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woman

Living life to the full



baking
Chocolate and Lime Torte
(Gluten Free)

Ingredients
6 eggs
250g caster sugar
150g dark chocolate
150g unsalted butter
100g ground almonds
4 tsp cocoa powder
1 lime - zest and juice

Method

- 1 Preheat the oven to 160C/320F/gas mark 4.
- 2 Whisk together eggs and sugar until it has doubled in volume.
- 3 Melt chocolate and butter over a pan of boiling water until smooth.
- 4 Fold chocolate and butter mix into egg mixture.
- 5 Sieve the cocoa powder into the mix. Fold until mixed.
- 6 Add ground almonds, lime juice and lime zest, mix well.
- 7 Line the base of a spring form tin and pour mix in.
- 8 Bake in the oven for 40 to 45 minutes.
- 9 Take out of the oven and allow to cool. At first it will have some height but it will sink over time.
- 10 Dust the top with icing sugar and for extra zing grate some lime zest on top.

mimisbakehouse.com

» **BRIAN McIVER**
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SCOTS writer Aefa Mulholland was facing a crisis of identity after a decade living in North America.

She caught herself slipping into transatlantic pronunciations – such as leisure coming out as “leeshure”.

Then she only scored 86 per cent in an online How Scottish Are You? quiz.

The award-winning travel writer decided to go on a year-long journey across the US and Canada in a bid to find out what it meant to be Scottish in North America.

The result is her book, *The Scottish Ambassador*, which she details her adventures learning Gaelic in Texas, playing the bagpipes in New Orleans, country dancing in Hawaii and entering a Scottie dog fancy dress competition.

Glaswegian Aefa, 44, also saw cabers tossed in Oregon, played golf with rattlesnakes in Arizona and encountered the Tilted Kilt – like a tartan Hooters.

But she said her most amazing discovery was just how popular her homeland is. She said: “I had taken my Scottishness for granted. I started to worry whether I was losing my identity.”

Writer Aefa Mulholland embarked on a tartan odyssey and found people obsessed with her homeland – the country of kilts, shortbread and cuddly dragons..

“I read about a Scottish festival in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, so I made it my target to make sure I was properly Scottish before I let myself go there.”

“The idea was to spend the year trying to reconnect with my Scottish identity and see if I could get it back over there.”

“But probably the same as so many Scots who have moved over there, you realise just how great it is being Scottish – people love the Scots, they really do.”

“People would come up to me to find out about Scotland and it was humbling and it was uplifting. I felt way more Scottish at the end of it.”

Currently staying in Toronto, Aefa left Glasgow 20 years ago and has lived mainly in the US and Canada ever since.

She started her journey in Portland, Oregon, where she came up with the book's title of *The Scottish Ambassador* when she was mistaken for a dignitary while a guest at a parade in the city.

She then went to a series of Highland Games, festivals and gatherings all over the States to get tips on becoming a proper Scot from Americans obsessed with the homeland she had left behind.

Aefa was a novelty for many of the Scottish-Americans she met, some who identified themselves as Scottish through distant lineage or emotional connection.

Their views of Scotland were based on kilts, shortbread and a crazy crossroads where Brigadoon meets *Outlander*.

Her Scotland of modern, progressive politics, Belle & Sebastian and haute cuisine didn't really compute for people whose most modern association of anything Caledonian was a can of Irn-Bru.

Aefa said: “In some places, they were perhaps not so keen on me because I

I'd taken my Scottishness for granted, so I spent a year going round US and Canada attempting to get back to my roots

challenged their identity. When I come in, some of them are surprised because they have only ever experienced shortbread tin Scots.

“We are a very small country and most people won't have met anyone from Scotland so all they know is Braveheart. But I suppose it's great that they know we exist at all.”

“The reality was a threat to a few who had built up an idea of old Scotland. “A lot of them also don't like coming to cities like Glasgow because we are not all swathed in tartan and it upsets their romantic ideals of Brigadoon.”

But she added: “Isn't it amazing to come from a country that is so beloved that so many people love and want to be a part of, even 10 generations later?”

Aefa's highlights were a Scottie dog festival in Savannah, Georgia, and a festival in Memphis where tartan tributes to Elvis were a great delight.

Lows included uncovering an unhealthy connection between the Confederate flag – often seen as a racist symbol – and the Saltire.

Aefa said: “It really is only white people who go to these gatherings in the south. “In the south, the whole Scottishness thing is very much tied into the way they see Scots as underdogs, in parallel to their Confederate past.”

“We don't want Scottish flags sitting next to confederate symbols or worse.” She also encountered ignorance about Scotland, with many apparently believing medieval epics like *Outlander*



AMBASSADOR'S RECEPTION Aefa found being a real Scot made her a novelty at Scottish festivals in the US. Picture: Mark Anderson

It's amazing to come from a country so beloved that people want to be part of it 10 generations on

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trend alert

Bag yourself some new arm candy for autumn.



TARTAN FLAG Parade on the main street during festival in Gatlinburg, Tennessee



ON PARADE Kilts and flags during the Tartan Day celebrations in New York



CRAZY KNIGHTS Aefa ran in to this warrior with an odd tartan twist travels took

and Braveheart are documentaries.

The Harry Potter films – partly shot in Scotland – also muddled US interpretations of Scottish history, with toy dragons and cloaks often found in pride of place in Scottish games and gatherings.

Although Aefa joked: “Our national animal is a unicorn – maybe we can't blame them.”

“But isn't it great that they care that much? They know things from Braveheart and Harry Potter but what they see and know about Scotland, they love.”

● The Scottish Ambassador by Aefa Mulholland is out now on Ponies and Horses books. Visit www.thescottishambassador.com