

Claire Keane

Second Street Bakeshop



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The founder of Second Street Bakeshop in Carrigaline in Cork first started cooking and selling her homemade caramel squares to fellow students in secondary school, as a means of raising funds for summer trips to visit the United States.

With a master's degree in Environmental Science, Claire emigrated to the US in 1999, with the intention of pursuing a career in the environmental area. After growing disillusioned, however, by the poor response with which wider society was meeting the climate emergency, she found herself craving the creativity that comes from being in the kitchen.

Following a couple of years of fine-tuning her culinary skills, Claire set up an artisanal shortbread, caramel and chocolate company, Clairesquares, in San Francisco in 2006. The success of the firm surprised even Claire, with Haagen-Dazs choosing to turn one of her cookies into a flavour of its world-famous ice cream in 2015.

Claire sold the company in 2019 before moving back to her native Cork. The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic restricted her to the kitchen, where she once again set about experimenting with toffee and shortbread.

Encouraged by the feedback from friends, and noticing an opening in the Irish market for American-style sweet treats, Claire set up Second Street Bakeshop in September 2021.

From her base at Cork Incubator Kitchens in Carrigaline, Claire produces Second Street's toffee-heavy brittle, which she sells both online and in retail outlets nationwide including Super Valu stores as part of the Food Academy program.

Her hope is to break into the retail market and grow her workforce beyond the support she receives from her sister in the kitchen, and her father who helps with deliveries.

Claire is grateful to ACORNS for providing a support network for women. "It's a valuable organisation that helps women elevate their businesses," she adds.

Providing early stage female entrepreneurs, living in rural Ireland, with the knowledge, support and networking opportunities to meet and even exceed their current aspirations.



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
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