

Rise of The Cupcake

Maggie O'Brien gives us a taste



Feeling a little low, need a pick me up, I know just the thing; yep, you've guessed, a cupcake! Those ubiquitous, enticing, comforting handfuls have become all the rage and Wimbledon is no exception.

I am probably typical of many of my generation; we (the girls) made the classic Victoria Sandwich cakes and buns, lots of buns, at school. Brought out at every school fair, village fête and family 'do's'. It seems those 'buns' are now 'cupcakes', only bigger with more icing, bespoke, made to order for every occasion. Why have they become so very popular?

Anyone can have one. They are available for every purse. With an excellent feel good and wow factor, let's face it, we all need that more than ever, it's hard times.

Sales of cupcakes rose by over 40% in the UK last year (source: Bakeryinfo.co.uk) and British Baker magazine organised their second National Cupcake Week in September, supporting the baking trade in capitalising on this fashionable delight.

Not only have they become a must-have item at every function, from leaving work gifts to baby showers; there's all the

merchandise too. Everything from baking equipment to cupcake shaped cushions, stationary and even underwear! Robert Dyas alone is apparently selling 500 cupcake stands a week.

Cupcakes, cupcakes and more cupcakes, in every conceivable variety, taste and form. Like Starbucks, (naturally they have them), it's catching on fast. Here on our doorstep we have Truckles, the Deli and Coffee Shop in Coombe Lane, with a wonderful selection. I asked owner Yvette Cleary, why she introduced them and why they'd been so good for business.

"A Truckles cupcake is a little more special than a plain old slice of cake and it's roughly the same price. The secret is to bake them fresh each day and make sure there are a variety of colours and designs so they appeal to both children and adults. Given the choice who wouldn't choose a cheerful cupcake?"

Emily Smith, from local company, Tempting Cake believes that the UK is influenced by US trends and with cupcakes featuring regularly in popular TV shows like 'Sex and the City', it's understandable. "A beautifully decorated box of cupcakes makes people smile and promises a portion of contained naughtiness

– sufficient to satisfy a craving for something sweet without going overboard", says Emily.

In the summer, at the Wimbledon Village Fair, I was lucky enough to win a dozen gorgeous cupcakes from the Village Cakery stand. Not bad for a £1. Set up by yet another excellent local cupcake entrepreneur, Rebecca Reid, who even does vintage tea parties including the china!

So, murmurs of a backlash against cupcakes? I don't think so anytime soon, not in this area anyhow!

CUPCAKE VENDORS IN YOUR AREA

Truckles | 020 8605 2175
255 Coombe Lane
truckles-deli.co.uk

Tempting Cake | 07887 571076
temptingcake.com

The Village Cakery | 07976 782 874
thevillagecakery.com

Cupcake-A-Licious | 07717 772588
cupcake-a-licious.co.uk

Cup Cakes To Go | 07531 090554
cupcakestogo.co.uk

And... A Brilliant Book Idea for children by local mother and author Helen Nathan. 'Flossie Crums' (D. Button Publishing)

An inspirational child's dream book with, you have guessed, cupcakes.