

Good relations on menu at July 4 celebrations

Independent Taipei mayoral candidate Ko Wen-je, second left, attends Fourth of July celebrations hosted by the American Institute in Taiwan at the Grand Hyatt Taipei yesterday.

Photo: CNA

An array of dishes made by a visiting US chef featured at an annual celebration in Taipei hosted by the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) yesterday to celebrate US Independence Day.

Chef Bryce Gilmore led local culinary experts in preparing pork belly sliders, blackened tuna and green chili pork shoulder, among other dishes.



AIT Taipei Director Christopher Marut said the dishes used ingredients from both the US and Taiwan.

Speaking in Mandarin, he said Taiwan was a top-10 destination for US agricultural and food exports, and added that Gilmore was visiting Taiwan as part of a US culinary diplomacy initiative.

Gilmore, recognized as one of Food & Wine magazine's "Best New Chefs" of 2011, is one of five American chefs traveling to East Asian markets to promote culinary exchanges, AIT said.

He is set to wrap up his visit to Taiwan on Sunday.

Marut also took the opportunity to laud the development of ties between Taiwan and the US.

The two sides, he said, had maintained cooperation in the areas of trade, culture, security, the environment, science, technology, health and others.

"We are working together to further enhance our robust commercial and economic relations through the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement," he said.

He also noted a stream of high-ranking US visitors to Taiwan, including officials and lawmakers such as Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Gina McCarthy, the first Cabinet-level official to visit Taiwan in nearly 14 years. McCarthy visited Taiwan in April.

Travel between Taiwan and the US had increased by 35 percent in the first year since Taiwan was admitted to the US Visa Waiver Program in November 2012, he said.

Yesterday's celebration was attended by hundreds of guests, including government officials and foreign officials based in Taipei.

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Joseph Shih (石定) offered birthday wishes to the US, which he described as Taiwan's "best friend."

Echoing Marut's remarks, Shih said Taiwan would continue to strengthen ties with the US in areas such as culture and education.

While the two countries do not have formal ties, the US government is bound by law to help Taiwan in its defense.

The Taiwan Relations Act and the Six Assurances issued by Washington to Taipei had helped play an important part in maintaining stability in the Taiwan Strait and the region, Shih said.