

Bipolar chef cooks herself happy

Catriona MacDougall was diagnosed with bipolar after years of suffering with severe depression, acute anxiety and a complete lack of self-esteem.

This is when the Edinburgh-based chef decided on the idea of Cook Yourself Happier, which is a social enterprise which combines food and mental health to help individuals find the best foods/recipes to match their moods.

Catriona (photo by Nicky@kppphotography) said: “We all know food is vital for a healthy body, but food is also essential for a positive and equally healthy mind. From personal and professional experience, I want to teach about how certain foods can do different things to your mood such as elevate it, calm it down or even take the edge off your day.”

She grew up in a house baking with her mum and gran and the love of food was essential in the MacDougall household.

By the time she was 11-years-old she decided she wanted to become a chef. Then, when she turned 18, she trained as a chef at The Edinburgh School of Food and Wine.

Catriona added: “When I realised, I had bipolar it was the answer I was looking for so many years. I always felt so withdrawn, out-of-place, with my moods going up and down like a yoyo.

“So, after my moods stabilised thanks to the medication I was taking, I began thinking about foods, and the types of food which helped me throughout my mental health journey.

“This is when I came up with the idea of Cook Yourself Happier, which is all about matching the right foods to help you with your mood.”

She is currently in talks with publishing companies about launching a cookery book under the name Cook Yourself Happier and Foods to Match Your Moods.

Catriona's top five homemade foods to help uplift her mood include;

1. Tomato and basil pasta sauce
2. Mango, pineapple and watermelon juice
3. Crab on toast
4. Monkfish with mixed herb risotto
5. Victoria Sponge

For more information, recipes etc, please visit www.cookyourselfhappier.com.