



OCEAN *of* FLAVOURS

Chef Alphonse Ishice Kocé

Chef Alphonse Ishice Kocé is looking forward to sharing his Kanak culture and cuisine at the OCEAN *of* FLAVOURS celebration in Auckland, 21-22 September 2026.

Throughout his culinary career, Chef Alphonse has always had the same ambition, to demonstrate the products from New Caledonia deserve a place among the world's finest cuisines.

Born and raised on Maré, part of Loyalty Islands of New Caledonia, Chef Alphonse is deeply connected to his Kanak culture and traditions, which hugely influences his cooking.

“My cooking is deeply rooted in my Kanak culture, inspired by the values passed down through my family, our customs and traditions, our respect for food and the importance of sharing meals together,” Chef Alphonse says.

“For me, cooking is about telling a story and if we continue to pass on this knowledge, our culinary traditions will never disappear.”

Chef Alphonse will get an opportunity to tell his story at the upcoming *OCEAN of FLAVOURS: One Ocean, Many Flavours* event, at Auckland University of Technology (AUT) School of Hospitality and Tourism.

Proudly presented by Pacific Trade Invest New Zealand (PTINZ), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and Pacific Cooperation Broadcasting Limited (PCBL), and supported by New Zealand Chef Peter Gordon ONZM, *OCEAN of FLAVOURS* will see celebrated Pacific chefs from Fiji, New Caledonia, Tonga, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea traveling to Aotearoa to join forces with some of New Zealand’s top chefs to demonstrate their culinary skills.

Chef Alphonse is part of the invited Pacific cohort, who, along with renowned chefs from New Zealand, will take part in a high-energy culinary collaboration on day one, and engage with food writers, influencers, and industry stakeholders on day two, culminating in a dinner for the public on Tuesday 22 September.

Working with the Pacific chefs, Chef Peter will work together to develop the dinner menu, using Pacific-sourced products for guests, to showcase the flavours of the Pacific and celebrate what the Blue Continent has to offer.

Destined career path

From a young age, Chef Alphonse knew he wanted to become a chef.

“I first moved to the neighbouring island of Lifou to study culinary arts, before continuing my training in Nouméa, where I earned my professional culinary diploma,” he explains.

“I then left New Caledonia for France to further my education and gain experience in fine dining.

“In 2007, I had the opportunity to begin my career alongside Yannick Alléno in Paris, before moving to London to work with Joël Robuchon, and a few years later, I reunited with Yannick Alléno in Dubai and then became head Chef at Café Pouchkine.”

Kanak ambassador

In 2020, Chef Alphonse returned to New Caledonia for what was meant to be a holiday however, the COVID-19 pandemic unexpectedly changed the direction of his career.

“I decided to dedicate myself to showcasing New Caledonian cuisine through a modern gastronomic approach, and opened my first restaurant, CELENERAW, which means ‘Sea and Land’, followed by Pacific Good Food.

“I became the first Kanak ambassador for New Caledonian cuisine, a role I carry with great pride and even after closing my restaurant in 2024 following the events that affected New Caledonia, I have continued to promote and defend the richness of our land, our ocean and our culinary heritage.”

Currently, Chef Alphonse works as a private chef through his company K2 Gastronomie Locale.

“My greatest inspiration in my work is our land,” he says.

“New Caledonia is blessed with extraordinary biodiversity and exceptional local produce, and I am also inspired by the dedication of our farmers, fishermen and livestock producers - without them, none of what I do would be possible.

“My role is to honour their work by transforming their ingredients into memorable culinary experiences.”

Similar but different

At *Ocean of Flavours*, Chef Alphonse cannot wait to share how every island and culture in the Pacific has its own traditions, techniques and stories.

“That diversity is what makes Pacific cuisine so special...this event is a wonderful opportunity to connect with our Pacific brothers and sisters and share our culinary cultures,” he says.

“Beyond gastronomy, these encounters create lasting human connections.

“They remind us that, despite our different backgrounds, we are all part of one Pacific family.”