

Great Irish Cuisine at Milwaukee Irish Fest 2017

Pádraic Óg Gallagher

WE AT THE Boxy House, were delighted to be invited to showcase our rendition of Irish Cuisine at the 2017 Milwaukee Irish Fest as part of the Temple Bar Trad Fest entourage, highlighting Irish music and culture. Our first meeting with the organisers of the Milwaukee Irish Fest took place during the Temple Bar Trad Fest in 2016, where we had the pleasure of presenting demos in the art of making traditional Leitrim Boxy and modernising Traditional Irish Cuisine. Needless to say, we were honoured to be invited to headline the Celtic Kitchen at the Milwaukee Irish Fest. With over 130,000 attendees over three days, this is the largest celebration of Irish and Celtic Culture in the world.

After months of preparation, our General Manager and Head Chef Dave Power, and I, left Dublin for Chicago with uniforms and knives (bags in the hold), arriving in Milwaukee some 15 hours later where our Irish Fest Celtic Kitchen hosts, Cynthia and Donna, whisked us straight to the Public Market go over plans for our engagement the following day.

Next morning up bright and early and off to do an interview on the Irish Fest site for Fox 13, the local News Network. Raced through making Boxy in the 90 seconds allocated, and while rushed it achieved the public relations goal for the Irish Fest. Straight to the Public Market for our first presentation with Jan and Jen in, what can only be described as, a dream demo kitchen. Dave and I made a starter of Boxy Loaf topped with StoneCrab Cold Smoked



■ Pádraic Óg Gallagher Owner Boxy House Temple Bar with Adrienne Donnelly Flaherty from Mohill and the Milwaukee Irish Festival

Salmon followed by Corned Beef and Cabbage in a Boxy Pancake with Parsley Sauce. To finish, we served our Baileys Cheese Cake. Chatting with some the audience we met a number of people who had already visited the Boxy House in Dublin. There was one young lady who drove down all the way from Chicago especially for our show!

With show number one finished and a success, we had to try out some local produce from the market, so it was off to the St Paul Fish company for lunch. This restaurant, run by JP Toske, sources the freshest seafood available. Pacific and Atlantic oysters were delicious but my mouth salivates every time I think of the soft shell crab. We could have stayed there all day eating and drinking, especially the Bloody Marys, but we had to prep for our five Irish Fest Celtic Kitchen shows. No rest for the wicked!

To try to get an understanding of the size of Irish Fest, think of our Bloom festival in the Phoenix Park. This one is similar in size with over one hundred and thousand people attending the three day festival. The music ranged from Celtic Rock to traditional and folk with one hundred acts on seventeen stages, celebrating everything Celtic, including Irish dancing, set dancing, pipers and of course some of the best in Irish cuisine by myself and Dave Power on the Celtic Kitchen stage.

Our show had seating for one hundred and eighty people with eight lucky competition

winners being served a three course meal at each show. We had to ensure we had adequate tastings for the audience. In Ireland, this would not have been a problem but working with different potatoes proved a little tricky. Do not use Yucan Gold potato variety to make Boxy! We made this mistake at the market gig and lucky for us we only had an audience of sixty and we were able to wing it. Yucan Gold are too waxy. We needed a high dry matter potato and Russets worked out fine.

Friday 4 PM came fast and thankfully we had a packed house with standing room only. To say I was nervous would be an understatement, but as a celebrity chef once said to me before going on stage, 'if you are not nervous then you are dead!' Dave and I played a blinder with me making the Boxy and Dave concentrating on the fillings. Mary Lee Hannon led an army of volunteers from Irish Fest including a couple of Leitrim ladies, Edel Logan from Ballinamore and Adrienne Donnelly Flaherty from Mohill. Team Boxy wooed the audience at each of the five shows with flavours and tastes of our famous Irish cuisine. Ireland has long been renowned for its fantastic produce. I feel very proud shouting about the wonderful cuisine available in Ireland today. We have always reared the best grass fed beef, greatest lamb, fattest tastiest pigs, fantastic fish and grown the freshest vegetables.

The main difference today is we have a plethora of exciting, highly qualified and expertly trained chefs, finishing these top grade products to an exacting standard.

Great food is now the norm in every town and city on the Island and we must shout loud and proud about it. I do so with pride whenever I get the chance, you should too.



■ Chefs arrest

