

Food and Murder

Meggin Kitterman, Assistant Library Director

Recently I read the book *The Golden Spoon* by Jessa Maxwell. The subjects “baking competition” and “mystery” grabbed my attention. I love cooking and baking shows, as well as cookbooks and cooking so I was intrigued to see how a mysterious puzzle would be woven into a baking competition. The book was interesting, not only because of the subject matter but also because the first person narrations from the contestants intertwine and play off each other to tell the story. I find this technique especially compelling when I listen to audiobooks as it helps me really get to know the characters.

Lucy Foley, author of several suspense novels uses this technique in her popular novels, at least in the three I’ve listened to: *The Hunting Party*, *The Paris Apartment* and *The Guest List*. In case you are interested, *The Golden Spoon* as well as the Foley titles are available for free, digitally, using the Libby app with your library card.

The Golden Spoon is Jessa Maxwell’s debut novel so although I wanted to read another Maxwell novel, I had no options. I decided to search the library catalog at www.newulmlibrary.org to see if I could find other books combining food and mystery. I tried a basic search first, because it usually does the trick. By typing “food and murder” into the search box, many results appeared. I was surprised to see all of the results were not cozy mysteries. Even a James Patterson mystery was in the result list.

Here are some of the leads I found with the catalog search with descriptions from the publishers:

Murder at an Irish Bakery/Carlene O’Connor

This book also centers around a baking competition and similar problems. “As for the competitors themselves, not all are as sweet as their confections. There are shenanigans on the first day of filming that put everyone on edge, but that’s nothing compared to day two, when the first round ends and the top contestant is found face-down in her signature pie.”

The Chef/ James Patterson

“Police detective by day, celebrity food truck chef by night, now Caleb Rooney has a new title: Most Wanted. In the Carnival days leading up Mardi Gras, Detective Caleb Rooney comes under investigation for a murder he is accused of committing in the line of duty--as a Major Crimes detective for the New Orleans Police Department. Has his sideline at the Killer Chef food truck given him a taste for murder?”

The Favorite Sister/ Jessica Knoll

“When five hyper-successful women agree to appear on a reality series set in New York City called Goal Diggers, the producers never expect the season will end in murder.”

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The Whole Enchilada/ Diane Mott Davidson

"Goldy Schulz knows her food is to die for, but she never expects one of her best friends to actually keel over when she's leaving a birthday party Goldy has catered."

Murder with Genache: a Key West Food Critic Murder/Lucy Burdette

"For better or worse, Key West Food critic Hayley Snow is baking over 200 cupcakes for her friend Connie's wedding while meeting her writing deadlines. The last things she needs is family drama."

Death by Chocolate Frosted Doughnut/ Sarah Graves

When the annual Pirate Festival blows into their small town, bakeshop owners Jacobia "Jake" Tiptree and her best friend Ellie White expect they'll be busy baking up a storm at The Chocolate Moose. When the body of celebrity foodie Henry Hadlyme is discovered in the Moose's basement, Jake is pegged for the murder. Who among Henry's numerous enemies scuttled him in the cellar? Alas, dead men tell no tales."

Devil's Food Cake Murder/JoAnn Fluke

"Hannah finds Matthew face-down in a plate full of Devil's Food Cake, a single bullet in his head. It will take some sleuthing to sift out the killer, but Hannah is sure of one thing: even the most half-baked murder plot can be oh so deadly."

Hope you find a delicious mystery to enjoy! If not, library staff are happy to help you find reads to suit your taste.

Reminder: The library will be closed on Monday May 29, to celebrate the Memorial Day holiday.

The library is located at 17 N. Broadway and is open to the public Monday - Thursday 9:30 a.m.-8 p.m. and Friday - Saturday 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

For information on library events and hours, visit www.newulmlibrary.org and choose Library Events.