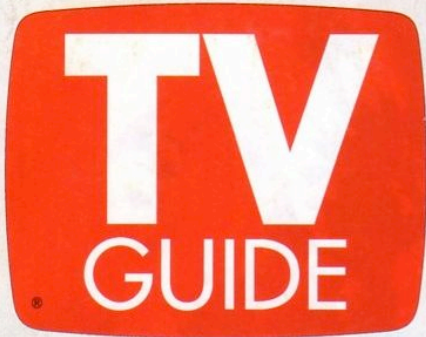


MOST COMPLETE DIGITAL COVERAGE FOR TIME WARNER CABLE OF NY & NJ



Nigella Lawson

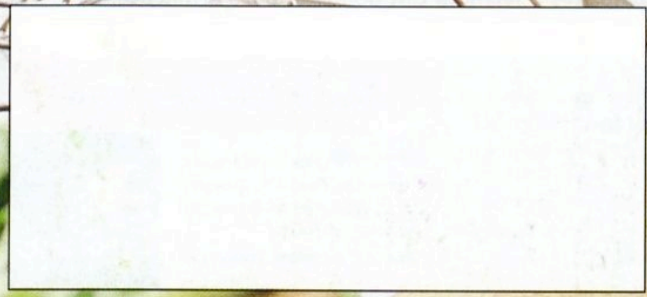
ECO-CHALLENGE
REALITY STARS
GIVE IT A TRY

OLIVIER MARTINEZ
STEAMS UP A
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NEW SERIES
NIGELLA'S
SUMMER
STYLE

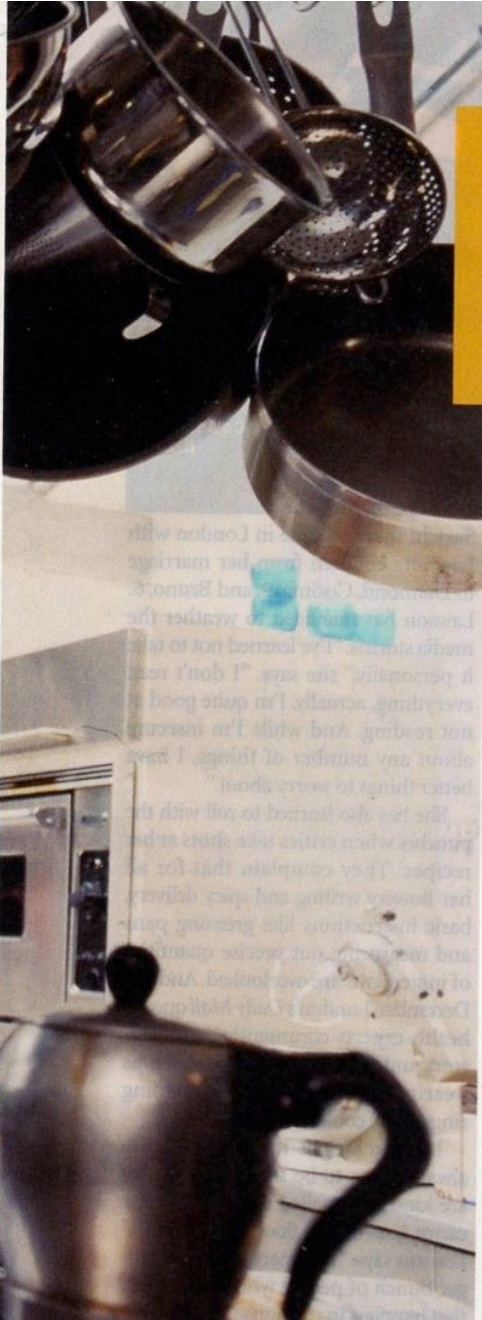
The British cook makes everything look easy. But her life has not always been a picnic

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FROM TIME WARNER CABLE





FOREVER SUMMER WITH NIGELLA premieres Saturday, May 3, 8 P.M./ET, on Style.

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o matter how you slice it, cooking-show hosts are handicapped by one huge limitation: Viewers can neither smell nor taste their creations. But somehow Nigella Lawson, the British food journalist, cookbook author and TV show host, has managed to transcend such sensory limitations. With her 2001 cooking series, *Nigella Bites*, and again with her new show, *Forever Summer With Nigella*, she has managed to tempt the viewer's taste buds by capitalizing on simply two senses: sight and sound.

Like *Nigella Bites*, *Forever Summer* is lush in presentation and unsparing in detail. The eight-part, half-hour weekly series, filmed at her West London house, sticks to Lawson's formula: It's a television version of a highly descriptive cookbook. She's done this twice before—both series of *Nigella Bites* were based on her books, *How to Eat* and *Nigella Bites*. Likewise, *Forever Summer* accompanies the book of the same name (published by Hyperion). Her writing, she says, "is much more intimate" than that of an average cookbook. "It's much more about trying to convey the experience of what it feels like to be cooking something," she says. The TV show, naturally, follows suit.

And as conceived by the 43-year-old Lawson, that experience is seriously sensual. Smooth jazz music ushers her in and out of the kitchen. Artfully framed multi-angle close-ups capture

her chopping, whisking, drizzling, kneading. "My cameraman is genius," Lawson says. "Sometimes he'll say, 'Nigella, could you cut that lime again? I want to get a glint off the knife.'"

Even the sound of her cooking is lush: Vegetables sizzle, the food processor whirs, the pilot light clicks briskly. But most vivid is the beguiling presence of Lawson herself. Raven-haired, voluptuous and flirty, she winks at her viewers over a homemade Lemon Drop cocktail. She licks sweet-and-sour dipping sauce off her fingers. She separates egg yolks, and sometimes tosses salads, with her hands. She holds up a carton of berries and declares, "Look at these luscious black fruits! Mmm." And through it all she conveys the sense that she is speaking to each viewer personally and directly.

This, she says, is just the happy result of her authenticity. "Sometimes when I'm on camera my eyes kind of waver a bit as I'm thinking of what I'm going to say," she says. "I think that's why people think that there's a genuine interaction going on."

That, plus her curves, go some way toward explaining why her Internet message boards tend to fill up with male fans. "I'm often teased about that!" Lawson says, laughing. "But on a serious level I think that I appeal to people who would not normally watch cooking shows. And not, I hope, for reasons of lechery—though I'm flattered by any attention. I think it's because I start from the point of view

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of someone who likes food and likes feeding people but is not an expert. My recipes are basically an elaboration on one you've done before, so it's straightforward and simple and nothing too complicated."

Lawson is neither a professional chef nor a cooking-school graduate. In her native England, though, she always had a certain notoriety. Her father, Nigel Lawson, was Britain's chancellor of the exchequer during the Margaret Thatcher years; her late mother, Vanessa Salmon, was a prominent socialite. After studying at Oxford, and while working as a deputy literary editor at London's *Sunday Times*, Nigella met and married John Diamond, a respected columnist.

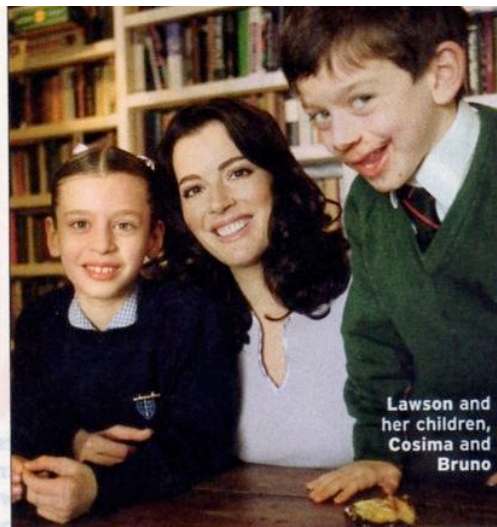
Later she worked as a freelance journalist and food critic for British news-

papers (*The Guardian*, *The Daily Telegraph*) and American magazines (*Gourmet*, *Bon Appetit*). It was Diamond who suggested that she write a book about her love of cooking. The resulting *How to Eat* earned her a British Book Award for Illustrated Book of the Year. Her *Nigella Bites* series became a hit and her next two books, *Nigella Bites* and *How to Be a Domestic Goddess*, were best-sellers, the latter winning her the British Book Awards' Author of the Year.

For all her fame and success, she has suffered real tragedies in her personal life. In 1993, her younger sister, Thomasina, died of breast cancer. In 2001, Diamond lost his four-year battle with throat cancer, which he'd chronicled publicly in both his *Times* column and in a BBC documentary. Ironically, her husband's condition prevented him from tasting her culinary creations just as she was beginning to share them with the rest of the world.

But public sympathy for Lawson quickly evaporated when, months after Diamond's death, she began dating advertising mogul and renowned art collector Charles Saatchi, a longtime friend of the couple. Their high-profile affair caused a stir in some British tabloids, which speculated that their relationship began before Diamond died.

Now, two years later, Lawson and



Lawson and her children, Cosima and Bruno

Saatchi share a home in London with Lawson's children from her marriage to Diamond, Cosima, 9, and Bruno, 6. Lawson has managed to weather the media storms. "I've learned not to take it personally," she says. "I don't read everything, actually. I'm quite good at not reading. And while I'm insecure about any number of things, I have better things to worry about."

She has also learned to roll with the punches when critics take shots at her recipes. They complain that for all her flowery writing and spicy delivery, basic instructions like greasing pans and measuring out precise quantities of ingredients are overlooked. And last December, London's *Daily Mail* quoted health experts commenting on Lawson's unhygienic practices—such as wearing potential bacteria-hoarding rings while cooking.

Lawson laughs it off. "There are always going to be some people who are kind of appalled at the way some carrot goes on the floor when I chop," Lawson says. "But there's a whole bigger bunch of people who think, 'Well, that happens in my house as well.'"

This breezy, personal approach is a major part of Lawson's appeal, and a testament to her broad, celebratory vision of cooking. "I think so much of what's important about food is about the contact with others and how one expresses oneself in one's relationships," she says. "In a sense that's always going to be more important than even the greatest skills."

In short, Lawson's TV message is more than how to make tangy lemon drinks, cooling summer salads and creamy berry trifles. It's about how to desire them. ■



For this Cheesecake Ice Cream recipe, go to www.tvguide.com/nigella

THE RAINBOW ROOM'S CARROT AND PEANUT SALAD*

4 medium carrots, peeled
 1/3 cup salted peanuts
 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
 2 tablespoons peanut oil
 A few drops sesame oil



Grate the carrots very coarsely, push them through the french-fry cutter blade in the food processor, or just cut them into skinny batons or sticks. In a bowl, combine them with the peanuts and then add the remaining ingredients.

Serves, 1-2, depending on your compulsiveness or generosity

* Named after the Rainbow Room in London, a restaurant in the legendary '70s fashion boutique Biba
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