

Great British Bake Off Episode 5 – Tips from the Scottish Women’s Institutes (SWI) on sugar, gluten and dairy free cakes and bakes.

As the Great British Bake Off reaches a half way point, it’s clear that Wednesdays may never be the same again.

Fuelled by Mary’s enviable knowledge and Paul’s cutting critiques, the show has caused a national baking frenzy.

Sadly, last week’s episode saw the departure of the much loved contestant, Sandy Docherty. Her witty humour and positive attitude had positioned her as one of the nation’s favourites but her crème brulee just didn’t cut it with the judges.

Episode 5 will see bakers try their hand at sugar, gluten and dairy free cakes and bakes. From upside-down pineapple cake to carrot cake, gluten free pittas to ice cream rolls; the contestants are tasked with creating healthy options, without compromising on taste.

Sugar is important in cake making not just for sweetness but to add structure, moisture and caramelised features, according to the SWI’s Mary Young, Stirling, Clackmannan and West Perth vice-chair.

She advises, “Sugar substitutes are available, the best of which are made from Stevia plants, therefore are natural. There are many different brands, but generally only half the amount of sweetener is required.

“Personally, my favourite sugar substitute for making a sponge cake is honey. For the filling, I’d look for sugar free jam and use whipped cream sweetened with sweetener. And don’t forget, fruit is also naturally sweet and can be used as such in recipes.”

Paul will be judging the technical challenge of gluten free pittas and for which, he will be looking for the perfect pitta pocket.

Much like other breads, patience is required to get the best result, explains Mary.

“These days, gluten free flour is readily available at most local supermarkets. It is milled from rice, potato, tapioca and natural gum, and is a great alternative to wheat bread flour.

“The contestants will need to bear in mind that gluten free flour is more absorbent and because of this, will require more liquid.”

And finally, the showstopper.

“A personal favourite of mine, ice cream rolls. I choose a recipe based on coconut milk or almond milk instead of cream, to suit those who are lactose intolerant or vegan,” explains Mary.

“I like adding fruit and nuts to my recipe which can make for interesting flavours and textures. Use an ice cream maker and also set the fast freeze to the coldest temperature – the ice cream will need to be as solid as possible for handling while coating with jam and then sponge.”

Mary suggests making a jam to suit the flavour of the ice cream and complement the sponge.

“Don’t overcomplicate matters and stick with a whisked sponge recipe - as in a Swiss roll – which when spread with the jam, and wrapped around the ice cream, should successfully form the ice cream roll.”

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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