

Good food at sea

Meet Lindsay Doyle of Treat Yar-Mouth, who supplies meals for hungry lobster fishermen

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY
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Lindsay Doyle made her first pie when she was two years old. Growing up, baking was as important to Lindsay as playing with dolls. In grade four, she took a bread-making course in 4-H and sold bread to her teachers. Later, her repertoire included cooking main meals.

When she was 19, Lindsay moved to Saskatoon. She not only started working for SaskTel, she began cooking up a storm for friends and relatives. Wanting a change in careers after several years, she turned to selling recreational vehicles. Although she had a knack for sales, the chances of making a living when temperatures plummeted to -40°C in winter were slim; it was time to move on.

The stars lined up. Her brother Kenton and his wife and two children, who had been living in Korea, bought a house, sight-unseen, in Yarmouth County and moved there in 2011. Within a year, several other members of her family were smitten with the “move east” bug.

By the fall of 2013, eldest brother Travis had pulled up stakes from Malaysia and moved to southwestern Nova Scotia. Wanting to be closer to the grandkids, Lindsay’s mother, Selena Crosson, bought a home in the same region with her husband Randy Gray. By Christmas younger brother Adrian had arrived and Lindsay had landed into the mix.

However, before leaving Saskatoon



■ Lindsay Doyle with two fresh loaves barely out of the oven, at her home business Treat Yar-Mouth.



■ Lobster boat crew Isaac Muise, Ryan Roberts, Dyson Roberts and Captain Jim Conrad enjoying a meal.

five years ago, Lindsay sold the entire contents of her freezer—casseroles, pies and cakes—to a friend. Other friends were somewhat miffed, wishing she had auctioned off the goods.

Shortly after arriving in Yarmouth, Lindsay met Ryan Roberts, a lobster fisherman. It was love at first sight (well, actually, it was love after he had the first bite of a meal she prepared.) They both enjoyed camping, sport fishing, and poker, so it was meant to be.

When the lobster season started, Lindsay cooked several meals for the captain and crew of Ryan's boat. More than once she heard, "You should start a business and sell this stuff to other boats." Although Lindsay had considered taking a nursing degree from the Dalhousie School of Nursing in Yarmouth, after daughter Karlie came along, that didn't seem feasible. Aha! How about a home business cooking for the captains and crews of some of the local lobster boats?

Lindsay now operates Treat Yar-Mouth: Lindsay's Homemade Goods. "Pronounce Yar-Mouth with a drawl, please," she says with a grin. It's a commercial kitchen that's part of her home on Mood Road, located on the outskirts of the town of Yarmouth.

There were plenty of hoops to go through in the start-up phase. Lindsay explains that if you are working with meat in a food operation from your own home, you need to have a separate entrance. You also need what's called a 'four-sink system' unless you have big bucks (upwards of \$10,000) and the space to install a commercial dishwasher. Two stoves with separate exhausts are also required. The list goes on and on.

Although her family have been a huge support, starting her own business still required a lot of money. "My savings went out the window and my line of credit maxed out in a hurry." One thing that helped was getting a living allowance for a year from the Nova Scotia Works Program, through Southwest Employment Services in Yarmouth. "I couldn't afford to have a house, a child in daycare, and start a business without assistance."

Renovations and equipment for Treat Yar-Mouth weighed in around \$30,000. Inspections followed, and more inspections. Finally, mere days before Dumping Day (the last Monday in November, when all the lobster boats in the district head to the fishing grounds at 6am) she received the

official nod and was licensed to operate.

Lindsay now supplies nine boats with a variety of meals including ham and scalloped potatoes, Salisbury steak with garlic mash, and sweet and sour meatballs. Her regular menu includes a selection of eight mains, four pastas, four sides and several meat-stuffed buns including pork and mushroom, donair, and barbecued chicken. Then there's an entire array of desserts: coffee cakes, cookies, muffins, pies and cheesecakes. Butter tarts are high on everyone's favourites list.

Captain Jim Conrad calls her butter tarts little pieces of heaven. "They're all part of her calorie-free menu," he quips with a grin.

Jim was the first captain to sign up for meals. He owns and operates *Hauler Nuthin* out of Yarmouth and has fished for more than 25 years. "I used to drink pop and eat chips; maybe heat up some TV dinners," he says. "Now I buy all our meals from Lindsay. Her food's like my mother used to make, like real pork chop dinners." Every meal is enough to feed his crew of four or five men in the busy season. "I just load my freezer on board my boat and take a meal out in the morning," he says. "Later, I peel back the top and pop it into the oven." When his supply starts to get low, he calls Lindsay with an order; she delivers it to the wharf when the boat returns to port.

Every Wednesday is bread day at Treat Yar-Mouth. Besides supplying the fishermen with bread, Lindsay has regular customers who show up on her doorstep. On offer are white, brown, cheese, garlic cheese, seven-grain, and cinnamon-raisin breads. She also makes giant gooey cinnamon rolls.

Commenting on her bread, Jim adds, "It's right off the charts. I buy it even when we aren't fishing."

Currently, Lindsay has five freezers, so she can make dishes ahead. Aside from her standard menu items she loves taking on special orders. For example, she was once asked by an Acadian in Wedgeport with ties to Louisiana to make a New Orleans king cake—most often made to celebrate the



Epiphany or Mardi Gras. King cake is basically a cinnamon roll formed into a ring with goodies inside the “cake” such as cream cheese, nutmeg, and orange zest. Lindsay then sprinkles

coloured sugars of green, gold, and purple on top, honouring the New Orleans tradition that represents faith, power and justice. She also makes chocolate king cakes.

Other people are starting to take notice. For example, a woman from Alberta arranged for her mother (who lives in Yarmouth) to have a year’s supply of Treat Yar-Mouth gift certificates.

But here’s the catch: cooking and baking used to be a great stress reliever. “Although I love making people happy with food, I don’t have a stress reliever anymore,” says the energetic entrepreneur. “Now it’s part of the stress, so I need to find another outlet.”

As well, some people don’t recognize that this is Lindsay’s job. “When I’m in my kitchen, it’s work. This is not

spare-time play. I just can’t stop what I’m doing to visit or do other things.” Mind you, there are times of the year during the summer when she has time to fish, go camping or play poker.

But, any day now, things will get frantic. Imagine having 40-50 people for dinner—every night—for weeks. Already she is considering hiring a part-time helper to gear up for the opening of the lobster season.

Does Lindsay plan on growing her business? “My goal is to keep it small enough so I can run the beast by myself until my daughter’s in school. I want it to be manageable and sustainable.” After a moment, she adds, “I think I can make the beast bigger and better, but I have to decide if I want it to be my life, or my backup plan.”

PINEAPPLE CAKE WITH BUTTER SAUCE

- 2 cups (500 mL) all-purpose flour**
- 1 tsp (5 mL) baking soda**
- 2 eggs**
- 1 1/2 cups (375 mL) white sugar**
- 1/2 tsp (2.5 mL) salt**
- 1 14-oz (414 mL) can crushed pineapple with juice**

Butter sauce

- 3/4 cup (175 mL) butter**
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) white sugar**
- 3/4 cup (175 mL) evaporated milk**
- 1 tsp (5 mL) vanilla extract**

Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C)

Cake: Combine dry ingredients then add wet ingredients and mix. Pour into greased 9x13 pan and bake for 35 to 45 minutes. Check with toothpick at the highest point and see that it comes out clean. Cake should be browned on top when done.

Sauce: In saucepan on medium heat melt butter, add sugar and blend well. Add evaporated milk and bring to a boil. Lower heat and continue to cook for 5 minutes or so. Remove from heat and

add vanilla. Pour over cake while warm. Cake is best served warm with a scoop of vanilla ice cream.

LINDSAY’S BUN DOUGH

- 10 to 12 cups (2.3-2.5 kg) all-purpose flour**
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) sugar**
- 2 tsp (10 mL) salt**
- 2 pkgs instant yeast**
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) oil or melted butter.**
- 2 cups (500 mL) warm milk**
- 2 cups (500 mL) warm water**

Combine water, milk, sugar and yeast.

Mix 3/4 of the flour and salt together.

Stir all ingredients together until well-blended then mix in 1/2 cup of flour at a time until dough is tacky but not sticky. Knead dough for at least five minutes, minimum.

Place dough in oiled bowl, cover with plastic wrap and set in warm area. Let dough double in size, about an hour, then punch down and use for dinner rolls, cinnamon rolls or garlic “bubble” bread.

For rolls, separate into 24 pieces or desired size of buns. Let rise until double in size and bake for 18 to 20 minutes in preheated 350°F (180°C) oven.



WARM TACO DIP

Mix 1 can refried beans and 1 lb (454 g) cooked ground beef with 2 T (30 mL) taco seasoning. Spread in bottom of greased 9x13 baking dish.

Mix 1 8oz (225 g) pkg of room-temperature cream cheese and 1 cup (500 mL) sour cream with 1 tbsp (15 mL) taco seasoning. Blend well and spread over bean mixture, then add 2 cups (500 mL) (total) of mixture of grated mozzarella and cheddar cheese on top of cream cheese layer. Top this with chopped green onion, tomato and sweet or hot peppers.

Bake in preheated 350°F (180°C) oven for 30 minutes or until bubbly.

Serve hot/warm with tortilla chips. 