

Hairst cooking battle between two Huntly teachers completes record culinary contest offering

By Lewis McBlane for Grampian Online

- lewis.mcblane@hnmedia.co.uk

Published: 16:00, 23 August 2023

| **Updated:** 18:54, 23 August 2023

A HEAD to head Hairst contest, expected to be a "good giggle", will see teachers vie for cooking glory as part of the event's record competition offering.



The head to head cooking competition will see teachers face off in a battle for the best main meal and dessert.

This year's festival, on Saturday, September 2, will see two "well known Huntly teachers" take on a two-round culinary gauntlet in front of a Stewart's Hall audience.

Cooking a family-sized main and a dessert featuring Dean's Shortbread on a £10 budget, the teachers' efforts will be graded by members of the public.

Hairst organiser Kay Thomson said she reckons the competition will be a "good giggle", and that teachers' recipes will hopefully be made available for people to try at home – "or not, depending how it goes."

"I think it will be a good giggle.

"We want to send out the recipes so people can try them at home.

"Or not, depending how it goes."

Pupils will also have a chance to flex their cooking muscles at Hairst, by entering the Great Hairst Youth Bake-Off.

The contest will see Huntly's young folk, split into age categories of 10-14 and 15-18, hand in "showstopper cakes" for judging at Sinclair's of Rhynie shop on Duke Street.

Topping their category, based on taste and appearance, will net a young baker one of two "coveted bake-off cake stands."



The contest will take place at the Stewart's Hall.

Entries should be handed in to Sinclair's on Saturday, September 2, where judging will begin at 10am before winners are announced at 11.30am.

Every entry will take pride of place in the bakery window after the competition.

Hairst chairperson Pat Scott said: "We are pleased that Sinclair's has agreed to host it for us, that is really good.

"I would just try and encourage as many people as possible to think about having a go.

"And not to think twice about it.

"Because they might just surprise themselves.

"You never know what the judges will like, so just join in and have a go."

Hairst will also see the return of the much-loved World Stovies Championship.

A Deveron Projects food chain event on Monday, August 28 at Square Deal will see members of the Hairst committee sharing some of their top stovies tips.

After the session, the committee will also prepare 100 bags packed with stovies ingredients, so anybody can take part.

The bags will be available to collect at Square Deal from Tuesday, August 29.

The Dean's Shortbread Competition is also coming back with a bang for 2023, along with a new Dean's Desserts Competition.

Offering the chance to win a luxury hamper, in line with the shortbread competition, the Dean's Desserts will give local cooks free rein to craft a dream dessert incorporating Dean's shortbread.

The new category is one that anybody can get involved with, Ms Thomson said, and said she expects traditional, tasty crumbles and Eton messes to feature heavily in the running order.

Ms Scott added that there are a wide range of activities to keep Hairst visitors busy all day, even besides the cooking contests.

"Come along on the day," she said.

"And come prepared to spend a good bit of the day, because there are stalls and there is entertainment.

"As well as the opportunity to cheer on the runners as they leave and as they come back across the finish line to the square – which is another important part of Hairst."