

A CELEBRATION OF FOOD



Matt Kirkegaard with his daughters Laura, 8, and Emelyn, 10, at home in Wilston. Picture: Steve Pohlner

Why men are the new kings of the kitchen

FIONA DONNELLY

THE shed used to be the male bolthole but more Aussie blokes can now be found in the kitchen.

Experts say the increase of dual-income families is forcing men to don the apron. But it's not for mid-week family dinners or the traditional spaghetti bolognese stand-by — men are seeking out recipes for complex dishes to impress friends.

More men than women now say they love to cook, men are twice as likely as women to use food media as entertainment and 38 per cent of men are ready for a culinary challenge.

Andrew Cox, group marketing manager for Meat & Livestock

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Association (MLA), which conducted the research, says his organisation has been tracking the trend for a decade.

He said the spike in male interest in cooking was because of the changing face of families, with more one-person and dual-income households forcing men into the kitchen.

But he said men were less interested in the day-to-day drudgery of cooking for the family and keener to impress peers and show off skills.

"Men like to show off — it means cooking is a bit of a new frontier for men," Mr Cox said.

But the food chores are being spread around, with more men embracing grocery shopping.

Woolworths' group retail communications manager, Kristen Young said a new class of "male fooderati?" was on the rise. The image of the worried male

shopper phoning home to check items on a shopping list his wife had written was outdated.

"We're now seeing an empowered, educated male shopper who's very involved in what he's buying," Ms Young said. "They've gone from very intimidated, list-dependent, unsure shopper to a fastidious, particular shopper who's highly informed."

Brisbane educator, Matt Kirkegaard said he was happy to contribute to his household by doing most of the cooking.

Cooking was way of sharing the load and "a lot more fun than doing the laundry".

"Most of my birthday gifts and Father's Day presents have been cooking related, including our pasta machine," he said.

TOP 5 PIZZAS

SOME love anchovies, others won't even consider a slice unless it's topped with ham and pineapple. But should it be deep crust or crispy, wood-fired or cooked in an electric oven? Our top five pizzas are out there to discover.

1 LA CASA, Drummoyne

From buffalo mozzarella and basil to quattro formaggi, brother and sister Tony and Carmel Ruggeri offer excellent value from the wood-fire oven. And kids get to play with their own dough.

2 RAY'S PIZZA, Balgowlah

Also known as the Ciao Belli Cafe, chef and owner Ray Gennaro's wood-fire pizzeria has been a northern beaches favourite for more than five years and is Italian all the way to his Tre Colori pizza of rocket, bocconcini and tomato.



3 DI STEFANO COFFEE WAREHOUSE CAFE AND DELI, Strathfield

This busy warehouse space on Parramatta Rd offers all things Italian, from the Sal Magro's freshly roasted coffee to smoky pizza. Pick up ingredients to DIY on the way out.

4 VIA NAPOLI, Lane Cove

A new contender for top pizza is Via Napoli with its 33cm-round pizza, \$16-\$22. Sorrento-style rectangular half-metre pizza, \$25-\$40, and the whopping 100cm version, \$40-60.

5 PIZZA ROCCO, St Clair

Start with Rocco Coloso's garlic crust with rosemary then move on to the Colosi topped with salami, chilli and caramelised onion before finishing off with apple crumble pizza.

