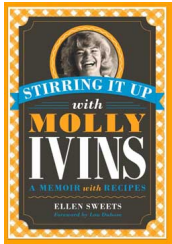


An intimate look at the private side of a very public personality

Written by BY TERRY MATHEWS, News-Telegram Arts Editor
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Public life was so much a part of the late Molly Ivins that it might be difficult to think of her as a gracious hostess, fabulous cook and generous friend.

Ivins' friend and fellow journalist Ellen Sweets has penned, "Stirring It Up with Molly Ivins: a Memoir with Recipes," recalling time spent shopping for ingredients and preparing and serving food served to a diverse group of friends around a custom-made round dinner table made of curly maple and inlaid with rare African bubinga wood.

Although Ivins was a firebrand liberal, she was raised in upper class Houston, went to Smith College, spent a year in France and received a master's degree from Columbia University. The year in France had a lasting impact on the way she viewed food, and she couldn't help her raising.

"Molly . . . had her mother's china, sterling tea service, a cut glass tea pitcher and a deviled-egg plate," Sweet writes.

Sweet includes recipes shared during time with Ivins and some of her own family favorites. Most every recipe has a backstory, woven expertly into the intimate look at a friendship that survived the test of time, distance and, ultimately, a fatal disease.

Also included in the book are personal photos from Sweet's collection and friends and family, giving the reader an insider's look into the life of a woman who loved much, laughed loudly and was never afraid to tell us what she really thought.