

AG06: Agallamh le Muireall Urchadan: Fuine

Interview with Muireall Urchadan (Muriel Urquhart): Baking

Presenter: Sarah Cruickshank



SARAH:

Cuide rium a-nise Muireall Urchadan, a bhuineas do dh'Eilean Leòdhais, ach a tha a-nise a' fuireach anns an Eilean Sgitheanach, agus tha ùidh aig Muireall ann a bhith a' fuine agus ann an còcaireachd. Fàilte, Muireall. Nise, ciamar a thòisich an ùidh a tha seo ann a bhith a' fuine agus a' còcaireachd?

MUIREALL:

'S caomh leam a' bhiadh. 'S caomh leam a' bhiadh, agus bu chaomh leam a' bhiadh bhon a bha mi beag bìodach, agus bhiodh mo mhàthair an còmhnaidh ... Bha i math air còcaireachd agus fuine, ach cha robh cus ùine aice, agus bhiodh i ann an cabhaig agus bhiodh rudan eile aice ri dhèanamh, agus tha, bhiodh i a' dol rudeigin fiadhaich nuair a bhiodh sinne ag obair am measg na rudan a bha i a' dèanamh agus bhithinn-sa an còmhnaidh a' coimhead na bha i a' dèanamh 's ciamar a bha i ga dhèanamh, agus bhithinn ag iarraidh dìreach mo làmhan fhaighinn a-steach dhan an taois agus crathadh dhan a' mhin-fhlùir a dhèanamh 's rudan a chur a-steach ann, agus cha robh i uabhasach measail air gum biodh sinn a' dèanamh sin.

Ach bha piuthar mo mhàthar a' fuireach an ath-dhoras dhuinn agus bha barrachd ùine aicese, seach gu robh a' chlann aice air an taigh fhàgail 's mar sin, agus leigeadh ise leat a bhith ag obair anns na poitean, agus, o, bhithinn-sa a' smaoineachadh gu robh mise an dèidh 's an rud a chòcaireachd. Bhithinn a' cur an rud mun cuairt leis an t-sleaghag agus a' smaoineachadh, "Seall an rud a rinn mi." Bha mi a' faireachdainn gu math moiteil gu robh mi an dèidh pana mòr brot a dhèanamh, agus cha robh idir. 'S i ise a bha an dèidh 's a dhèanamh.

SARAH:

With me now is Muireall Urchadan, who comes from the Isle of Lewis, but now lives on the Isle of Skye, and Muireall is interested in baking and in cooking. Welcome, Muireall. Now, how did your interest in baking and cooking begin?

MUIREALL (MURIEL):

I love food. I love food, and I have always loved food since I was a tiny tot, and my mother was always ... She was a good cook and baker, but she didn't have much time, and she was always in a hurry and had other things to do, and she sometimes became irritated when we used to work around what she was doing and I always used to watch what she was doing and how she was doing it, and I always wanted to just get my hands into the dough and shake the flour and add the ingredients, and she was never too keen on allowing me to do that.

But my mother's sister lived next door to us and she had more time, because her children had left home, and so on, and she would let you work with her pans, and oh, I used to think that I had done the cooking. I would stir the dish with the spurtle and think, "Look at what I've made." I felt very proud that I had made a large pan of soup, although I hadn't. She was the one who had made it.

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MUIREALL:

'S nuair a bhiodh i ag obair air fuine, leigeadh ise leat a bhith ag obair anns an taois agus a' crathadh am min-fhlùir air feadh an àite 's cha toireadh i trod dhut uair sam bith. Tha mi a' smaoinichadh gur ann às a sin a fhuair mi, 'fhios agad am faireachdainn snog a tha sin, a bhith ag obair le taois a tha rudeigin fliuch agus min-fhlùir ga chrathadh. Tha e gu math ... Tha e gu math therapeutic, tha mi a' creids', ann an dòigh. 'S ann an uairsin a thòisich an ùidh agamsa.

SARAH:

A bheil cuimhn' agad air a' chiad rud a rinn thu leat fhèin?

MUIREALL:

Uill, tha cuimhn' agam nuair a fhuair mi an leabhar a bha seo aig àm na Nollaig. Bha cèic mhòr teoclaid ann, agus bha mi a' cantainn, "Bhiodh sin fìor mhath nam faighinn air seo a dhèanamh." Ach chan eil fhios agam dè a thachair gun deach leigeil dhomh, ach chaidh cantainn rium gu faodainn feuchainn air co-dhiù, agus ... ach gu feumainn a h-uile càil a dhèanamh mi-fhìn, agus, o, bha mi air mo dhòigh glan leis a seo, agus dh'obraich e glè mhath. Agus tha mi a' creids' gu robh e furasta gu leòr a dhèanamh, ach ... Tha mi a' creids' gu robh mi timcheall air ochd no rudeigin mar sin, agus fhuair mi air an cèic a bha seo a dhèanamh. O, 's bha mi cho moiteil gun do rinn mise an cèic a bha seo. Agus bhon uairsin, dìreach lean e air adhart mar sin, 's bhithinn gu math tric gach Disathairn', gach feasgar Disathairn', bhithinn er ... a' dèanamh còcaireachd air choireigin, bèicearachd air choireigin dìreach a rèir 's dè an seòrsa rudan a bha a dhìth air daoine.

SARAH:

Dè an seòrsa rudan a bhios tu fhèin a' fuine an diugh?

MUIREALL (MURIEL):

And when she was baking she would let you work with the dough and shake flour everywhere, and she wouldn't ever give you a telling off. I think that's where I got, you know, that nice feeling, of working with a moist dough and shaking flour. It's very ... It's very therapeutic, I suppose, in a way. That's when my interest began.

SARAH:

Can you remember the first thing you made by yourself?

MUIREALL (MURIEL):

Well, I remember when I got this book at Christmas. There was a large chocolate cake in it, and I said, "It would be great if I could to make that." I don't know what happened, but I was allowed to, but I was told that I'd be allowed to have a go at it anyway, and ... but that I would have to do it all myself, and oh, I was delighted with that, and it worked out very well. And I believe it was easy enough to make, but ... I believe I was around eight, or something like that, and I managed to make this cake. Oh, and I was so proud that I had made that cake. 46 And ever since then, I just carried on like that, and quite often, on a Saturday, every Saturday afternoon, I would do some baking, some baking, depending on what sorts of things people needed.

SARAH:

What sorts of things do you bake these days?

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MUIREALL:

Tha e a rèir, really, dè an àm dhen bhliadhna a bhios ann dè a bhios mi ag iarraidh a dhèanamh. Agus cuideachd a rèir a bheil tòrr uighean againn. Tha cearcan againn, 's bidh sinn a' faighinn uighean bhuapa, so, nuair a bhios iad a' breith, bidh gu leòr de dh'uighean agam, so bidh mi a' dèanamh rudan an uairsin mar reòiteagan agus rudan a tha a' cleachdadh tòrr de dh'uighean, mar meringues is reòiteagan agus diofar rudan mar sin, paidhs a tha a' cleachdadh 's dòcha tòrr uighean annta, rudan mar er ...

Bidh mi a' dèanamh brownies cha mhòr a h-uile seachdain. Tha a' chlann dìreach ... Bidh iad gan ithe dìreach ... A h-uile latha, tha iad gan gabhail! Agus ... So, tha sin a' feumachadh tòrr uighean, ach uaireannan, chan eil na rudan idir cho furasta an dèanamh sa tha iad a' coimhead agus thèid rudan ceàrr, ach 's ann bho bhith a' feuchainn a-rithist 's dòcha agus a-rithist a gheibh duine ... Bidh mearachdan ann 's bidh rudan a' dol ceàrr, ach coma. Chan eil e gu diofar.

SARAH:

An fheàrr leat biadh samhraidh no biadh geamhraidh, agus carson?

MUIREALL:

Uill, 's toigh leam as t-samhradh, nuair a bhios rudan ... nuair a bhios rudan a' fàs timcheall òirnn. Bidh mi a' dèanamh ... Uill, se elderflower cordial a bhios mi a' dèanamh - a' tòiseachadh a' dèanamh - ach uaireannan, bidh e a' dol na sheòrsa de dh'fhion. Ach chan e g' eil duine a' gearain mu dheidhinn sin, cha 'reid mi.

MUIREALL (MURIEL):

It depends, really, on the time of year what I want to make. It also depends on whether we have lots of eggs. We have chickens and we get eggs from them, so, when they are laying, I have plenty of eggs, so I then make things like ice creams and other things that require a lot of eggs, such as meringues and ice creams and other things like that, pies that use a lot of eggs, things like ...

I bake brownies almost every week. The children just ... They eat them just ... They have them every day! And ... So that takes a lot of eggs, but sometimes, things aren't as easy to make as they seem and things go wrong, but it's through trying again and maybe again that you get ... You make mistakes and things go wrong, but never mind. It doesn't matter.

SARAH:

Do you prefer summer food or winter food, and why?

MUIREALL (MURIEL):

Well, I love summer, when things are ... when things are growing around us. I make ... Well, I make elderflower cordial - or at least that's how it starts out - but sometimes it turns into a kind of wine. But no-one has complained about it, or at least I don't think so.

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MUIREALL:

Ach 's toigh leam cuideachd a bhith a' cruinneachadh rudan nuair a bhios na dearcan a-muigh air craobhan, a' feuchainn rudan eadar-dhealaichte le sin, dè an seòrsa diofar rudan a nì mi leotha. 'S toigh leam a bhith a' dèanamh silidh gu math tric. Ma tha na rudan sin a' fàs gu bitheanta timcheall ort, 's toigh leam a bhith a' cleachdadh na rudan sin, airson diofar rudan mar silidhean, ach 's caomh leam biadh snog geamhradail. Rudan a tha ... 'Fhios agad, rudan blàth, rudan ... Seòrsa de stews agus rudan mar sin, agus 's caomh leam rudan mar sin gu mòr. Sin na rudan as ... Tha mi 'creids' gur e sin na rudan as fheàrr leam a bhith ag ithe.

SARAH:

Dè a tha thu a' smaoinichadh a tha a' dèanamh deagh bhèicear no còcaire?

MUIREALL:

Tha mi a' smaoinichadh, anns a' chiad dol-a-mach, gur e misneachd rudeigin fheuchainn. Chan eil e diofar ... gu diofar ma thèid e ceàrr ort. Feumaidh tu rudeigin fheuchainn uaireannan. Chan eil e math gu leòr, dìreach leabhraichean a bhith agad agus a bhith gan coimhead agus a' cantainn, "Nach biodh sin math a ghabhail?" Feumaidh tu cantainn, "Uill, tha mise a' dol a dh'fheuchainn ri sin a dhèanamh." Agus gun a bhith ro mhì-mhisneachail nuair a thèid rudan ceàrr. Chan e cantainn, "O, uill, chaidh siud uile gu lèir ceàrr," you know? "Chan fheuch mi air gu bràth tuilleadh," ach cantainn, "Càite an deach e ceàrr?" Agus faicinn, "Uill, 's dòcha an ath thuras gun cuir mi ann beagan a bharrachd dhen a siud, no nas lugha dhen a seo, agus cuideachd a bhith a' cumail notaichean..

MUIREALL (MURIEL):

But I also like to gather things when the berries are on the trees, and try different things with them the various different things I can do with them. I quite often like to make jam. If these things commonly grow around you, I like to make use of them, for different things such as jams, but I also love nice wintry foods. Things that are ... You know, warm things, things ... Stews and things like that, and I really love things like that. Those are the things ... I suppose those are the things I prefer to eat.

SARAH:

What do you think makes a good baker or cook?

MUIREALL (MURIEL):

I think that, in the first place, it's the confidence to try something. It doesn't matter if something goes wrong. You sometimes have to try things. It's not good enough just to have books and to look at them and say, "Wouldn't it be nice to try that?" You have to say, "Well, I'm going to try to make that." And also not to be lose confidence when things go wrong. It's not a case of saying, "Oh, well, everything went wrong," you know? "I'll never try that again," but saying, "Where did it go wrong?" And seeing, "Well, perhaps next time, I'll add a little more of that, or less of this, and also to keep notes.

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Uaireannan, bidh mi, nuair a bhios mi a' dèanamh 's dòcha recipe a-mach à leabhar, no rudeigin dhen an t-seòrsa sin, no rudeigin far blog no far an eadar-lìon, bidh e agam sgrìobhte a-mach, agus bidh mi ga dhèanamh mar a tha e sgrìobhte a' chiad turas, ach an uairsin, an ath thuras, 's dòcha gun can mi, "Uill, bha siud ro bhog," no "bha siud ro chruaidh," no "cha robh siud milis gu leòr," no "bha siud fada ro mhilis," no, "an dùil am biodh e na b' fheàrr le beagan dhen a siud no dhen a seo?" agus dìreach notaichean beaga a ghabhail gach turas agus na h-atharraichidhean a dhèanamh, 's bidh an uairsin ... bidh e nas coltaiche ris an seòrsa rud a tha thu fhèin ag iarraidh a dhèanamh. Aig deireadh an latha, feumaidh e còrdadh riut

SARAH:

So, mar sin, 's dòcha gu faic sinn air farpais còcaireachd thu.

MUIREALL:

O, chan fhaic gu bràth! Chan fhaic gu bràth, cha 'reid mi! Sin an rud. Nuair a tha thu a' còcaireachd, tha thu ag iarraidh ... Tha thu ag iarraidh fois, really, a bhith ga dhèanamh, agus 's e rud um ... 's e rud saorsainneil a th' ann. Tha thu mar gum biodh ga do chall fhèin ann a bhith ga dhèanamh ma tha tìde gu leòr agad, agus tha e math ma tha ùine agad. Chan eil càil nas miosa na bhith a' feuchainn rudeigin a dhèanamh ann an cabhaig, agus a bhith a' feuchainn rudeigin a dhèanamh ann an cabhaig 's daoine ga do choimhead agus camara ort ... Bhiodh e dìreach uabhasach, tha mi a' smaoinichadh.

SARAH:

So 's e cur-seachad a th' ann airson an t-àm seo?

MUIREALL:

'S e cur-seachad a th' ann, agus tha mi a' smaoinichadh sin mar a bhios e!

Sometimes, I, when I'm making a recipe from, say, a book or something like that, or something from a blog or from the Internet, I'll have it written out, and I'll make it as it's written the first time, and then, the next time, I might say, "Well, that was too soft," or "that was too hard," or "that wasn't sweet enough," or "that was too sweet," or "I wonder if it would be better with a little of this or that?" and just take short notes each time and make the changes, and then it will be ... it will be more like the sort of thing you want to make. At the end of the day, you have to like it.

SARAH:

So, we may see you on a cookery competition.

MUIREALL (MURIEL):

You'll never see that! I don't think you'll ever see that! That's the thing. When you're cooking, you want ... You want peace, really, when you're doing it, and the thing is ... it's something relaxing. It's as if you lose yourself in what you're doing if you have enough time, and it's nice to have the time. There's nothing worse than trying to do something in a hurry, and to be trying to do something in a hurry with people watching and a camera pointed at you ... I think that would be absolutely awful.

SARAH:

So it's just a pastime for now?

MUIREALL (MURIEL):

Yes, it is a pastime, and I think it will stay that way!

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SARAH:

Mile taing airson bruidhinn rinn, Muireall.

MUIREALL:

Taing.

SARAH:

A thousand thanks for talking to me, Muireall.

MUIREALL (MURIEL):

Thanks.