

tasty tv

BY GEORGE DICKIE

What Stewart says goes on Food Network's 'Chopped: Martha Rules'

Martha Stewart has had her hands in so many television and retail ventures over the years, one might say she's practically a cottage industry.

But that would be inaccurate. With her Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia brand, she became an actual industry.

Her newest TV endeavor comes this week on Food Network with "Chopped: Martha Rules." Premiering Tuesday, April 13, the hourlong stunt series finds Stewart presiding over the competition at an outdoor kitchen in Kennebunkport, Maine, as chefs are challenged in three rounds – appetizer, entree and dessert – to make delicious creations from a basket of mystery ingredients.

But they'll need to adapt on the fly as Stewart has carte blanche to change the rules without notice and even take control of the clock. The winner of each episode, as determined by Stewart and fellow judges Marc Murphy and Marcus Samuelsson, advance to the finale and compete for a \$50,000 grand prize.

It's the latest step in a career that has seen Stewart dominate the culinary/homemaking/design landscape on television for three decades. The following are a few of her other more noteworthy projects.

"Martha Stewart Living" (1993-2004, syndicated): Stewart arguably made her name on TV with this half-hour series based on the same-named magazine, in which she presented segments on cooking, gardening, craft making and decorating. The show left the air in 2004 after Stewart was convicted and sentenced in a stock-trading case.

"Martha" (2005-12, syndicated and Hallmark Channel): Also titled "The Martha Stewart Show," this variety/talk offering represented Stewart's return to daytime television and like its predecessor featured culinary, craft-making and decorating segments as well as conversations with celebrity guests. Rising costs forced Hallmark to shutter production in 2012.

"Today" (1996-present, NBC): Hosts may have come and gone, but Stewart continues to be a presence on the iconic morning franchise with her regular segments on cooking, crafts and gardening.

"Martha & Snoop's Potluck Party Challenge" (2016-19, VH1): In an odd pairing, Stewart joined rapper and marijuana advocate Snoop Dogg for this cooking series in which they put their personal spins on dishes for themed dinners and drinks with celebrity guests including Seth Rogen, Wiz Khalifa, Kathy Griffin and Robin Thicke. A little too much fun was had by all.

"The Apprentice: Martha Stewart" (2005, NBC): A rare misfire was this effort in which Stewart served as a more tactful version of the show's regular boss, Donald Trump (who was one of the executive producers here). Sagging ratings brought about its demise after one season.

"Martha Knows Best" (2020-present, HGTV): Gardening is front and center of this series that finds Stewart offering up tips to callers and celebrity friends and showing off projects and improvements at her 150-acre estate in suburban New York.

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