

Kids Hero - Allyson Gofton

Where were you born?

I was born in Launceston, Tasmania - and no I don't have two heads!

How many in your family?

There's only my brother and I now, but I have lots of brothers and sisters-in-law and nieces and nephews on my husband's side, which is really cool.

How do your family feel about you being famous and do you like being recognised?

They don't think I am famous and neither do I. I just had a cool job that involved television.

What were your favourite subjects at school?

Oh that's easy to guess.....cooking and sewing at High School and at Matriculation I loved Ancient and Tudor history, Environmental Science and Geography. My husband who has a degree in Science reckons I did soft subjects!

What made you want to be a cook?

My Dad insisted that I had a trade!!!! I wanted to go to Uni to study history and drama, but that was not to be. It all worked out just fine in the end.

What is the best thing about food?

Eating it!!!!

Who are your mentors and why?

My Chef for being a teacher and showing that people cannot do a job unless they are shown the skills in the first place; my Dad for teaching me never to give up and if you stumble to pick yourself up and have another go; Tui Flower for teaching me the skill of writing about food for mid-market New Zealand to inspire Mums and Dads to keep on cooking for their families a guy called David Drees, who was my boss when I worked in advertising and who taught me about being answerable to clients, to get the brief right for the target market and to be accountable to a client especially as they are paying the bill!!

What inspires you?

My family - they need food every day, small new innovative food businesses who are usually incredibly creative and New Zealand's fine produce, especially our beef and lamb which I love to cook with.

Where is your favourite place to travel to and why?

Oh well here's a toughy as I love to go home to Tasmania which has become a boutique food lover's dreamland, and then next would have to be Sri Lanka - wonderful curries, Bali - fragrant fresh fruit - Spain - I love their tapas.

Your favourite pastime?

I don't have a lot of free time as I like to spend most evenings doing things with my children, but if I do get some time I have a cook's garden that always need something being tended to plus I love to knit, tapestry, sew and read social history particularly where it relates to food. I have just finished the Cadbury Wars by Deborah Cadbury - a great read.

What is your favourite recipe and why?

Irish Stew because my Mum made it for me every time I went home.

What is your favourite kitchen utensil and why?

Well next to a good knife a set of saucepans and the usual kitchen essentials, It would have to be my microplane grater, it makes zesting a lemon or grating parmesan a breeze.

What recipe best reflects NZ?

Roast Lamb in any guise from the shoulder to the leg or lamb cutlets. Lamb is pretty synonymous with all things Kiwi. Though I have to say I am not a lover of mint sauce with it - all that vinegar over prime NZ lamb - I'll pass on that!

Your favourite music?

Oh I have an eclectic taste in music from Lenord Cohen to I am Kloot to Bruce Springsteen and more. It all depends on my mood.

Favourite books and movies?

For books well at the moment I'd have to say Harry Potter as I read the whole series to my son and so for the memories I banked over that 18 month period - priceless! Movies, oh well I am not the greatest movie fan, but I do like a laugh and I went 4 times to see Death at a Funeral and I laughed out loud every time.

How many books have you written?

Lots, big and small but it's around 20 now.

Who would you most like to have dinner with and why?

Well an odd one really. My Dad went to war for King and country and we had WW 11 drummed into us as kids. So I reckon the man who'd love some good Kiwi food would have to be Churchill - what a doggedly determined man he was and thank God he was, we should say. But he loved good food and given he admired our Anzac soldiers so much I am sure he'd love roast Kiwi lamb and then I could add in a Pavlova, a few Anzac biccies and a little chilled NZ wine. Not to mention the stories from behind the scenes!

If you could be someone else for a day who would it be and why?

John Key, I'd love to find out what all those people in the Beehive actually do!

Your favourite saying?

Smile with your eyes - it shows you mean it.

What three things would your best friends use to describe you?

Generous, kind, loyal.



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