

Master pâtissier Eric Lanlard was born in Brittany, France, but has lived in England for 23 years. Having come to London, Eric worked with the Roux Brothers for five years as their head pastry chef. After much hard work and dedication, he was able to fulfil his childhood dream and set up his own pâtisserie, Cake Boy.

in the kitchen with Eric Lanlard

How would you describe your cake decorating style?

It depends on who I am making the cake for – we have bespoke orders and often the cakes are to celebrate something special or for a launch. I would describe my style for big orders as glamorous and my signature is a little touch of edible gold glitter so that always makes an appearance. I like elegant and timeless designs, especially for wedding cakes. I think it's all about ensuring that the cake looks good enough to eat but it's also about the taste. For me it is essential to have a delicious cake that is made from the best possible ingredients to ensure you get first-class results.

What are your top tips for baking cupcakes that don't disappoint on taste?

There are no rules about what a cupcake should taste like so I am really open to anything, from flavoured sponges to carrot cake or different types of fillings. My personal favourites are cupcakes with soft centres and I use fruit compote to fill the middle of each cake. It keeps it more interesting and gives an extra surprise when you bite into it. Finally, cupcakes must be fresh so always eat them on the day they are baked.

How do you make sure your cupcakes are picture perfect?

I like using silicone moulds with coloured chocolate or petal paste to get some amazing decorations in an instant. It makes them look original and glamorous and there are so many options available now.

Why do you think baking is so popular at the moment?

Baking has never been so popular – the word 'cupcake' was one of the most popular search terms on Google last year. I think people have rediscovered the pleasure and reward of baking which was forgotten for too long, and of course it does make great television. You can really learn techniques and tips from great baking experts. Last year's *Baking Mad with Eric Lanlard* was such a great success that Channel 4 recommissioned 20 episodes for a new series starting in March. That's an additional 10 episodes to last year's series. Baking is definitely here to stay!

Do you have any more advice you'd like to share?

Baking is like chemistry so you must follow recipes, allow time and be ready for failure – do not give up if something does not work the first time, try again! At least if you use quality ingredients your baking will taste yummy even if it doesn't look so good on the first attempt.



Home Bake and *Cox Cookies and Cake* are published by Mitchell Beazley. *Baking Mad with Eric Lanlard* returns to Channel 4 in March. For more baking tips and decorating ideas visit www.bakingmad.com.

