

Travel and History Inspire

The Sweet Life



Story by Briana Lonas.
Photos courtesy of Lilly Robinson.

Stirring up cake batter in her kitchen, with a shy yet engaging smile, Lilly Robinson looks like any young high-school student hanging out at home. Look closer beyond the dark tresses and fresh complexion, and you'll notice a glint in her eyes—a mad, crazy passion that could easily go beyond a mere hobby.

It's easy to marvel at the sophistication of Robinson's delectable edibles, but this 15-year-old has been baking since the age of nine and doesn't plan on slowing down in the kitchen anytime soon.

Although Robinson dreams of having a career in design someday, her many travels have inspired a penchant for whipping up decadent desserts and pastries for family and friends. She admits to pouring over recipe books and seeking technique tips online, but she can't pass up a good challenge and isn't opposed to attending a culinary school someday.

"I really want to go into costume design," Robinson told Kidz Zone during a recent chat about her baking hobby.

The poised, soft-spoken freshman said she has a sketchbook filled with ideas and in the future she may be looking into intern-

ships and summer programs in order to break into the costume design world for the stage and big screen. "What somebody is wearing says a lot about them." She referred to the live action version of Cinderella she once saw and explained how a costume lends itself to the storyline and transfers to the audience. "There's a lot you can say through what somebody is wearing," she said.

In the meantime, she's soaking up everything she can about different countries and cultures—her love of history will help in her chosen field, but it also helps now with her baking projects.

"I always try to learn about the country, what's going on, and what's gone on in the past. I've always been interested in historical royalty and fashion. Going to France was awesome because I went to Versailles and saw the clothing of Marie Antoinette." She said that while in eighth grade, she did a presentation about fashion and the French Revolution.

"I've been reading about the Romanovs and the Russian Revolution. I was into Greek mythology for awhile. I also love reading about the 14th century and Eleanor of Aquitaine, the French queen—the first queen that ruled both France and England by herself; she's a fascinating character."

Aside from design interests, Robinson is completely at ease in the kitchen and said she's often watched the Thomas Keller MasterClass lessons, which teaches cooking techniques and fundamentals.

Her family's love of travel has helped provide a solid foundation for her baking skills and she first became interested in the culinary arts on a family trip to Paris when she turned nine years old. "I said to myself, 'This is the best thing!' and once she returned home, started learning to bake cookies before launching into more difficult items such as éclairs and macarons. For those unfamiliar, the macaron pastry is as delightful as it is intimidating and typically made from a meringue base whereas a macaroon is made with coconut.

"I tried to do macarons once and didn't do very well, but I took a cooking class in Paris this summer," she said. That class at La Cuisine helped Robinson improve, and she recalled it was a three and a half hour intensive class that combined two techniques—the French and the Italian.

"The Italian (meringue) method is a lot sturdier, and it's a lot easier; you don't have to be as fin-



Baking classes abroad

icky with them. That's something new I didn't know before, and that's how I make them now. Macarons are very hard to make," she admitted. "You have to be careful with meringue, very exact."

One of the most important lessons she learned was never to over-mix the egg whites. "There were times I had to start over. It was a lot of work."

Last summer Robinson visited Paris again and visited the famous Le Cordon Bleu culinary school—an institution in gastronomy situated alongside the Seine River where students learn the art of choosing, cooking, and eating good food.

Robinson also traveled to the south of France and stood amidst fields of lavender – it was there where she got her first taste of ice cream made from the hardy, fragrant herb. "The ice cream was incredible, very floral."

On that same family vacation she visited England, where Robinson said she enjoyed great Indian food as well as the strawberries and cream at a Wimbledon match—a must for any tourist!

She's learned to make pizza in Italy, apple strudel in Austria, and pastries such as tzatziki, spanakopita, and pita bread in Greece. She explained that the spanakopita was made from layers of puff dough, spinach, onions, feta, and garlic for traditional comfort food bliss that she enjoyed eating, especially as she's a vegetarian.

"My mom is vegetarian. I've always had the option to not be but, I feel better when I eat that way," she explained. She does eat eggs and cheese.

"I think out of all the places I've been, Greece was my favorite

in food because it's really fresh and simple. In Greece, they don't have phyllo dough like here; their dough naturally rises in a way that is very flaky with olive oil and flour and other ingredients."

But what country had the best desserts?

"The best chocolate I've had has been in Switzerland. They have the best hot chocolate. I went to the Lindt factory and that was awesome," she said.

"When I was younger, I wanted to be a chocolate tester. Not a very attainable goal." Robinson laughs when she says this, as though she might be the only person who's ever dreamed of living for chocolate!

"I learned how chocolate is grown and processed. They had a part for visitors, much smaller than where they actually make the chocolate. We got in a little cart, and they tour you around."



Tasty pastries from scratch

Robinson dished a little more about cooking for family and some of her baking strategies:

Kidz Zone: Does your family often ask you to cook?

Robinson: "I get a lot of requests for baking. My dad is a very good cook, and he usually does the cooking. My dad doesn't like sweets at all, which is crazy I think! I'm always trying to find sweets that he actually likes, but I made a pear sorbet for his birthday he liked.

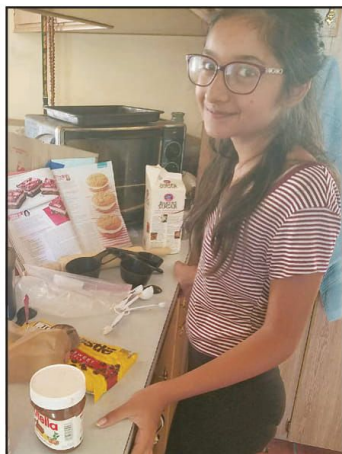
KZ: When you go out to restaurants with your family, do you ever think to yourself, 'I've had better?'

Robinson: I try not to think about it too much and just enjoy the moment.

KZ: What are some of the qualities you need in order to have any success working with pastries?

Robinson: Patience. You have to want to make things very exact

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Baking from scratch




Lilly Robinson enjoys lavender ice cream in the south of France

Prescott Astronomy Club



WHAT'S UP?
FEBRUARY
THE HEART OF PLUTO




Story by Adam England. Images courtesy of Alan Stern, New Horizons Principal Investigator.

On February 14th we celebrate Valentine's Day and the birthday of our Great State of Arizona. One astronomical discovery in early Arizona history is Pluto at Flagstaff's Lowell Observatory in 1930. Percival Lowell had begun the hunt for his "Planet X" in 1906, and died in 1916 unaware that he had actually imaged Pluto. Twenty-three-year old Clyde Tombaugh continued taking photographs and comparing them under a blink-comparator, eventually locating what would later be called Pluto on February 18th 1930.


In 2006, NASA launched the New Horizons probe to explore Pluto, which culminated in the July 2015 flyby of the dwarf-planet and its five moons. As the probe approached the planet, it began taking images, and the Heart of Pluto immediately stood out. Named the Tombaugh Regio, it's a

smooth area of mostly nitrogen ice, surrounded by rock and ice mountains soaring over 11,000 feet from the surface. Data revealed glacial activity along these mountain ranges, similar to what we see on earth in the polar climates.

New Horizons continues to operate, and recently flew past Ultima Thule, an object 25% further from us than Pluto. Data continues to come in from the edges of our Solar System, with the initial images showing a snowman shaped object, likely formed from the collision of two separate objects.



Pluto in true color



First color image of Ultima Thule

If you'd like to learn more about the sky, telescopes, or socialize with other amateur astronomers, visit us at www.prescottastronomyclub.org or Facebook @PrescottAstronomyClub to find the next star party, Star Talk, or event.

Adam England is a local insurance broker who moonlights as an amateur astronomer, writer, and interplanetary conquest consultant. Follow his rants and exploits on Twitter @AZSalesman or on Facebook.com/AdamEfromAZ

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because, you know, a lot of times if you go off the recipe, it doesn't come out good. But you also have to know how to look at what you've made and if it's not working, how to fix it.

KZ: What was it like visiting the famous Le Cordon Bleu?

Robinson: "It was really cool; they have big classrooms for bread, pastries, and pies. I was super excited because they have a colony of bees on their roof where they make and sell their own honey. They have a greenhouse on the roof, and gardens. It's a good option for American students because they have classes with a translator.

KZ: Are you fearless when you go into the kitchen?

Robinson: I try to be fearless. If I'm worried about something, I'll usually have my dad come in and look at the recipe and make sure everything is okay. I want to know how to make as many things as possible. If I just go and make it, if it doesn't turn out that's okay. I can just go and make it again.

KZ: What would you like to make that you haven't made before?

Robinson: I've never made a soufflé. I want to make mince-meat pie this winter. I'm always

trying new recipes just about every weekend.

KZ: Have you done any cake decorating?

Robinson: I don't really like using frosting. I do try and make things pretty. I usually decorate with powdered sugar and fruit. That's something I want to try in the future, making really beautiful decorations with piping. I think it's an important skill.

KZ: Have you made many birthday cakes?

Robinson: I make a birthday cake for pretty much everyone. I made a birthday cake for my mom—a chocolate cake with espresso icing and raspberries. Two years ago, I made a birthday cake for my mom with chocolate with apricot jam; that's what we tried in Austria.

KZ: Have you tried inventing a recipe?

Robinson: Sometimes I'll change a recipe to flavors that I like. I made a tiramisu recently that I sort of invented. In France they have a cookie called a madeleine; it's really spongy and soft similar to a lady finger but smaller and shell-shaped. So I made a tiramisu with madeleines. I love trying new things, new ideas that haven't been done before...and I just love baking!



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Kidz Zone MAGAZINE

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WEST YAVAPAI
GUIDANCE CLINIC
Foundation

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST-AID TRAINING
FREE THROUGH WYGC FOUNDATION

The WYGC Foundation believes that everyone can benefit from the MHFA course. Past attendees of the course have been the individual working in direct service to psychiatric clients. Other attendees have been people who have struggled with their own mental health crises; the parent of the 13 year old who wants to find out if their child is simply going through chemical changes or if they need to seek professional help, the friend of someone living with substance use disorder that doesn't know how to support their loved one anymore...truly the list goes on.

The nonprofit West Yavapai Guidance Clinic (WYGC) Foundation is offering this class to the public, free of charge, on Friday, March 1, 2019. Participants in the 8-hour class – led by experienced, certified trainers – will leave with a certificate naming them a mental health first aider. These education opportunities have been made possible through WYGC Foundation donors and private grant award dollars.

Mental Health First Aid is a service offered by West Yavapai Guidance Clinic Foundation on a regular basis, open to the public and free of charge. The next class will be held on Friday, March 1, 2019 in Prescott Valley. Space is limited, so advance registration is required. Call Lacey Carlock at 928-445-5211 ext 3635, or email l.carlock@wygc.org to reserve your spot.