

# Just Desserts by Aimee owner/chef recognized by United Way

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Now, one might think a peach is a peach, but "Mine is definitely a different version than the actual peach shortcake at the Peach Fest itself," Loughran said.

To start with, her peaches come from Wagner's Farm Market, while the Peach Festival uses Bittner-Singer Orchards.

"I peel my peaches and, while I'm peeling my peaches, I make a homemade spiced – we'll call it like a syrup," Loughran said. "It's not as heavy as a syrup, but it's kind of like it's syrup-based. So, as I'm peeling the peaches, the hot syrup I pour into the buckets of peeled peaches. And I do spice it up, too. I use some spices. I know the Peach Festival, they do not use spices, but as a pastry chef I know that peaches pair very well with a spice and cinnamon. So, I do use spices to layer in the peaches and also the syrup.

"My biscuit is from scratch. It is homemade. They're not all uniform. Obviously, I scoop my biscuits out. I do a sugary top to mine, also. So, that's probably why it's a little different than the Peach Festival's, because mine is still kind of hot when people are picking up their shortcakes. And like I said, there is a crispy, sugary top to my biscuit, also.

"And then my whipped cream, my whipped cream basically looks like ice cream. It's scooped out, and then it holds its form like ice cream does; and it will hold its form for a couple of days."



Just Desserts by Aimee owner/chef Aimee Loughran shows off her popular peach shortcake. (Photos courtesy of Aimee Loughran)

Now this is where Loughran's methodology gets really interesting: She serves her dessert disassembled.

"Everything is separated, which a lot of people love, because, when

they go to the Peach Festival and they get peach shortcake, it's all put together at once which, by the time they bring it home to their loved ones – because some people can't make it to the Peach Festival; some people are older, they can't get to the Peach Festival like they normally do – so their loved ones bring home their peach shortcake. So, what I offer is the peach shortcake disassembled," Loughran said.

"The peaches and the syrup come in an 8-ounce closed container. And then I separate, because it's a three-compartment container that I have. The whipped cream is in one compartment, and then the biscuit's in another; and then in the main compartment is that container of peaches and syrup.

"They can bring it to their loved ones and whatnot. Because, I mean, I have people that come and buy 12 at a time. And they bring them to their neighbors, all their elderly family, and it's a good perk when people want that. Because, like I said, they can enjoy it with their loved ones and they don't have to eat it immediately. They can eat it a day or two from now."

Happy customer Kelley Casale was among those who recently

bought a shortcake. She said, "Aimee's peach shortcake gives your taste buds a true party. The cinnamon syrup, with local homegrown peaches, homemade biscuits with homemade whipped cream, is to die for!"

## United Way Recognition

Ingenuity has become a hallmark for Loughran.

"I started the business a little over four years ago – it was actually right before COVID," she said. Just Desserts by Aimee opened as a commercial kitchen in a unit behind the Lewiston Stone House. "I was in my first 10 months of business when COVID hit. So, that was huge for me, because I was either going to survive or not survive. And I thought outside of the box and I started doing those DIY kits, and it kept me afloat. I survived because of those kits, and then, because I did so well, I started up the 'Yellow House.'"

Her second location, in the "Little Yellow House" at 476 Center St., is now open weekly, from noon to 6 p.m. Friday and Saturday, and from noon to 4 p.m. Sunday.

At this commercial location, "My cheesecakes are No. 1, because I do supply cheesecakes to some local restaurants. I supply to Casa Antica, Ray's Tavern and also Hustler's. So, my cheesecakes I'm known for," Loughran said. "My cream puffs, my mini pies, are a huge seller now, because I only typically sell pies

at Thanksgiving time and like possibly during Christmas. But, because I make pies for local restaurants, I do make them for the store now. But I always make smaller, like mini pies. Because I'm not open enough during the week for people to buy bigger pies, I offer the smaller version pies. And then also my raspberry tarts – they are to die for. And then also my cookies. I sell giant cookies. They're about like, I would say, 5 inches big. The one that's most popular, I would say, is my turtle cookie.

"That turtle cookie is a homemade chocolate chip cookie. And it's topped with a homemade caramel, toasted pecans and a milk chocolate."

As customers have taken notice of her pastries, the United Way has noticed Loughran's perseverance.

Women United of United Way of Greater Niagara President Joanne Beaton said, "When COVID hit, it also shut down her business, so she needed to think outside the box. Aimee was creative to design DIY desserts, which had a different theme each week. This was a curbside service for families to enjoy at home."

Loughran is one of four women who will be honored Oct. 4 at the "Women in Business Spotlight Series."

"We are proud to recognize women in business in our community. Aimee represents women striving to make their own way and demonstrating their talents," Beaton said. "Just Desserts is a popular business not only in Lewiston, but all over Niagara County."

Loughran said, "It was definitely very rewarding to see that all the hard work and dedication and effort and time that I put into my bakery is being recognized. It's starting to pay off, for sure. You set goals, and you crush them."

"I'm a single mom now." In and right after the pandemic, "It was definitely a lot being a single mom, doing it all on my own, and trying to build a company during COVID, to obviously what it is now."

"Slowly but surely, I'm getting there."

## HOT CASE Carry Out Menu

\$6<sup>99</sup>/lb

Monday – Chicken & Biscuits

Tuesday – Breaded Pork Chops

Wednesday – Chef's Choice

Goulash, Sausage Peppers & Onions, Lasagna

Thursday – Meatloaf

Friday – Fish Fry

Menu subject to change

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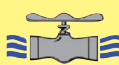
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