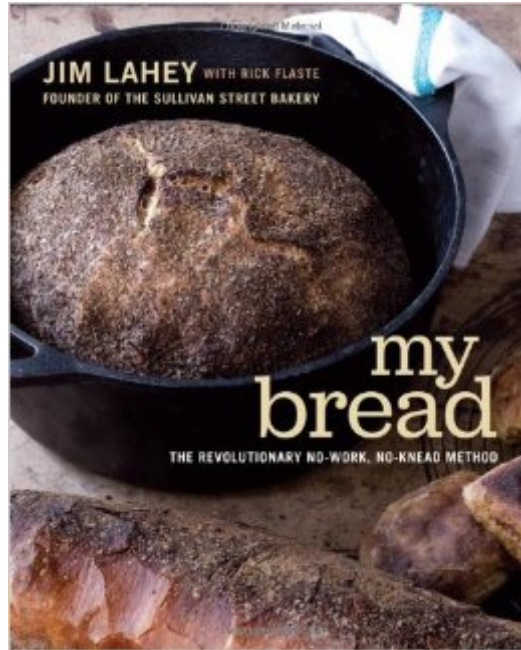


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My Bread: The Revolutionary No-Work, No-Knead Method



Synopsis

Lahey's â€œbreathtaking, miraculous, no-work, no-knead breadâ€• (Vogue) has revolutionized the food world. When he wrote about Jim Lahey's bread in the New York Times, Mark Bittman's excitement was palpable: â€œThe loaf is incredible, a fine-bakery quality, European-style boule that is produced more easily than by any other technique I've used, and it will blow your mind.â€• Here, thanks to Jim Lahey, New York's premier baker, is a way to make bread at home that doesn't rely on a fancy bread machine or complicated kneading techniques. The secret to Jim Lahey's bread is slow-rise fermentation. As Jim shows in *My Bread*, with step-by-step instructions followed by step-by-step pictures, the amount of labor you put in amounts to 5 minutes: mix water, flour, yeast, and salt, and then let time work its magicâ€•no kneading necessary. The process couldn't be more simple, or the results more inspiring. Hereâ€•finallyâ€•Jim Lahey gives us a cookbook that enables us to fit quality bread into our lives at home. color photos throughout

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Let me start with a summary. *My Bread* is a great cookbook about making artisan bread, thin crust pizza, and sandwiches. The instruction is clear, the recipe is practical and super easy, and the picture is beautiful. You also get a bonus section about the author's personal story in developing his career and famed no-knead method. I love this book and highly recommend it to everyone. I like bread, especially good quality artisan bread. I like getting my hands dirty, both in the laboratory and in my kitchen. But, as a Taiwanese biologist, I have no cultural background, professional training, or family tradition in making bread, so I didn't even think about doing it before. Until somewhere in

2009, I learned about Jim Lahey's no-knead, slow fermentation, and baking in an oven-within-an-oven method. (Thanks to Mark Bittman for New York Times and Internet!) I just tried it using my Pyrex bowl. The result was a big surprise and very successful! I started making bread regularly. I shared my bread with friends including Americans, a Brazilian, Chinese, and an Italian. They all like it and cannot believe that this bread is not purchased from stores. So, if I, a guy with no cultural background and no family tradition in bread, can use this method to make great artisan bread in his little kitchen, anyone can do it! Someone has commented that it is a one-trick thing, so if you've known this technique beforehand (like myself), you don't need this book. I DISAGREE. I got this book after I've produced about 30 loafs with experimenting add-in ingredients, but Lahey's book still provides me with good recipe for different bread variations and interesting ideas. I tried several already; I like some better than others, but they all taste pretty good.

I prefer bread books written by practicing bakers. I find that they usually reflect author's approach to bread-baking, his philosophy, and in my opinion such books are more complete and entertaining than the ones written by professional food writers, although there are some notable exception. So from that point of view a book by Jim Lahey, owner and founder of New York Sullivan Street Bakery is an obvious choice. There is another reason altogether though - arguably it was Mr. Lahey's recipe for no-knead-bread and publication by Mark Bittman in NY Times that started the resurgence of amateur bread baking. It was his recipe that transformed me from occasional to everyday baker. Therefore for me buying this book was a no brainer. My first impression is very positive (I don't expect it to change). The book is printed in convenient 10x8" format on a high-quality glossy paper. Most but not all recipes are accompanied by photos, which make the process very clear. The recipes are given in cups and in metric units, a good thing in my opinion, but if you're used to ounces, you're a bit out luck, although quite a few recipes start with 280 g. of flour which is pretty much 10 oz. The layout is very clear, typeface makes it easy to read, there are no gaudy colors, and every recipe can be found in the table of contents. There are six chapters. First comes highly personal, rather entertaining and mercifully short explanation of how Mr. Lahey became a baker and what bread represents to him. Second chapter is theory, it explains what the ingredients are, and how the process works. Third chapter is where the recipes begin, there's no-knead-bread itself and about dozen of breads based on it as well as some breads based on liquids other than water. Fourth chapter is pizza and focaccia.

I think it's fantastic that the No Knead Bread took over much of the world by storm. As a passionate

homebaker, I think there are very few things that can get much better than a great loaf created by your own hands. And I think it's fantastic that Lahey (and Bitmann) have inspired so many intrepid folks to successfully attempt to make their own good bread at home. And for that, I'm giving this book 3 stars. But...I think book is a one trick pony. Most of the recipes are pretty much identical, with a few variations. Take some bread flour, add water weighing 75-85% of the flour weight, 2% salt and 0.25-0.5% instant yeast. Stir 30 seconds, leave at room temp for 12-18 hours, do a fold, dump into a dutch oven and bake. In a few recipes, you replace 25% of the bread flour with some whole wheat or rye (but this is predominantly a white bread book). In some you add olives, or fennel or whatever. Sure, they work, but they're just minor variations on the same theme. You will learn "the trick" to make decent loaves without much skill on your part, but that's it. Which is fine, but just realize that this is not the book that will help you progress further as a baker. And you can find countless no knead recipes on The Internet which then almost makes getting this book redundant. I see this book simply as Lahey's official codification of the no knead method, and not a true representation of the complex and beautiful breads available at his bakery. If you catch the bread bug, you will undoubtedly want to try out other flours, make shapes other than a dutch oven round or a ciabatta, maybe get a little creative with loaves that you can score with nice designs, or even venture into the land of wild yeast. At that point, I doubt you will really refer back to this book.

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