

Regional UK & Ireland Winner of Global Cook for Change! Sustainability Chef Challenge Announced

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Gordon Carberry, a craft development chef with Sodexo Ireland has won the UK and Ireland regional final of the [Sodexo](#) global Cook for Change! sustainability chef challenge 2026 and will go on to compete against eight other Sodexo chefs from across the globe in the grand final which is being held in London in March 2026.

The global challenge, now in its third year, showcases the most talented chefs from within the Sodexo culinary community to unleash their creativity, showcase their love for food, and champion [sustainability](#) in the kitchen.

The competition began earlier this year with Sodexo's seven global regions holding their regional competition to find three chefs to compete in the regional finals, two runners up will also compete in the grand finale.

Sodexo UK & Ireland's judges included its most senior culinary experts, including Richard Learmount, food director, Matt Hay, head of culinary, as well as executive chefs David Ward and Stuart Bowman.

Last week Sodexo UK & Ireland's three regional finalists, Stacey Kniazeva, Roman Lovett and Gordon Carberry, travelled to Wittenheim in France for a three-day European semi finals which included culinary workshops and training sessions before competing for the coveted place to represent the UK & Ireland in the grand finale.

Gordon Carberry was announced as the UK & Ireland winner, with his dish 'Meacan Bán' (Irish for parsnip).

The dish comprises miso glazed parsnip, gouchujang, parsnip puree, popped chickpeas, wild rice, nori, citrus plant mayonnaise and crispy parsnip skins served with parsnip and apple shrub.

On being announced as the UK & Ireland winner Gordon said: "I love pushing myself outside of my comfort zone. I chose to take a humble ingredient and show it in as many different ways as I could. The experience so far has been incredible, all the finalists are talented colleagues, and I'm thrilled and honoured to be able to compete in the final."

Gordon, a craft development chef for Sodexo Ireland, has worked in restaurants ranging from Michelin, fine dining, bistros to now working in contract catering where he has found his home. Gordon loves to compete in culinary competitions and has been doing so for over a decade.

Matt Hay, Head of Culinary at Sodexo UK & Ireland said: "This is a fantastic competition which showcases what our talented chefs are creating every day for our guests across the region. All three finalists have demonstrated exceptional culinary skills from creating the concept of the dish to the production of it in a high-pressured competition setting. The whole Sodexo culinary community will be supporting Gordon as he prepares for what will be an exciting live cook-off to find the 2026 winner."

Each chef was asked to create one sustainable plant-forward or plant-based dish that showcases delicious global flavours and ingenuity with the use of ingredients, cooking techniques as well as incorporating a food waste element such as utilising trimmings, by-products or repurposing ingredients. Criteria also included low-carbon recipe development, a focus on health and nutrition and that the dish must feature sustainably sourced, local and seasonal ingredients.

Sodexo UK & Ireland have won the competition for the last two years and are the host region for the grand finale which will be held over two days in March 2026. The live cook-off will be held on 23 March 2026 in Luton at the UK headquarters of the competition's sponsor, the Rational Group, the world market and technology leader in the field of hot food preparation for professional kitchens.

The 2026 winner will be announced the following day at a gala event at the spectacular Vision Hall in central London. Special guests will join Sodexo chairwoman, Sophie Bellon and other senior leaders from across the Sodexo Group to enjoy a drinks reception and food showcase featuring dishes from the global chefs in partnership with Sodexo UK & Ireland's premium food brands The Good Eating Company; Fooditude; and Heritage Portfolio.

Jean Renton, CEO Sodexo UK & Ireland said: "Well done to our finalists Stacey, Gordon and Roman who have all demonstrated their individual ability to create innovative dishes that taste wonderful and champion local ingredients and environmentally responsible practices – something we instil through our food services whatever the setting.

"We are excited to be the host of the 2026 grand finale and look forward to welcoming chefs and guests from around the world to showcase our exceptional culinary talent and passion for hospitality. We will be cheering on Gordon and hoping for a third win but the level of competition is exceptional so we'll just have to wait until the grand finale."