World Central Kitchen

A Thank You from José Andrés

1 message

Lindsey, World Central Kitchen Thu, Nov 12, 2026



Dear friend,

As the holidays approach, I find myself thinking about the tables that shape our lives: a crowded kitchen counter, a folding chair someone pulls up at the last minute, or a plate passed down the line. And because of you, there's always room for one more seat.

This month, our founder José Andrés has a thank-you note for you below. Then Chef Simon Garnier, one of our culinary managers, takes you inside how our teams build menus, cook for whole communities, and answers how we cook in bulk.

1,285
Kitchen Corps Members Welcomed in October

81,148
Members in Our Kitchen Corps Community

Here's what's inside:

1. Thank you from Chef José Andrés
2. Staff Spotlight: Simon Garnier

3. An Exclusive Recipe for You
4. Your Questions Answered: What foods are easiest to prepare in bulk?

Thank you for being part of our kitchen.

With gratitude,
Lindsey

Lindsey Latham
Kitchen Corps Manager
World Central Kitchen

P.S. Curious about how we work? Email us with questions, or send along any topics you'd like to learn more about.



Friend,

I want to start with two words: thank you.

Every month, you show up. That steady, year-round giving is how WCK stays ready to respond. That is what it means to help build a table.

Today, we're launching our campaign, **One Table for All**. It is built on a belief you already live by: no one should be left without a seat, or without food.

I have always believed in one simple idea: **build longer tables**. You have been building this one all year.

When people sit together at one table, something extraordinary happens. A simple plate of food becomes more than a meal. It is comfort, dignity, and a reminder that someone cares.

I want to tell you why it matters

When someone is hungry, they need food today. Not tomorrow. Not after a committee meets.

So WCK shows up with the urgency of now. After the hurricane. In the middle of a wildfire. During the war. In the days when nobody else can get through. We cook with local chefs, buy from local farmers, and serve food that tastes like home. Because people want our respect, not our pity.

You bring something to WCK that no one else can: reliability. You make our response possible before the headlines begin. Every meal needs ingredients, fuel, kitchens, and the people on the ground who make it happen. Your monthly gift keeps that chain of care alive.

You are the reason we can say yes, quickly, when the call comes.

The table is set, and you have a seat at it, always.



Chef José Andrés
WCK Founder



Staff Spotlight
Simon Garnier

Simon Garnier is our Culinary Manager for Europe, based in Madrid, Spain. He joined WCK in 2022, volunteering in Poland to feed refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine. Today, he oversees food production across our responses, whether that means building field kitchens, helping partners set up community kitchens, helping restaurants shift to emergency meals in disaster zones, or packing shelf-stable food kits for bulk deliveries.

How do you and the teams on the ground decide what to cook on day one versus day thirty?

> On day one, we're still setting up, so the menu is built around what's available: our equipment, our stock, and our suppliers. By day thirty, the operation has settled, our capacity and team have grown, and the cooks have learned to trust each other and share their own knowledge of the local kitchen. Every dish we cook is a local recipe or a take on one. I like to work with a two-week menu and change it for the third week to bring variety. The first menu is built with local chefs and some research. By week three, we build the menu with our local team. For example, in Venezuela, I asked each chef in our kitchen to create one recipe, and we built the new menu from their dishes.

What types of food are best at each stage of a crisis (early, middle, and ending the response)?

> It always depends on the crisis and on who we're feeding.

- **Early:** After a flood, for example, people are busy cleaning their homes and putting their lives back in order. A sandwich is often the first meal because they can keep it and eat when they're hungry and ready for a break. First responders often prefer them too, as they can slip easily into their pockets or backpacks. In other responses, people need a hot, comforting meal right away.
- **Middle:** Hot meals for affected communities is our priority. Nothing is more comforting, warming and supportive than a hot meal.
- **Ending:** From there, it's about listening. We ask communities which meals they love and which ones they don't, and we keep adjusting.

What's the one meal that always makes you feel at home?

Pot-au-feu, my family's traditional Sunday lunch. Beef shank, with its marrow bone, simmers slowly for hours with veggies, until the meat falls apart and the broth is full of flavor. Served with a spoon of cream.



Simon shares how a local chef in Acapulco, Mexico changed the way he thinks about flavor.

Local cooks have always inspired me and shaped how I approach food. They show me time and again how deeply our palates are rooted in culture, and how surprising and delicious different combinations can be.

In Acapulco, a chef shared his grandmother's lentil recipe with us. It had pineapple in it and I was doubtful at first. Mixing those ingredients wasn't natural for me. One taste changed my mind. Lentils, pineapple, bacon, chorizo, and vegetables. It became the favorite dish of everyone we served and everyone on our team. To this day, it's the best lentil dish I've ever eaten.

From our kitchen to yours, please enjoy this small taste of what you make possible every day.

Click here for a PDF of the recipe.

🤳 Made the dish? Share your table with us!
Tag **@WCKitchen** and use **#WCKitchenCorps**



Your Questions Answered by Simon

What types of foods do you find easiest to make in bulk?

“I'd love to know what types of foods you find easiest to make in bulk - bread, lentils, etc. It is fascinating to me to see the giant pots and pans you use, and I love seeing your recipes.”

—Submitted by Jennifer S. Front Royal, VA

Great question! Those giant pots are usually simmering big batches of stew, the easiest and most efficient way to feed large numbers of people something nourishing and comforting.

In big pots, dry ingredients burn easily so we almost always cook with a sauce, which makes everything tastier too. We tend not to cook much pasta because it's hard to get the timing right so it doesn't arrive overcooked at distribution sites. We also avoid common allergens like nuts, gluten, shellfish, and seafood unless we can offer safe alternatives.

Bread needs heavier infrastructure, like big ovens, so we usually partner with local bakeries. When their supply chain is cut, we support them directly, like distributing corn flour. Other times we run bakeries ourselves, like our bakery truck in Gaza, which can produce 3,000 pitas an hour.

Cooking in bulk isn't that complex. Big pots are like small pots, just harder to stir! The real challenge is logistics: storage, transport, and securing the water, fuel and electricity to run our burners and trucks, all in the middle of a disaster area. For example, our bakery truck alone uses over 26 gallons an hour, more than 630 gallons a day if it runs around the clock. But as we always say: there's no problem, only solutions.