

Great British Bake Off Episode 4 – Tips from the Scottish Women’s Institutes (SWI) On Desserts and Puddings

The nine remaining home bakers will be hoping to savour sweet taste of success when putting desserts before Paul Hollywood and Mary Berry in this week’s episode of the Great British Bake Off.

Dorrett is the latest contestant to be ejected from the tent after her bread creations failed to make the grade in last week’s show.

This time around, the bakers are being challenged to create crème brulees, Austrian spanische windtorte and baked cheesecakes.

The perfect amount of wobble is needed in a crème brulee, a rich, creamy custard usually flavoured with vanilla, according to the SWI’s Mary Young, Stirling, Clackmannan and West Perth vice-chair.

She advises: “When baking the custards they must be surrounded with warm water to come halfway up the ramekins, baked really slowly until just set retaining a ‘wobble’!

“Then chill for as long as possible, four hours or overnight.

“The brulee is a caramelised sugar topping and to make this, heat the grill to high, sprinkle a thin layer of sugar on top and grill for 2-3 minutes until the sugar caramelises. Cool but do not refrigerate. “

Meringue is a key part of the Spanische Windtorte which also contains cream and soft fruit.

Basic meringue has only two ingredients - egg whites and sugar - and Mary says this is best made the night before and left to dry in a switched-off oven for several hours.

“It’s important to ensure the mixing bowl and whisk are spotlessly clean,” she says. “Egg whites should be at room temperature and as fresh as possible. Don’t rush the whisking process, if the egg whites are not beaten for long enough they won’t hold their shape when baked.

“Adding the first half of sugar gradually, beating well between each spoonful, and then folding in the second half works well. Meringue can be piped or spooned onto a baking parchment lined tray and baked in a cool oven.”

Pavlova is a meringue variation with a chewy texture from the addition of vinegar and cornflour, which softens it, allowing it to be cut into portions when serving and works best for layering with cream and seasonal fresh berries.

Meanwhile cooked meringue – also known as Italian meringue – does not absorb moisture so readily and is suitable for meringue baskets, and egg white and sugar placed together into a bowl and whisked over hot water until stiff.

Three baked cheesecakes make up the show-stopper and Mary and Paul will be looking for faultless offerings. To help achieve this, our SWI expert says that all ingredients should be at room temperature.

“Use a spring-form tin or foil lined baking tin,” continues Mary. “Set the oven – watch the temperature – too high a heat can cause the top to crack.

“A water bath is excellent if you want a silky texture. Leave to cool in the tin for as long as possible while preparing toppings.”

The SWI has dropped ‘Rural’ from its name, unveiled a new logo and motto, ‘Women Together’ and launched a new website.

New Institutes being formed and taking up themes and activities that reflect their own interests, lifestyles and communities, alongside existing SWI groups where education and training in home skills, family welfare, citizenship and friendship remain the key aims. Baking and crafts remain among the most popular activities but they now exist alongside activities such as ukulele playing, speed crafting and wine tasting.

For more details of how to find your nearest institute, or advice on how to set up a new one, visit www.theswi.org.uk or go to its Facebook pages at <https://www.facebook.com/ScottishWomensInstitutes>.

The next episode of The Great British Bake Off will be screened on Wednesday at 8pm on BBC One.

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