



10 RIDERS, ONE INSPIRING CHEF, AN HISTORIC CHÂTEAU AND ENDLESS GOOD FOOD AND WINE. DOES IT GET ANY BETTER? BY CAROLYN MALCOUN

Provence

THE TRAVEL ISSUE



LOCATION PHOTOGRAPHY BY
REBECCA MARSHALL

Taking a bike tour through Provence is like living in a postcard. Roads meander through ancient villages, spilling into cherry and almond orchards that run right into vineyards growing the grapes for some of the finest wines in the world.

Coasting into the woods behind Abbaye Saint-Madeleine du Barroux in Provence, I found a feast waiting. I propped my bike against a tree and limped over to check out the spread. Bottles of chilled rosé and sparkling water sat among platters of endive stuffed with goat cheese, walnuts and strawberries; a fennel and grapefruit salad; melon strewn with mint; and paper-thin slices of raw summer squash sprinkled with herbs. I was living the dream.

Just moments earlier, I had been swearing under my breath. My quads burned. I pedaled up the switchbacks to the abbey so slowly I felt I might topple over at any minute. But now I was gingerly sitting down

(those padded bike shorts only do so much) to dig into lunch with 10 others on this Du-Vine Cycling + Adventure Company trip. Its motto: Bike/Eat/Drink/Sleep. For our group that meant cycling through the Dentelles de Montmirail in France—a small mountain chain that snakes through northern Provence—and bedding down at La Verrière, a private château surrounded by vineyards.

That morning had kicked off with a ride to the market in Bédoin. We rolled down the hill from La Verrière and pedaled 12 miles to meet Seamus Mullen, the energetic 42-year-old James Beard Award-nominated chef of Tertulia and El Comado in New York City. He's the reason this trip was called "Chef on Wheels"—he

was there to teach cooking classes and ride with us on our food-centric adventures.

At the market, Mullen filled shopping bags with the ingredients he'd use to make the feast in the woods and for the cooking class he would lead later that evening. Did he have plans for either when he arrived at

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Asparagus Salad
with Eggs & Jambon
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Endive with
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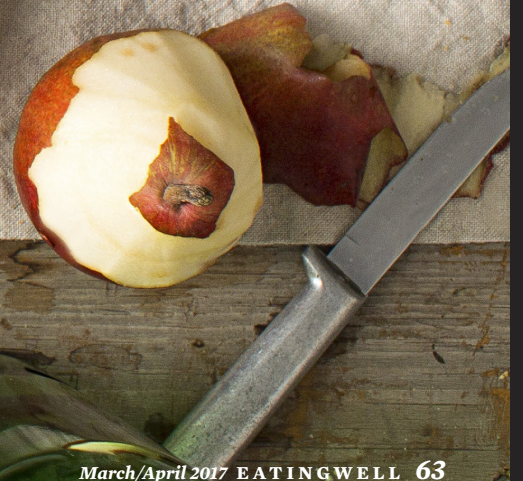
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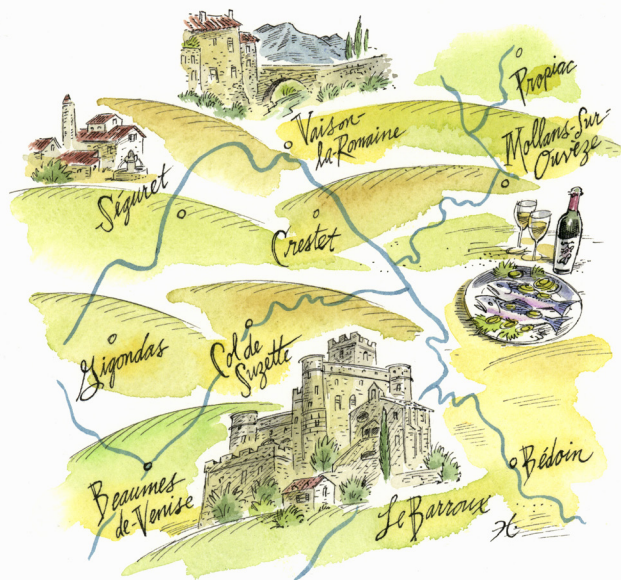


Grilled Lamb Chops with Anchovy-Walnut Chimichurri
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On the final night of our trip, Mullen took over the outdoor grill at La Verrière to prepare a farewell feast. He assembled a show-stopping meal that focused on grilled local lamb, which the region is known for, served with a rustic chimichurri sauce. Mullen's love of vegetables is obvious in every meal he cooks. And he took as much care in preparing the veggie-packed sides as he did the main dishes.





the market? He sure didn't. His inspiration came from what was fresh. And inspiration came easy—colorful tomatoes, the largest and tiniest artichokes I've ever seen, the first cherries of the season, frilly heads of lettuce and more filled the bustling market. A single fish stall stretched half a block, its cases laden with everything from sea beans and squid to cod and cuttlefish.

We groaned with soreness and delight as we dug into the feast. After cycling almost 30 miles that morning, we were famished. And the food was amazing: it was so simple, yet so delicious, because Mullen had crafted it from the freshest of the fresh. It wasn't hard to see how his own journey influenced how he cooks today.

Five years ago, Mullen wouldn't have been on this trip. For much of the last decade, he was sick—*really* sick. Every morning went like this: he sat up in bed and let his feet dangle over the edge for 10 minutes to let the swelling in his hands and feet subside. Then he stood up and hobbled to a lounge chair where he sat for another 15 minutes before hobbling to the shower. Sometimes his hands were too swollen to button his shirt. He wore slip-on clogs

because it hurt too much to tie his shoes. This was devastating for a Vermont kid who was a mountain bike racer through his early 20s.

Mullen has rheumatoid arthritis, an autoimmune disease in which his immune system mistakenly attacks healthy cells in his joints. Despite taking a cocktail of medications—injectables, chemotherapy drugs, painkillers, you name it—and getting monthly blood transfusions, that painful morning routine was *still* his day-to-day reality. *For eight years.*

On top of all this, he was frequently in and out of the hospital. Some of the medi-

cations he took suppress the immune system, leaving him more susceptible to other illnesses. After bacterial meningitis landed him in the hospital for two weeks, he decided that something had to give.

"There's a really amazing Buddhist proverb that goes: when you're ready for a teacher, he appears," Mullen said after detailing his health history one night. The group was seated around him in the stonewalled great room of La Verrière. All of us were silent, mouths slightly agape, glass of wine or piece of prosciutto frozen in mid-air. I can't even imagine what his medical chart looks like. It was hard to believe that this was the same guy who rode up 6,263-foot Mont Ventoux the day before. How the hell did he get here?

Mullen got here because he met his teacher: Frank Lipman, M.D. He practices functional medicine, which combines Western medicine with other complementary treatments, at Eleven Eleven Wellness Center in New York City. After running a battery of tests, Lipman suggested an imbalance in Mullen's gut bacteria was contributing to his sickness and started him down a path to heal it.

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Seafood Paella with
Spring Vegetables
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Mullen heads to Sicily on his next "Chef on Wheels" trip with DuVine Cycling + Adventure Co. at the end of May. On our trip to Provence, he cooked a picnic lunch (opposite top and center) with ingredients he gathered from the Bédoin farmers' market (bottom). During his cooking class, he taught us how to cook one of his signature dishes, paella.





EDIBLE EXPLORATIONS

Five more active culinary adventures let you have your cake and work it off too

1 Walk your way through California wine country. Enjoy cooking classes and olive oil tastings while walking through Sonoma and Napa counties. Starts at \$3,198 per person for 5 days. [backroads.com](#)

2 Ramble through Japan. Hike among fruit trees and rice paddies, experience a tea ceremony and go to a sake brewery. Starts at \$9,895 per person for 8 days. [butterfield.com](#)

3 Coast through the Great Smoky Mountains. Explore the landscape by bike, then enjoy Blackberry Farm's amenities—hike, horseback ride, fly fish and dine at the farm's James Beard Award-winning restaurant. Starts at \$5,999 per person for 6 days. [trektravel.com](#)

4 Explore Piedmont and Parma. Wander through Barolo vineyards, go on a truffle hunt, taste Parma ham at the source and visit a Parmigiano-Reggiano dairy. Starts at \$2,095 per person for 8 days. [exodustravels.com](#)

5 Find your center in Southern India. Take cooking classes, tour coffee, tea and spice plantations and Zen out in yoga classes in the state of Kerala on a private tour. Starts at \$2,380 per person for 8 days. [gourmetontour.com](#)

THE TRAVEL ISSUE



MISSION ACCOMPLISHED: Cyclists from around the world flock to Provence to tackle Mont Ventoux, which is part of the Tour de France every few years. DuVine founder Andy Levine (left) poses with Mullen at the summit after their ride. The rest of us, save for Carlos Valentin (above, front center), were deemed unfit for the ride. Don't worry, we weren't offended.

It wasn't easy. Mullen's regimen included conventional medicine, supplements, herbs, yoga, meditation and acupuncture. He slept more. But the biggest change

was his diet. Mullen loaded up on foods to feed the good bacteria in his gut, especially lots of fibrous vegetables and dark leafy greens. "The stuff that we don't break down goes into our large intestine and those good little bugs that live down there have a frickin' party on that stuff," he said. Lipman also instructed him to eliminate alcohol, gluten, grains and sugar and limit dairy—a way of eating that not all health professionals agree with but one that Lipman believes works for some people.

Six months later, Mullen climbed out of bed and walked down the circular staircase in his Brooklyn apartment. Halfway down the stairs, he realized he wasn't in pain. "Everything in the world went from black-and-white to color," he said. The first thing he did? Pumped up the tires on his old bike. "I rode six miles. I was fat and out of shape and exhausted but I had a shit-eating grin the whole time," Mullen said.

Mullen has been asymptomatic for four years now. He says his markers for rheumatoid arthritis are now negative. Today he's as much a cyclist as he is a chef. He's tackled about 30 cycling races in the past three years, including La Ruta de los Conquistadores in Costa Rica, a grueling 161-mile mountain bike race. And he has no plans to stop cooking or cycling. Recently he's teamed up with the charity No Kid Hungry to help create a program called Chefs Cycle, bringing together food and fitness to raise money to end childhood hunger in America.

Retiring to my room after Mullen's talk, I stretched my aching muscles in anticipation of our ride the next day. Just thinking about getting back on the saddle sounded daunting. But then I remembered Mullen's journey to good health and knew if he could change his life, I could at least get back on the bike and climb another mountain. And there would be chilled rosé and an amazing meal waiting for me at the end of the day. 🍷

CAROLYN MALCOUN is EatingWell's senior food editor. Since this trip didn't traumatize her enough, she plans to complete a 50-mile bike race this summer. **SEAMUS MULLEN's** next book is *Real Food Heals: Eat to Feel Younger and Stronger Every Day* (Avery, Aug. 2017).



WINES

Bursting with aromas of strawberries, white flowers and citrus, rosé wines from Provence are arguably the best in the world. Using blends of grenache, mourvèdre, syrah, cinsault and merlot grapes, the wines develop a pink color from their brief time—generally 2 to 20 hours—in contact with the red grape skins. The sunny Provence climate and proximity to the Mediterranean Sea yield light, fresh wines that pair best with seafood, cheese and salad. Uncork a chilled bottle with a meal or pour a glass to cool down after a hot day. These are just a few of our favorite rosé producers whose wines are available in the U.S.

- **Commanderie de la Bargemone**
- **Commanderie de Peyrassol**
- **Domaine de Triennes**
- **Domaine Tempier Bandol**

Chocolate-Covered
Almond Cake

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Endive with Goat Cheese, Strawberries & Walnuts

ACTIVE: 15 min
TOTAL: 15 min

TO MAKE AHEAD: Refrigerate stuffed endive for up to 4 hours; top with oil, honey and basil just before serving.

Vary these quick-to-assemble apps with the season. Try sliced nectarines in place of the strawberries in the summer and halved grapes in the fall.

- 24 large Belgian endive leaves (from 4 heads; about 8 ounces)
- 3 ounces soft goat cheese
- 1½ cups sliced small-to-medium strawberries
- ¼ cup toasted chopped walnuts
- ¼ teaspoon sea salt
- 4 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon raw honey
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh basil

Arrange endive on a platter. Crumble a little bit of goat cheese onto each leaf. Top with strawberries and walnuts. Sprinkle with salt. Drizzle with oil and honey and sprinkle with basil.

SERVES 12: 2 leaves each

CAL 64 / FAT 5G (SAT 1G) / CHOL 3MG / CARBS 4G / TOTAL SUGARS 3G (ADDED 1G) / PROTEIN 2G / FIBER 1G / SODIUM 79MG / POTASSIUM 83MG.



Asparagus Salad with Eggs & Jambon de Bayonne

ACTIVE: 30 min
TOTAL: 30 min

TO MAKE AHEAD: Refrigerate vinaigrette (Step 2) for up to 3 days; bring to room temperature before using.

Piment d'Espelette is a sweet, spicy ground pepper from the Basque region of France. While it's not essential, it does add a subtle kick to the otherwise subtle flavors of this salad. Look for this spice and jambon de Bayonne at specialty stores and well-stocked markets.

SALAD

- 24 medium-to-thick asparagus stalks (about 1½ pounds), trimmed
- 3 large eggs
- 1 small shallot, very thinly sliced, rings separated
- 6 paper-thin slices jambon de Bayonne or other cured ham, such as Serrano
- ¼ cup fresh small basil and/or tarragon leaves
- Piment d'Espelette for garnish

VINAIGRETTE

- ¼ cup fresh tarragon
- ¼ cup finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
- ¼ cup white-wine vinegar
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon raw honey
- ¼ clove garlic
- ¼ teaspoon ground pepper
- ⅙ teaspoon sea salt
- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil

1. To prepare salad: Put a large pot of salted water on to boil. Fill a large bowl with ice water and place next to the stove. Boil asparagus until bright green and just tender, about 3 minutes. Immediately transfer to the ice water with a slotted spoon. Add eggs to the boiling water and cook for 6½ minutes. Meanwhile, remove the asparagus to a clean kitchen towel and pat dry. Transfer the eggs to the ice water and let stand until cool.

2. To prepare vinaigrette: Combine tarragon, cheese, vinegar, mustard, honey, garlic, pepper and salt in a blender; process until the tarragon is finely chopped. With the motor running, drizzle in oil through the feed tube and process until creamy.

3. To serve: Cut the eggs in half. Arrange the asparagus and eggs on a large platter and drizzle with the vinaigrette. Top with shallot, ham, basil and/or tarragon and a sprinkle of Piment d'Espelette, if desired.

SERVES 6: about ¾ cup each

CAL 169 / FAT 13G (SAT 3G) / CHOL 100MG / CARBS 5G / TOTAL SUGARS 3G (ADDED 1G) / PROTEIN 7G / FIBER 1G / SODIUM 343MG / POTASSIUM 187MG.



Radish, Herb & Feta Salad with Lemon Vinaigrette

ACTIVE: 40 min
TOTAL: 40 min

TO MAKE AHEAD: Refrigerate dressing (Step 1) for up to 3 days; bring to room temperature before using.

Sorrel, a perennial herb common in French cooking, adds bright, lemony flavor to this salad. The red-veined variety is particularly pretty.

DRESSING

- 4 oil-packed anchovy fillets
- 1 medium clove garlic, minced
- ⅓ cup lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons champagne vinegar
- 1 tablespoon raw honey
- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil, preferably Arbequina
- ¼ teaspoon sea salt
- Freshly cracked pepper to taste

SALAD

- 1 pound radishes, trimmed and very thinly sliced
- 2 cups packed small sorrel leaves or baby arugula
- 1 small shallot, very thinly sliced, rings separated
- ½ cup fresh basil, torn into small pieces

- ½ cup fresh tarragon, torn into small pieces
- ¼ teaspoon sea salt
- Freshly cracked pepper to taste
- ½ cup crumbled feta or soft goat cheese
- 4 teaspoons lemon zest
- 1 tablespoon finely grated fresh horseradish
- Piment d'Espelette for garnish

1. To prepare dressing: Combine anchovies, garlic, lemon juice, vinegar and honey in a blender; process until almost smooth. With the motor running, drizzle in oil through the feed tube and process until creamy. Season with ¼ teaspoon salt and pepper to taste.

2. To prepare salad: Combine radishes, sorrel (or arugula), shallot, basil and tarragon in a large mixing bowl. Season with salt and pepper. Gently toss with ½ cup of the dressing (reserve the remaining dressing for another use). Transfer to a serving bowl or platter. Top with feta (or goat cheese), lemon zest, horseradish and a sprinkle of Piment d'Espelette, if desired. Serve immediately.

SERVES 6: scant 1 cup each

CAL 148 / FAT 12G (SAT 3G) / CHOL 12MG / CARBS 7G / TOTAL SUGARS 4G (ADDED 1G) / PROTEIN 3G / FIBER 2G / SODIUM 331MG / POTASSIUM 271MG.



Grilled Lamb Chops with Anchovy-Walnut Chimichurri

ACTIVE: 35 min
TOTAL: 35 min

Provence is famous for its lamb, particularly that raised in the town of Sisteron, where sheep graze on wild herbs and grasses. Look for racks with about 8 chops each that have been frenched, which means the meat has been cut away from the tips, exposing the bone.

LAMB

- 2 racks of lamb (about 1¼ pounds each), frenched
- ¾ teaspoon sea salt
- ¾ teaspoon ground pepper
- 2 teaspoons lemon zest
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil

CHIMICHURRI

- ⅓ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- ¼ cup fresh mint
- ¼ cup fresh parsley
- 2 teaspoons lemon zest
- ¼ cup lemon juice
- 2 oil-packed anchovy fillets
- 1 small clove garlic
- ¼ cup Niçoise olives, pitted and coarsely chopped
- ¼ cup coarsely chopped walnuts
- ½ teaspoon crushed red pepper

1. Preheat grill to high.
2. To marinate lamb: Cut lamb between each bone into individual chops. Place on a rimmed baking sheet and season both sides with salt, pepper

and lemon zest. Drizzle with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup oil. Let stand while you make the chimichurri.

3. To prepare chimichurri: Pulse oil, mint, parsley, lemon zest, lemon juice, anchovies and garlic in a food processor until it has a coarse, rustic texture. Transfer to a bowl. Stir in olives, walnuts and crushed red pepper.

4. To grill lamb: Grill the lamb chops 2 to 3 minutes per side for medium rare. Serve immediately with the chimichurri.

SERVES 8: 2 chops & $1\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp. chimichurri each

CAL 284 / FAT 23G (SAT 4G) / CHOL 52MG / CARBS 2G / TOTAL SUGARS 0G (ADDED 0G) / PROTEIN 17G / FIBER 1G / SODIUM 334MG / POTASSIUM 264MG.



Seafood Paella with Spring Vegetables

ACTIVE: $1\frac{1}{4}$ hrs

TOTAL: 1 hr 35 min

EQUIPMENT: 13- to 14-inch paella pan

Provence is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea so there's bountiful seafood throughout the region. Despite the fact that it's best known as a Spanish dish, paella appears at Provençal farmers' markets, cooked up by vendors using the catch of the day.

- 6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 2 cups diced onion
- 1 cup diced fennel
- 3 medium tomatoes, grated on the large holes of a box grater (skins discarded)
- 4 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons white-wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon sea salt, divided
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground pepper
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon crushed red pepper
- Pinch of saffron
- 1 large fresh artichoke
- 1 cup Calasparra rice or other paella rice
- 2 cups seafood stock
- 1 cup green beans, trimmed and cut into 2-inch pieces
- 4 ounces squid bodies, sliced into rings
- 6-12 clams and/or mussels, scrubbed
- 8 ounces skinned monkfish (see *Tip, page 104*) or cod, cut into 1-inch-thick pieces

1. Heat 3 tablespoons oil in a 13- to 14-inch paella pan over medium-high heat. Add onion and fennel; cook, stirring often, until the onion is translucent, about 5 minutes. Add tomatoes, garlic, vinegar, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt, pepper, crushed red pepper and saffron. Reduce heat to maintain a simmer and cook, stirring occasionally, until the tomato liquid has evaporated, 20 to 25 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, clean artichoke (see *page 104*). Cut lengthwise into 6 wedges. Heat 2 tablespoons oil in a large skillet over medium heat until very hot but not smoking. Add the artichoke wedges; sprinkle with $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon salt and cook until browned, about 2 minutes per side. Transfer to a plate.

3. Preheat oven to 375°F.

4. When the tomato liquid has evaporated, add rice to the paella pan, increase heat to medium and cook, stirring, for 2 minutes. Add stock. Turn on a second burner so both the front and rear burner on one side of the stove are on; bring to a boil over high heat.

5. Spread the rice evenly in the pan and nestle the artichokes and beans into it. Reduce heat to maintain a low simmer and cook for 10 minutes, rotating and shifting the pan around the burners periodically to help the rice cook evenly. Season squid with $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon salt and place on the rice. Cook, without stirring but continuing to rotate the pan, for 5 minutes more.

6. Nestle clams and/or mussels into the rice with the open edges facing up. Season fish with the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt and place on top of the rice. Remove the paella from the heat and very carefully cover the pan with foil.

7. Transfer the pan to the oven and bake for 10 minutes. Let stand, covered, for 10 minutes before serving.

SERVES 6: $1\frac{1}{3}$ cups each

CAL 354 / FAT 15G (SAT 2G) / CHOL 60MG / CARBS 38G / TOTAL SUGARS 5G (ADDED 0G) / PROTEIN 16G / FIBER 5G / SODIUM 695MG / POTASSIUM 695MG.



Chocolate-Covered Almond Cake

ACTIVE: 35 min

TOTAL: $3\frac{1}{2}$ hrs

(including cooling time)

TO MAKE AHEAD: Refrigerate

syrup-soaked cake (Steps 1-5) for up to 1 day; refrigerate frosted cake for up to 1 day more. Let stand at room temperature for about 1 hour before serving.

EQUIPMENT: 9-inch springform pan, parchment paper

This dense almond cake looks deluxe, but can be whipped up in the time it takes to prepare a batch of cookies. A drizzle of dry sherry syrup adds complex, fruity flavors and results in an extra-moist cake.

CAKE

- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups Marcona almonds or lightly salted roasted almonds (8 ounces)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup coconut sugar or granulated sugar, divided
- 4 large eggs, at room temperature
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup almond flour
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup low-fat milk
- 2 teaspoons grated lemon zest
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon

SYRUP

- 6 tablespoons dry sherry, preferably Pedro Ximenez
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup coconut sugar or granulated sugar

GANACHE

- 6 ounces chopped bittersweet chocolate or bittersweet chocolate chips
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup heavy cream

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Coat a 9-inch springform pan with cooking spray. Line the bottom with parchment paper.

2. To prepare cake: Process almonds and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar in a food processor to the consistency of almond butter. Using a stand mixer with the whisk attachment, beat eggs on medium speed until fluffy, 1 to 2 minutes. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar and beat on high speed until pale in color and tripled in volume, 3 to 5 minutes. Add the almond mixture, then oil, then almond flour, then milk, mixing on medium speed after each addition until just incorporated before adding the next. Mix in lemon zest and cinnamon. Scrape the batter into the prepared pan.

3. Bake the cake until a tester inserted in the center comes out with just a few crumbs attached, 35 to 40 minutes. Run a thin knife around the edge of the pan and remove the sides. Let the cake cool on a wire rack for 30 minutes. Invert onto the rack and remove the pan bottom. Put a large rimmed baking sheet below the rack.

4. To prepare syrup: Meanwhile, cook sherry and sugar in a small saucepan over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until the sugar is dissolved, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from heat.

5. Poke several holes in the bottom (now top) of the cake with a fork. Brush with half of the syrup. Let the cake absorb the first layer then brush with the remaining syrup. When cool, cover with plastic and let stand for 1 hour or up to 1 day.

6. To prepare ganache: Place chocolate in a medium heatproof bowl. Heat cream in a small saucepan over medium-high heat until just boiling. Pour the cream over the chocolate and let stand for 5 minutes. Gently stir to combine. Let stand for 30 minutes to thicken.

7. Carefully transfer the cake to a serving plate, leaving the now top side up. Frost with the cooled ganache.

SERVES 16: 1 slice each

CAL 280 / FAT 19G (SAT 5G) / CHOL 57MG / CARBS 26G / TOTAL SUGARS 21G (ADDED 20G) / PROTEIN 6G / FIBER 3G / SODIUM 100MG / POTASSIUM 135MG.