



National Public Radio  
635 Massachusetts Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20001-3753

Telephone: 202.513.2000  
Facsimile: 202.513.3045  
<http://www.npr.org>

For Immediate Release  
Jenny Lawhorn 202-513-2754  
[jlawhorn@npr.org](mailto:jlawhorn@npr.org) June 16, 2004

## P R E S S R E L E A S E



### NPR STARTS SEARCH FOR HIDDEN KITCHENS THE HIDDEN KITCHENS PROJECT Stories of Land, Kitchen & Community

From Peabody Award Winning Producers  
The Kitchen Sisters (Davia Nelson & Nikki Silva) and Jay Allison

SAN FRANCISCO--A new series of **sound rich radio** stories comes to NPR this Fall exploring the world of hidden kitchens, street corner cooking, legendary meals and eating traditions -- how communities come together through food. "The Hidden Kitchens Project" will be broadcast on NPR's *Morning Edition* each **Friday** beginning in October through the end of the year.

The Project will chronicle **stories of life and food** from an **unusual array** of kitchens. Kitchens tucked away in carwashes, test kitchens, soup kitchens, night kitchens, secret restaurants hidden in houses to feed new immigrant communities; **tiny kitchen economies** that reflect the way people live and adapt in 21<sup>st</sup> century America.

"Hidden Kitchens" is created by Peabody Award winning producers, The Kitchen Sisters (Davia Nelson & Nikki Silva) and Jay Allison. Like NPR's "Lost & Found Sound" and "The Sonic Memorial Project," "The Hidden Kitchens Project" is a **nationwide collaboration** and will include radio producers, community cooks, **street vendors**, grandmothers, chefs, **anthropologists**, **foragers**, public radio listeners and more. As with these two previous award-winning series the public will have the opportunity to call or write in with their own stories of **significant and unusual kitchens**, family food traditions, **community ceremonies** and recipes.

These highly produced stories of food will feature an **eclectic gathering of people** who find it, grow it, cook it, sell it, celebrate it, and think about it—like Valeria, who each night sets up a **mobile, rolling night kitchen** on the empty street outside a **cab yard** in San Francisco, and cooks Brazilian food all night for the more than 400 cabbies who have also come to America from her hometown in Brazil.

Some kitchens are **hidden by place, some by time** --- like the young women who for nearly one hundred years in the plazas near the Alamo came at twilight with makeshift tables, and big pots of chili to cook over open fires. The plazas teemed with people – soldiers, tourists, cattlemen and troubadours who roamed the tables, filling the night with music. These **chili queens** fed San Antonio and their families for nearly a hundred years, until public nuisance laws and health codes were enacted that shut them down to make the plazas more quiet and respectable places.

The Hidden Kitchens series will capture **seldom-heard voices**, sound and music that evoke a deep **sense of culture** and place. The project will travel the country to document stories of our kitchen cultures – past and present – **clambakes**, church suppers, **pancake** breakfasts, **political campaign fish fries** – wherever there is **food and tradition**. Beginning this spring, those interested in submitting a story can call our NPR **Hidden Kitchens Phone Line** at **(202) 408-0300**. Many of the pieces in the series will be shaped by the messages gathered from this **nationwide response**.

“Hidden Kitchens” will also feature an **hour-long special broadcast** which will be heard on public radio stations throughout the country and an **interactive Web site [www.hiddenkitchens.org](http://www.hiddenkitchens.org)** offering behind the scenes stories and photographs – a way for listeners to participate with their own food memories, kitchen wisdom and recipes.



###

The Kitchen Sisters (Davia Nelson & Nikki Silva) have been producing radio programs together since 1979. They are the creators of the 1999 Peabody Award winning series, Lost & Found Sound and the 2002 Peabody Award winning series The Sonic Memorial Project. Aired on NPR's All things Considered, these groundbreaking national collaborations have brought together independent producers, NPR, stations, artists, writers, archivists, historians and public radio listeners throughout the country to create memorable and significant radio.

Jay Allison is an independent broadcast journalist. His work airs on NPR's All Things Considered, PRI's This American Life, ABC News' Nightline, and other national programs. He is the recipient of four Peabody Awards and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's Edward R. Murrow Award for outstanding contributions to public radio, the industry's highest honor. He is the director of Atlantic Public Media and the founder of WCAI/WNAN, the public radio service for Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. He is also an innovator in online projects for public broadcasting, including Transom.org and The Public Radio Exchange (PRX.org).

NPR is renowned for journalistic excellence and standard-setting news and entertainment programming. A privately supported, non-profit, membership organization, NPR serves a growing audience of more than 22 million Americans each week via more than 770 public radio stations. International partners in cable, satellite and short-wave services make NPR programming accessible anywhere in the world. With original online content and audio streaming, npr.org offers hourly newscasts, special features and seven years of archived audio and information.