

ROGER MOOKING

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Chef Series with Dufflet Rosenberg | November 2 2011



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1. I've read that you are a self-taught baker, how did you get into baking?

I baked a few of my mother's favourite recipes for a restaurant in Toronto, a cafe actually, called the Cow Cafe and I liked what I did. That's really how I started, I didn't have much experience at that point. I wanted to be something in that industry, I just didn't know what. So this opportunity came up and I said, okay, I think I can do that, and that's how it all started. I did bake a little bit as a teenager but not at the level that I do now. And my mom's chocolate cake recipe is still one that we used today. I've tweaked it here and there, but it's pretty much still the same.

2. You've been given the title, the Queen of Cake in Toronto. When did you realize that you truly are the Queen of Cake?

Well, I think people may say that, but I feel like it's more of a pun because we're on Queen Street. And I really think it's because we've been around for so long and it's more so because of longevity. It's like the Queen. I mean how long has she been the Queen? That's like me.

3. What about baking appeals to you?

I think when people do it as a hobby it can be very satisfying. What I love about baking is how you can see it from beginning to middle to end. You experience the entire thing over a number of stages; it is such a methodical process. It's all chemistry. Unlike cooking, where you cook and then eat it in 2 seconds, where as baking you can have it for a couple of days. I mean, I am a little bit of an impatient person but I have the patience to bake but not the patience to cook. Of course I love eating, I love eating all the spices and flavours. Indian food. Korean food. I love everything. I love it all. I'm just not interested in the process of making it. I'm not a bread baker either, the process of making bread irritates me, I don't like waiting, like I said I'm impatient. I mean I love bread but it is the process of cakes and cookies that I love. I remember when I started in this industry and I was handling meat, I thought, this really isn't for me, but the butter and the flour and the sugar, that's for me.

4. As someone who was born and raised in Toronto, what are some of your favourite things about the city?

I would have to say cycling in Toronto. My husband and I have a tandem and we often go out of town, put the bike on a car, and go ride for a day. We have a whole route where we go out to Mississauga, sort of through Etobicoke to Mississauga then Queen Quay. When we come back, we like to watch the planes underneath the runways. Sometimes I'll take the Humber bike path because we're out in Etobicoke now. I'll jump onto the Humber up to Berry Road and then down, just past Prince Edward, where I have to walk with my bike, carry it up three flights of stairs and then ride along Royal York. It's really quite nice there. Hopefully I can get a few more rides in before it gets too cold.

5. What do you love about cycling?

Well people have said that my husband and I should write stories about our tandem trips, because we discover a lot of things on our trip. We like to see what the bike tour companies are doing but then we make our route. When you're on a bike trip you end up seeing things that you don't see in cars, you just end up on the highway in a car. On a bike, you get a whole different feel of the city, you get the good, the bad and the ugly.

6. What is soul food to you?

To me it's comfort food. The things I bake, having a bowl of munchies and fried chicken. I was actually just saying the other day how you can't get good fried chicken in Toronto.