

For Immediate Release

Contact:

Jenny Parker McCloskey, 215-409-6616
jparker@constitutioncenter.org

Merissa Blum, 215-409-6645
mblum@constitutioncenter.org

**NEW NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER EXHIBIT TRACES
GOVERNMENT IMPACT ON THE AMERICAN DIET**

How Regulations and World Events Shape What We Eat

Philadelphia (September 30, 2015) – On Friday, October 9, 2015, the National Constitution Center opens a tasteful new exhibit, *What's Cooking, Uncle Sam? The Government's Effect on the American Diet*. Visitors can travel from “farm to table” as they discover how world events, innovation, government regulations, research, and economics have shaped what we eat and why.

What's Cooking, Uncle Sam? The Government's Effect on the American Diet will remain on display at the National Constitution Center through January 3, 2016. This exhibition was created by the National Archives Museum, Washington, DC, with support from the Foundation for the National Archives. The national tour of “What's Cooking, Uncle Sam?” is made possible by Mars, Incorporated.

In conjunction with *What's Cooking, Uncle Sam?*, this fall the National Constitution Center will present “What's Cooking? An Evening with American Chefs” an *America's Town Hall* program featuring leading health policy expert Ezekiel Emanuel.

What's Cooking, Uncle Sam? uncovers how the government's efforts to influence what Americans eat has led to unexpected consequences, dismal failures, and life-saving successes. The exhibit takes a thematic approach, inviting visitors to “dig in” to four broad topic areas: Farm, Factory, Kitchen, and Table.

Farm

Government has had a profound effect on the way farms are run and what they produce. The Department of Agriculture scoured the globe for new plant varieties, researched hybrid crops, distributed seeds to farmers, and controlled the prices of farm commodities. Visitors can learn how programs and legislation transformed agriculture in America.

Section highlights include:

- A musical program in support of the Office of Price Administration performed by Pete Seeger and others.
- A hybrid corn crossing plot. Hybrid corn is considered by many to be one of the most important discoveries in the history of farming.

-more-

Factory

Government's attempts to ensure the safety of an industrialized food supply have changed the nature of foods, production methods, labeling, and advertising. Public outcry over swill milk, rancid meat, and substandard tea led to the passing of the Pure Food and Drug Act and the creation of U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Food producers quickly capitalized on new regulations, touting their products as "pure," "enriched," and "unadulterated." Visitors can see how the government embraced advances in food technologies, performed research on food production, and secured patents for some of their methods.

Section highlights include:

- Upton Sinclair's letter to Theodore Roosevelt on the hazards of the meatpacking industry.
- Lab records and photographs of the "Poison Squad" research.

Kitchen

As scientists made discoveries about nutrition, the government sought to change the eating habits of Americans. Most efforts aimed to reform the homemaker through nutrition education and cooking classes.

Section highlights include:

- Aunt Sammy's (Uncle Sam's wife's) Radio Recipes.
- 1931 "Signs of Good Nutrition" poster.

Table

Although many of its overt attempts to change our diets were unsuccessful, the government did succeed in changing and homogenizing American tastes in other ways. Meals served to soldiers and school children instilled food habits and preferences that persist today. The diets and entertaining style of the Presidents and First Ladies were also influential, as many Americans wrote the White House for recipes and incorporated presidential favorites into their family meals.

Section highlights include:

- Rosalyn Carter's menus for State dinners.
- President Johnson's famous Pedernales River chili recipe.

What's Cooking, Uncle Sam? The Government's Effect on the American Diet is on loan from the National Archives Museum in Washington, D.C., until January 3, 2016.

The National Constitution Center is located at 525 Arch Street on Philadelphia's Independence Mall. The Center is open 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, until 6:00 p.m. on Saturday and from noon to 5:00 p.m. on Sunday. General admission is \$14.50 for adults, \$13 for seniors, students with ID, and youth (ages 13-18), \$8 for children (ages 4-12), and is free for active military. For more information, call 215-409-6700 or visit constitutioncenter.org.

-more-

Page 3 of 3 What's Cooking, Uncle Sam?

About the National Constitution Center

The [National Constitution Center](https://www.constitutioncenter.org) in Philadelphia inspires active citizenship as the only place where people across America and around the world can come together to learn about, debate, and celebrate the greatest vision of human freedom in history, the U.S. Constitution. A private, nonprofit organization, the Center serves as America's leading platform for constitutional education and debate, fulfilling its Congressional charter "to disseminate information about the U.S. Constitution on a non-partisan basis." As the **Museum of We the People**, the Center brings the Constitution to life for visitors of all ages through interactive programs and exhibits. As **America's Town Hall**, the Center brings the leading conservative and liberal thought leaders together to debate the Constitution on all media platforms. As a center for **Civic Education**, the Center delivers the best educational programs and online resources that inspire, excite, and engage citizens about the U.S. Constitution. For more information, call 215-409-6700 or visit constitutioncenter.org.

#