

American 'Food Stamp Chef' Takes on 11-Hour Halloween Cookathon in Dublin to Raise Money for Secret Street Tours

Chef Karl Wilder to Cook for 11 Hours in Dublin on Halloween for Secret Street Tours.

DUBLIN, DUBLIN, IRELAND, August 11, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Cookathon will bring together food, homelessness, celebrity guests and a very unusual Halloween challenge

“

Food gives people an excuse to sit down together. Once people start talking, they discover that the person they thought was completely different from them usually isn't.”

Karl Wilder

Chef Karl Wilder is planning to spend Halloween in a kitchen in Dublin, cooking continuously for eleven hours in an unusual fundraising event for [Secret Street Tours](#), the organisation whose guides include people with lived experience of homelessness.

The 11-Hour Halloween Cookathon will take place on Saturday, October 31, from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. at Ringsend &

Irishtown Community Centre, Thorncastle Street, Dublin 4, D04 P4F3. A live audience will be able to attend during the day, donate, and the event will also be broadcast online.

Wilder is perhaps best known in the United States as the ****Food Stamp Chef****, a name that came from his work demonstrating how to survive on an extremely limited budget. An [author](#) and entrepreneur as well as a chef, he now lives and works in Europe and is the founder of [The Chef Tours](#).

The idea for the Dublin event came from a very personal reaction to Secret Street Tours. Wilder, who is on the organisation's board, took one of its tours himself before becoming involved.

"I expected to learn something about homelessness," Wilder said. "What surprised me was how much I liked the guide. He was funny, he was interesting, and he was completely himself. We talked and laughed, and for a while I wasn't thinking about him as 'a homeless person' and myself as a visitor. We were just two people having a conversation."

That experience has shaped Wilder's thinking about the event. Rather than organising a conventional dinner with speeches and a fundraising appeal, he decided to create something that would allow people to meet, talk and participate.

The format is intentionally unpredictable. Wilder will cook for eleven consecutive hours, while invited celebrities, media personalities and other guests will be encouraged to arrive with a mystery ingredient. Wilder will then have to work that ingredient into whatever he is cooking at the time.

"The ingredient could be brilliant, or it could be absolutely terrible," Wilder said. "That's part of the fun. I'm committing myself to eleven hours, so once the first person walks in with something strange, there's really no going back."



Chef Karl Wilder and Milou

The Halloween theme also allows the event to play with the Irish origins of Halloween and Samhain without turning the day into a conventional Halloween attraction. A Halloween-themed container for the mystery ingredients is being suggested, with a cauldron available if the later hours of the event require an additional bit of theatre.

For Secret Street Tours, the fundraiser comes at a time when homelessness remains one of the most visible social issues in Dublin. The organisation's approach is unusual because its tours are led by people with lived experience, allowing guides to tell their own stories while developing employment skills and interacting directly with visitors.

That raises a question Wilder believes is worth discussing beyond the Cookathon itself: **Does human contact change the way people think about homelessness?**

"If you only ever see homelessness from a distance, it's easy to turn people into a category," Wilder said. "Once you've sat down with somebody, laughed with them and discovered that you have things in common, it's much harder to see them as somehow different from you."

That is one of several issues Wilder hopes the event will bring into the media conversation.

INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES

****Chef Karl Wilder is available for interviews before, during and after the October 31 event.****

Potential interview topics include:

The Food Stamp Chef:****** How cooking on a limited budget shaped Wilder's career and philosophy about food.

What happens when you stop seeing homelessness as an abstract issue:****** Wilder's experience taking a Secret Street Tour and meeting a guide with lived experience.

Can food create social connection?****** Why Wilder believes sitting down together can change how people relate to one another.

Why an 11-hour cookathon?****** The thinking behind turning a fundraiser into a live, unpredictable event rather than a conventional charity dinner.

The mystery ingredient challenge:****** Celebrity and media guests arriving with ingredients that Wilder has to cook with on the spot.

What food tourism can do beyond tourism:****** Wilder's broader belief that food can be a way into understanding a city and its people.

The changing travel industry:****** How artificial intelligence is changing the way people discover destinations and why human experiences may become more valuable as technology improves.

The Food Stamp Chef to international culinary entrepreneur:****** Wilder's career in America, Europe and the development of The Chef Tours.

Halloween and Samhain:****** The relationship between Ireland's ancient traditions and the modern Halloween phenomenon.

The Cookathon is particularly suited to ****radio, television and live interview formats****, because Wilder will be cooking throughout the day and guests will be arriving with mystery ingredients. Media organisations covering the event will have the opportunity to interview Wilder while the Cookathon is actually taking place rather than simply reporting on a completed fundraiser.

EVENT INFORMATION

11-Hour Halloween Cookathon

Saturday, October 31, 2026

9:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Live audience throughout the day

Ringsend & Irishtown Community Centre

Thorncastle Street

Dublin 4

D04 P4F3

The event is being organised to raise money and awareness for Secret Street Tours Dublin.

Chef Karl Wilder is available for media interviews.

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