

Michelin trained, Soweto-born chef offers SA chefs opportunity to work in Paris

Michelin trained Chef Wandile Mabaso, as a part of his SA Culinary Tour starting 21 July dubbed 'By Wandile's Invitation', has announced his French Culinary Bursary in South Africa. This will give talented, growth-hungry, up-and-coming South African chefs a chance to apply for a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to work in a Michelin-starred restaurant in Paris.



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The Soweto-born culinary artist and food disrupter has recently returned from the two and three Michelin Star restaurants, Le Maurice & Hôtel Plaza Athénée in Paris where he has dutifully served under the custodianship of Chef Alain Ducasse, who has acquired 21 Michelin stars throughout his illustrious career.

As a creative artist full of global experiences, Mabaso has worked in some of the best restaurants in the world and has prepared some culinary masterpieces for presidents, prime ministers, basketball stars, football stars and famous musicians like Beyoncé and Jay-Z, to mention but a few, in his culinary journey between New York and Paris Michelin starred restaurants.

Ambassador of French Cuisine to SA

Mabaso has been nominated by Ducasse as the ambassador of French Cuisine to the country, and in his endeavors to uphold the title as well as educate food enthusiasts on French techniques and cuisine, he will be offering “French cooking classes” during his SA Culinary Tour for chefs who would like to spend a couple of hours doing a class that will explore ingredients, food preparation and also French cooking techniques.



“I am privileged and excited about this journey in my life. Seven years ago, I took a leap of faith and made a decision to move from Miami to New York to realise my dream,” says Mabaso. “I had no money, no place to stay and no job, but I knew that what I wanted to do was learn to cook French cuisine. I knocked on French restaurant doors and offered to work in their kitchens for free so I could just learn. There were some nights where I would resort to sleeping on the streets of New York because I wasn’t earning any money, but I kept going until eventually, someone noticed my talent and attitude and offered me my first ‘paid job’ in New York. The rest is, as they say, history.”

This story of resilience and determination are the reasons why Mabaso has partnered with the IFSA (Instate France South Africa) and the French Embassy in SA to create his own funded bursary for an SA chef to experience the culinary mecca of the world and learn from some of the best chefs in Paris.

There will be three events where SA chefs can experience the cooking class and also stand a chance to be handpicked from all the participants to work with Mabaso to prepare and execute for the culinary tour. The chef will announce the winner of this inaugural initiative at the end of the culinary tour in November. To enter, you need to send an e-mail to info@wandilemabaso.com with a heading: French Cooking Class DBN/JHB or CPT depending on your closest city and a short motivation on why you should be chosen. Competition and cooking class are only open to qualified chefs.

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