

# Food Network's 'Easter Basket Challenge' pushes bakers to their creative limits

**tasty tv**  
BY GEORGE DICKIE

Sunny Anderson is all about Easter. She loves the holiday itself, the food and most importantly, the desserts. Which is why her hosting gig on Food Network's "Easter Basket Challenge" was such a natural fit for her.

"I've never really done like a holiday competition show like this. I did a pie show but I love Easter and I love the food around Easter. I'm planning my Easter menu right now and scallop potatoes is on it," she says with a laugh. "So I'm looking forward to it."

Premiering Monday, March 1, the five-episode, hourlong series challenges seven professional and home bakers with creating tasty and imaginative holiday masterpieces to be evaluated by judges Jordan Andino ("Junior Chef Showdown") and Claudia Sandoval ("Masterchef Latino"). The contestants must interpret the outrageous Easter themes presented to them and turn them into delicious holiday confections and elaborate edible displays.

In the end, the winning baker receives a grand prize of a golden egg filled with \$25,000.

For her part, Anderson ("The Kitchen") came away impressed by the creativity on display here, which involved more than just baking.

"(The designs) are super elaborate," she says. "There's PVC and wood frames – and it's not just cakes. These bakers are also challenged with molding chocolate and spinning sugar and doing some really artful

things that are not typical in competitions. And then we also have some height requirements and dimension requirements that we give in some of the challenges where we really want people to do something huge. And I think for the finale, we had them make like a three-foot-tall Easter egg. ... You've got to put something in the Easter egg that's hidden for the judges to find. And obviously that adds another level of fun and flair."

But with the fun, there is also pressure. Because of the complicated nature of the designs, the bakers have hours instead of minutes to complete their creations, which didn't always mitigate the stress level. In fact, Anderson recalls one theme that had the contestants particularly on edge.

"At one point, we asked them to do something that would be worthy of an art museum," she says. "So when you think about that, you've got to temper chocolate, which takes forever. If you get it wrong, you've got to start over. You've got to mold things. You know, stack up cakes and carve them. The fondant alone is just a headache. You know, many of them almost didn't finish with the time allotted. It was amazing."

"There were photo finishes pretty much every time," she continues, "and a lot of them at the end ... wished that they had just a few more minutes. I think everyone says that when they're competing because there's a list of things you want to get done and it doesn't always happen."



"Easter Basket Challenge"

## celebrity q&a

# Wrenn Schmidt

OF 'FOR ALL MANKIND' ON APPLE TV+



**Though "For All Mankind" is an alt history of the space program, doing it nonetheless had to be something of a history lesson for you, no?**

Yeah, I think so. I actually feel like as far as the space program, the Apollo years were more familiar to me. There was still a lot to learn, especially technically, but I feel like some of that trajectory was much more familiar. And I feel like even though I was alive, I was a kid during the shuttle age, I didn't really have much of an understanding of how incredible that technology was and the ways in which it kind of changed the game for what we were doing in space as a country.

So that for me was really fascinating and kind of intense and mind-blowing to understand all of the technology. I mean, I really kind of geeked out about that. And going to see the space shuttle that's here in Los Angeles was really stunning because I'd been studying as much as I could to understand exactly how that machinery worked to kind of understand at what point does alarm bells go off for Margo or for someone that's really well-versed in how the technology works.

BY GEORGE DICKIE

## WebLinks

America's best undiscovered talent goes head-to-head on teams led by coaches Kelly Clarkson, Blake Shelton, Nick Jonas and John Legend, as Season 20 of "The Voice" takes another chair spin Monday on NBC. Stay on top of the latest news at [www.nbc.com/the-voice](http://www.nbc.com/the-voice)

Barry Allen (Grant Gustin) searches for his missing wife (Candice Patton) while also trying to stop the cunning Eva McCulloch (Efrat Dor) as Season 7 of "The Flash" debuts Tuesday on The CW. Get a glimpse at what's to come at [www.youtube.com/watch?v5xEWXM-J9y78](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v5xEWXM-J9y78)



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