

## A 'Pear-fectly' delicious dessert, ripe for the season



**Chocolate Pear Cake**  
By Susie Iventosch

Photos Susie Iventosch

Our Lamorinda Weekly publisher, Andy Scheck, sent me this pear cake recipe and it sounded very intriguing. Made with fresh pears, cocoa powder, chocolate chips, quick oats, blond raisins, and a wee bit of whisky or rum, it is a fun one to try! Andy enjoys cooking, and he loves using seasonal produce, so when pears hit the produce stands, he finally took an opportunity to make this cake. He'd been meaning to try this recipe for years, but had never gotten around to making it until just now. The original recipe comes from a German cooking enthusiast who posted it online many years ago.

We made the cake and thought it was delicious. The only thing we would do differ-

ently next time, would be to cut the pears up into bite size pieces and layer them in the middle of the batter, or mix them into the batter, so that the pears are evenly distributed. Using halves makes a nice presentation, but we'd love to have more cake and pears together in each bite. We also added a bit of salt to the ingredients.

We used red crimson pears in our cake, because they were the only ripe ones we could get our hands on at the moment, but if you have time to let the pears ripen, use your favorite pears for this cake. Bosc, D'Anjou, or Bartlett pears are all great for baking. Be sure that the pears are ripe, but firm. You don't want them to be mushy for baking.

If you give this cake a try, we know you will enjoy it! So

many delightful flavors together. The oats, even though there is not much in the recipe, give a certain texture and flavor that combines well with the rest of the ingredients!

\*Note – I converted this recipe into cups and ounces from the original, which was in metric measurements, ergo the slightly unusual quantities.



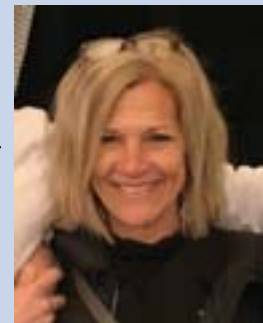
### INGREDIENTS

2 lbs. pears (about 3 large pears) ripe, but firm  
5 1/2 tablespoons butter (5.3 oz.)  
3/4 cup sugar (Andy used raw sugar, I used granulated sugar, but I also think brown sugar would be great)  
3 large eggs  
1/2 cup milk  
2 1/4 cups plus 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour  
3 teaspoons baking powder  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa powder  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
5 tablespoons quick oats  
2/3 cup dark chocolate chips or shredded chocolate  
1 tablespoon golden raisins  
1 tablespoon rum or whiskey  
Powdered sugar for dusting the top of the cake

### DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 F. (Andy baked this cake at 380 F, but I found 350 worked perfectly in my oven.)  
Grease or spray an 8-inch square baking dish.  
Soak the raisins in in the rum for about 15-20 minutes. Peel and halve the pears and remove the core.  
Set aside.  
Mix all dries (flour, baking powder, salt, cocoa powder, and cinnamon) together in a small bowl. Set aside.  
Cream butter and sugar together in a mixing bowl until light and fluffy. Beat in eggs until incorporated. Add milk and dries alternately, beginning and ending with dries.  
Stir in oats, raisins, and chocolate chips and mix well.  
Turn about 2/3 of the batter into the prepared baking dish. Arrange pears face down right on top of the batter and gently press down a little bit. Then, cover the pears with the remaining batter. You may not be able to completely cover the pears, but that's okay. Alternatively you can chop the pears into bite-size pieces and spread them evenly over the bottom batter and then cover them with the remaining batter.  
Bake for 50-60 minutes, or until a cake tester comes out clean. Remove from the oven and cool. Dust with powdered sugar.

Susie can be reached at [suziventosch@gmail.com](mailto:suziventosch@gmail.com). This recipe can be found on our website: [www.lamorindaweekly.com](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com). If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977. Or visit <https://treksandbites.com>



## Looking Good in Lamorinda Let's talk autumn attire

By Moya Stone

Back in June I attended a garden party in celebration of wool. Hosted by Lafayette resident April Ward, the gathering was in honor of the 2021 winners of the California State Make It With Wool Competition.

Make It With Wool (MIWW) is a state and national fashion design and sewing competition sponsored by the American Sheep Industry. Founded in 1947, the competition website says it seeks to "Promote the beauty and versatility of wool fabrics, fibers, and yarns." The MIWW California State competition is coming up on Nov. 12.

Ward has been MIWW California State Director for two years and she is currently hard at work raising the profile of the competition. An accomplished seamstress herself and a winner of MIWW when she was in high school, Ward says she felt back then that the competition was a chance to step outside her sewing comfort zone. "This meant learning new techniques or improving on my existing techniques," she comments. "It also may have meant trying out a different type of wool fabric or a challenging pattern."

This year Ward and Marissa Sanchez, the 2022 Junior National Winner, have hit the road attending American Sewing Guild meetings and 4-H related events trying to encourage new entrants.

Eighteen-year-old Sanchez is from Brentwood and has been sewing for nine years.



Image courtesy of Prestel Publishing.

She got involved with MIWW through 4-H and she enjoys working with wool because it's both warm and breathable. "I can create warm coats for the winter and dresses perfect for spring," she says. Sanchez's winning outfit is a houndstooth wool coat and a sheath dress. "Her outfit is stunning," says Ward, "and everyone is impressed with her sewing skills."

Sanchez says her favorite part of competing is meeting new people and learning about their sewing techniques. A tip she offers to anyone interested in competing is don't forget to test your fabric to make sure it's at least 60% wool. "And of course have fun sewing," she says.

MIWW is open to pre-



Photo provided

Knit-a-long Cardi at Busy Stix in Lafayette.



Photo Moya Stone

Marissa Sanchez MIWW 2021 National Winner Junior Division.

teens through adults and all fabric and yarn used must be at least 60 percent wool. Three judges will look for excellence in presentation and appearance, construction, and marketability. Entries are due by Oct. 15 and there will be a fashion show at 2 p.m. on Nov. 12 at the Orinda Masonic Center. For more information visit [www.makeitwithwool.com](http://www.makeitwithwool.com) or contact April Ward at [april.ann.ward@gmail.com](mailto:april.ann.ward@gmail.com).

Busy Stix yarn shop in Lafayette has joined with Clinton Hill Cashmere for a KAL (knit-a-long): The Classic Cardi Edition. Starting Sept. 20, knitters will tune into to the Clinton Hill Zoom class for three sessions and knit a cardigan sweater. Busy Stix will be open and tuning in as well, so knit-

ters can gather at the shop for some social stitching. The Clinton Hill KAL kit is available through Busy Stix (at a discount). Call the shop for more information (925) 284-1172.

All this wool talk has me itching to pull on some autumn attire and according to Marie Claire magazine, the big trend this season is equestrian. Think blazers with elbow patches, capes in herringbone wool, tweed riding caps, boots, and stirrup strap leggings (remember those in the '90s?). Even for the non-horsey set, it's the look to sport! Although this trend is "inspired by" equestrian, Dover Saddlery in the Moraga Rheem Shopping Center offers the real thing.

Fashion icon Coco Chanel once said, "My life didn't

please me, so I created my life." And what an adventure that was! Chanel's life is told for young readers in Isabel Pin's latest book, "I Am Coco: The Life of Coco Chanel" (Prestel Publishing). An award-winning illustrator of more than 40 children's books, Pin gives an overview of Coco from her beginnings as an orphan to her remarkable success as an innovative fashion designer. The text is concise and enhanced by Pin's whimsical illustrations. This is a fun fashion read for kids age 6 to 9 and adults too.

Enjoy the cooler weather and go forth in style!

Moya Stone is a fashion writer and blogger at [www.overdressedforlife.com](http://www.overdressedforlife.com).

## Gold Coast Chamber Players opening is all about Italy



Luigi Piovano

Photo provided

Submitted by Pamela Freund-Striplen

Who doesn't love Italy? The mu-

sic, the food, the people! It all starts Opening Night, Friday, Sept. 23 when leading Italian musicians perform exclusively with the award-winning Gold

Coast Chamber Players. Luigi's Italian Feast and Concert, a unique and enchanting GCCP fundraising event, follows on Sunday, Sept. 25.

The Friday concert is a blockbuster all-Brahms program and features the Principal cellist of the Santa Cecilia Orchestra, Luigi Piovano. Piovano is one of the most sought-after cellists throughout the world and will be performing on his 330-year-old cello. The romantic program is well suited for Piovano to perform with his wife, Grazia Raimondi, one of Italy's leading violin soloists. Joining them is violinist Livia Sohn, pianist Bernadene Blaha, and violist Pamela Freund-Striplen. Single tickets and discounted sub-

scriptions are available at [gccpmusic.com](http://gccpmusic.com).

Later that weekend on Sunday, Sept. 25 is Luigi's Italian Feast and Concert, in a lovely Lafayette backyard garden. You'll dine alfresco under the new moon and enjoy an intimate concert celebrating the finest Italy has to offer while supporting the Gold Coast Chamber Players. Luxury ingredients imported specifically for this event are transformed into a feast by Luigi - a chef and cellist extraordinaire. Proceeds benefit GCCP educational programs in local schools and its concert series, voted Diablo Magazine's Best of the East Bay, ensuring live music remains an integral part of our community.

Only a few seats remain. Tickets: [gccpmusic.com](http://gccpmusic.com)

Four more Gold Coast concerts are included in the 2022-23 Season: "Folk Inspired," "Connections in Time," "Cello Extravaganza," and "Souvenir," each with world-renowned musicians with a unique theme. These Gold Coast adventures have great audience appeal and provide an opportunity to meet musicians in an intimate setting.

All concerts are at 7:30 p.m. and are held at the Don Tatzin Community Hall at the Lafayette Library, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd. For tickets and complete concert details, visit [gccpmusic.com](http://gccpmusic.com) or call (925) 283-3728.