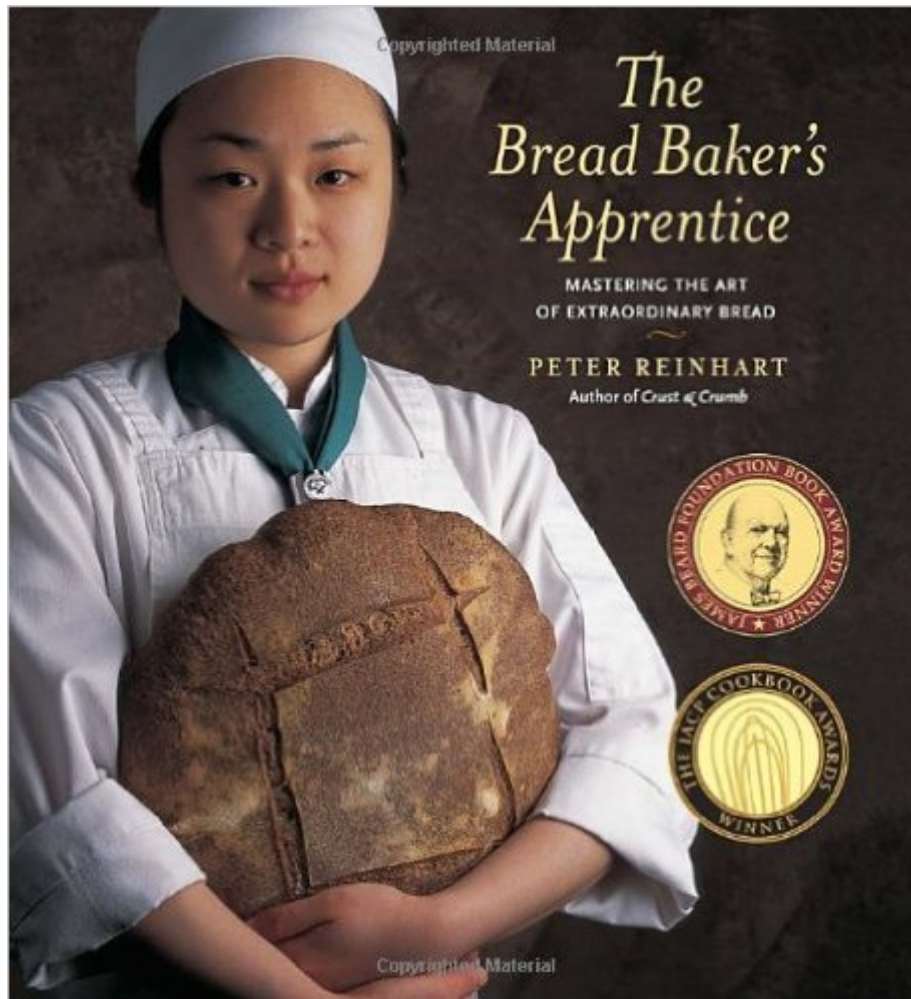


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The Bread Baker's Apprentice: Mastering The Art Of Extraordinary Bread



Synopsis

Co-founder of the legendary Brother Juniper's Bakery, author of the landmark books *Brother Juniper's Bread Book* and *Crust & Crumb*, and distinguished instructor at the world's largest culinary academy, Peter Reinhart has been a leader in America's artisanal bread movement for over fifteen years. Never one to be content with yesterday's baking triumph, however, Peter continues to refine his recipes and techniques in his never-ending quest for extraordinary bread. In *The Bread Baker's Apprentice*, Peter shares his latest bread breakthroughs, arising from his study in several of France's famed boulangeries and the always-enlightening time spent in the culinary academy kitchen with his students. Peer over Peter's shoulder as he learns from Paris's most esteemed bakers, like Lionel Poilâne and Phillippe Gosselin, whose pain à l'ancienne has revolutionized the art of baguette making. Then stand alongside his students in the kitchen as Peter teaches the classic twelve stages of building bread, his clear instructions accompanied by over 100 step-by-step photographs. You'll put newfound knowledge into practice with 50 new master formulas for such classic breads as rustic ciabatta, hearty pain de campagne, old-school New York bagels, and the book's Holy Grail—Peter's version of the famed pain à l'ancienne. En route, Peter distills hard science, advanced techniques, and food history into a remarkably accessible and engaging resource that is as rich and multitextured as the loaves you'll turn out. This is original food writing at its most captivating, teaching at its most inspired and inspiring—and the rewards are some of the best breads under the sun.

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Customer Reviews

I bought this book after carefully researching it, trying to decide if it would be a book I would use or a book that would sit on my shelf and collect dust. The recipes in this book look more time-consuming than those found in my other bread books, and I finally decided that, based on other reviews of this book, it was worth a shot. Almost all of the recipes in this book require more than one day to make; the author bases a great many of his recipes on some form of starter, whether it's a stiff dough or a liquid sourdough starter. He asserts that this style of baking brings out the most flavor in the flour. He's right. The recipes I have tried [so far] in this book do indeed have a better and stronger flavor, in spite of the fact that the base ingredients are the same as that of other recipes in other books. The author does more than provide a bunch of good recipes (he refers to them as "formulas"). He describes the chemistry behind the ingredients and how they react to one another when mixed. He also shows, with photographs, many different shaping methods and intermediate steps that are required in making bread dough. The author writes the techniques and recipes in this book like a man who has a deep interest in the subject, not just a desire to crank out another cookbook. He demonstrates, through his discussion in the book, his deep understanding of the art of breadmaking. For this man, bread making is a joy and a pleasure, not just a profession. When reading this book, the reader gets pulled along into the excitement the author has for his topic, which makes the process of breadmaking even more pleasurable. This book is not for the lazy baker. If you want to make breads that are fast and easy, look for other titles. But if you want outstanding breads, and you're willing to work for it and be patient, then this book is a superb choice.

This is an expensive book worth every penny. Reinhart will show you how to bake bread even if you've never baked anything that didn't come out of a can and if you are an experienced baker, Reinhart will strengthen your understanding of how bread is made. His explanation of the science of how bread is mixed, baked and even tasted is definitive and clearly written. The section on shaping dough is aptly photographed and understandable. It is, by far, the clearest description of shaping dough found in the current crop of baking books. The bulk of the book consists of recipes, more accurately, formulas, for baking various kinds of bread. I've tried only two of them so far and both came out excellent. And one of the things that makes this book so helpful is that if your bread doesn't come out excellent you'll learn why it didn't and what to do about it. This book amplifies Reinhart's previous book, *Crust and Crumb*, and like that book the formulas will help you bake the best bread you've ever made. And the theory will help you to create your own signature variations. This is a priceless book and it is also a definite classic. If you don't bake, buy it for

someone who does.

When Peter Reinhart's previous book (Crust and Crumb) was published, I stated in my review that this was the only book any serious baker would need. You can still get by with that one, but Reinhart has outcompeted himself with *The Bread Baker's Apprentice*. Until he pulls another stunt like this, *Baker's Apprentice* is now the only book any serious bread baker would ever need, or anyone less serious for that sake. Like the last book, *Baker's Apprentice* is overflowing with information, experience and wisdom, but this one is also tightly organized and well laid out. It is at the same time a baking tutorial, a recipe collection, a reference work, and for baking freaks like me, bedtime reading. Maybe it is a missionary tract too. The various bread types cover a repertoire worthy of any professional baker, yet one that can be accomplished by us amateurs. The photos are pretty but also inspirational and instructional, showing shaping options and procedures. Reinhart's last book got me away from yeasted white bread and onto the path of rustic, naturally leavened bread (although he by no means forces the reader to follow that path). His chapter in this book about the Poilane-style Miche (the loaf shown on the cover) got me off the path and onto the road.

This is a beautiful book and addresses the science of bread making and the chemical processes that occur during it in an in-depth fashion. The question then becomes, why don't I use this book more? I bake bread weekly and, although I have made several of the recipes in this book, I usually find myself turning to other books, where the recipes are clearer and quicker. Most of the recipes in this book require 2 days to make. The selections are beautiful and tasty, but seem more like breads for special occasions, rather than the everyday fare I'm usually looking for. If you're thinking about getting into the business of breadmaking, I'd certainly recommend buying this book. If, however, you just bake for your family, I think you can find more affordable books that will give you extremely good recipes. Check out "The Garden Way Bread book" if you want a more eclectic book with very tasty recipes.

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