

Musaafer HTX & NYC Step Up and Join World Central Kitchen's Chef Corps, Expanding Global Impact

This dual-city presence positions Chef Istwal and the Musaafer teams in HTX & NYC to support World Central Kitchen's rapid-response efforts across regions.

HOUSTON, TX, UNITED STATES, June 16, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Chef Mayank Istwal,

“

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Ms. Mithu Malik

Executive Chef of the MICHELIN-starred [Musaafer in Houston](#), and the Musaafer restaurant group's co-founder Ms. Mithu Malik (of The Spice Route Company) have joined the prestigious World Central Kitchen Chef Corps, a global network of culinary leaders dedicated to providing fresh, nourishing meals in response to crises worldwide. This brings the total membership in Houston to 21.

With flagship locations in Houston and New York, Musaafer brings its distinctive “neoteric Indian” culinary philosophy to two of the nation's most dynamic food capitals. This

dual-city presence positions Chef Istwal and his team to support World Central Kitchen's rapid-response efforts across regions, combining culinary excellence with meaningful humanitarian outreach. In addition, his 100-day journey across India's original 29 states (now 28), has given the Musaafer team deep personal connections across the subcontinent - relationships they can call upon in times of need.

In Houston, Chef Istwal and co-founder Ms. Mithu Malik of Musaafer join a distinguished community of 19 other (for a total of 21) Chef Corps H-Town members, representing the spirit of collaboration and cultural richness that makes Houston one of America's most exciting food cities.

“We are honored to be accepted into such an illustrious group of global chefs and restaurants, and will be ready to step up and do our part whenever the need should present itself.” said Ms. Malik.

Chef Istwal's leadership at Musaafer has earned international acclaim, including back-to-back MICHELIN stars in 2024 and 2025. His approach blends deep respect for India's regional cuisines

with modern technique and storytelling, creating immersive dining experiences that celebrate both heritage and innovation.

Joining the Chef Corps reflects a natural extension of Musaafer's ethos -using food not only as an art form, but as a vehicle for care, connection, and community impact. Through this role, Chef Istwal and the Musaafer team will support World Central Kitchen's mission to deliver immediate relief to communities affected by natural disasters and humanitarian crises.

As Musaafer continues to expand its footprint from Houston to New York, its commitment to service remains constant: elevating the role of hospitality as a force for good, both locally and globally.

About World Central Kitchen

World Central Kitchen (WCK), founded in 2010 by José Andrés, is a nonprofit organization that is first to the frontlines, providing fresh meals in response to crises. Using a model of rapid action, local sourcing, and real-time adaptation, WCK has served more than 600 million meals worldwide.

The Chef Corps is a global network of culinary leaders who are on standby to help WCK mobilize quickly after disasters. These chefs are among the most trusted and connected members of their communities, ensuring that responses are locally led and carried out with care and dignity.

Houston Chef Corps members include including Chef Benchawan Painter of Street to Kitchen and Jantra, whose recent work with the TSA food program in Spring of 2026, has helped define the goodwill apparent among the city's vibrant and diverse culinary landscape. Together, these, and other Houston chefs such as Aaron Bludorn, Hugo and Ruben Ortega, Justin Yu, Evelyn Garcia, Suu Khin and a dozen or so more, stand ready to serve in crisis.

World Central Kitchen looks forward to continued collaboration with Chef Mayank, Musaafer and local Chef Corps members should future response efforts be needed in the region.



Mithu Malik, Chef Mayank Istwal, Shammi Malik receiving their 2025 Michelin Award in Houston, TX

[Chef Mayank's Media Page](https://mccartneystudios.com/chef-mayank-istwal) & Downloadable Assets:

<https://mccartneystudios.com/chef-mayank-istwal>

[Mithu Malik's Media Page](https://mccartneystudios.com/the-maliks) and downloadable Assets:

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