

Alfred University alumnus appearing as guest chef on Travel Channel's Food Paradise

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Wes Choy '01, executive chef
at Talkeetna Alaskan Lodge

TALKEETNA, AK -- Wes Choy, a 2001 Alfred University graduate, will be featured this weekend as a guest chef on the Travel Channel program, Food Paradise.

The Sunday, Jan. 21, episode of Food Paradise, "The Last Food Frontier," airs at 9 p.m. EST and features restaurants in Alaska. Choy, executive chef at Foraker Dining Room in the Talkeetna Alaskan Lodge, is among the chefs chosen to appear on the show.

Choy is in his third year as executive chef at Talkeetna Alaskan Lodge, which is in Talkeetna, AK, a little over 100 miles north of Anchorage and just south of Denali National Park. Before becoming executive chef in 2016, he was executive sous chef at the restaurant.

"Food Paradise was scouting for an episode about restaurants in Alaska and I was fortunate to be among the chefs chosen to be on the show, not only for the food but for the amazing view of the Denali Mountain Range," which can be seen from the restaurant, Choy explained.

A starting offensive lineman on the Saxon football team, Choy earned a bachelor's degree in accounting from Alfred University in 2001. He worked a few years in the accounting field in the Buffalo area before making a significant career change. Choy had worked in various culinary positions since high school, using those jobs to help pay for his college education. In 2006 he decided to pursue a career as a chef, moving to Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, and receiving his formal chef's training at the Vancouver Culinary Arts College.

He returned to Buffalo to open a sushi restaurant, but closed it after his father's death and briefly returned to the accounting profession. In 2009, Choy began an 18-month bicycle trip across the country, spending his time reflecting on life and retracing his Chinese heritage. It was during the trek that he decided that he would make cooking his career choice.

Choy wound up back in Vancouver, getting a job at the world-renowned Hawksworth restaurant, which had the greatest influence on his career as a chef. There, he met and learned from chefs who he says shared his passion for what has become his culinary specialty: "combining Asian foods and ingredients with European cooking techniques and styles, and vice versa."

He owned a restaurant in Las Vegas, Pasta Fresh, before beginning work at Talkeetna Alaskan Lodge in 2014. Sunday's episode of Food Paradise was filmed in August at the Talkeetna's Foraker Dining Room. Choy won't reveal what he has cooked up for the show, saying "people will have to tune in to find out."

