



# TAKE 5

## Verity Walcott, the cook behind Instagram @forthe flavour shares her foodie origin story

**Bath-based Instagrammer Verity Walcott spent the lockdowns cooking – but her passion in the kitchen didn't wane with freedom, as she continues to perfect her considerable culinary skills. She shares her recipes via her Instagram account, @forthe flavour – and two favourites opposite.**

### Where did the cooking love start?

I worked in a bakery from when I was 15 until I left home for university – that's where my fascination with baking began.

To my boss's surprise, I would happily volunteer to take the shift out the back, pot washing – which had nothing to do with enjoying washing trays of course, but everything to do with wanting to overlook the baker's kitchen. I remember beautifully decorated lines of custard puff creams, all perfectly consistent in shape, size and decoration, seeing bakers jostling piping hot trays, watching bread steam fill the room.

### Did you ever make it in there with them?

The bakers knew I loved learning about baking and so took great

pride in showing off their bakes, often calling me over to come and see what they were making. Sometimes they would talk me through the technical processes.

### Have you ever fallen out of love with cooking?

I went through a period in my life where creating and making food was of little or no importance to me – living and working in London will do that to you. My food passion was reignited when I met my husband, who is Sicilian. A few trips to beautiful Sicily made me fall in love with cooking once again.

### Tell us about those Sicilian food experiences...

The taste of fresh pasta cooked by Nonna, my husband's grandmother, whipped up in what seemed like seconds; a trip to a little island where we met a man in a van on the beach stuffing ciabattas with caper tuna and mayo, every sandwich with a squeeze of fresh lemon juice and drizzle of herbs. It still goes down as the best tuna sandwich I have ever tasted.

A meal at a Sicilian's dinner table is an all-night affair with many dishes. And who's complaining when it's washed down with homemade red wine?

### Closer to home, what are your favourite Bath foodie brands and places?

I do my weekly veg shop at Stokes on Moorland Road, where they also have unique Middle Eastern spices and grains; I get all my authentic Italian produce from Avellino's Italian Deli; Scoop Wholefoods is another favourite; and I use Seven Hills Chocolate for most of my chocolate bakes.

### You're in the kitchen, creating a new recipe. What next?

It normally starts with knowledge of the basics. Most people understand a basic cake batter ratio for example – it's composed of four ingredients: flour, eggs, butter and sugar, and the use of equal amounts. If you follow that format, but then choose

to substitute the flour with a different grained flour – you have already started creating your own unique recipe. Sure, you can find recipes online, but why not create something based on the knowledge you already have and make it your own?

### Have you had any major kitchen disasters?

Yes, many! This one still makes me cringe: I completed a cookery course at Ashburton Cookery School just after the first lockdown. At the end of the course, we had a three-day exam that felt a bit like being on *Masterchef*. I had made the most lovely-looking choux pastry shells, which needed filling with crème patisserie, before being dipped in chocolate to make profiteroles. I

over whipped the cream, which split my crème patisserie.

### Oh no! How did you get through it?

I had to think on my feet and so I stuffed them with whipped cream, otherwise my teacher would have been biting into a dry choux pastry, or I would have had nothing to present. I passed so it couldn't have been that bad, but I haven't had it in me to revisit that recipe since...

### What's foodie Instagram like?

Sharing recipes has brought me a lot of joy. I often get DMs from people who have tried my recipes – sometimes they share photos or ask for advice. I feel honoured that they've seen a picture of mine that inspires them.

### To sum up, what do you love most about baking?

Baking is like a mystery – it's mathematical, but even with a recipe, the result can differ. You follow the steps, measure the ingredients, calculate the time exactly, but some things are out of your control. The result can be either perfect or a total disaster! In many ways, this is part of the joy of baking for me. It's about letting go, giving things a try and not being afraid to fail. ■

For more: Instagram @forthe flavour



**V**erity shares her sumptuous and creative bakes online and invites us to join in the fun. Here, she shares a couple of her favourite sweet treats to get us started on our own kitchen adventures.

## LEMON SHORTBREAD

Makes approx. 8-10 slices

### Ingredients

Two large lemons, zested  
50g caster sugar, plus extra for sprinkling  
100g salted butter  
175g plain flour

### Method

1. Heat the oven to 150°C. Zest the lemons into a small bowl. Add the caster sugar and rub the lemon and sugar together. Lemon sugar can be made a few days in advance for a stronger lemon flavour. Keep some of the lemon sugar back for sprinkling.  
2. Put the butter in separate bowl and

beat with a wooden spoon until soft. Beat in the sugar lemon mixture until plate and creamy.  
3. Stir in the flour and work with your hands to form a soft dough. Tip into the tin and press into an even, flat layer with your fingers. Place in the fridge for 30 minutes. It can be left over night and baked the next day.  
4. Prick the dough all over with a fork and bake in the oven for 40 minutes until the shortbread is a pale gold colour. Cut into wedges and then leave it to cool completely in the tin. Once it's cooled, remove from the tin and dust with the extra lemon caster sugar.



## FLOUR-FREE CHOCOLATE RUM CAKE

Makes approx. 10 slices

### Ingredients

220g dark chocolate  
200g butter  
25g dark dutch cocoa  
½ cup of coffee  
2 tbsp rum  
200g dark brown sugar  
4 eggs  
200g ground almonds  
1½ tsp vanilla essence  
½ tsp salt  
Optional fresh berries, whipped cream and ice cream for toppings

### Method

1. Preheat your oven to 180°C  
2. Grease and line a round spring-form cake tin.  
3. In a saucepan, add chocolate, cocoa, rum and hot coffee and stir over a medium heat until the chocolate has melted and you get a smooth consistency.  
4. Remove the pan from the heat and add the brown sugar to the chocolate mixture – allow to cool.  
5. In two clean bowls, separate the egg whites from the egg yolks. Whisk egg yolks.  
6. Add almond flour, salt,

vanilla and whisked egg yolks to the cooled chocolate mix.  
7. Using a stand mixer or by hand, whisk the egg whites until stiff peaks form.  
8. Fold half the egg white into the cooled chocolate mixture.  
9. Then fold the remaining egg white into the chocolate mixture.  
10. Pour the batter into the cake tin and bake for 40-45 minutes.  
11. Remove the cake from the oven and let it cool before removing the tin, then serve with cream, ice cream and mixed berries. ■

For more: Instagram @forthe flavour

