



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2023.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Orange County
Program Title: Edna Lewis Menu Trail
Program Category: Community and Economic Development

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Stephanie Straub
Title: Assistant County Administrator for Operations
Signature: *Stephanie Straub*

Virginia Association of Counties – Achievement Awards

The Edna Lewis Media Event and Menu Trail

Orange County, Virginia

In the Winter of 2022, staff from the Department and Economic Development and Tourism in Orange County were considering storytelling opportunities and brand awareness efforts that could be used to tell a more diverse story about Orange County and potentially peak interest in the area as a travel destination for all travelers. They wanted stories that hadn't been told and ones that represented a wide range of people and topics. When Edna Lewis's name came up staff knew immediately that this was an important story to tell and that it was of National significance. The problem addressed by the Edna Lewis Media Event and Menu Trail is one of awareness and under representation. Chef Edna Lewis was from the era of James Beard and Julia Child and is well-respected among culinary professionals around the world. Lewis was equally influential and groundbreaking as Beard and Child however, she does not share the same type of household name recognition or celebrity status. Her contributions are just as significant as those of her contemporaries – maybe more so, and her story deserves to be told. By inviting media to Virginia to taste, visit and experience some of Edna Lewis's heritage, Orange County is working to bring overdue awareness to Lewis and preserve her story for future generations. It's important that young, aspiring black chefs see themselves (and their communities) represented in America's culinary history and more National focus on Edna Lewis's story accomplishes that goal.

Program Description

The Edna Lewis Media Event and Menu Trail programs were conceived to tell the story of Edna Lewis' life growing up in Orange County, Virginia and to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the

publication of her first cookbook – the Edna Lewis Cookbook. The programs were groundbreaking for Orange County and have resulted in measurable website traffic, increased awareness, and valuable earned media for Orange County businesses and attractions. As the programs evolved from conception through planning and on to the execution phases, a variety of ancillary efforts added depth, preservation and long-term significance to the storytelling campaign. Orange County worked collaboratively with the Communications Team at the Virginia Tourism Corporation to pitch the opportunity to national media outlets.

Edna Lewis is called the Grand Dame of Southern Cooking. Through her four cookbooks and her restaurant notoriety, she introduced the world to the black history and culinary culture she grew up with in rural Orange County, Virginia. She was one of the first to talk about the seasonality of ingredients, the importance of fresh, local agriculture and southern culinary traditions at the national level. The Media Event hosted in Orange on October 20 & 21 2022, was a tribute to her legacy and her family, as well as a tangible way to introduce mainstream media and the traveling public to her powerful story. In addition to the multi-course tasting menu the media also experienced a full-day tour of Edna Lewis' Orange County. They visited her home church – where she pilgrimaged annually for revival, got a driving tour of the Freetown area with a local historian, and visited her grave/family cemetery along with other Orange County attractions and black history sites. Over 20 Orange County businesses participated in the execution of this program in one way or another. Writers were hosted by Orange County lodging and restaurant facilities, they drank Orange County wine and beer, they toured Orange County historic sites and were introduced to Orange County organizations and citizens. The community was able to embrace this program and participate in a variety of ways – including with the ongoing Edna Lewis Menu Trail.

Culinary experiences continue to be a driver for travel decision-makers, even in the post pandemic market. Things like Immersive Food Experiences and a focus on Zero-Kilometer Sourcing are

hot topics especially for the Millennial and Generation Z travel segments. The Orange County, Virginia Edna Lewis Media Event and Menu Trail efforts have aimed to tap into this enthusiasm, build awareness and potentially drive visitors to the county long-term. In addition to the well-deserved awareness building the earned media and engagement on various social/digital channels generates interest in Orange County as a diverse and modern destination, even with its more rural ambiance and reputation.

Orange County's Department of Economic Development and Tourism used the Edna Lewis Media Event and Menu Trail opportunity to highlight the county in its entirety, to celebrate local agriculture and to feature black history and current culinary attractions. The county also used the Menu Trail and Media Event to spur other efforts such as the installation of new Highway Marker honoring Lewis and approved by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and a proclamation by Representative Abigail Spanberger honoring Lewis's many contributions to the Commonwealth. The timeline for the Media Event and the Familiarization Tour itinerary are below.

Edna Lewis Dinner – Timeline with Menu items

5:00pm – Cocktail Hour in the Main House with live Music.

- Chef Craig Hartman will be providing a signature cocktail called the “Sweet Edna” It’s Southern Style Sweet Tea with Bourbon and Peach Preserves.
- Barboursville Vineyards has donated their Sparkling Rose as a wine option for the cocktail time.
- Joy Crump will provide Watermelon Lemonade.
- Each Chef will be providing a Welcome Bite
 - Joy Crump - Edna Lewis' Cheese Straw Crackers with savory preserves
 - Andrew Eppely - Popcorn SweetBreads w/ Honey Mustard, Parsley & Lemon Aioli
 - Craig Hartman - Charcoal-grilled Lamb Chops with Ratatouille

5:45pm – 6:00pm – Move Guests to the Barn for Dinner.

6:00pm – A Virginia Homecoming Dinner

Welcome to Orange County

Julie Perry

Introduction of VIPs

Julie Perry

Family Reading - Introduction from the Edna Lewis Cookbook

Angela Freeman

Play First Video

6:15pm – First Course Introduced by Chef Craig Hartman

Lobster a L’Americian Soup inspired by Ms. Lewis’s Lobster L’Americian

Nescant Wine from Barboursville Vineyards

Remarks from his Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner article

Phil Audibert

Play Second Video

6:45pm - Second Course Introduced by Chef Joy Crump

Ms. Lewis' Southern Fried Chicken, Sweet Autumn Yams, Braised Garden Greens, Corn Pudding, Yeast Rolls with Butter and Pickles.

Four Horsemen of Helles Beer from Iron Pipe Aleworks

Introduction of Rita McClenney – President of the VTC

Bruce Monroe

Words of Welcome

Rita McClenney

7:30pm – Third Course Introduced by Andrew Epperly

Chocolate Pannacotta/ Chestnut Cake, Cocoa Nibs, Spiced Pears inspired by Ms. Lewis’ Chestnut Cake

Bone Orchard Port from Horton Vineyards

Edna Lewis Familiarization Tour

8:00am – Depart the Inn at Willow Grove and go to [The Market at Grelen](#) for Breakfast and activities.

9:30am – Depart for James Madison’s Montpelier for the [Mere Distinction of Colour Exhibit](#) and newly expanded interpretation in the South Yard. Experience aspects of the Enslaved Community Tour as time allows.

11:00am – Embark on a Freetown Driving Tour with Bruce Newton/Phil Audibert and the [Orange County African American Historical Society](#). Noteworthy stops include:

- Bethel Baptist Church where Ms. Lewis and her family attended services.
- Freetown Sign – introduction of NEW Virginia Department of Historical Resources Highway Marker Location to honor Edna Lewis and the Freetown community.
- Wreath Laying at Edna Lewis’s Grave

12:30pm – Lunch at [Patch Brewing](#) catered by Coopers Cookin and Catering.

- Sample Patch Brewing’s Edna Lewis Inspired Beer
- Hear the [Gordonsville Fried Chicken](#) Story and why Gordonsville was once referred to as the “Fried Chicken Capital of the World.” Taste the authentic recipe handed down through generations and currently entrusted to Coopers Cookin and Catering in Orange County, Virginia.
- Enjoy a Special Dessert and learn about the Edna Lewis Menu Trail running Thanksgiving 2022 – Memorial Day 2023.
- Proclamation from Abigail Spanberger’s Office.

2:00pm – Return to the Inn at Willow Grove to depart for home.

Program Results

The Edna Lewis Media Event and Menu Trail programs have produced a variety of measurable and immeasurable results for Orange County, Virginia. Because of the quality pitching and hosting efforts Orange County has received 29 media placements to date. The Edna Lewis page on the Orange County Tourism Website (www.visitorangevirginia.com) is currently the number 1 visited page on the site and new users to the site are up 102% year over year with the average time on the site up 46% since the Edna Lewis event. Additionally, local restaurants are reporting robust traffic and engagement with the various featured recipes. Current media placements and links are below.

June 2023

- Smithsonian Magazine: [What Made Edna Lewis the Mother of Soul Food](#)

May 2023

- Virginia Living: [Edna Lewis](#)
- PBS: Tracing [a rich history of Black American cuisine in Edna Lewis’ footsteps](#)

April 2023

- The Washington Post : [On the Edna Lewis Menu Trail, a toast to an iconic chef and her hometown](#)

February 2023

- Bethesda Magazine & Bethesda Beat: [Glorious Weekend Getaways](#)
- Blue Ridge Country Magazine: [Edna Lewis Menu Trail: Enjoy Legacy Dining](#)
- Okra Magazine: [A celebration of Southern Grand Dame Edna Lewis in her hometown of Virginia.](#)

January 2023

- CBS19: [Highlighting new travel and tourism spots](#)
 - <https://pressroom.virginia.org/whatsnew/>
- Newsradio WINA - [New wineries, hotel, and an Edna Lewis Menu Trail area attractions in 2023 VTC guide](#)
- 97.53WV - [New wineries, hotel, and an Edna Lewis Menu Trail area attractions in 2023 VTC guide](#)
- Conde Nast Traveler - [Retracing the History of Freetown Through the Life and Legacy of Edna Lewis](#)
- AFAR Magazine – [In Virginia, a Homecoming for Chef Edna Lewis](#)
- Richmond Free Press: [Orange County celebrates culinary icon Edna Lewis](#)
- I-95 Exit Guide: [What's New in Virginia in 2023](#)

December 2022

- Miami Herald: [Explore the historic Edna Lewis Menu Trail, a trip through Black culinary history](#)
- AAA: [The Grand Dame of Southern Food](#)
- ZAYZAY Entertainment - [A New Menu Trail Celebrates the Life, Legacy, and Eats of the Grand Dame of Southern Cooking](#)
- The Charlotte Observer - [Explore the historic Edna Lewis Menu Trail, a trip through Black culinary history](#)
- AAA World - [THE GRAND DAME OF SOUTHERN FOOD VIRGINIA'S EDNA LEWIS MENU TRAIL RECOGNIZES A TRAILBLAZER IN SOUTHERN COOKING](#)

November 2022

- Garden & Gun: [Where to Get Away This Fall in the South](#)
- Southern Living: [The Best Things To Do In Orange, Virginia](#)
- Thrillist: [A New Menu Trail Celebrates the Life, Legacy, and Eats of the Grand Dame of Southern Cooking](#)
- Boomer Magazine: [The Edna Lewis Menu Trail](#)
- Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star: [Orange celebrates chef with Edna Lewis Menu Trail](#)
 - Syndicated: [Roanoke Times](#)
- Culpeper Star-Exponent: [Culpeper-area community briefs for Nov. 11, 2022](#)
- Delicious Food - [ORANGE CHEF CELEBRATES WITH EDNA LEWIS MENU TRAIL](#)

October 2022

- Orange County Review - [Editorial: An outsider's guide to the legacy of Edna Lewis](#)





A VIRGINIA HOMECOMING

THE
EDNA LEWIS
COOKBOOK

Golden Anniversary Dinner

A CELEBRATION OF

Fall

Edna Lewis

ORANGE
COUNTY

Refined
Southern
Cooking

LOCALLY SOURCED ♦ GUEST CHEFS

SEASONAL INGREDIENTS ♦ RECIPES



Cocktail Hour
5pm



Dinner &
Craft Beverage
Pairings
Begin at 6pm



THURSDAY
OCTOBER 20
2022

THE INN AT WILLOW GROVE

14079 PLANTATION WAY • ORANGE • VA 22960

The Grande Dame of Southern Cooking – Edna Lewis was born and raised in Orange County, Virginia in an area called Freetown. One of the first African American women to write a cookbook that didn't hide the author's true identity, race or gender Edna Lewis helped the world to better understand Southern Cooking.

Exclusive Media Event. Seating is Limited.

A VIRGINIA HOMECOMING

THE
EDNA LEWIS
COOKBOOK

Golden Anniversary Dinner

is an **EXCLUSIVE MEDIA EVENT** hosted by
Orange County Tourism and the Inn at Willow Grove.

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Guest Chefs Joy Crump (FOODE, Mercantile, & Top Chef Season 12) &
Craig Hartman (BBQ Exchange, Champion Ice House)
along with the Culinary Director for the Inn at Willow Grove, Andrew Eppley
will be preparing a multi-course meal inspired by Lewis's cookbook and featuring
locally sourced ingredients and craft beverage pairings.



RSVP

The EDNA LEWIS

MENU

TRAIL

— ORANGE —

— VIRGINIA —



-  Edna Lewis Artifacts at the James Madison Museum of Orange County Heritage
-  Coming Early 2023
NEW Edna Lewis Historical Marker
-  African American Historical Society



Barbeque Exchange

540-832-0227 | www.bbqex.com
Coconut Layer Cake & Brunswick Stew with Cornbread

Champion Ice House

540-406-5393 | www.championicehouse.com
Apple Brown Betty & Hoppin John

Clearwater Grill

540-972-0606 | clearwatergrill.com
Sauteed Rib Pork Chops served with Whipped Sweet Potatoes & Apple Brown Betty

Coopers Cookin and Catering

540-308-7199
Quiche Lorraine, Deep Dish Apple Pie with Nutmeg Sauce, Curry Chicken or Curry Shrimp in Rotation

Market at Grelen

540-672-7268 | www.themarketatgrelen.com
Hot Biscuit, split, buttered, & sugared, with Fresh Strawberries & Whipped Cream

Spoon and Spindle

540-360-3004 | www.spoonandspindle.com
Roast Quail stuffed with Wild Rice & White Grapes

Vintage Restaurant

540-317-1206 | www.innatwillowgrove.com/vintage-restaurant.html
Smothered Braised Rabbit & Slow Roasted Sticky Ribs



visitorangevirginia.com/taste/the-edna-lewis-menu-trail



United States
of America

Congressional Record

by Congresswoman Abigail D. Spanberger

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE **117th** CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 168

WASHINGTON, October 21, 2022

No. 165

House of Representatives

HONORING Edna Lewis

Ms. SPANBERGER. Madame Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of a distinguished Virginian: Ms. Edna Lewis.

Edna was born in Freetown, Orange County, Virginia in 1916. As a child growing up in a small farming community of emancipated slaves, Edna learned how to grow and cultivate food on her grandfather's farm. Drawing upon the heritage and culture of her African American ancestors, Edna developed her distinct style of traditional Southern cooking.

At the age of sixteen, Edna left Freetown and eventually settled in New York City. Working as a seamstress and dressmaker, it wasn't until 1949 that she began cooking professionally as the head chef at Café Nicholson, a new restaurant in Manhattan. The restaurant and Edna's unique style of Southern cooking quickly gained a dedicated following—including prominent individuals ranging from Eleanor Roosevelt to Truman Capote.

Even after Edna eventually left Café Nicholson, demand for her cooking and culinary expertise did not diminish. She published her first cookbook in 1972, followed shortly after by *The Taste of Country Cooking* in 1976. *The Taste of Country Cooking*, her seminal work, combines recipes and stories from her childhood in Freetown. Edna's ability to impart her voice and heritage on the cookbook made it loved and adored by many.

Edna published two more cookbooks over the course of her life. She was the recipient of numerous accolades including the James Beard Living Legend Award and International Association of Culinary Professionals Lifetime Achievement Award among many others. In 2014, she was honored by the creation of a US postal stamp with her image.

Now, in honor of Edna's life and achievements, the Orange County community will be installing a historical marker so that visitors can learn more about her and her contributions to our Commonwealth and our nation. As the U.S. Representative for Virginia's Seventh District, I thank Orange County for creating an enduring memory of Edna so that future generations can remember one of the great champions of Southern cuisine.