

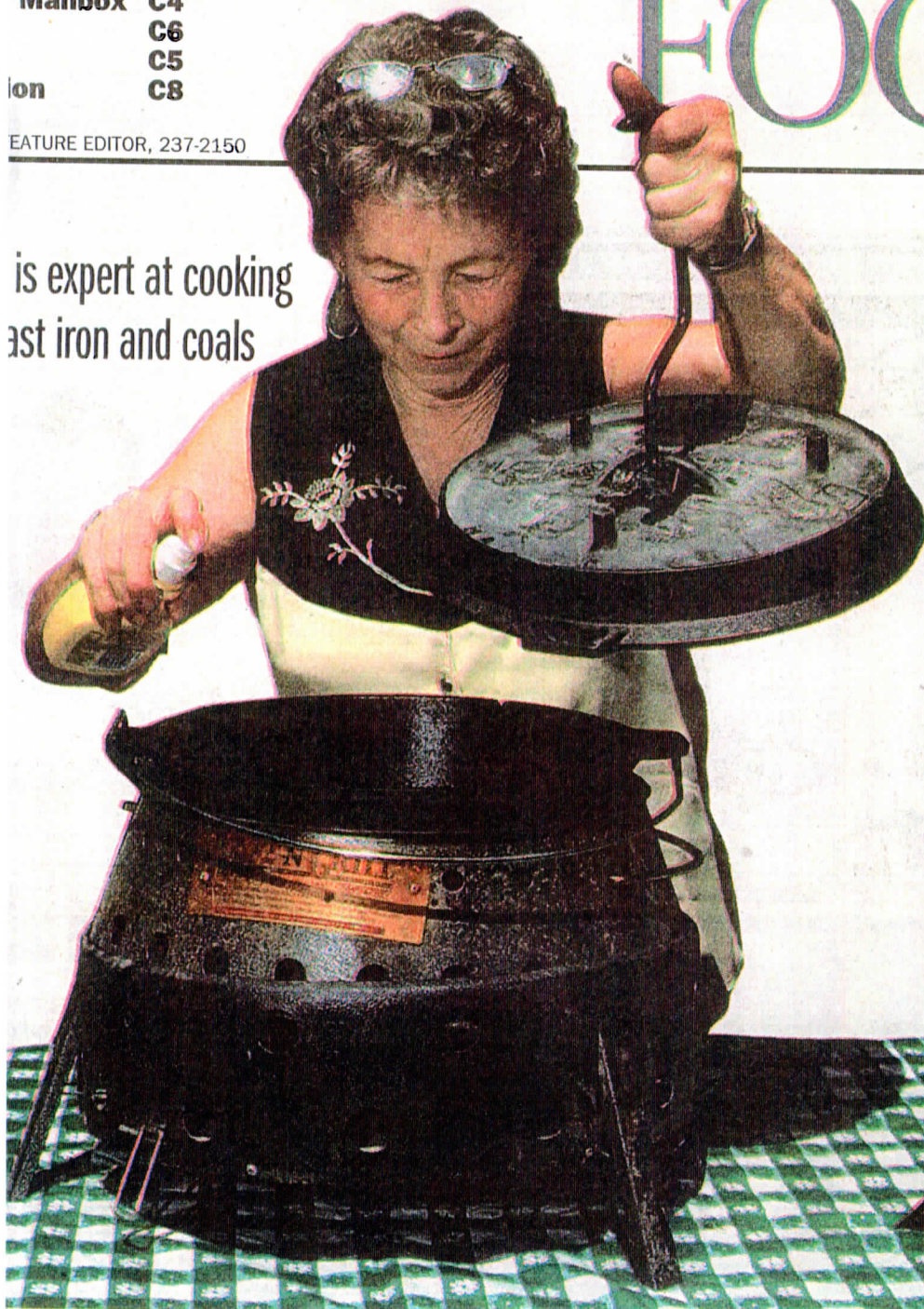
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FEATURE EDITOR, 237-2150

FOOD

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is expert at cooking
ast iron and coals



MICHAEL BRANDY, DESERET MORNING NEWS

oan of Sandy may be the only woman in Utah to make her living with a cast iron pot.

The basics

Dutch oven connoisseur Colleen Sloan shares her cooking tips and recipes with thousands of hungry campers and Boy Scouts each year.

The popular cast-iron pots are a lifetime investment and will outlive those who purchase them if well cared for, she says. The basics involved in cooking with and cleaning a Dutch oven are as follows:

➤ A new Dutch oven must be "seasoned" before using by heating it to harden the protective coating applied by the manufacturer. It can be heated in the oven, in the fire or inside a barbecue grill.

When it's cool, scrub it in warm, soapy water and rinse thoroughly with warm water, then put it on a hot stove or a hot oven to dry it thoroughly. Then apply a light coating of oil or shortening and bake it in the oven at 450 to 500 degrees for one hour. The resulting finish gives the pot a "no-scrub" surface that easily comes clean with a solution of one part vinegar to four parts water.

➤ After cooking and cleaning the pot, always dry it with heat, either in the fire or in the oven. This is the only way to evaporate moisture from the pot to avoid rusting. Place a paper towel inside the pot before storing to absorb any residual moisture.

➤ Because a Dutch oven builds and radiates heat much like a traditional oven, cooking is disrupted when you remove the lid. Sloan swears you'll know when the food has finished cooking, "You'll smell it without having to take off the lid. That's how you know when it's done."

➤ When cooking with charcoal briquets, always put more heat on top of the Dutch oven lid than underneath the pot. Coals should be placed evenly around the perimeter of the pot, rather than clustered in the center.

➤ Heat of 300 to 375 degrees is sufficient to bake almost any dish. To determine how many briquets are needed to reach this temperature, add three to the size of the oven and place that amount on top; subtract two from the size of the oven for the bottom. For example, if you have a 12-inch oven, you'll need 15 briquets on top and 13 briquets on the bottom. Each additional briquet adds 18 to 20 degrees to the cooking temperature.



VALERIE PHILLIPS

Cooking for stars is sweet

HOLLYWOOD — Although Hollywood is synonymous with film stars, it's unlikely that visitors will actually rub shoulders with them. But, I guess I got the next best thing — to rub shoulders with the people who feed them.

Devin Alexander, owner of Cafe Renée Catering, and Sherry Yard, executive pastry chef for Wolfgang Puck Worldwide, both spoke to food editors on June 26 at the Food News Seminar, sponsored by the Los Angeles Daily News and General Mills. The two chefs spoke during a dinner at Vert, Puck's restaurant next to the Hollywood Renaissance Hotel. The food editors were in town for the Pillsbury Bake-Off.

Going Dutch

Learn more

Colleen Sloan's cookbooks and backcountry cooking information are available at www.logcabinrubb.com or www.happycamper.com.

By Carrie A. Moore

Deseret Morning News
ONLY HER NOSE knows when dinner is ready.

That refined sense of smell—and a brain packed with every conceivable cooking tip—has kept Colleen Sloan spreading the Dutch oven gospel of good grub for the past 40 years.

She's written and self-published six cookbooks. And she's traveled to 49 different states and given hundreds of demonstrations. The Beehive State's own Dutch oven diva, Sloan may be the only woman in Utah to make her living with a cast-iron pot.

Rather, a cast of cast-iron pots. At last count, she had approximately 170 of them.

And if those pots could talk, they'd tell of sitting on the coals in 20-below weather in a Montana winter. Or clanging along a mountain trail atop a mule, headed for a Scout Jamboree. Or simmering as part of a Winter Olympics feast for 1,400 people that Sloan managed to serve in downtown Salt Lake City alongside cowboy poetry back in 2002.

She has a bean pot that dates to 1734, decades before the Revolutionary War, a cast-iron fry pan with legs inherited from her mother's stove, and another with 6-inch legs that no doubt sat atop many a campfire. Images of the cast-iron cookware hang on her wall and dangle from her ears, a testament to her love affair with what she believes is the finest type of pot ever invented.

"Dutch ovens were actually the original pressure cooker and crock pot put together. Everything that comes out of them is tender and tastes so much better than if it was cooked in the microwave, in the oven or on the stove top," she says.

That's because true Dutch oven cooks "never lift the lid" until their nose tells them the food is done, meaning all of the nutrients that went into the pot stay there.

The legend of backcountry Dutch oven cooking in this country dates to 1707, she says, when a Brit named Abraham Darby brought his cast-iron pots



Dutch oven cook and cookbook writer Colleen Sloan has approximately 170 Dutch ovens.

Please see SLOAN on C2

city chef Puck for 10 years, and her desserts have been eaten by Hollywood's elite at his restaurants and at such galas as the Governor's Ball after the Academy Awards. When Puck cooked against TV's "Iron Chef" Masaharu Morimoto, Yard did the dessert. Her cookbook, "The Secrets of Baking," won a 2004 James Beard Award.

She illustrated the demands of her job with a story of leaving work one night at 7 p.m., telling Puck she'd been there since 7 a.m. "He said, 'That's 12 hours—that's only half day's work!'"

When she's trying to create a special dessert, she gets her fresh ingredients at the local farmer's market. "That's the heart and soul of what my desserts are, what makes my desserts different."

The stacked dessert she made for the food editors at Vert included small, sweet strawberries and white chocolate, buttermilk ice cream and crème fraîche. At a party for Pillsbury Bake-Off contestants, there was a flowing chocolate fountain where people could dip cherries, chunks of angel food cake and other morsels.

Devin Alexander caters hundreds of Hollywood dinners and parties, with past clients including Reba McEntire and Carol Burnett.

The old saying "in Hollywood, it's who you know" is true, she said. After graduating from culinary school, she became interested in a guy who was a "key player" on the "Late, Late Show." But when he finally called, it was to ask her to make four dozen appetizers for a segment on the show.

"I spent all of \$7 on the ingredients," she said. (That included red food coloring to make "instant" salmon mousse.) But staffers liked them, and that led to an offer to try out as the show's permanent caterer. She next catered for a TV show called "Take A Chance with the Stars," where actress Lisa Rinna loved her sweet-and-sour meatballs.

Then she put the word out that she made healthy, flavorful fare to lose or gain weight for movie roles. To help actor Jay Mohr, who had to lose weight to play an AIDS patient in the 1996 movie "Playing by Heart," Alexander fed him ahi tuna filets on cucumber matchsticks with wasabi sauce. Most of her other dieting clients have confidentiality contracts, so she can't divulge their details.

What makes stars different? "Stars are used to getting exactly what they want, even if it's a bowl of M&Ms with all the green ones picked out. And they tend to eat off expensive china, which slows down the clean-up process."

Some are generous—she was tipped \$500 once for a Thanksgiving dinner for nine. "Others penny-pinch like crazy," she added.

Her rule: "Under no circumstances can you be star-struck. You have to be aware of their work, but don't gush."

She also sets limits, turning down a permanent personal-chef job after the celebrity hired her to cater an event, then put off giving her menu preferences. "I finally called her agent and said, 'It's three days before the party, and I don't know what food she wants me to do yet.'" The celebrity then personally e-mailed her and tried to woo her to stay on permanently.

"It's funny how, when you're not interested in working for them, it makes you a hot commodity," she said. "But without any communication, it would be a miracle if I could make her happy."

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Nutritious blueberries easy to dress up

Associated Press

BLUEBERRIES MAY BE described approvingly as nutrient-dense, and low-calorie, but most of us are just pleased that at the peak of their season they taste so juicy good.

Fresh fruit can be a no-work dessert eaten as is, sprinkled with sugar, drizzled with cream. Yet it takes only a little more work to turn the fruit into a seemingly dressed-up dessert—as in this blueberry cheese tart flavored with lemon curd.

You can buy the pie crust ready made, and the lemon curd, too. But the creamy curd, a smooth, thick sauce sold in the jams and jellies sections of supermarkets, is simplicity itself to make and the homemade version has a taste as fresh as the berries.



Only Blueberry Cheese Tart can be made with store-bought pie crust.

RECIPES

LEMONY BLUEBERRY CHEESE TART

(Preparation 10 minutes, baking and cooling 20 minutes, chilling time 2 hours)

9-inch frozen pie crust, thawed
8-ounce container (1 cup) mascarpone cheese, or 8-ounce package cream cheese, softened
5 tablespoons lemon curd (recipe follows)
2 cups fresh blueberries
Preheat oven to 375 F.

Press the pie crust into a 9-inch tart pan with removable bottom, or leave in the original aluminum pie tin. With the tines of a fork, pierce the bottom and sides. Bake until lightly browned, about 10 minutes; refrigerate until cool, about 10 minutes.

In a small bowl, stir together cheese and 3 tablespoons of the lemon curd until smooth. (If mixture is too thick to spread, stir in a small amount of milk.) Spread mixture in the bottom of the cooled tart shell.

In a medium-size bowl, gently stir the blueberries and the remaining 2 tablespoons lemon curd until thoroughly combined. Spoon the blueberries evenly over the mascarpone layer. Cover and chill 2 hours. To serve, remove the sides of the tart pan, if used; cut into wedges.

Makes 8 servings.

Nutrition information per serving: 290 cal., 2.8 g pro., 19.8 g fat, 26 g carbo., 122 mg sodium, 28.4 mg chol.

LEMON CURD

(Adapted from a recipe by Maida Heatter)

3 large eggs plus 1 egg yolk
1 cup sugar
1 stick (4 ounces) unsalted butter, cut in pieces
2 teaspoons finely grated lemon peel (yellow part only)
½ cup fresh lemon juice

In the top of a large double boiler, lightly whisk eggs, yolk and sugar; stir in the butter, lemon peel and juice. Place pan over simmering water over medium-low heat; cook, stirring frequently, until thick, about 20 minutes. Strain and cool. Refrigerate or freeze leftovers for another use.

Makes 2¼ to 2½ cups.

—Blueberry recipe created for AP by the U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council