert Gail Simmons

*Tickets now on sale*

**GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (April 30, 2015)** – Nationally-acclaimed celebrity chef Mario Batali and culinary expert Gail Simmons will participate in this year's Meijer LPGA Celebrity Chef Cookoff presented by Kraft.

The entertaining and interactive cooking event will be held at 6:30 p.m. July 24 at the Grand Rapids Public Museum, and will showcase their personal culinary creations with event proceeds benefiting the [Meijer Simply Give](#) program, which replenishes the shelves of food pantries throughout the Midwest.

Both Batali and Simmons will prepare an appetizer and main course while interacting with guests throughout the evening. The event will also feature local pastry fare that will be voted on by the guests.

A limited number of general public tickets are now on sale, at [meijerLPGAclassic.com](#), for \$100 apiece. The ticket includes food, wine and a ticket to the golf tournament for the weekend.

"Grand Rapids is a city that is passionate about great food, which is why we think this specific event is such a highlight of tournament week," Meijer President J.K. Symancyk said. "After the success of last year's event, we are excited to open up more tickets to the general public while still maintaining the museum's unique atmosphere."

This year's event will feature:

- **Mario Batali:** He counts 26 restaurants, 10 cookbooks, numerous television shows and two Eataly marketplaces (with a third opening soon) among his ever-expanding empire of deliciousness. Batali appears daily on ABC's "The Chew," a daytime talk show on ABC that celebrates and explores life through food.
- **Gail Simmons:** She is a trained culinary expert and judge on Bravo's Emmy-winning series "Top Chef," as well as head critic on "Top Chef Masters." Since 2004, Simmons has been Special Projects Director at *Food & Wine Magazine*. She participated alongside Cat Cora and Carla Hall in last year's Meijer LPGA Celebrity Chef Cookoff.

"I couldn't be more thrilled to be coming back to Grand Rapids," Simmons said. "Last year, the community really embraced the inaugural event and its great cause. I'm so impressed and excited about what Meijer has done to raise awareness for their *Simply Give* program."

For more information on the Meijer LPGA Classic presented by Kraft or to volunteer please visit [meijerLPGAclassic.com](#).

To view a video recapping the inaugural Meijer LPGA Classic presented by Kraft, please visit <http://newsroom.meijer.com/meijer-lpga-simply-give-video>.

To view a video on the Meijer hunger relief efforts, including *Simply Give*, please visit <http://newsroom.meijer.com/meijer-simply-give-video>.

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#### **About Meijer *Simply Give***

Meijer is a family-owned retailer based in Grand Rapids, Mich. with a fundamental philosophy aimed at strengthening the communities it serves. Meijer operates more than 200 supercenters and grocery stores throughout Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Kentucky, and proudly donates more than 6 percent of its net profit each year to charities throughout the Midwest. With hunger as a corporate philanthropic focus, Meijer partners with hundreds of food banks and pantries through its *Simply Give* and food rescue programs. Meijer also supports education, disaster relief, and health and wellness initiatives. For additional information on Meijer philanthropy, please visit [meijercommunity.com](http://meijercommunity.com). Follow Meijer on Twitter @twitter.com/Meijer and @twitter.com/MeijerPR or become a fan at [www.facebook.com/meijer](http://www.facebook.com/meijer).

#### **About Blythefield Country Club**

Located just north of Grand Rapids, Blythefield has been providing families the best golf and social experience in West Michigan since 1928. With the Rogue River flowing through, Blythefield boasts one of the most beautiful championship layouts in Michigan. Previously, Blythefield has hosted the 1953 Western Amateur, the 1961 Western Open, won by Arnold Palmer, and the 2005 Western Junior won by Rickie Fowler. In 2014, Blythefield hosted the inaugural Meijer LPGA Classic presented by Kraft. Learn more about Blythefield Country Club at [www.blythefieldcc.org/](http://www.blythefieldcc.org/).

#### **About the LPGA (Ladies Professional Golf Association)**

The LPGA is the world's leading professional golf organization for women. Founded in 1950, the association celebrates a diverse and storied membership with more than 2,300 members representing more than 30 different countries. With a Vision to inspire, empower, educate and entertain by showcasing the very best of women's golf, LPGA Tour Professionals compete across the globe, while dedicated LPGA Teaching and Club Professionals (T&CP) directly impact the game through teaching, coaching and management. The Symetra Tour consistently produces a pipeline of talent ready for the world stage. The LPGA is headquartered in Daytona Beach, Florida. Follow the LPGA on its television home, Golf Channel, and on the web via: [www.lpga.com](http://www.lpga.com), [www.facebook.com/LPGA](http://www.facebook.com/LPGA), [www.twitter.com/lpga](http://www.twitter.com/lpga), and [www.youtube.com/user/lpgavideo](http://www.youtube.com/user/lpgavideo).

#### **About Octagon Global Events**

Octagon Global Events is a division of Octagon, the world's largest sports and entertainment representation and marketing agency. Octagon Global Events focuses on premium event/property management, providing strategic corporate solutions. The division currently manages two Champions Tour events, two LPGA Tour events and the Toyota Texas Bass Classic. For more information, visit <http://www.octagonglobalevents.com/>.