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**47** 5 Ways with Brownies  
Decadent takes on this forever-favorite



47

**57** The Art and Science of Lamination  
Award-winning pastry chef Nicole Plue explains not just how pastry works but why

**63** Butter, Layers, Magic  
Braided Danish, twisted breads, airy vol-au-vents, and more laminated creations



63

**79** Inside the Workshop of Iris Hantverk  
Discover the unique and long-standing artistic tradition of this historic Swedish brushmaker



79

**83** Baking with Salted Butter  
Delve into traditional Breton pastries, originating in Brittany, France

**91** Getting Scrappy  
Transform your leftover dough pieces into scrumptious snacks

**99** The Shape of Lebanese Baking  
Cookbook author Maureen Aboud explores the depth and breadth of Lebanese pastry



99

**in every issue**

- 7** EDITOR'S LETTER
- 9** COOKBOOK CORNER
- 13** COOKIE OF THE MONTH CLUB  
Chocolate-peanut butter and strawberry cheesecake
- 17** SMALL BATCH  
Flourless Chocolate Cake
- 19** BREAD BOX  
Croissant loaf and gluten-free crescents

- 23** PERFECT PAIRING  
Lemony spritzer and pastry-wrapped asparagus
- 27** FROM THE TEST KITCHEN  
Pastry brushes
- 29** FROM THE PANTRY  
Confectioners' sugar
- 33** GOLD STANDARD  
Scones
- 37** BAKING SCHOOL IN-DEPTH  
Danish dough

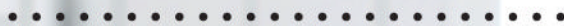
- 73** BAKING FEARLESSLY WITH ERIN JEANNE MCDOWELL  
Coconut cake and pineapple cookies
- 105** ORIGIN OF A CLASSIC  
Pogne de Romans bread
- 109** FAST-FIX BAKING  
Carrot Cake Muffins
- 111** RECIPE INDEX
- 113** IN THE KITCHEN with ROSE LEVY BERANBAUM  
My favorite piecrust



**on the cover**  
KOUIGN AMANN  
PAGE 85

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KATIE GRAVES  
RECIPE DEVELOPMENT BY AMANDA STABILE  
FOOD AND PROP STYLING BY KATIE MOON DICKERSON  
ART DIRECTION BY LIZ KIGHT

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# Hello, Springtime

Spring always feels like a turning point in the baking year. The days grow longer, the light softens, and suddenly, the kitchen calls for projects that are as rewarding to make as they are to share. That spirit lives at the heart of our this, our first Pastry Issue, where technique meets comfort and a little bit of bravery leads to beautifully flaky rewards.

Pastry has a reputation for precision: butter blocks, careful folds, chilled doughs, and patient timing. Yet I've always believed pastry is just as much about invitation as it is about accuracy. In these pages, you'll find recipes that encourage you to lean into lamination alongside pastries that feel approachable yet still deliver a stunning finish. I'm especially excited to include guidance from my friend and expert baker Nicole Plue, whose depth of knowledge and warm teaching style remind us that great pastry is built on both skill and heart.

Some pastries are wrapped in memory. One recipe in this issue draws inspiration from my mom's go-to appetizer for family gatherings: phyllo-wrapped asparagus and cheese that vanished almost as soon as they hit the table. We gave it a Bake from Scratch twist with puff pastry, asparagus, and white Cheddar, but the heart of the recipe remains the same: Bake it your own. Swap, tweak, and make it part of your story.

This issue also celebrates how ingredients tell the story of place. For our recipes inspired by Brittany, France, we do as the locals do and reach for their famously salted butter. That simple choice transforms doughs, fillings, and finishes alike, and these recipes highlight just how big an impact exceptional butter can make. And because no baker likes to waste good pastry, we've even included ideas for using every scrap of dough—ensuring not one buttery bite is left behind.

One of the most meaningful inspirations for this issue came from a visit to Maison Pascalis, a 134-year-old bakery in the Drôme region of southeastern France. Traveling there with a group of bakers last fall, meeting the family behind the bakery, and watching generations at work was a reminder that baking is a living lineage. Their *pogne de Romans*—an orange blossom-scented enriched bread with a tender, feathery crumb—left a lasting impression on me.



I visited Maison Pascalis bakery for an “elbows-on” demonstration of their traditional *pogne de Romans* shaping.

Traditionally, the dough is shaped by pressing an elbow straight through the center to create its signature crown. It's practical, theatrical, and deeply rooted in tradition. In our version, we spare you the elbow and adapt the shaping for home bakers while keeping the aroma and texture true to its heritage. Though they're often associated with Easter, the bakery prepares them year-round, filling the space with the perfume of orange blossom no matter the season.

Whether you're folding, shaping, or savoring, I hope this issue inspires you to explore pastry with curiosity and confidence.

Preheat your ovens; it's time to bake.

Brian Hart Hoffman  
Editor-in-Chief

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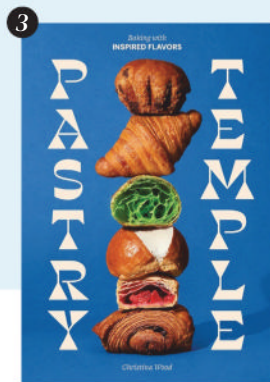
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## 1 Scéal

BY CHARLOTTE LEONARD-KANE  
AND SHANE PALMER

Fresh from their bakery of the same name in Wicklow, Ireland, the bevy of recipes from these bakers-spouses are true classics you'll want to enjoy time and again. Many of their baked goods rotate seasonally, and their wintertime Rhubarb and Sweet Woodruff Danish, with fruit sourced from a nearby farm and herbs that grow wild near the bakery, is a particular favorite. The book's chapters are structured around master bread and pastry doughs such as croissants and Danish, rough puff and shortcrust, and include detailed descriptions, tips and tricks, and helpful baker's notes as well as step-by-step photography and plenty of local flavor. ➔ [instagram.com/scealbakery](https://www.instagram.com/scealbakery)

## 2 Modern Australian Baking

BY CHRISTOPHER THÉ

Born and raised in Australia with Indonesian heritage, Christopher Thé draws upon his beautiful country for inspiration when baking, seeking to be “in harmony with the land.” Organized by season, each chapter's recipes incorporate native Australian ingredients based on their time of availability, such as clafoutis made with winter Illawarra plums and hearty Sorrel and Blue Cheese Strudel Tarts with Wild Weeds for autumn, Fresh Jasmine Blossom Cream Roll in spring, and Sourdough Crumpets with a lemony herb and honey butter in summer. Explanations of many native ingredients, like Bunya nut and satinash (a sweet-tangy red berry), are included, as well as in-depth descriptions of doughs, breads, and pastries. ➔ [christopherthe.com.au](https://www.christopherthe.com.au)

## 3 Pastry Temple

BY CHRISTINA WOOD

Inspired by her own baking origin story of wanting to be creative in the kitchen yet failing because she lacked sufficient experience, Christina Wood shares the wealth of knowledge she learned on her journey to opening her own pastry shop, Temple Pastries, in Seattle, Washington. She divides her book into categories of brioche, puff pastry, and croissant, or as she terms them, “Three Pillars of Pastry.” A breakdown of each recipe includes a timeline so readers can ensure they'll have ample time to prep, making it particularly helpful for breads such as Chocolate-Chunk Brioche Buns, which has an extended fermentation time, or pastries with fillings that should chill overnight, like her Hazelnut Galette de Rois. ➔ [pastrytemple.com](https://www.pastrytemple.com)

## 4 Beyond Baking

BY PHILIP KHOURY

Globally recognized pastry chef and cookbook author Philip Khoury introduces readers to a world of pastries crafted upon plant-based ingredients. Learn how to laminate dough by following the step-by-step instructions and illustrations to create *pain au chocolat*, *tarte tropézienne*, and more. Bake fluffy cakes like Pistachio and Raspberry Cream Dream, or craveable cookies from Macadamia Shortbread to Peanut Butter Chocolate Chip Cookies, all using homemade botanical substitutions for eggs, butter, milk, and other dairy. You'll even find QR codes throughout the book for videos of the author demonstrating various recipes. Especially helpful is the “plantry” section of the book, featuring detailed descriptions of products and ingredients to aid in your plant-based baking repertoire. ➔ [instagram.com/philkhoury](https://www.instagram.com/philkhoury)

## 5 It's Time to Bake Pastries

BY BRIAN HART HOFFMAN

Inspired by his vast culinary travels, our editor-in-chief, Brian Hart Hoffman, shares how to master the art of pâtisserie. Each chapter of this book introduces readers to a fundamental type of French pastry—including puff pastry and choux, viennoise and friable, and everything between—which serves as the basis for an array of treats. Featuring step-by-step instructions and helpful tips, this book will give you the knowledge and confidence to create dozens of sweet and savory pâtisserie-style bakes at home, no matter your skill level. ➔ [bakefromscratch.com/shop](https://www.bakefromscratch.com/shop)



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## ROASTED CARROT GALETTE

Makes 1 (10-inch) galette

All-Butter Piecrust (recipe on opposite page)

- 8 ounces (227 grams) creamy feta cheese
- ¼ cup (56 grams) whole-milk ricotta cheese
- 2 tablespoons (6 grams) chopped fresh chives
- 2 tablespoons (28 grams) olive oil, divided
- 5 large fresh basil leaves
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper, divided
- ½ teaspoon chopped fresh thyme
- 1 pound (454 grams) medium carrots with tops
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt

Carrot Top Chimichurri (recipe follows)

1. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.

2. On a lightly floured surface, roll All-Butter Piecrust into a 10½-inch square (about ¼ inch thick). Using a sharp knife, trim ¼ inch from all sides of dough. Using a bench scraper or the back of a knife, lightly score a square into dough 1 inch from edges. Carefully transfer dough to prepared pan.

3. In the work bowl of a food processor, pulse feta, ricotta, chives, 1 tablespoon oil, basil, garlic powder, ½ teaspoon pepper, and thyme until smooth and creamy, 1 to 2 minutes. Spread mixture onto dough within scored square. Freeze for 15 minutes.

4. Position oven rack in bottom third of oven. Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C).

5. Peel and halve carrots lengthwise, reserving tops for chimichurri. On a baking sheet, toss together carrots, salt, remaining 1 tablespoon oil, and remaining ½ teaspoon pepper. Arrange carrots on feta mixture.

6. Bake for 20 minutes. Cover with foil, and bake until crust is golden brown, 10 to 15 minutes more. Let cool on pan for

15 minutes. Top with Carrot Top Chimichurri. Best served warm. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 2 days.

## Carrot Top Chimichurri

Makes ½ cup

- 1 cup (28 grams) finely chopped carrot tops (fronds/greens)
- ¼ cup (12 grams) finely chopped fresh parsley
- 3 tablespoons (42 grams) olive oil
- 1 to 2 tablespoons (15 to 30 grams) red wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon (2 grams) chopped fresh chives
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper

1. In a small bowl, stir together all ingredients until well combined. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 1 week.

## COCONUT CREAM PIE

Makes 1 (9-inch) pie

### All-Butter Piecrust (recipe follows)

#### Filling:

- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup (150 grams) granulated sugar
- $4\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoons (36 grams) cornstarch
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon kosher salt
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups (360 grams) whole milk
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups (360 grams) canned unsweetened coconut milk
- 7 large egg yolks (133 grams)
- 1 cup (84 grams) sweetened flaked coconut
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons (6 grams) vanilla extract

#### Topping:

- $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups (360 grams) cold heavy whipping cream
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup (60 grams) cold canned unsweetened coconut milk
- 6 tablespoons (72 grams) granulated sugar

#### Garnish: lightly toasted sweetened flaked coconut

1. Position oven rack in bottom third of oven. Preheat oven to 425°F (220°C).
2. On a lightly floured surface, roll All-Butter Piecrust into a 12-inch circle (about  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch thick). Transfer dough to a 9-inch pie plate, gently pressing into bottom and up sides. Fold edges of dough under, and crimp as desired. Prick bottom of crust all over with a fork, and freeze until firm, about 15 minutes.
3. Top dough with a piece of parchment paper, letting excess extend over edges of plate. Add pie weights.
4. Bake until edges are golden brown, about 15 minutes. Carefully remove parchment and weights. Bake until bottom of crust is dry and golden, 8 to 10 minutes more. Let cool completely.
5. For filling: In a medium saucepan, whisk together sugar, cornstarch, and salt; whisk in milk, coconut milk, and egg yolks until well combined. Cook over medium heat, whisking constantly, until thickened, 10 to 15 minutes. Remove from heat; whisk in flaked coconut and vanilla.
6. Spread filling into cooled prepared crust. Cover with plastic wrap, pressing wrap directly onto surface of filling to prevent a skin from forming. Refrigerate

until cold and set, at least 4 hours, or up to overnight.

7. For topping: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat cold cream, cold coconut milk, and sugar at high speed until medium-soft peaks form, 2 to 3 minutes. Spread onto pie just before serving. Garnish with toasted coconut, if desired. Cover and refrigerate for up to 3 days.

**PRO TIP:** Shake your can of coconut milk well before you measure it.

### All-Butter Piecrust

Makes 1 (9- to 10-inch) crust

- $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups (188 grams) all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (113 grams) cold Plugrà® Premium European Style Unsalted Butter, cubed
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup (60 grams) ice water, plus more as needed

1. In a large bowl, whisk together flour and salt. Add cold butter, and toss with your hands until butter is coated in flour. Using a pastry blender or your hands, work butter into flour mixture until butter pieces are quarter-size. Add  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup (60 grams) ice water, and toss until flour is hydrated and a dough begins to form. (Mixture may appear crumbly. It should be moist and hold together when pinched.) Add more ice water, 1 tablespoon (15 grams) at a time as needed, until dough comes together when pressed. (Be careful not to add too much water.)
2. Turn out dough, and press into a flat square. Wrap tightly in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes or up to 2 days.
3. Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface, and roll into a 10-inch square. Fold dough in half; fold in half again. (This mimics lamination.) Wrap in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes or up to 3 days, or freeze for up to 6 months. Let frozen dough thaw overnight in refrigerator before using.



cookie club

# COOKIE CLUB

OF THE MONTH

PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
KATIE GRAVES  
RECIPE DEVELOPMENT BY  
OLA AGBODZA  
FOOD AND PROP STYLING BY  
KATIE MOON DICKERSON

# MARCH

## SALTED CHOCOLATE-PEANUT BUTTER CRINKLE COOKIES

Makes about 12 cookies

*There are few things better than the taste of peanut butter and chocolate together, and the only possible way we could think to improve this timeless duo was to turn it into a cookie. We combined two kinds of chocolate with creamy peanut butter to create a unique dough that is topped with melty milk chocolate chips and a sprinkling of flaked salt to enhance the sweetness in the cookie. This sophisticated take on the classic flavor combination results in wonderfully chewy cookies with a crackled top that are decadently delicious.*

- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup (170 grams) creamy peanut butter
- 4 ounces (113 grams) 55% cacao semisweet chocolate, chopped
- 2 tablespoons (28 grams) unsalted butter, cubed
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup (94 grams) all-purpose flour

- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup (21 grams) Dutch process cocoa powder
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon baking soda
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 large eggs (100 grams), room temperature
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup (90 grams) confectioners' sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (110 grams) firmly packed light brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Milk chocolate chips
- Flaked sea salt, for topping

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Line baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. In a medium heatproof bowl, combine peanut butter, chopped chocolate, and butter. Place bowl over a saucepan of simmering water, and heat, stirring occasionally, until melted and well combined. Remove from heat, and let cool for 15 minutes.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, cocoa, baking powder, baking soda, and kosher salt.

4. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat eggs at medium speed until frothy. Add confectioners' sugar, brown sugar, and vanilla, and beat at low speed until combined. Increase mixer speed to high, and beat until mixture is thick and fluffy, 4 to 5 minutes. Switch to the paddle attachment; add peanut butter mixture and flour mixture, and beat at low speed until well combined, stopping to scrape bottom and sides of bowl.
5. Using a 3-tablespoon spring-loaded scoop, scoop dough (about 53 grams each), and roll into balls. (Dough will be soft but should not stick to your hands.) Place 3 inches apart on prepared pans.
6. Bake until edges are set and tops look dry and crinkled, 10 to 13 minutes, rotating pans halfway through baking. Gently press several chocolate chips into top of each hot cookie, and sprinkle sea salt on top. Let cool completely on pans on wire racks. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.





# APRIL

## STRAWBERRY CHEESECAKE COOKIES

Makes 12 cookies

*We created a cookie that emulates the defining flavors of New York-style cheesecake: warm and buttery graham cracker crust, rich and smooth cream cheese filling, and tangy and fresh strawberry sauce. No special pan, no long wait to indulge, and no sharing required!*

### Dough:

- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup (150 grams) unsalted butter, melted and cooled slightly
- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup (147 grams) firmly packed light brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (100 grams) granulated sugar
- 1 large egg (50 grams), room temperature
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- $2\frac{1}{4}$  cups (281 grams) all-purpose flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon kosher salt

### Filling:

- 4 ounces (113 grams) cream cheese, room temperature
- 3 tablespoons (21 grams) confectioners' sugar
- 1 large egg yolk (19 grams), room temperature
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon lemon zest
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon kosher salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon vanilla extract

### Topping:

- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (75 grams) lightly crushed graham crackers
- 2 tablespoons (28 grams) firmly packed light brown sugar

- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 tablespoons (28 grams) unsalted butter, melted and cooled slightly
- 12 teaspoons (60 grams) strawberry preserves\*

1. For dough: In a large bowl, whisk together melted butter, brown sugar, granulated sugar, egg, and vanilla.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking soda, and salt. Gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture, stirring until just combined.
3. Line rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper.
4. Using a 3-tablespoon spring-loaded scoop, scoop dough (about 55 grams each), and roll into balls. (Dough will be soft but should be firm enough to scoop; if it's too soft, let it stand at room temperature for 5 minutes.) Place at least 2 inches apart on prepared pans. Using the back of a spoon, make an indentation about 2 inches wide in center of each dough ball. Refrigerate until cold, about 1 hour, or freeze for about 15 minutes.
5. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).
6. For filling: In another medium bowl, whisk together cream cheese,

- confectioners' sugar, egg yolk, lemon zest, salt, and vanilla. Divide filling among dough indentations (about 2 teaspoons or 10 grams each).
7. For topping: In another medium bowl, whisk together graham crackers, brown sugar, and salt; whisk in melted butter until well combined.
8. Spoon 1 teaspoon preserves onto filling in each indentation; carefully swirl together with a wooden pick. Sprinkle half of topping onto edges of cookies.
9. Bake until edges are golden brown and set, 15 to 20 minutes, sprinkling remaining topping onto cookies halfway through baking. Let cool on pans for 10 minutes. Remove from pans, and let cool completely on wire racks. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 3 days. ▣

\*We used Bonne Maman® Strawberry Preserves.

*small batch*

# FLOURLESS CHOCOLATE CAKE



Makes 1 (6-inch) cake **GLUTEN-FREE**

Passover, a Jewish holiday commemorating the Israelites' liberation from slavery in Egypt, occurs in early spring every year and is celebrated with a ritual meal called seder. Many symbolic foods are served, and a central practice involves abstaining from eating leavened grains, commemorating the haste with which the Israelites had to flee Egypt, leaving no time for their bread to rise.

This flourless cake is Passover-friendly, as it uses whipped eggs to lift the cake. The result is a decadently fudgy base with a flaky crust that is sure to satisfy a crowd at any gathering, whether you're celebrating a special holiday, following a gluten-free diet, or simply want a chocolate treat.

Although you can use a whisk, we recommend a hand mixer for this cake, as the large amount of air incorporated into the eggs while mixing is what helps achieve lift and, subsequently, the signature cracked crust that forms as the cake settles while cooling.

4 ounces (113 grams) 60% cacao bittersweet chocolate, chopped  
½ cup (113 grams) unsalted butter (see Note), cubed  
3 large eggs (150 grams), room temperature  
¾ cup (150 grams) granulated sugar  
½ teaspoon kosher salt  
½ teaspoon vanilla extract  
½ cup (43 grams) Dutch process cocoa powder  
Confectioners' sugar, for dusting

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Lightly butter a 6-inch springform pan, wiping out excess. (See Note.) Line bottom of pan with parchment paper.
2. In the top of a double boiler, heat chocolate and butter over simmering water, stirring frequently, until melted and smooth. Remove from heat, and let cool for 10 minutes.
3. In a medium bowl, beat eggs, granulated sugar, salt, and vanilla with a hand mixer at medium speed until thick and pale, 2 to 3 minutes. Using a balloon whisk, fold in cooled chocolate mixture. Sift cocoa onto mixture, and fold with whisk until completely combined and no dry streaks remain. Gently spread batter into prepared pan.
4. Bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out with a few moist crumbs and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers at least 210°F (99°C), 40 to 45 minutes. Let cool in pan for 10 minutes. Carefully remove sides of pan, and let cool completely on pan base on a wire rack.
5. Just before serving, lightly dust with confectioners' sugar. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days. **D**

**Note:** This cake can be made dairy-free by replacing butter with cooking spray in step 1 and with adding the same amount of neutral oil to chocolate in step 2.



# GLUTEN-FREE VANILLA-GLAZED CRESCENT ROLLS



These crescent rolls are made from an enriched dough, resulting in a plush and pillowy texture. A drizzle of vanilla bean seed-speckled glaze adds a fragrant sweetness without overpowering the rich, buttery flavor of the bread.

Makes 12 rolls

- 3¾ cups (450 grams) gluten-free bread flour\*, divided
  - ½ cup (120 grams) hot water (120°F/49°C to 130°F/54°C)
  - 4 tablespoons (48 grams) granulated sugar, divided
  - 2¼ teaspoons (7 grams) instant yeast
  - 1¼ cups (300 grams) buttermilk, room temperature
  - 8 tablespoons (112 grams) unsalted butter, room temperature and divided
  - 1 large egg (50 grams), room temperature
  - 2½ teaspoons (8 grams) kosher salt
  - 2 teaspoons (12 grams) vanilla bean paste
  - 1 teaspoon baking powder
  - 1 large egg (50 grams)
  - 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water
- Vanilla Glaze (recipe follows)

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat ¾ cup (90 grams) flour, ½ cup (120 grams) hot water, 2 teaspoons (8 grams) sugar, and yeast at low speed until well combined, about 2 minutes. (Mixture will be thick.) Cover with plastic wrap, and let stand in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until puffed, 15 to 25 minutes.
2. Add buttermilk, 6 tablespoons (84 grams) butter, room temperature egg, salt, vanilla bean paste, baking powder, remaining 3 cups (360 grams) flour, and remaining 3 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon (40 grams) sugar to yeast mixture. Beat at low speed until well combined; increase mixer speed to medium, and beat for 5 minutes. (Dough will be like a very thick batter.) Cover dough with plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.
3. Line baking sheets with parchment paper.
4. On a lightly floured surface, divide dough in half (about 500 grams each). Roll half of dough into a 10-inch circle. (Keep remaining dough covered to prevent it from drying out.) Using a small offset spatula, spread 1 tablespoon (14 grams) butter onto dough circle. Using a pastry wheel, cut dough into 6 equal triangles. Starting from base of each triangle, roll up dough, pinching pointed end to seal. Place rolls, point side down, on prepared pans, and shape into crescents by bringing ends closer together.

- Repeat with remaining dough and remaining 1 tablespoon (14 grams) butter. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until very puffed, 30 to 45 minutes.
5. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C).
6. In a small bowl, whisk together egg and 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water until well combined; brush onto rolls.
7. Bake until golden brown and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers 210°F (99°C), 15 to 18 minutes. Let cool on pan for 10 minutes.
8. Drizzle Vanilla Glaze onto rolls; best served warm. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

*\*We used King Arthur Gluten-Free Bread Flour.*

### Vanilla Glaze

Makes about ¼ cup

- ½ cup (60 grams) confectioners' sugar
- 1 tablespoon (15 grams) whole milk
- ½ teaspoon vanilla bean paste
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt

1. In a small bowl, whisk together all ingredients until smooth; use immediately.



# ORANGE MORNING BUN PULL-APART LOAF

Inspired by the croissant loaf, a hypnotic amalgamation of layered croissant dough fused together into one easily sliceable loaf, this morning bun loaf is ever so crispy on the outside while retaining the light-as-air, flaky, and buttery interior. Mingling notes of orange and sugar create a delicate flavor combination that is subtle enough to highlight the buttery puff pastry dough with a delightful zing of freshness.

Makes 1 (9x5-inch) loaf

- 1 cup (200 grams) granulated sugar, divided
- 5 tablespoons (70 grams) unsalted butter, melted (110°F/43°C to 115°F/46°C)
- 1 tablespoon (6 grams) plus 1 teaspoon orange zest, divided

Yeast **ed** Rough Puff Pastry Dough (recipe follows)

1. Spray a 9x5-inch loaf pan with baking spray with flour. Line pan with parchment paper.
2. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup (150 grams) sugar, melted butter, and 1 tablespoon (6 grams) orange zest at medium speed until light and fluffy.
3. On a lightly floured surface, roll Yeasted Rough Puff Pastry Dough into a  $20\frac{3}{4}\times 18\frac{1}{2}$ -inch rectangle. (If dough feels too soft, wrap in plastic wrap and freeze for 10 to 15 minutes before continuing.) Using a pizza cutter or sharp knife, trim

$\frac{1}{4}$  inch from all sides to create a  $20\frac{1}{4}\times 18$ -inch rectangle. Using a small offset spatula, spread sugar mixture onto dough. Using a pizza cutter or sharp knife, cut dough into 27 (6x2 $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch) rectangles.

4. Carefully stack 3 rectangles on top of each other, staggering short sides by about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch. Roll dough into a coil, and tuck ends under, pushing center up slightly (about  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch). Place in prepared pan. Repeat with remaining dough. Loosely cover with



a piece of greased plastic wrap. (Do not secure plastic wrap; you don't want any weight or pressure on proofed dough.) Let rise in warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until very puffed and dough jiggles slightly when pan is shaken, about 1½ hours.

5. Preheat oven to 425°F (220°C). Place a piece of foil on bottom rack of oven to catch any dripping butter.

6. Place loaf in oven.

7. Immediately reduce oven temperature to 350°F (180°C), and bake until golden brown and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers 210°F (99°C), 1 hour to 1 hour and 10 minutes, covering with foil during final 25 minutes of baking to prevent excess browning. Let cool in pan for 10 minutes. Carefully remove from pan, and let cool on a wire rack for 10 minutes.

8. In a small bowl, whisk together remaining ¼ cup (50 grams) sugar and remaining 1 teaspoon orange zest until well combined; sprinkle sugar mixture onto loaf. Serve warm, or let cool completely. Store in airtight container for up to 3 days.

## Yeast-Rough Puff Pastry Dough

Makes 1 (9x5-inch) loaf

⅓ cup (80 grams) warm water  
(110°F/43°C to 115°F/46°C)

2¼ teaspoons (7 grams) instant yeast  
6 tablespoons (72 grams) granulated sugar, divided

4½ cups (572 grams) bread flour

3½ teaspoons (11 grams) kosher salt

1 cup (227 grams) plus 6 tablespoons  
(84 grams) cold unsalted butter, cubed

1 cup (240 grams) cold whole milk

All-purpose flour, for dusting

1. In a small bowl, stir together ⅓ cup (80 grams) warm water, yeast, and ½ teaspoon sugar until well combined. Let stand until foamy, 5 to 10 minutes.

2. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat bread flour, salt, and remaining 5 tablespoons plus 2½ teaspoons (70 grams) sugar at low speed until combined. Add 6 tablespoons (84 grams) cold butter; beat until mixture resembles coarse bread crumbs, about 2 minutes. Add remaining 1 cup (227 grams) cold butter, and pulse mixer between low speed and “off” setting just until butter is coated with flour.



3. Add cold milk to yeast mixture. While pulsing mixer between low speed and “off” setting, add yeast mixture to flour mixture in a slow, steady stream just until a shaggy dough comes together. (There will still be large pieces of butter.)

4. Turn out dough onto a surface lightly dusted with all-purpose flour, and shape into a rough 7-inch square. (Dough will be soft and slightly sticky.) Wrap in plastic wrap, and freeze for 30 minutes.

5. Roll dough into an 18x9-inch rectangle, lightly dusting work surface and top of dough with all-purpose flour as needed. Fold dough in half so short sides meet. Pat fold to mark center. Unfold dough, and pull one short side to center.

Pull opposite side to center so short sides are touching. Pinch seams together; fold along center seam, like closing a book. Rotate dough 90 degrees; repeat rolling and folding procedure one more time. (Dough will start out soft, rough, and somewhat sticky but will come together. Turn dough over as needed so edges are rolled out as evenly as possible.) Wrap in plastic wrap, and freeze for 15 minutes. 6. Repeat rolling and folding procedure one more time. Wrap in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for 1 hour. (If dough is resisting or feels too soft, wrap in plastic wrap and freeze for 10 to 15 minutes before continuing.) ■

*perfect pairing*

# ASPARAGUS-AND- WHITE CHEDDAR PASTRY BUNDLES

## LIMONCELLO SPRITZ

Makes 2 servings

- 8 ounces prosecco or sparkling wine
- 4 ounces limoncello
- 2 ounces fresh lemon juice
- 1 ounce ginger ale
- 2 ounces sparkling water

Garnish: lemon slices

1. Fill 2 glasses with ice.
2. In a liquid-measuring cup, gently stir together prosecco, limoncello, lemon juice, and ginger ale. Divide between prepared glasses; top each with 1 ounce sparkling water. Garnish with lemon slices, if desired.

Choose your favorite store-bought limoncello, or easily make it yourself with our recipe at [bakefromscratch.com](https://www.bakefromscratch.com).

Tangy-sweet limoncello, a lemon liqueur originating in southern Italy, is made by steeping lemon peels in a high-proof spirit and combining with a sugar syrup. The zesty liqueur is a great base for a fruity springtime cocktail. Choose a sweeter or drier prosecco or sparkling wine as you prefer.

This delectable pastry is a great bite for welcoming guests or simply to enjoy as a light meal. The flaky layers of rough puff pastry and a simple filling of sweet veggies and savory cheese are a lovely way to mark the longer, warmer days of spring to come.

Makes 12 pastries

- 3 to 4 bundles thin fresh asparagus (about 885 grams), trimmed to 5 to 6 inches long
- 1 tablespoon (14 grams) olive oil
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper

**Rough Puff Pastry Dough** (recipe follows)

- 1 large egg (50 grams)
- 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water
- 4 ounces (113 grams) sharp white Cheddar cheese, cut into 12 equal pieces

**Garnish:** flaked sea salt, ground black pepper, fresh thyme leaves

1. Line baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. In a medium bowl, toss together asparagus, oil, kosher salt, garlic powder, and pepper.
3. On a lightly floured surface, roll Rough Puff Pastry Dough into a 16½x12½-inch rectangle. Trim ¼ inch from all sides. Cut dough into 12 (4-inch) squares.
4. In a small bowl, whisk together egg and 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water.
5. Position 1 dough piece as a diamond, with one point toward you. Place about 6 asparagus spears in center of dough; top with 1 cheese piece. Fold one side of dough over filling to center; brush egg wash onto corner of dough on asparagus. Fold opposite side of dough over asparagus to center, gently pressing

dough corners together. Brush egg wash onto pastry. Place on prepared pan. Repeat with remaining dough, remaining asparagus, and remaining cheese. Freeze pastries for 15 minutes.

6. Position oven racks in top third and bottom third of oven. Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C).

7. Bake until golden brown and cheese is melted, about 20 minutes, rotating pans between racks halfway through baking. Garnish with sea salt, pepper, and thyme, if desired. Best served warm. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 2 days.

### Rough Puff Pastry Dough

Makes 12 pastries

- 1⅓ cups (303 grams) cold unsalted butter, cubed
- 2¼ cups (281 grams) all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons (6 grams) kosher salt
- ½ cup (120 grams) ice water

1. Freeze cold butter until firm, 15 to 20 minutes.
2. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat cold butter, flour, and salt at low speed just until butter is coated with flour. With mixer on low speed, add ½ cup (120 grams) ice water in a slow, steady stream, beating just until dough comes together, about 1 minute, stopping to scrape bottom and sides of bowl and turning dough to hydrate evenly. (There will still be large pieces of butter; it's OK if a few dry bits remain.)
3. Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface, and pat or roll into a 7-inch square. Wrap in plastic wrap; refrigerate for 1 hour.
4. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough into an 18x10-inch rectangle, lightly flouring surface and top of dough as needed. Fold dough in thirds like a letter; rotate dough 90 degrees. Repeat rolling, folding, and rotating two more times. (If at any point butter is too soft, wrap in plastic wrap and freeze until butter is firm again, checking every 5 minutes.) Tightly wrap in plastic wrap; refrigerate for up to 3 days or freeze for up to 3 months. Let frozen dough thaw overnight in refrigerator before using. **D**



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*Mastering  
Techniques  
and Ingredients  
Behind Every  
Delicious Creation*

# It's Time to Bake

In this section, don't miss:

From the Test Kitchen:  
Pastry Brushes  
PAGE 27

From the Pantry:  
Confectioners' Sugar  
PAGE 29

Gold Standard:  
Scones  
PAGE 33

Baking School In-Depth:  
Danish Dough  
PAGE 37

from the test kitchen



# THE PASTRY BRUSH

## *Small Tool, Big Impact*

It's easy to overlook the pastry brush. It lives quietly in a drawer, comes out for pies or holiday roasts, and rarely gets the spotlight. But this unassuming tool plays a key role in how food looks, cooks, and tastes. A well-brushed crust shines. A buttered sheet of phyllo stays flaky. A grilled steak releases cleanly from the grate.

Today's kitchens usually rely on one of two styles: classic fiber brushes or modern silicone versions. Each brings something different to the table—and knowing when to use which will elevate your baking and cooking.

### THE CLASSIC CHOICE: FIBER PASTRY BRUSHES

Fiber brushes are the traditionalists. Made with natural or synthetic bristles, they're the kind you'll still see in bakeries and pastry kitchens.

What makes them special is how they *hold* liquid. Butter, egg wash, syrups, and glazes soak into the bristles, allowing you to paint food gently and evenly. This soft touch is ideal for delicate doughs, croissants, or piecrusts that don't appreciate heavy pressure.

That said, fiber brushes come with a few quirks. They're harder to clean thoroughly, especially after greasy or sticky jobs. Over time, they may hold on to odors—or lose a stray bristle or two. They also need a bit more attention when drying and storing.

Fiber brushes are best for all-around baking, delicate pastries, light glazing, and anyone who loves a traditional feel.



### CARING FOR YOUR PASTRY BRUSHES

No matter which style you choose, a little TLC goes a long way. Fiber brushes should be washed promptly with warm water and mild soap. Gently separate the bristles to release trapped residue and then air-dry completely—ideally, bristles pointing down. Silicone brushes are simpler: wash by hand or in the dishwasher and make sure the base of the bristles stays clean. Dry all brushes thoroughly before storing to prevent odors or mold.

So, which brush sweeps the rest? The truth is there's no single winner. Fiber brushes offer finesse and tradition. Silicone brushes offer durability and ease. Many experienced bakers keep both, reaching for fiber when presentation matters and silicone when speed, heat, or cleanup is the priority.

In the end, the pastry brush may be humble, but used well, it's a quiet finishing touch that makes food look polished, professional, and irresistibly good. **D**

### THE MODERN WORKHORSE: SILICONE PASTRY BRUSHES

Silicone brushes are the low-maintenance cousins. Flexible, heat-resistant, and nearly indestructible, they've become a favorite in busy home kitchens.

They don't absorb liquid, which makes them incredibly easy to clean—most go straight into the dishwasher. No lingering smells, no hidden egg wash at the base, no shedding bristles. They also shine in high-heat situations, like brushing oil on a hot grill or basting roasted vegetables.

The trade-off? Silicone brushes don't "paint" quite the same way. They tend to push liquid across the surface rather than softly laying it down, which can feel less precise for delicate pastry work.

Silicone brushes are best for savory cooking applications and folks who value convenience.



Read more about these heirloom-quality fiber brushes from Swedish company Iris Hantverk on page 79.

➔ Visit [bakefromscratch.com/shoptheissue](https://bakefromscratch.com/shoptheissue) to find our preferred fiber and silicone brushes.

*from the pantry*



*CONFECTIONERS'  
SUGAR*

*Its fineness and starch content transform texture  
in everything from buttercream to shortbread*

**W**e think we know confectioners' sugar. It sits in a quiet corner of the pantry, pulled out at the end—a gentle snowfall over a cake, a quick whisk into a glaze, the soft punctuation of sweetness that feels almost ornamental. A finishing touch, nothing more.

But once you look closely—really closely—confectioners' sugar reveals itself as something far more influential. The moment you understand how this powder is made, what its microscopic size allows it to do, and why a whisper of starch changes everything, you begin to see it differently.

And the real revelation arrives: Confectioners' sugar doesn't finish desserts. It shapes them. Every dessert has a hidden architecture—a backbone of texture and structure that determines how it feels in the mouth. It's in the plush lift of a buttercream that melts instantly. It's in the gloss of a glaze that pours like satin. It's in the delicate crumble of shortbread that gives way the moment you bite.

These qualities aren't aesthetic. They're structural. And they all begin with how this sugar is made.

## HOW IT'S MADE

Confectioners' sugar begins as standard granulated sugar and then undergoes repeated milling until the crystals are crushed into a powder fine enough to behave almost like air. That "10X" you see on the label? It refers to the fineness of the grind—sugar that has been milled to pass through a 10X sieve, producing an ultra-fine, uniform powder. The finer the particle, the faster it dissolves, because its increased surface area allows near-instant integration into both fat and liquid.



Most confectioners' sugar is made from either cane sugar or beet sugar. Cane sugar dissolves cleaner, tastes brighter, and produces the glossiest glazes and silkiest buttercreams. Beet sugar can dissolve unevenly and sometimes leaves faint granular specks.

All confectioners' sugar contains a small amount of starch—just enough to prevent clumping and influence texture. Cornstarch is the go-to for shelf stability, but it can be slightly chalky if under-hydrated. Tapioca starch dissolves cleaner to create glossier, silkier finishes.

Confectioners' sugar is so fine that it naturally compacts, forming tiny clusters that don't always dissolve on their own. Sifting or whisking breaks up these compacted particles, evenly disperses the starch throughout the sugar, and eliminates clumps—essential for the smoothest buttercream, lump-free glaze, and clean, glossy royal icing.

### HOW IT'S USED

Once you know what silky, snowy confectioners' sugar can do, you'll reach for it with new confidence and a sense of possibility.

**Buttercreams and Frostings:** Its fine particles dissolve immediately into fat, creating a pillowy, melt-on-the-tongue finish that granulated sugar can't achieve.

**Glazes and Icings:** With a few drops of liquid, confectioners' sugar becomes a fluid, opaque glaze that sets satin-smooth—something only a confectioners' sugar with starch can do.

**Royal Icing and Decorative Work:** The consistency of the powder creates a perfectly smooth paste that pipes clean lines and dries to a crisp, flawless finish.

**Shortbread and Meltaway Cookies:** Because it inhibits gluten development, confectioners' sugar produces a finer,

softer, quicker-to-crumble texture than granulated sugar.

**Stabilized Whipped Cream:** A small amount of confectioners' sugar can transform whipped cream.

The starch absorbs moisture, slows weeping, and keeps the cream lofty and silky for hours.

**Dusting:** A light dusting softens flavors—bitterness, sharp citrus—and visually decorates a dessert.

### CONFECTIONERS' SUGAR VS. POWDERED SUGAR

"Powdered sugar" is a term once used for any sugar ground to a fine powder, while "confectioners' sugar" arose in professional kitchens to describe a refined grind blended with starch. Today, nearly all US retail powdered sugar is 10X confectioners' sugar. Abroad, it's known as "icing sugar," and in professional kitchens, "confectioners' sugar" (or "10X" for shorthand) remains the preferred term for its precision. In everyday baking, though, the names are interchangeable: different words for the same indispensable ingredient.

Confectioners' sugar's ultra-fine particles control tenderness, smoothness, spread, and stability—shaping the outcome while remaining almost invisible. Once you understand its behavior, you can use it with purpose. Intentionality replaces habit, and suddenly, the results shift: finer crumbs, glossier glazes, softer icings. That's the beauty of learning the anatomy of an ingredient—once you see how it works, you can never bake the same way again.

## SHORTBREAD COOKIE BARS

Makes 9 bars

*These bars skew a little more tender and melt-in-your-mouth thanks to one key swap: using confectioners' sugar instead of granulated sugar. Because it dissolves instantly into the softened butter, confectioners' sugar creates a super-smooth dough and a finer, more delicate crumb. (The tiny bit of cornstarch in the sugar helps keep things especially soft.) Like most shortbread, the dough comes together with almost no effort—no chill time, no rolling. You're just pressing it into the pan, which minimizes gluten development and gives you that characteristic sandy texture. Docking the dough with a fork isn't just decorative; it lets steam escape so the slab bakes evenly rather than puffing up in spots. And even though shortbread is usually judged by color, it's baked to a specific internal temperature (200°F/93°C to 205°F/96°C) so the bars stay tender without overbrowning. It's an easy way to guarantee consistent results. Once cooled, the shortbread becomes a canvas for a lush vanilla buttercream, which again relies on confectioners' sugar—its ultra-fine grind dissolves seamlessly into fat, creating a smoother, more stable frosting that spreads easily without graininess.*

### Shortbread:


- 1½ cups (340 grams) salted butter, softened
- 1 cup (120 grams) confectioners' sugar
- 1 tablespoon (13 grams) vanilla extract
- 3 cups (375 grams) all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt

### Buttercream:

- 1 cup (227 grams) salted butter, softened
- 4 cups (480 grams) confectioners' sugar
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt

- 2 tablespoons (30 grams) whole milk
- 2 teaspoons (8 grams) vanilla extract

**Garnish:** assorted sprinkles

1. Preheat oven to 325°F (170°C). Line an 8-inch square baking pan with parchment paper, letting excess extend over all sides of pan.
2. For shortbread: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter and confectioners' sugar at medium speed until creamy, 3 to 4 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Beat in vanilla.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour and salt. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture, beating until dough comes together and stopping to scrape bottom and sides of bowl. Press dough into prepared pan. Prick dough all over with a fork.
4. Bake until lightly browned and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers 200°F (93°C) to 205°F (96°C), 30 to 35 minutes. Let cool completely in pan on a wire rack.
5. For buttercream: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter at medium speed until creamy, 1 to 2 minutes. With mixer on low speed, gradually add confectioners' sugar and salt, beating until smooth and stopping to scrape bottom and sides of bowl. Add milk and vanilla, beating until smooth and stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Increase mixer speed to high, and beat until light and fluffy, about 2 minutes.
6. Spread buttercream onto cooled shortbread. Garnish with sprinkles, if desired. Using excess parchment as handles, remove from pan, and cut into bars. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days. 

**PRO TIP:** Refrigerate frosted bars for 15 to 20 minutes to set buttercream for cleaner, easier cuts.



gold standard

Curious about the similarities and differences between scones and biscuits? Watch *Bake from Scratch* editor-in-chief Brian Hart Hoffman and *Great British Bake-Off* winner Edd Kimber bake each quick bread step-by-step.

→ Search “biscuits vs. scones” at [bakefromscratch.com](http://bakefromscratch.com) for details.

# Classic SCONES

PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
KATIE GRAVES

The story of scones began in the 16th century on the warming griddles of cozy Scottish kitchens. Although they were originally closer to a Scottish oatcake called bannock, scones have transformed from a rustic flatbread-style meal staple into the fluffy quick bread we know (and love) today.

The humble scone is a lesson in consistency—simple to make yet each step should be performed with care. Ensuring dairy products are cold before incorporating into dry ingredients helps prevent gluten development; minimal handling prevents the dough from being overworked and keeps the warmth of your hands from softening the butter. Take care not to overwork the butter when incorporating it into the flour; you want butter pieces about the size of small pebbles that are coated in flour. The small pieces of butter melt while baking, creating air pockets that result in the layers. The final product is a light, tender treat with plenty of rise and just enough sugar to offer a whisper of sweetness while allowing the richness of the dairy to shine. Its base is

unpretentious, made of staple ingredients, but the simplicity is what gives bakers freedom to bake it their own.

When it comes to shaping scones, the thick, pliable dough allows you to choose a range of shapes and sizes. Traditional British scones are often round, cut out with a smooth- or fluted-edged cutter. Rustic versions, harkening back to their Scottish oatcake origins, are often large wedges. The shape is easily made without additional tools; the dough is simply formed into a large circle and then cut or scored with a bench scraper or knife before baking.

Similarly, there are many topping options before baking your scones. We prefer to use a simple egg wash to create a golden-brown color, but you can also use heavy whipping cream for lighter color after baking but with a beautiful shine. And a sprinkle of granulated, turbinado, or sparkling sugar on top before baking will always be a simple yet sophisticated finish.



Thanks to a boost in popularity as a teatime treat—often attributed to Anna, England’s Duchess of Bedford, who had an affinity for serving the baked goods at her social gatherings—scones are now beloved in the United Kingdom and beyond. Scone dough is simple, so using high-quality ingredients will give you the best flavor and results.

## CLASSIC SCONES

Makes about 9 scones

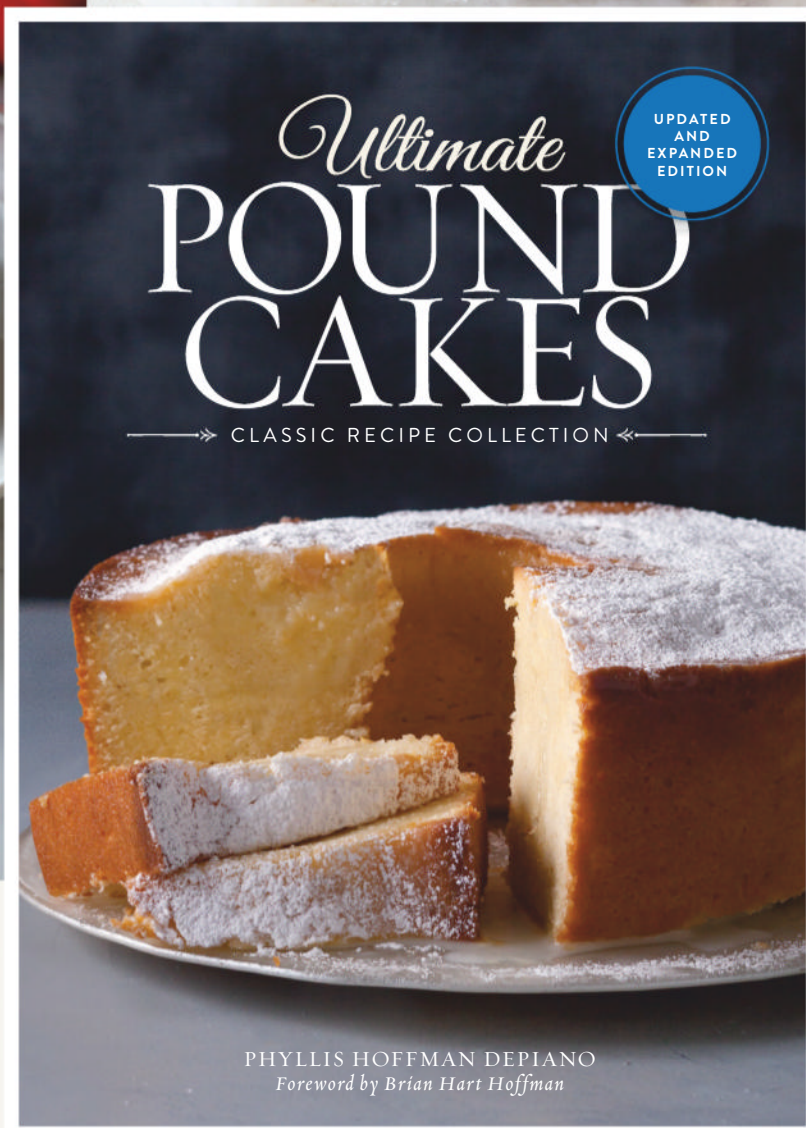
- 3 cups (375 grams) all-purpose flour
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup (50 grams) granulated sugar
- 4 teaspoons (20 grams) baking powder
- $1\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoons (4 grams) kosher salt
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup (170 grams) cold unsalted butter, cubed
- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup mix-ins (optional; see Note)
- 1 cup (240 grams) cold heavy whipping cream
- 1 tablespoon (13 grams) vanilla extract
- 1 large egg (50 grams)
- 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water

1. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt. Using a pastry blender or 2 forks, cut in cold butter until mixture is crumbly. Stir in mix-ins (if using). Add cold cream and vanilla, stirring with a fork just until mixture starts to come together. Using your hands, knead dough until combined.
3. Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface, and roll into a rectangle about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches thick. Using a bench scraper or bowl scraper, cut dough in thirds; stack dough pieces on top of each other. Repeat rolling, cutting, and stacking procedure one more time. Pat or roll dough to a 1-inch thickness. Using a  $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch round cutter, cut dough, rerolling scraps to use all dough. Place 2 inches apart on prepared pan. Freeze until firm, about 15 minutes.
4. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C).
5. In a small bowl, whisk together egg and 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water; brush onto scones.
6. Bake until golden brown, about 20 minutes. Let cool on pan for 5 minutes. Best served warm. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days. **D**

**Note:** Get creative with scone mix-ins. Mini chocolate chips, dried fruit, or chopped nuts make great additions to scones. You can even incorporate a tablespoon of citrus zest or a blend of herbs and a bit of hard or semihard cheese for a savory take. Just be sure that whatever you add is not too large, as big pieces can make it difficult to cut out your scones.



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*Master the lamination of classic and quick Danish dough—where butter, yeast, and time work together to create tender layers and dramatic lift*

# DANISH DOUGH





Danish dough occupies a very comfortable middle ground in the world of laminated pastry. Known as *wienerbrød* in Danish—literally “Viennese bread”—this dough traces its roots to Austrian baking traditions. The dough is enriched with milk, eggs, and sugar, which makes it softer and noticeably more forgiving. But the enrichment isn’t just for flavor—it gives the dough the flexibility to be shaped, braided, twisted, filled, and cut with far less resistance than lean laminated doughs.

# CLASSIC DANISH DOUGH

## What Exactly Is Lamination?

Lamination is the process of creating alternating layers of butter and dough—layers that expand dramatically in the oven through steam power.

It begins with two separate components: a *détrempe* (the dough) and a butter block. The butter is enclosed inside the dough and then rolled and folded repeatedly. Each fold multiplies the number of butter layers, which ultimately gives laminated pastries their height, flake, and dramatic interior structure.

Once the pastry hits the oven, the water locked inside both the butter and the dough turns to steam. That steam forces the layers apart from the inside while the melting butter tenderizes the dough and distributes flavor. The goal isn't puffiness—it's separation. Height comes as a byproduct.

## How to Plasticize Butter

Butter is finicky. Too cold and it shatters. Too warm and it smears itself enthusiastically into the dough, taking your layers with it.

Plasticizing butter—pounding it between sheets of parchment paper into a slab with even thickness—works it into a flexible, malleable state so it laminates cleanly without smearing. The butter reaches a state where it can remain cold yet bend without cracking and stretch without melting. Properly plasticized butter moves with the dough, which is exactly what lamination requires. If there's one step that solves most lamination problems before they happen, this is it.





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## The Lock-In

How you enclose the butter determines how quickly and evenly your layers build. For Classic Danish Dough, we use the French lock-in: The butter block is rolled to half the length of the dough. The exposed dough is brought together over the butter and sealed to create three layers.



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### Taking Turns

Turns are the repeated rolling and folding that build lamination, and in this stage, accuracy matters more than strength.

For a single turn (letter fold), the dough is rolled into a rectangle and folded into thirds like a letter. This is the most controlled and forgiving fold, making it ideal for Danish dough.

After each turn, the dough rests. This allows gluten to relax and butter to firm back up—both essential before rolling again. Rotate the dough 90 degrees between turns to ensure you are rolling it out in the opposite direction that it has previously been stretched.

## CLASSIC DANISH DOUGH

Makes enough for 12 pastries

*This is the classic, butter-block version of Danish dough: fully laminated, fully committed, and very good at showing off. The butter is enclosed as a block and then rolled and folded through a series of turns to build clean, defined layers. Those layers translate directly to lift—steam expansion in the oven pushes them apart from the inside, giving this dough its height and crisp edges.*

- 1 cup (240 grams) whole milk, room temperature
- 1 large egg (50 grams), room temperature
- 1 large egg yolk (19 grams), room temperature
- 1 (0.25-ounce) package (7 grams) instant yeast\*
- 4 cups (508 grams) bread flour\*
- ⅓ cup (67 grams) granulated sugar
- ¼ cup (283 grams) unsalted butter, softened and divided
- 1 tablespoon (9 grams) kosher salt

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer, whisk together milk, egg, egg yolk, and yeast by hand; add flour, sugar, 3 tablespoons (42 grams) butter, and salt. Using the dough hook attachment, beat at low speed until dough comes together, about 1 minute; beat until dough pulls away from sides of bowl and is smooth when a small amount is pinched off, 5 to 8 minutes. Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface; shape into a smooth ball.

2. Spray a large bowl with cooking spray. Place dough in bowl, turning to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until doubled in size, about 2 hours.

3. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Lightly dust parchment with flour.

4. Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface, and gently shape into a 10x8-inch rectangle. Place on prepared pan. Cover tightly with plastic wrap, and refrigerate overnight.

5. Using a pencil, draw a 12x8-inch rectangle on a sheet of parchment paper; turn parchment over. Place remaining 1 cup plus 1 tablespoon (241 grams) butter on prepared parchment. Cover with a second sheet of parchment.



6. Using a rolling pin, pound butter to flatten slightly. Using rolling pin and a bench scraper, shape butter to fit inside drawn rectangle, keeping edges straight and even. (If butter gets too soft to work with, refrigerate for 5 minutes before continuing.) Wrap butter fully in parchment paper, and refrigerate for at least 2 hours or overnight.

7. Freeze dough for 15 to 30 minutes.

8. Let butter block stand at room temperature until pliable, 10 to 15 minutes.

9. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough into a 16x12-inch rectangle. Unwrap butter block; place crosswise in center of dough. Fold dough over butter block, meeting in center and stretching and lightly pressing to seal dough around

butter block. Rotate dough 90 degrees, and immediately roll into an 18x12-inch rectangle (about ⅛ inch thick). Fold in thirds like a letter; rotate 90 degrees, and roll dough into an 18x12-inch rectangle. Fold in thirds like a letter. Wrap dough in plastic wrap, and freeze for 15 to 30 minutes.

10. Repeat rolling and folding dough one more time. Wrap dough in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for 1½ hours. (Alternatively, wrap dough tightly in plastic wrap, and freeze for up to 3 months. Let frozen dough thaw overnight in refrigerator before using.)

\*We used Red Star® Quick-Rise™ Instant Yeast and Bob's Red Mill® Bread Flour.

# QUICK DANISH DOUGH

## The Butter-Smearing Method

Quick Danish Dough skips the butter block entirely. Instead, softened butter is smeared directly onto the dough and folded in stages. This creates butter-rich zones rather than precise sheets. When folded and rolled, these zones stretch into thin streaks and pockets of butter that behave much like traditional laminated layers once they hit the oven.

## Scoring and Folding the Quick Dough

This structured folding method keeps butter evenly distributed and gives Quick Danish Dough its surprisingly layered interior.

After the butter is smeared evenly across the dough, the surface is lightly scored into equal sections, taking care not to cut all the way through. These lines act as guides, giving the dough clear instructions on where to fold. Each fold creates more places where butter separates the dough. The result isn't dramatic, architectural lamination—but it is controlled, reliable, and exceptionally tender.





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## QUICK DANISH DOUGH

Makes enough for 2 (13-inch) pastries

*For a faster Danish dough, softened butter is spread directly onto the dough before folding instead of incorporating a butter block. The layers are less precise—butter-rich zones rather than clean sheets—but the science still works. Butter melts, steam forms, the dough lifts. The result is a dough with a tender crumb that's ideal for everyday Danish, braids, spirals, and pastries that lean on filling for personality.*

- 1 cup (240 grams) whole milk, room temperature
- 1 large egg (50 grams), room temperature
- 1 large egg yolk (19 grams), room temperature
- 2¼ teaspoons (7 grams) instant yeast
- 4 cups (508 grams) bread flour
- ⅓ cup (67 grams) granulated sugar
- 1¼ cups (283 grams) unsalted butter\*, cubed, room temperature, and divided
- 1 tablespoon (9 grams) kosher salt

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer, whisk together milk, egg, egg yolk, and yeast by hand; add flour, sugar, 3 tablespoons (42 grams) butter, and salt. Using the dough hook attachment, beat at low speed until dough comes together, about 1 minute; beat until dough pulls away from sides of bowl and is smooth when a small amount is pinched off, 5 to 8 minutes. Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface, and shape into a smooth ball.

2. Spray a large bowl with cooking spray. Place dough in bowl, turning to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until doubled in size, about 2 hours.

3. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Lightly dust parchment with flour.

4. Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface, and gently shape into a 10x8-inch rectangle. Place on prepared pan. Cover tightly with plastic wrap, and refrigerate overnight.

5. In a small bowl, stir remaining 1 cup plus 1 tablespoon (241 grams) butter with a small spatula until soft and creamy.

6. Freeze dough for 15 to 30 minutes.

7. On a very lightly floured surface, roll dough into an 18½-inch square. Using a sharp knife, trim ¼ inch from all sides. Using a small offset spatula, spread butter evenly onto dough. Using a ruler, carefully score buttered surface of dough, marking dough into 9 (6-inch) squares. (Do not cut through dough.)

8. Using a sharp knife, in bottom third of dough, carefully make a 6-inch cut to the left and the right scoring of dough; repeat cuts in top third of dough. Working from left to right and bottom to top, carefully fold marked squares, one onto another until dough is a 6-inch square and about 1¼ inches thick. Wrap dough in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for 1½ hours or freeze for 20 to 30 minutes.

9. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough into an 18x12-inch rectangle (about ⅛ inch thick). Fold in thirds like a letter. Wrap dough in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for 1½ hours or freeze for up to 3 months. Let frozen dough thaw overnight in refrigerator before using.

*\*We used Plugra® European Style Unsalted Butter.*



## Which Danish Dough Should I Use?

**CLASSIC DANISH DOUGH:** When you want height, definition, and dramatic layers—ideal for braids, showpiece pastries, and minimal fillings.

**QUICK DANISH DOUGH:** When time is short and tenderness matters more than sharp lamination—perfect for spirals, filled pastries, and everyday baking. **D**

➔ Find all the tools and equipment we used for these Danish doughs at [bakefromscratch.com/shoptheissue](https://bakefromscratch.com/shoptheissue).

# 5 WAYS WITH BROWNIES



*Decadent takes on the perennially favorite treat*

RECIPE DEVELOPMENT BY LAURA CRANDALL

## CHOCOLATE-COVERED FRUIT BROWNIES

Makes 9 to 12 brownies

*Echoing the classic movie theater snack Raisinets, these brownies feature raisins as well as dates mixed into the batter and topped with a luscious layer of ganache. The dates add a subtle honey flavor and extra dose of chew, but feel free to use only raisins or a combination of dark and golden raisins if you prefer.*

### Brownie:

- 8 ounces (226 grams) 60% to 70% cacao bittersweet chocolate, chopped
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup (170 grams) unsalted butter, cubed
- $1\frac{2}{3}$  cups (200 grams) confectioners' sugar
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup (165 grams) firmly packed dark brown sugar
- $1\frac{1}{4}$  cups (156 grams) all-purpose flour
- 3 tablespoons (15 grams) unsweetened cocoa powder, sifted
- $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon kosher salt
- $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon instant espresso powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon baking powder
- 4 large eggs (200 grams), lightly beaten and room temperature
- 2 teaspoons (8 grams) vanilla extract
- 1 cup (160 grams) chopped pitted Medjool dates, divided
- 1 cup (128 grams) raisins, divided

### Ganache:

- 8 ounces (226 grams) 64% cacao semisweet chocolate, finely chopped
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup (180 grams) heavy whipping cream
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoons (32 grams) light corn syrup
- 2 tablespoons (28 grams) unsalted butter, cubed

1. Preheat oven to 325°F (160°C). Line a 9-inch square baking pan with foil, letting excess extend over sides of pan; spray foil with cooking spray.
2. For brownie: In the top of a double boiler, heat chocolate and butter over simmering water, whisking occasionally, until melted and smooth. Turn off heat, and whisk in sugars until well combined, 1 to 2 minutes.

(Mixture will not be completely smooth.) Remove from heat, and let cool for 5 minutes.

3. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, cocoa, salt, espresso powder, and baking powder.

4. Gradually add eggs to chocolate mixture, whisking until combined. Whisk in vanilla. Fold in flour mixture until almost combined. Fold in  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (80 grams) dates and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (64 grams) raisins. Spread batter into prepared pan.

5. Bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out with a few moist crumbs or an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers 200°F (93°C), 45 to 50 minutes. Let cool completely in pan on a wire rack.

6. Sprinkle remaining  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (80 grams) dates and remaining  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (64 grams) raisins onto cooled brownie.

7. For ganache: In a medium bowl, add chocolate.

8. In a medium saucepan, heat cream and corn syrup over medium-low heat until steaming. (Do not boil.)

9. Pour hot cream mixture onto chocolate; let stand for 2 to 3 minutes. Starting in center of bowl, slowly stir in small circles with a rubber spatula until well combined. Stir in butter until melted and combined. Pour all over fruit on brownie. Refrigerate until ganache is set, about 30 minutes.

10. Using excess foil as handles, remove from pan, and cut into bars. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

**PRO TIP:** Stirring ganache from the center outward prevents too much air being incorporated into the mixture.



## COOKIES-AND-CREAM BROWNIES

Makes 9 to 12 brownies

*The deep flavor of black cocoa contrasted with a sweet vanilla cream in Oreo sandwich cookies is the perfect addition to upgrade a plain brownie to an unforgettable treat. Black cocoa in the brownie base adds a smooth, rich, and more intense chocolate flavor, and a generous layer of buttercream adds bright sweetness. Don't forget the chunks of crushed cookies studding the brownie and frosting, which contribute even more chocolate flavor while adding a satisfying crunch.*

### Brownie:

- 8 ounces (226 grams) 60% to 70% cacao bittersweet chocolate, chopped
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup (170 grams) unsalted butter, cubed
- $1\frac{2}{3}$  cups (200 grams) confectioners' sugar
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup (165 grams) firmly packed dark brown sugar
- $1\frac{1}{4}$  cups (156 grams) all-purpose flour
- 3 tablespoons (15 grams) black cocoa powder, sifted
- $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon kosher salt
- $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon instant espresso powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon baking powder
- 4 large eggs (200 grams), lightly beaten and room temperature
- 2 teaspoons (8 grams) vanilla extract
- 8 cream-filled chocolate sandwich cookies (92 grams), quartered

### Buttercream:

- 1 cup (227 grams) unsalted butter, softened
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon kosher salt
- $3\frac{1}{2}$  cups (420 grams) confectioners' sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup (60 grams) cold heavy whipping cream
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- $1\frac{1}{4}$  cups (116 grams) lightly crushed cream-filled chocolate sandwich cookies (about 10 cookies), plus more for garnish

1. Preheat oven to 325°F (160°C). Line a 9-inch square baking pan with foil, letting excess extend over sides of pan; spray foil with cooking spray.
2. For brownie: In the top of a double boiler, heat chocolate and butter over simmering water, whisking occasionally, until melted and smooth. Turn off heat; whisk in confectioners' sugar and brown sugar until well combined, 1 to 2 minutes. (Mixture will not be completely smooth.) Remove from heat, and let cool for 5 minutes.

3. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, cocoa, salt, espresso powder, and baking powder.
4. Gradually add eggs to chocolate mixture, whisking until combined. Whisk in vanilla. Fold in flour mixture just until combined. Fold in quartered cookies. Spread batter into prepared pan.
5. Bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out with a few moist crumbs or an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers 200°F (93°C), 40 to 45 minutes. Let cool completely in pan on a wire rack.

6. For buttercream: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter and salt at medium-low speed until smooth. Reduce mixer speed to low; add confectioners' sugar, about 1 cup (120 grams) at a time, alternately with cold cream, about 1 tablespoon (15 grams) at a time, beating until smooth after each addition and stopping to scrape bottom and sides of bowl. Beat in vanilla.
7. Increase mixer speed to medium; beat until light and fluffy, 1 to 2 minutes. Fold in crushed cookies. Spread buttercream onto cooled brownie. Refrigerate until buttercream is set before serving, about 30 minutes.
8. Garnish with crushed cookies, if desired. Using excess foil as handles, remove from pan, and cut into bars. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.









## PEANUT BUTTER-CREAM CHEESE-SWIRLED BROWNIES

Makes 9 to 12 brownies

*Although peanut butter and chocolate are an unbeatable combination, it can sometimes be a challenge to bake a peanut butter brownie that doesn't crumble. The addition of cream cheese adds fat and moisture that keeps peanut butter from separating and drying out when baked, and the finished product is a fudgy brownie swirled with creamy ribbons of peanut butter goodness.*

### Brownie:

- 8 ounces (226 grams) 60% to 70% cacao bittersweet chocolate, chopped
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup (170 grams) unsalted butter, cubed
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups (200 grams) confectioners' sugar
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup (165 grams) firmly packed dark brown sugar
- $1\frac{1}{4}$  cups (156 grams) all-purpose flour
- 3 tablespoons (15 grams) unsweetened cocoa powder, sifted
- $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon kosher salt
- $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon instant espresso powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon baking powder
- 4 large eggs (200 grams), lightly beaten and room temperature
- 2 teaspoons (8 grams) vanilla extract

### Swirl:

- 1 (8-ounce) package (226 grams) cream cheese, softened
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (128 grams) creamy peanut butter
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup (67 grams) granulated sugar

- 1 large egg (50 grams), room temperature
- 1 tablespoon (8 grams) all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1. Preheat oven to 325°F (160°C). Line a 9-inch square baking pan with foil, letting excess extend over sides of pan; spray foil with cooking spray.
2. For brownie: In the top of a double boiler, heat chocolate and butter over simmering water, whisking occasionally, until melted and smooth. Turn off heat, and whisk in confectioners' sugar and brown sugar until well combined, 1 to 2 minutes. (Mixture will not be completely smooth.) Remove from heat; let cool for 5 minutes.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, cocoa, salt, espresso powder, and baking powder.
4. Gradually add eggs to chocolate mixture, whisking until combined. Whisk in vanilla. Fold in flour mixture just until combined. Spread two-thirds of batter (about 3 cups or 762 grams) into prepared pan.
5. For swirl: In another medium bowl, beat all ingredients with a hand mixer at medium speed until smooth and creamy. Spoon mixture onto batter in large dollops. Spoon remaining brownie batter around swirl mixture in large dollops. Using a wooden pick, swirl together layers.
6. Bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out with a few moist crumbs or an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers 200°F (93°C), 50 to 55 minutes. Let cool in pan for 15 minutes. Using excess foil as handles, remove from pan, and let cool completely on a wire rack before cutting into bars. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

## MILLIONAIRE BROWNIE BARS

Makes 9 to 12 brownies

*Inspired by the indulgent layers of millionaire shortbread bars, these brownies feature a layer of thick, gooey caramel, delicately topped with a dark chocolate ganache. A sprinkle of sea salt on top cuts through the richness of the brownies and hearkens back to the subtle saltiness of shortbread in the original bars.*

### Brownie:

- 4 ounces (113 grams) 60% to 70% cacao bittersweet chocolate, chopped
- 6 tablespoons (84 grams) unsalted butter, cubed
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup plus 1 tablespoon (98 grams) confectioners' sugar
- 6 tablespoons (84 grams) firmly packed dark brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup plus 2 tablespoons (79 grams) all-purpose flour
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoons (8 grams) unsweetened cocoa powder, sifted
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon kosher salt
- $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon baking powder
- 2 large eggs (100 grams), lightly beaten and room temperature
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

### Caramel:

- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup plus 2 tablespoons (195 grams) sweetened condensed milk
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (110 grams) firmly packed dark brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (120 grams) heavy whipping cream
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup (84 grams) light corn syrup
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup (57 grams) unsalted butter, cubed
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

### Ganache:

- 6 ounces (170 grams) 60% to 70% cacao bittersweet chocolate, finely chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup plus 1 tablespoon (135 grams) heavy whipping cream
- 1 tablespoon (21 grams) light corn syrup
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoons (21 grams) unsalted butter, cubed

Garnish: flaked sea salt

1. Preheat oven to 325°F (170°C). Line a 9-inch square baking pan with foil, letting excess extend over sides of pan; spray foil with cooking spray.
2. For brownie: In the top of a double boiler, heat chocolate and butter over simmering water, whisking occasionally, until melted and smooth. Turn off heat, and whisk in confectioners' sugar and brown sugar until well combined, 1 to 2 minutes. (Mixture will not be completely smooth.) Remove from heat; let cool for 3 minutes.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, cocoa, kosher salt, and baking powder.
4. Gradually add eggs to chocolate mixture, whisking until combined. Whisk in vanilla. Fold in flour mixture just until combined. Spread batter into prepared pan.
5. Bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out with a few moist crumbs or an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers 200°F (93°C), 15 to 20 minutes. Let cool completely in pan on a wire rack.
6. For caramel: In a medium heavy-bottomed saucepan, whisk together condensed milk, brown sugar, cream, corn syrup, butter, and kosher salt. Bring to a boil over medium heat, whisking frequently, until thickened, smooth, and shiny and an instant-read thermometer registers 234°F (112°C) to 240°F (116°C) for soft-ball stage, about 12 minutes. Remove from heat, and whisk in vanilla. Pour hot caramel onto cooled brownie, spreading smooth. Let cool completely.
7. For ganache: In a medium bowl, add chocolate.
8. In a medium saucepan, heat cream and corn syrup over medium-low heat until steaming. (Do not boil.)
9. Pour hot cream mixture onto chocolate; let stand for 2 to 3 minutes. Starting in center of bowl, slowly stir in small circles with a rubber spatula until well combined. Stir in butter until melted and combined. Pour ganache onto cooled caramel, spreading smooth. Garnish with sea salt, if desired. Refrigerate until ganache is set, about 30 minutes.
10. Using excess foil as handles, remove from pan, and cut into bars. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 3 days.



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breakdown of sugar and  
caramel stages and  
temperatures.



## TIRAMISÙ BROWNIES

Makes 9 to 12 brownies

*Just when you thought tiramisù couldn't get any more indulgent, we created this decadent, chocolate-forward variation.*

*While the essential flavors of mascarpone, coffee, and cocoa remain, the brownie base adds additional sweetness and a prominent chocolate flavor. With its nutty and caramelly notes, a splash of Marsala wine imparts an unmistakable complexity to the dessert.*

- 8 ounces (226 grams) 60% to 70% cacao bittersweet chocolate, chopped
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup (170 grams) unsalted butter, cubed
- $1\frac{2}{3}$  cups (200 grams) confectioners' sugar
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup (165 grams) firmly packed dark brown sugar
- $1\frac{1}{4}$  cups (156 grams) all-purpose flour
- 3 tablespoons (15 grams) unsweetened cocoa powder, sifted
- 1 tablespoon (6 grams) instant espresso powder
- $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon kosher salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon baking powder

- 4 large eggs (200 grams), lightly beaten and room temperature
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoons (23 grams) Marsala wine
- Whipped Mascarpone (recipe follows)
- Garnish: unsweetened cocoa powder

1. Preheat oven to 325°F (160°C). Line a 9-inch square baking pan with foil, letting excess extend over sides of pan; spray foil with cooking spray.
2. In the top of a double boiler, heat chocolate and butter over simmering water, whisking occasionally, until melted and smooth. Turn off heat; whisk in sugars until well combined, 1 to 2 minutes. (Mixture will not be completely smooth.) Remove from heat; let cool for 5 minutes.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, cocoa, espresso powder, salt, and baking powder.
4. Gradually add eggs to chocolate mixture, whisking until combined. Whisk in wine. Fold in flour mixture just until combined. Spread batter into prepared pan.
5. Bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out with a few moist crumbs or an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers 200°F (93°C), 30 to 35 minutes. Let cool completely in pan on a wire rack.

6. Spread Whipped Mascarpone onto cooled brownie. Refrigerate until cold and set, about 1 hour.
7. Using excess foil as handles, remove from pan; garnish with cocoa, if desired. Cut into bars. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

**PRO TIP:** Rum or coffee liqueur can be substituted for Marsala, or alcohol can be replaced with vanilla extract if you prefer.

### Whipped Mascarpone

Makes about 2 cups

- 1 cup (240 grams) cold heavy whipping cream
- 1 (8-ounce) container (226 grams) cold mascarpone cheese\*
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup (90 grams) confectioners' sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, add all ingredients. Slowly increase mixer speed to medium, and beat until thick and creamy and stiff peaks form, about 1 minute, stopping to scrape whisk and sides of bowl. Use immediately. **D**

\*We used BelGioioso® Mascarpone Cheese.





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these brownies at  
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# THE ART AND SCIENCE OF LAMINATION

*A conversation with renowned pastry chef and educator Nicole Plue,  
guiding bakers to understand not just how pastry works but why*

BY AMBER WILSON





James Beard Award-winning pastry chef Nicole Plue is based in Calistoga, California, and has spent decades baking, teaching, and demystifying techniques for home bakers and professionals alike. She is a lead instructor at Central Milling's Artisan Baking Center in Petaluma, California, where she teaches immersive, hands-on pastry workshops.

➔ Follow her on Instagram at @nicoleplue.



There is a moment, early in lamination, when the dough feels like it might refuse you. It's cool and resists, the butter hidden inside like a secret you're not yet allowed to know. This is usually the point where home bakers decide that laminated dough belongs to professionals—people with marble countertops a mile long and mysterious confidence.

Nicole Plue would like you to pause here.

Because lamination, she insists, is not about fear or force. It is about understanding what is happening—inside the dough, inside the butter, and inside your own expectations.

“The overview is that lamination is the process of creating thin, discrete layers of dough and butter that when introduced to the heat of the oven, create steam, which lifts open the crumb and results in (hopefully!) consistent, long, even, butter-flavored cavities we call layers.”

If you've ever wondered why laminated dough behaves the way it does—why it resists, why it relaxes, *why* it sometimes breaks your heart and other times opens into a honeycomb interior—you're in the right place. Think of this not as a recipe but as a conversation: between you and the dough and between you and a teacher who has the language to name what your hands are already feeling.

## DOUGH, BUTTER, HEAT

Nicole teaches lamination everywhere, from small, focused workshops to intensive retreats, including two sold-out Bake from Scratch Laminated Dough Master Class Baking Retreats in 2025. But she always begins with the same grounding idea: Lamination is a system—one where every decision carries forward into the final pastry.

“The variables include the type of dough you are laminating (yeasted or non-yeasted, lean or enriched), the type of butter you are using (European style, cultured, and salted are some of the choices), the percentage of butter used, and the number and type of folds or turns used. When you are eating a laminated pastry that you or someone else baked, all that goes into what you are tasting and experiencing.”

Once you understand that each layer exists because of a deliberate choice, you begin to bake with curiosity instead of anxiety.



## NICOLE'S 5 LAMINATION ESSENTIALS

1

### TIME YOU CAN PROTECT.

“Setting aside time so you can be focused on the process. The beauty of hand-rolling dough is that it demands you be present and responsive to how the dough and butter are behaving.”

2

### BUTTER WITH TOLERANCE.

“I’ve experimented with small-batch ‘boutique’ butters, and some fail at lamination. They start to break down and weep liquid under all the pressure of rolling. Great on toast but not to work with.”

3

### FLAVOR MATTERS AS MUCH AS LAYERS.

“If the dough is yeasted, allow time for bulk fermentation. So many times, I taste a beautifully laminated pastry that has zero flavor. I want flavor.”

4

### FLOUR DISCIPLINE.

“A dough brush for brushing off excess flour and being mindful throughout the process of how much flour you are using on your table.”

5

### PATIENCE—AND PERMISSION TO FAIL.

“Patience, a love of process, and a tolerance for failure. I once heard you have to make something 100 times, experience all the possible variables, to claim any sort of mastery.”

**RUNNERS-UP:** Two styles of rolling pins (dowel and ball bearing), a cool kitchen, generous counter space, and refrigeration you can access easily.

Interested in an intensive Laminated Dough Baking Retreat in our Birmingham, Alabama, test kitchen in 2027? ➔ [Email events@bakefromscratch.com](mailto:events@bakefromscratch.com).

## THE BUTTER BLOCK

Butter block consistency is notoriously difficult to teach—too cold, the butter shatters; too warm, it smears. “The phrase I repeat is ‘cold but pliable.’ Can you hold up the butter block and bend it without any breaking and it still feels cool to the touch?”

Nicole teaches butter preparation not as a box to check but as a physical conversation. She uses a dowel-style rolling pin and sturdy plastic, working swiftly and evenly to soften the butter.

“The process is called ‘plasticizing’ the butter. I work quickly and modulate the pressure of the pounding, and the more detailed I am about giving every square inch some decent pressure to soften, the better the results.”

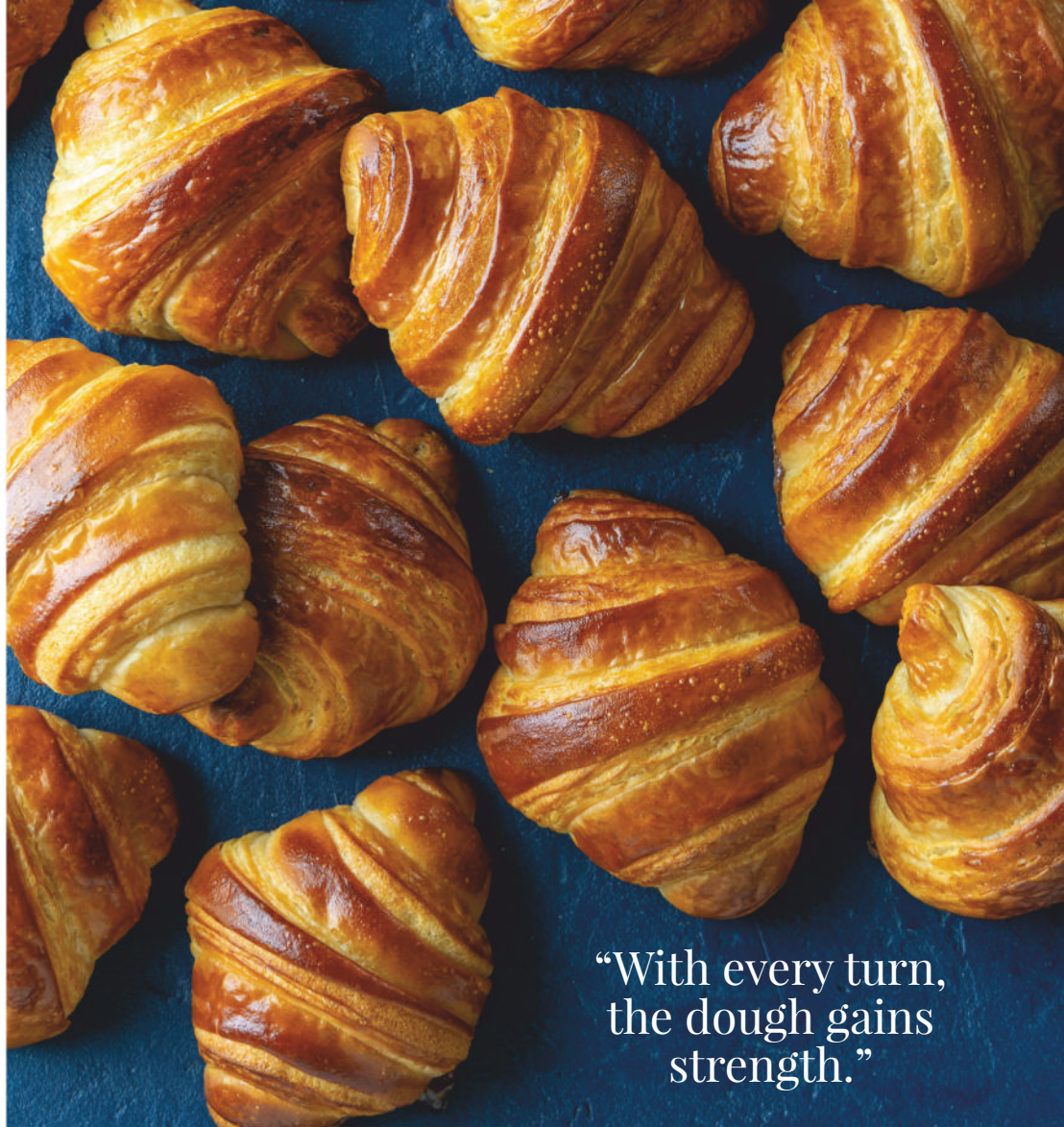
What matters here is thoroughness. Butter that looks ready can still hide resistance. “If I’m haphazard in applying pressure, overall, the block can appear pliable, but within the structure, there may be hard, uncooperative chunks of butter that will resist extending evenly within the dough.”

This is one of the lessons in lamination: What you rush will reveal itself later.

## BUILDING STRENGTH

As the dough is rolled and folded, something subtle but fundamental begins to happen. You don’t always see it, but you do feel it.

“With every turn, the dough gains strength. The process of elongating the dough on your worktable with your rolling pin strengthens the gluten. You will feel an increase in resistance while rolling out rather than see it. What you



“With every turn, the dough gains strength.”

will see with each successive turn is the layers of butter increasing in number and decreasing in thickness.”

This is the architecture of lamination: butter stretched thinner and thinner, dough gaining just enough strength to hold it all together.

## THE ROLE OF HYDRATION

The goal of lamination is not layers for their own sake—it is steam. Steam is what lifts, separates, and defines the crumb.

“Generally, the drier the dough, meaning the lower the hydration, the more beautiful the lamination. But with hand-rolled dough, there’s a point where the lamination will be compromised because

the dough is too dry and it’s almost impossible to extend with each successive fold.”

In professional kitchens, sheeters compensate for low-hydration doughs. At home, bakers must find that narrow window between workable and ideal. “When I was developing the recipe I teach, I started with the dough I process on the sheeter and slowly ticked up the hydration in it until the final turn was challenging but doable.”

## WHEN ORDER GIVES WAY TO POSSIBILITY

Not all lamination begins with a pristine butter block. Nicole is quick to introduce what she calls blitz dough—not as a



compromise but as a different way of understanding how layers form. Where classic lamination prizes order and precision, blitz embraces irregularity. Butter is cut in, not enclosed. The dough looks chaotic before it ever looks promising.

“I love blitz puff pastry. Its only drawback is that it’s not suitable for pastries that need a lot of structural integrity. I wouldn’t use my blitz for mille-feuille or beef Wellington. Other than that, it’s as flaky and a lot more delicate and tender than traditional puff pastry.”

Blitz teaches a different type of confidence. Instead of hiding the mechanics of lamination inside a butter block, it exposes them. You see the dough change with each turn. “There are so many good lessons to inform you as a baker and enhance all your dough-handling skills. For example, you see how each turn dramatically develops the dough. It gets smoother and stronger, and you can see it. That’s also happening with

doughs made with a butter block, but you don’t see it as clearly.”

It is also unforgiving in one specific way: flour. “Blitz dough, maybe more so than a butter block dough, will not be as beautiful if you use too much flour on your bench for rolling out. That was a discipline this dough taught me: Be judicious with the amount of flour on your table. Sticking is bad, but pounding your dough with flour might be worse.”

And then there is the moment that unsettles nearly everyone the first time—the butter breaking, streaking, losing its neatness entirely. “This broken chaotic mess of butter makes the most beautiful layers. If you start to see your butter block break up into irregular streaks of butter in your croissant dough despite all your best efforts, don’t lose heart. It will still produce beautiful flakes.”

Blitz reframes failure. What looks like collapse can still become lift. What feels like disorder can still create structure. It

reminds the baker that lamination is not fragile—it is resilient.

## RETURNING TO THE BEGINNING

By the time the pastry goes into the oven, lamination no longer feels like a performance. It feels like a sequence of decisions—when to wait, when to roll, when to stop. You’ve learned to read temperature in texture, strength in resistance, patience in pauses. Time and temperature have revealed themselves like elusive ingredients, just as Nicole promised they would.


And when the layers lift, when steam does its work, the result isn’t just flake or height or structure—it’s understanding. You know what happened because you were present for every step. Lamination is no longer something happening to you. It’s something you’re part of.

*Shall we begin?* ■

**BONUS!**

Find Nicole's recipes for  
Apple Tart with Cider Glaze  
and Tarte Flambé at  
[bakefromscratch.com](http://bakefromscratch.com).





PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM BATHIE  
RECIPE DEVELOPMENT BY  
OLA AGBODZA AND AMANDA STABILE  
PROP STYLING BY HALEY BOWEN

# BUTTER, LAYERS, MAGIC

*From twisted brioche to airy vol-au-vents, these pastries prove that lamination isn't intimidating—it's delicious, joyful, and wildly rewarding*





## LAMINATED BRIOCHE TWISTS

Makes 10 pastries

*Laminated brioche blends two classics of French baking: the soft richness of an enriched dough and the crisp, layered structure of viennoiserie. Here, the enriched dough is chilled, folded with a butter block, and transformed into delicate layers that bake up crisp at the edges and tender within. The simple cut-and-twist shaping opens the dough just enough to let the layers rise beautifully in the oven. Finished with a light almond glaze, these twists offer the familiar comfort of brioche with the flakiness of a morning pastry—unexpected, elegant, and wonderfully approachable.*

### Laminated brioche dough:

- 3½ cups (445 grams) bread flour, divided
- 3 tablespoons (36 grams) granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon (9 grams) kosher salt
- 2¼ teaspoons (7 grams) instant yeast
- ½ cup (120 grams) warm whole milk (110°F/43°C to 115°F/46°C)
- 3 large eggs (150 grams), lightly beaten and room temperature
- ⅔ cup (150 grams) unsalted butter, cubed and room temperature
- 1 cup (227 grams) unsalted butter, cubed and softened
- 1 large egg (50 grams)
- ⅓ cup (80 grams) plus 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water, divided
- 4 cups (480 grams) confectioners' sugar
- 1 teaspoon almond extract

### Garnish: toasted sliced almonds

1. For laminated brioche dough: In the bowl of a stand mixer, whisk together

1½ cups (191 grams) flour, granulated sugar, salt, and yeast by hand. Add warm milk and beaten eggs; using the paddle attachment, beat at low speed until combined, about 1 minute; scrape sides of bowl. With mixer on low speed, gradually add remaining 2 cups (254 grams) flour, beating until a shaggy dough forms; scrape sides of bowl.

2. Switch to the dough hook attachment. Beat at medium-low speed until dough is smooth, elastic, and slightly tacky, 4 to 6 minutes. With mixer on medium-low speed, add room temperature butter, 1 tablespoon (14 grams) at a time, beating until combined after each addition (6 to 7 minutes total). Beat at medium speed until a smooth, elastic dough forms, 10 to 12 minutes. Turn out onto a lightly floured surface; knead 5 to 8 times, and shape into a smooth round.

3. Lightly oil a large bowl. Place dough in bowl, turning to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until doubled in size, about 45 minutes.

4. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

5. Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface; lightly punch down dough.

Flatten dough to an 8x6-inch rectangle, and transfer to prepared pan. Cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate until cold and firm, at least 3 hours, or up to overnight.

6. In a medium bowl, stir softened butter until smooth and spreadable.

7. Using a permanent marker or pencil, draw a 7-inch square on a piece of parchment paper; turn paper over. Spread butter to an even thickness within drawn square. Fold paper over butter, or top with another piece of parchment paper. Refrigerate until butter is firm but still pliable, about 30 minutes.

8. Roll dough into a 16x7-inch rectangle. Place butter block in center of dough. Fold dough over butter block, pinching seam to seal. Rotate dough 90 degrees.

Roll into a 22x12-inch rectangle. Dust off any excess flour, and fold dough in thirds like a letter. Rotate dough 90 degrees; roll into a rectangle again. Dust off excess flour. Fold short sides to meet in center. Fold dough in half, as if you are closing a book. Wrap in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for 45 minutes to 1 hour.

9. Line baking sheets with parchment paper.

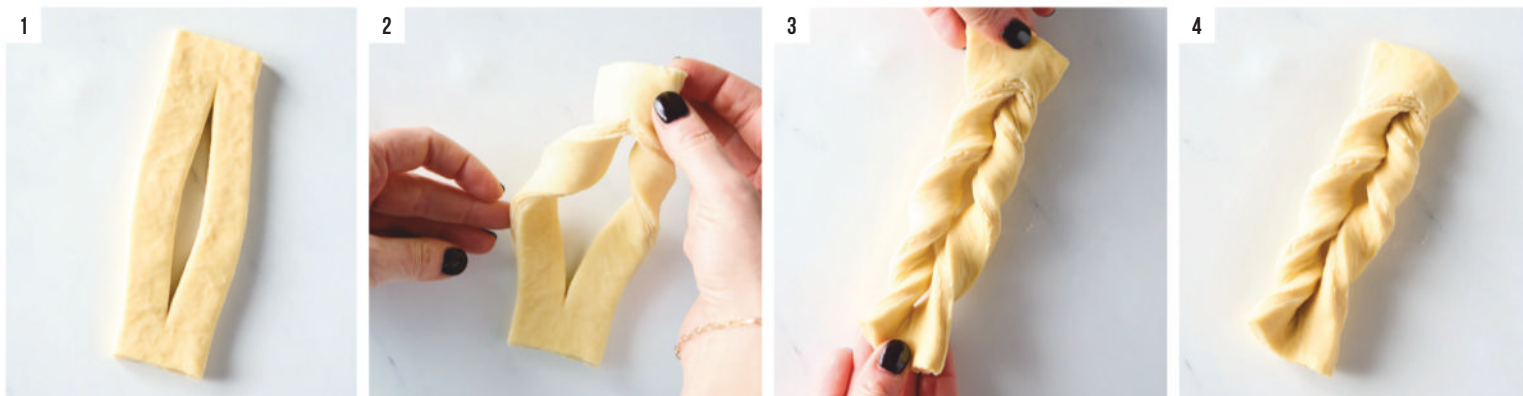
10. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough into a 20½x8-inch rectangle (about ¼ inch thick). Trim ¼ inch off all sides. Cut dough into 10 (7½x2-inch) strips. Cut 1 strip lengthwise down center, keeping 1 inch on both short sides intact. Holding one end in each hand, gently twist one short end through hole in center 2 to 3 times. (Don't twist too much, or the layers will be too stretched to puff up.) Repeat with remaining strips. Place 2 inches apart on prepared pans. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until puffed and jiggly, about 1½ hours.

11. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C).

12. In a small bowl, whisk together egg and 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water. Carefully brush onto pastries, taking care to avoid exposed internal layers.

13. Bake until golden brown, 15 to 20 minutes. Let cool on pans for 10 minutes. Remove from pans, and let cool completely on a wire rack.

14. In another medium bowl, whisk together confectioners' sugar, almond extract, and remaining ⅓ cup (80 grams) water until smooth; drizzle onto cooled pastries. Garnish with almonds, if desired. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.



## MASCARPONE-LEMON VOL-AU-VENTS

Makes 10 pastries

*Vol-au-vents—French for “windblown” or “flying in the wind”—earned their name for the remarkable lightness of their hollow, crisp shells. A lean base dough wrapped around a soft butter block forms the clean, defined layers that give the pastries their signature height. Cutting and stacking the dough creates hollow centers ready to be filled once cooled. Whipped cheese and lemon curd bring a bright, creamy finish that complements the pastry’s delicate crispness. Refined yet surprisingly straightforward, these little shells echo classic French technique while fitting beautifully into the modern home kitchen.*

### Classic puff pastry dough:

- 3 cups (381 grams) bread flour
- 1 cup (125 grams) all-purpose flour
- 1½ teaspoons (5 grams) kosher salt
- ¼ cup (57 grams) cold unsalted butter, cubed
- 1 cup (240 grams) cold water (65°F/18°C to 70°F/21°C)
- 2 teaspoons (10 grams) distilled white vinegar or fresh lemon juice
- 1¼ cups (284 grams) unsalted butter, room temperature

- 1 large egg (50 grams)
- 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water

Whipped Mascarpone (recipe on page 55)

- 10 tablespoons (200 grams) lemon curd\*

Garnish: fresh blackberries

1. For classic puff pastry dough: In the bowl of a stand mixer, whisk together bread flour, all-purpose flour, and salt by hand. Add cold butter; using the paddle attachment, beat at low speed until butter has worked into flour and mixture resembles cornmeal. With mixer on low speed, slowly add 1 cup (240 grams) cold water and vinegar or lemon juice, beating just until combined.

2. Switch to the dough hook attachment. Beat at low speed until dough comes together, 2 to 3 minutes. (It may not look totally smooth; that’s OK. You don’t want to overwork it.) Lightly dust a surface with all-purpose flour; turn out dough, and shape into a 1-inch-thick square. Wrap in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or up to overnight.

3. Using a permanent marker or pencil, draw an 8-inch square on a piece of parchment paper; turn paper over. Spread room temperature butter into an even thickness within drawn square. Fold parchment over butter. Refrigerate until firm but pliable, about 30 minutes.

4. On a clean surface, roll dough to a 12-inch square. Place cold butter square diagonally in center of dough so that four corners of dough are visible. Fold corners of dough over butter to meet in center, pinching seams to seal.

5. Lightly dust dough and a rolling pin with all-purpose flour. Using rolling pin, lightly tap dough into a rectangle. Roll dough into a 20x10-inch rectangle (about ¼ inch thick). Fold short sides of dough to meet in center; fold dough in half as

if you are closing a book. Rotate dough 90 degrees. Repeat rolling and folding once. Wrap dough in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or for up to 2 hours.

6. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.

7. On a surface lightly dusted with all-purpose flour, repeat rolling and folding procedure one more time; rotate dough 90 degrees. Roll into an 18x14-inch rectangle (about ⅜ inch thick). Using a ¾-inch round cutter, cut dough. Using a 1¼-inch round cutter, cut centers from half of dough rounds. Place dough rings on whole dough rounds, using a light dab of water to adhere layers. Prick bottoms of pastries 2 to 3 times with a fork. Place 2 inches apart on prepared pan. Freeze until firm, about 30 minutes.

8. Preheat oven to 425°F (220°C).

9. In a small bowl, whisk together egg and 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water; brush onto pastries.

10. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 375°F (190°C), rotate pan, and bake until golden brown, 10 to 15 minutes more. Let cool on pan for 10 minutes. Remove from pan, and let cool completely on a wire rack.

11. Place Whipped Mascarpone in a pastry bag; cut a ½-inch opening in tip. Pipe into cooled pastries. Top each with 1 tablespoon (20 grams) lemon curd. Garnish with blackberries, if desired. Filled pastries are best served same day as made. Store unfilled pastries in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

\*We used Bonne Maman® Lemon Curd.

➔ For step-by-step photos of how to make classic puff pastry dough, search “pastelitos” at [bakefromscratch.com](http://bakefromscratch.com).







## PASTRY CREAM DANISH

Makes 12 pastries

*Danish is about managing structure, and this version keeps the technique as straightforward as possible. The laminated dough gives you the lift and flakiness you want, but the shaping is key: two small cuts and a simple crossover create an opening that helps the layers expand evenly in the oven instead of puffing in one direction. The Pastry Cream is thickened enough to stay put during baking so it doesn't seep into the dough or cause sogginess. A small amount of jam adds acidity and color without throwing off the balance of moisture. The result is a Danish that bakes up consistently well—crisp edges, a set custard center, and a clean, defined shape.*

**Classic Danish Dough** (recipe on page 42)  
**Pastry Cream** (recipe follows)

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup (80 grams) strawberry jam  
1 large egg (50 grams), lightly beaten  
Fresh berries  
Simple syrup (see Note)

1. Line baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. On a lightly floured surface, divide Classic Danish Dough in half. Roll half of dough into a  $12\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$ -inch rectangle; trim  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch off all sides of dough. Cut dough into 6 (4-inch) squares. (Cover and refrigerate remaining dough until ready to use.)
3. Position 1 dough square in front of you so it is shaped like a diamond. Fold it in half so it becomes a triangle, with widest edge of triangle closest to you and tip pointing away. Using a sharp paring knife and starting  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch from right side of triangle, make a cut from base of triangle to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch below top point. Starting  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch from left side, make a cut from base of triangle to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch below previous cut. Unfold square. Fold cut left side over center, and place point in line with opposite inside point. Fold cut right side over center, and place in line with opposite inside point. Press edges to seal, using a light dab of water to adhere if needed. Repeat procedure with remaining dough, and place 2 inches apart on prepared pans. Loosely cover with plastic wrap, and let stand for 30 minutes.

4. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C).
5. Spoon about 1 tablespoon (15 grams) Pastry Cream into center of each Danish, and top each with 1 teaspoon jam. Brush dough with beaten egg.
6. Bake for 10 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 350°F (180°C), and bake until golden brown and an instant-read thermometer inserted in pastry (not cream) registers 190°F (88°C), 5 to 10 minutes more. Remove from pans, and let cool on a wire rack. Top Danish with berries, and brush with simple syrup. Serve warm or at room temperature.

**Note:** For simple syrup, bring  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (100 grams) granulated sugar and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup (60 grams) water to a boil in small saucepan over medium heat, stirring occasionally until sugar dissolves. Remove from heat, and let cool completely before using. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks.

### Pastry Cream

Makes about 1 cup

- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup (180 grams) whole milk
  - 6 tablespoons (72 grams) granulated sugar, divided
  - $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon kosher salt
  - $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon vanilla bean paste
  - 4 large egg yolks (74 grams), room temperature
  - $1\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoons (12 grams) cornstarch
1. In a small saucepan, heat milk, 3 tablespoons (36 grams) sugar, salt, and vanilla bean paste over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until steaming. (Do not boil.)
  2. In a medium bowl, whisk together egg yolks, cornstarch, and remaining 3 tablespoons (36 grams) sugar. Gradually add hot milk mixture, whisking constantly. Pour egg yolk mixture into saucepan, and bring to a boil over medium heat, whisking constantly. Cook, whisking constantly, for 2 to 3 minutes.
  3. Strain mixture through a fine-mesh sieve into a medium heatproof bowl. Cover with plastic wrap, pressing wrap directly onto surface of pastry cream to prevent a skin from forming. Refrigerate until completely cooled, at least 1 hour.



## CHOCOLATE-CREAM CHEESE DANISH BRAID

Makes 2 (13-inch) pastries

*Quick Danish Dough gives you flaky layers without the long rest periods, and scoring a rectangle in the center is a simple way to keep the filling contained so it doesn't spread during baking. The alternating strip-folding helps the pastry rise evenly and helps the braid hold its shape. The cream cheese filling is formulated to be stable—it won't leak or overly soften the layers—and the chocolate chips melt into small pockets rather than disappearing.*

- 2 (8-ounce) packages (454 grams) cream cheese, softened
- 2 cups (240 grams) confectioners' sugar
- 2 large egg yolks (37 grams), room temperature
- 2 teaspoons (12 grams) vanilla bean paste
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt

Quick Danish Dough (recipe on page 45)

- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup (134 grams) 55% cacao semisweet chocolate chips, divided
- 1 large egg (50 grams), lightly beaten

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat cream cheese, confectioners' sugar, egg yolks, vanilla bean paste, and salt at medium speed until smooth and creamy, 4 to 5 minutes.

2. On a lightly floured surface, divide Quick Danish Dough in half. Roll half of dough into a 15 $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch square (about  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch thick). Trim  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch off all sides of dough. (Cover and refrigerate remaining dough until ready to use.) Transfer dough to a piece of parchment paper cut to the size of your baking sheet. (Your dough will be bigger than parchment now, but it will help you move the pastry after braiding.)

3. Using a bench scraper or the back of a small knife, lightly score a 13x5-inch rectangle in center of dough square. At top and bottom of scored rectangle, trim off 1-inch-wide strips of dough on both sides.

4. Spread half of cream cheese mixture (about 1 cup or 245 grams) within scored rectangle. Sprinkle half of chocolate chips (67 grams) onto mixture. Cut 1-inch-wide strips in dough along both long sides of filling.

5. Fold top and bottom pieces over filling. Starting on left side, fold top dough strip over filling, ending just below opposite strip. Repeat with top dough strip on right side. Continue pattern, alternating left and right, until you reach end of strips. Tuck and pinch last strip. Transfer pastry, still on parchment, to a baking sheet.

6. Repeat procedure with remaining dough, remaining cream cheese mixture, and remaining chocolate chips. Cover braids, and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until puffed, 45 minutes to 1 hour.

7. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C).


8. Brush beaten egg onto first assembled braid.

9. Bake first braid for 15 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 350°F (180°C), and bake until golden brown and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center of pastry registers 190°F (88°C), 10 to 15 minutes more, covering with foil during final 10 minutes of baking to avoid excess browning. Remove from pan, and let cool completely on a wire rack.

10. Meanwhile, return oven temperature to 375°F (190°C), and brush beaten egg onto second assembled braid. Bake as directed. Pastries are best served same day as made. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 3 days. **D**







Hailing from Kansas City, Missouri, Erin Jeanne McDowell is an award-winning baker, writer, and culinary teacher. She is the author of *The Fearless Baker: Simple Secrets for Baking Like a Pro* (2017), *The Book on Pie: Everything You Need to Know to Bake Perfect Pies* (2020), and *Savory Baking: Recipes for Breakfast, Dinner, and Everything in Between* (2022). She also writes her Happy Baking Newsletter on Substack and hosts the video series *Happy Baking* on YouTube.

➔ Follow Erin on Instagram at [@emcdowell](#) and at [erinjeannemcdowell.com](#).

# Baking Fearlessly

with  
Erin Jeanne  
McDowell



STORIES AND RECIPES BY  
ERIN JEANNE MCDOWELL  
FOOD AND PROP STYLING BY  
GIOVANNA VAZQUEZ



## A Tale of Two Temperatures

*You should eat this recipe both warm and cooled*

Pineapple upside-down cake is a classic for a reason—bright, juicy pineapple that’s been caramelized in a buttery topping on top of a soft, fluffy cake. It’s simple to make and manages to be beautiful without any kind of icing or frosting. Most of all, this sweet combination of flavors and textures tends to be a crowd favorite. But my favorite thing about pineapple upside-down cake: It is even more delicious when it is served warm. While you can make this cake ahead of time and serve it at room temperature, it’s truly wonderful when the caramelized topping is soft and gooey. It becomes a cozy, melt-in-your-mouth sort of experience best enjoyed with a spoon instead of a neatly sliced piece you eat with a fork.

This got me thinking about another type of bake that’s also undeniably delectable both warm and at room temperature: cookies. Whenever I bake cookies, I love to enjoy a few warm, before cooling finishes setting their structure. This experience is so good, it’s often my favorite part of baking cookies—a gift especially for the person who took them out of the oven, to be enjoyed at just the right moment.

Combining this idea with upside-down cake goodness, the Pineapple Upside-Down Cookies were born. Just like their cakey forefather, these cookies are incredibly delicious at both temperatures. Warm, they’re rich and comforting; cooled, they become soft sugar cookies with bonus flavors and textures. Baked in a muffin pan to help contain the caramel during baking, the cookies are large and impressive (bakery-style). You’ll know they’re done when the caramel is bubbling around the sides of the cookies—but err on the side of under-baking them for the best soft cookie experience.

These cookies look stunning on a platter or tucked into cellophane bags to give as gifts. But whatever you do, don’t miss the opportunity to enjoy a few fresh from the oven—also known as the ultimate reward for the cookie baker.

## PINEAPPLE UPSIDE-DOWN COOKIES

Makes 12 cookies

*What do you get when you combine a soft, cakey cookie with a classic pineapple upside-down cake? It’s juicy, it’s caramelized, it’s buttery—and best of all, it’s portable! These cookies are best baked inside a bun pan, which helps to contain the buttery brown sugar topping responsible for caramelizing the pineapple. You can also use a jumbo muffin pan; the cookies will be slightly thicker and may require an additional 2 to 3 minutes in the oven. For the best results, drain the pineapple and cherries well—any excess juice can slow down caramelizing or potentially make a soggy cookie rather than a supersoft one. Do yourself a favor and enjoy some of them when they are warm fresh from the oven as well as letting some cool to serve at room temperature—both ways are extremely delicious.*

### Cookie Dough:

- 1 $\frac{2}{3}$  cups (208 grams) all-purpose flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon baking soda
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon fine sea salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup (60 grams) sour cream, room temperature
- 1 large egg (50 grams), room temperature
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 4 tablespoons (56 grams) unsalted butter, room temperature
- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup (80 grams) powdered sugar
- 3 tablespoons (42 grams) light brown sugar

### Assembly:

- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup (165 grams) light brown sugar
- 6 tablespoons (84 grams) unsalted butter, melted
- 12 canned pineapple rings, patted dry
- 12 stemless maraschino cherries, patted dry

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C) with the oven racks in the upper and lower thirds of the oven. Lightly grease 2 (6-well) 4-inch bun pans with cooking spray.
2. Make the cookie dough: In a medium bowl, whisk the flour, baking soda, and salt to combine. In a liquid-measuring cup, whisk the sour cream, egg, and vanilla together to combine.



➔ Find the bun pan that Erin uses for these cookies at [bakefromscratch.com/shoptheissue](https://bakefromscratch.com/shoptheissue).

3. Using a hand mixer, cream the butter, powdered sugar, and brown sugar in a medium bowl on medium speed until light and fluffy, 3 to 4 minutes. Scrape the base and sides of the bowl well. (You can also do this by hand with a silicone spatula, if you prefer, but the quantity is a bit too small for a standard electric stand mixer.)  
4. Add the sour cream mixture, and mix on medium speed until well combined. Scrape the bowl well. Add the dry ingredients in 2 to 3 additions, mixing on low speed just until it's incorporated.  
5. To assemble the cookies: In a small bowl, mix the brown sugar and melted

butter to combine. Scoop a heaping tablespoon (about 19 grams) of the mixture into each prepared well. Use a small offset spatula (or your hands) to help spread it into an even layer.  
6. Place a pineapple ring into the base of each well. Place a cherry in the center of the pineapple ring, pressing down lightly.  
7. Scoop the cookie dough by 2-tablespoon (about 38 grams) portions, and place on the pineapple. Use a damp hand to gently press the cookie dough flat, covering the pineapple.  
8. Transfer to the oven and bake, swapping pans halfway through, until the

cookies are visibly browned around the outer edge, 14 to 17 minutes. Remove the cookies from the oven, and transfer to a wire rack to cool for 5 minutes.  
9. While the cookies cool in the pan, line two baking sheets with parchment paper. After the cooling time, invert the pan(s) in a swift, firm motion, slamming it down onto one of the prepared baking sheets. Use a spatula to transfer the unmolded cookies to the other prepared baking sheet, leaving any excess syrup and juices behind.  
10. Cool the cookies for at least 8 minutes (or completely) before serving. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

# THE Coconut Cake

Plus a favorite new frosting and an ingredient you should know

Every baker has their favorites. For me, this is a dream cake—the kind of cake I want for my birthday, or to bring to a big party. It serves up big coconut flavor, but it's the combination of textures that truly makes this cake special. Soft enough that a spoon can fall effortlessly through three layers of light, fluffy cake that are filled with silky coconut custard. It's iced with an easy-to-make coconut frosting—a recipe that contains a special ingredient and deserves a shoutout all its own.

The coconut buttercream is a riff on a frosting known as sweetened condensed milk buttercream—also sometimes called Russian buttercream. It's made by whipping butter until it's extremely aerated. This is the lengthiest part of the process and can take up to eight minutes to become light enough—it should change from yellow to nearly white in color. Without a sufficient incorporation of air, it's difficult to add the final ingredient, sweetened condensed milk, without causing the frosting to break. Added gradually to the lightened butter, the mixture comes together to make an ultra-creamy frosting that's not too sweet but is as easy to make as American buttercream. Using sweetened condensed coconut milk brings in pure coconut flavor without making any other adjustments to this classic recipe.

Sweetened condensed coconut milk is increasingly available in grocery stores, especially natural food stores. Look for it in cans near the sweetened condensed milk or alongside other shelf-stable nondairy options. But you can also make it yourself with two ingredients and a little bit of time. Heat 2 (13-ounce) cans of coconut milk on the stovetop over medium heat until it's fluid and well combined. Add 1 cup (200 grams) granulated sugar, and stir to help it dissolve. Bring the mixture to a simmer and then reduce the heat to low and continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until the mixture is reduced by just over half, 45 minutes to 1 hour. It should be thick enough to coat your stirring utensil. Cool the sweetened condensed milk completely before using or refrigerate it in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks.

All these elements combine to make this supremely coconutty layer cake live up to its name. After all, this isn't just a coconut cake—it's THE Coconut Cake.

## THE COCONUT CAKE

Makes 1 (3-layer) 8-inch/20cm cake

*This cake is extra special—a dream birthday or occasion cake. This recipe is a towering dream and boasts big coconut flavor and the dreamiest combination of textures. The cake is soft and super fluffy, and the filling is deliciously creamy. The buttercream is a twist on one of my favorite kinds, made with sweetened condensed milk, sometimes called Russian buttercream. One simple change makes it super coconutty: by using sweetened condensed coconut milk instead (find it at natural grocery stores). This frosting is so creamy and melt-in-your-mouth—the perfect complement to the rest of the cake. While this recipe has multiple components, the end result speaks for itself. It is truly THE Coconut Cake.*

### Cake Layers:

- 2<sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub> cups (333 grams) all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons (10 grams) baking powder
- ½ teaspoon fine sea salt
- ¾ cup (180 grams) buttermilk, room temperature
- ½ cup (113 grams) unsalted butter, melted
- ¼ cup (56 grams) neutral oil, such as vegetable, canola, or safflower
- 1 tablespoon (13 grams) vanilla bean paste or vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon coconut extract
- 8 large eggs (400 grams), room temperature
- 2<sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub> cups (467 grams) granulated sugar
- 1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> cups (150 grams) sweetened flaked coconut

### Custard Filling:

- 1 (13-ounce) can (383 grams) coconut milk
- ¾ cup (180 grams) heavy whipping cream
- ½ cup (100 grams) granulated sugar
- ¼ cup (32 grams) cornstarch
- ½ teaspoon fine sea salt
- 2 large eggs (100 grams)
- 2 tablespoons (28 grams) unsalted butter
- 1½ teaspoons (6 grams) vanilla bean paste or vanilla extract
- 2 cups (170 grams) sweetened flaked coconut

### Frosting and Assembly:

- 1 cup (227 grams) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon fine sea salt
- 1 (14-ounce) can (397 grams) sweetened condensed coconut milk
- 2 cups (170 grams) sweetened flaked coconut, pulsed in a food processor to finely chop
- 8 Raffaello candies

1. Make the cake layers: Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C) with an oven rack in the middle. Spray 3 (8-inch/20cm) round cake pans with baking spray with flour. Line the base of the pans with parchment paper, and lightly spray the paper.

2. Sift the flour, baking powder, and salt together into a medium bowl. Whisk the buttermilk, melted butter, oil, vanilla, and coconut extract together in a large liquid-measuring cup with a pour spout.

3. In the metal bowl of a stand mixer (or in a medium heat-safe mixing bowl), whisk together the eggs and sugar together until well combined. Set the bowl over a medium pot of barely simmering water (make sure the base of the bowl isn't touching the water). Heat, whisking constantly, until the mixture reads 105°F (40°C) on a thermometer.

4. Remove the bowl from the double boiler, and transfer to the electric mixer fitted with the whisk attachment. (Alternatively, if you're using a hand mixer, whip in the same bowl you heated the eggs in.) Beat the eggs on high speed until pale and thick, 5 to 6 minutes. Reduce the speed to medium and whisk for 2 to 3 minutes more.

5. Sprinkle about one-quarter of the flour mixture onto the egg mixture, and mix on low speed just until incorporated. Add the remaining flour mixture in 2 to 3 additions, mixing just until incorporated into the batter.

6. With the mixer running on low speed, gradually add the buttermilk mixture to the bowl in a slow, steady stream. Once it's all added, mix until the batter is evenly combined. Fold in the coconut with a silicone spatula until incorporated.

7. Divide the batter between the prepared pans (about 550 grams per pan).

8. Bake until the center springs back gently when touched, 35 to 40 minutes. Remove the cakes from the oven, and place the pans on a cooling rack. Let them cool in the pans for 15 minutes and then run a small offset spatula around the outside of the pan to loosen it. Invert the cakes onto the cooling rack, gently peel away the parchment, and allow to cool completely.

9. Make the custard filling: In a medium pot, whisk the coconut milk, cream, sugar, cornstarch, salt, and eggs until well combined. Transfer to the stovetop and cook over medium-low heat, whisking constantly, until the mixture begins to thicken, 2 to 4 minutes. It can be helpful to switch to a silicone spatula for better stirring once it begins to thicken.

10. Continue to cook, stirring constantly, until the mixture comes to first boil (fat bubbles coming up from the center of the pot), 2 to 3 minutes more. Remove the pot from the heat, and stir in the butter, vanilla, and coconut until the butter is fully melted and everything is evenly combined.

11. Transfer the mixture to a medium heat-safe bowl, and cover directly with plastic wrap. Cool to room temperature and then transfer to the refrigerator until fully chilled, at least 2 hours. (To speed up cooling, pour the custard onto a baking sheet, and cover directly with plastic wrap. The increased surface area will cool it down much faster!)

12. Make the frosting: In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat the butter on high speed until nearly white in color, fluffy, and very aerated, 7 to 8 minutes. Scrape the bowl well, add the vanilla and salt, and beat for 1 minute more.

13. With the mixer running on medium speed, gradually add the sweetened condensed milk in about 4 additions, pouring it into the mixer in a slow, steady stream. Scrape the bowl well once or twice as you incorporate the condensed milk.

14. Continue to beat the frosting on medium-high speed until it's thick and

smooth, 1 to 4 minutes more. (If the frosting looks broken or grainy at any point, keep going. Raise speed to high and continue to whip until it comes back together.)

15. Transfer one-third of the frosting (about ¾ cup or 194 grams) into a pastry bag and with a large round pastry tip (about ½ inch/1 cm wide), or cut a ½-inch/1cm opening from the end.

16. Assemble the cake: Use a serrated knife to remove the domed top of the cakes, if needed. Use a dab of frosting to adhere a cake layer to a cake board, platter, or cake stand. Pipe a ring of frosting around the outside edge of the cake layer. Scoop about one-third of the custard filling (about 1 cup or 300 grams) into the center, and spread it into an even layer.

17. Place another cake layer on top, and gently press down to adhere. Repeat the piping and filling process with another cake layer. Place the final cake layer on top, and press down gently to adhere.

18. Use a small amount of frosting to apply a thin, allover crumb coat of frosting. Transfer the cake to the refrigerator for 15 to 20 minutes to firm up.

19. Use the remaining frosting to frost the top and sides of the chilled cake in a thin layer of frosting all over. Use the pastry bag to pipe a ring of frosting around the outer edge, and spoon the remaining custard filling into the center of it, and spread into an even layer.

20. Use your hands to press coconut into the sides and the top, covering all the frosted portions of the cake (leaving the custard uncovered). Densely pack the coconut, pressing it firmly onto the cake.

21. Use a knife to gently divide the cake into 8 even slices. Just barely mark the surface of the cake as a guide. Use the remaining frosting in the pastry bag to pipe a rounded dollop in the center of each slice, closer to the outer edge. Place a Raffaello candy on top of each dollop.

22. Refrigerate the cake until ready to serve, but let it stand at room temperature for about 30 minutes to soften the frosting before serving. Cover and refrigerate for up to 3 days. **D**



INSIDE THE WORKSHOP OF  
**IRIS HANTVERK**

*Sweden's  
Historic  
Brushmakers*

BY AMBER WILSON

The homewares company Iris Hantverk traces its origins to Sweden's labor movement in the late 19th century, when visually impaired craftsmen advocated for their right to fair working wages. What began as a workhouse and training school is now a globally recognized maker of handmade household tools and brushes—tactile objects whose elegance stands apart in an era of plastic and speed. Today, Iris Hantverk remains modest in scale, with just 17 employees in total, including visually impaired craftsmen in both Sweden and Estonia.

Sara Edhäll, along with her colleague Richard Sparrenhök, has co-owned Iris Hantverk since 2012. Before becoming co-owner, Sara spent years within the company, never expecting to lead it. That changed when the company lost its government subsidy and the previous owners decided to sell.

"I had worked in the company for a very long time and had been through all the tough years that we had struggled with profitability," she recalls. With the jobs of visually impaired brushmakers at risk, she made a choice. "There were several of us in the company who wanted to see the business continue and, not least, preserve the jobs of the craftsmen. . . . In the end, it was Richard and me who bought the company, and even though it was very tough at the beginning because we didn't get any big loans for working capital, we got the business going. It felt very good."

In this workshop, skill is measured not in sightlines but in fingertips. "In many cases, craftsmen who have or had little vision have had more difficulty learning to tie brushes than those who cannot see at all because they have relied more on their vision than their sense of touch," Sara says. She believes the workshop reflects a larger truth: "I believe that there are many other traditional arts and crafts forms that a blind person can master just as well as a sighted person."





Working by touch yields practical benefits, too. “A brush that is machine-punched can easily lose its bristles when the wood cracks or swells—something handmade brushes cannot do because of the way they are tied,” Sara explains.

Customers can feel the difference before they understand it. “The thing you hear the most is that they are beautiful,” Sara notes. “I think it’s because so few everyday items are made by hand these days. But also, because you can see that the products are designed with care and consideration for the user.”

There is an intimacy in the act of making something by touch alone: the idea that craftsmanship is not diminished by disability but deepened, that function and beauty can be held in the same hand. After all these years, Sara’s motivation remains simple. “What inspires and drives me,” she says, “is to see that there are so many people who appreciate the products and might choose a brush made of wood and natural materials over one made of plastic.” **D**




Bake from Scratch is honored to be a retailer of Iris Hantverk handmade kitchen tools. Browse our collection of baker and pastry brushes, pastry scrapers, and cake testers at [bakefromscratch.com/shop](https://bakefromscratch.com/shop). To learn more about its tradition of craftsmanship and to explore its full product line, visit [irishantverk.se/en](https://irishantverk.se/en). Every purchase supports the artisans whose hands create these heirloom tools.

A top-down photograph of a block of butter in its white paper wrapper, resting on a light-colored, speckled surface. A butter knife with a wooden handle and a metal blade is positioned at the top of the frame, with a dollop of butter on the blade. The butter block is the central focus, and the text is overlaid on it.

*Baking with*  
**SALTED BUTTER**

*Although we typically use  
unsalted butter in our  
recipes, we'll happily  
break our own rule  
and use salted butter  
in these Breton pastries*

Originating in Brittany, France, Breton pastries are known for their generous use of salted butter. The peninsular region of Brittany has long been a major producer of both dairy products and sea salt. Brittany dairy farmers and butter makers typically heavily salted their butters in the 13th century due to the common (and widely unpopular) salt tax, or *gabelle*, as Brittany was one of the few cities in France that was exempt from the large tax. The region became known for its butter—creamy, full of flavor, and with a long shelf life thanks to its added salt. Even after the abolition of the salt tax following the French Revolution, salted butter was still widely used in the region, and that continues to this day. Read more about Brittany's salted butter and find more Breton recipes on our website at [bakefromscratch.com/breton](https://bakefromscratch.com/breton).



Far Breton,  
PAGE 85

## FAR BRETON

Makes 1 (8-inch) cake

*This dense, custard-like cake is similar in texture to clafoutis or Parisian flan. It's studded with sweet, caramelly prunes, which are soaked in rum or Armagnac brandy from southwest France to become pruneaux à l'Armagnac or "drunken prunes," a popular French treat. The fruit absorbs the flavors of the brandy while rehydrating to become soft and tender. The name "Far Breton" has evolved from the Breton-language phrase "farz forn," in which "farz" means "flour," "meal," or "porridge," and "forn" means "oven." In Breton, "far" also means "flan."*

- 1 (8-ounce) package (226 grams) pitted prunes
- 1/3 cup (80 grams) Armagnac brandy
- 3 large eggs (150 grams), room temperature
- 3/4 cup (150 grams) granulated sugar
- 2/3 cup (83 grams) all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 cups (480 grams) whole milk
- 1/4 cup (57 grams) salted butter
- 2 teaspoons (12 grams) vanilla bean paste

1. In a small saucepan, combine prunes and brandy. Let stand for 30 minutes to 1 hour.
2. Using a kitchen torch or long-stemmed match, ignite brandy, and carefully shake pan while letting flames burn off. Let cool completely. (Prunes will absorb any excess liquid while they cool.)
3. Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C). Spray an 8-inch round cake pan with baking spray with flour. Line bottom of pan with parchment paper.

4. In prepared pan, arrange prunes in a single layer.

5. In a large bowl, whisk together eggs and sugar until thick, frothy, and almost doubled in volume, about 3 minutes. Add flour and salt, and whisk until just combined.

6. In another small saucepan, heat milk, butter, and vanilla bean paste over medium-low heat until butter is melted and an instant-read thermometer registers 125°F (52°C) to 130°F (54°C). Slowly whisk warm milk mixture into batter until well combined. Immediately pour batter over prunes in prepared pan.

7. Bake until top is golden brown, cake jiggles slightly when pan is gently shaken, and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers 190°F (88°C) to 195°F (91°C), 25 to 30 minutes. Let cool completely in pan on a wire rack. Serve at room temperature, or refrigerate overnight before serving. Refrigerate in airtight container for up to 3 days.

## KOUIGN AMANN

Makes 12 pastries

*Literally translating to "butter cake" and pronounced "kween ah-mahn," these miniature multilayered pastries are fit for royalty. A caramelized sugar crust and laminated dough create a crisp, flaky exterior while the center of the pastry remains soft and tender. Kouign amann is often described as a cross between a*

*croissant and a sticky bun, and the original recipe (dating back to the 1860s) evolved from a large cake-style dessert to smaller individual servings using a muffin pan for added convenience.*

### Dough:

- 1 1/4 cups (300 grams) cold water (65°F/18°C to 70°F/21°C)
- 1 tablespoon (9 grams) instant yeast
- 1 1/2 teaspoons (6 grams) granulated sugar
- 4 cups (508 grams) bread flour
- 1 tablespoon (14 grams) salted butter\*, room temperature
- 1 tablespoon (9 grams) kosher salt

### Butter block:

- 1 1/2 cups (340 grams) salted butter\*, room temperature
- 2 cups (400 grams) granulated sugar, plus more for dusting

1. For dough: In the bowl of a stand mixer, whisk together 1 1/4 cups (300 grams) cold water, yeast, and sugar by hand until yeast and sugar dissolve. Add flour, butter, and salt; using the paddle attachment, beat at low speed until a shaggy dough forms.

2. Switch to the dough hook attachment. Beat at low speed until dough becomes smooth and forms a ball around dough hook. Increase mixer speed to medium-low, and beat until dough becomes smooth and elastic, 4 to 6 minutes. Cover with plastic wrap, and let rest at room

➔ For step-by-step photos of how to shape Kouign Amann, search "quick kouign amann" at [bakefromscratch.com](http://bakefromscratch.com).



temperature (67°F/20°C to 72°F/22°C) until dough puffs significantly, 45 minutes to 1 hour.

3. Using a permanent marker or a pencil, draw an 8-inch square on a large piece of parchment paper; turn parchment over.

4. For butter block: In a medium bowl, fold and stir butter until it is smooth. Spread butter into an even thickness within drawn square. Fold parchment over butter to cover. Refrigerate until firm but pliable, about 30 minutes, or for up to 2 days.

5. Punch down dough, and turn out onto a clean surface. Flatten into an 8-inch square, and wrap in plastic wrap. Freeze for 20 minutes.

6. Remove butter block from refrigerator; it should be cold but flexible. If it's too soft, return to refrigerator to chill longer. If it's too hard, let stand at room temperature for a few minutes.

7. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough into a 16x8-inch rectangle, with one long side closest to you. Unwrap chilled butter block, and place in center of dough. Fold dough over butter block, fully enclosing it and pinching seam to seal. (The seam should be vertical.) Rotate dough 90 degrees so seam is horizontal. Roll dough into a ¼-inch-thick rectangle (about 22x10 inches), with one long side closest to you. (Make sure to maintain the rectangular shape, squaring the dough off with a bench scraper as needed.) Fold

dough in thirds like a letter, using a pastry brush to dust off excess flour between each layer. Rotate dough 90 degrees, and repeat rolling and folding procedure.

8. Wrap dough in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for 30 to 45 minutes. (The dough should relax, and the butter should chill. At this stage, the dough can be refrigerated up to overnight.)

9. Lightly spray 2 (6-cup) jumbo muffin pans with baking spray with flour; dust with just enough granulated sugar to coat bottom and sides of cups.

10. On a clean work surface, sprinkle 1⅓ cups (333 grams) sugar in an even layer. Turn out dough onto sugar. With seam facing you, roll dough into a 22x10-inch rectangle. Sprinkle remaining ⅓ cup (67 grams) granulated sugar onto dough in an even layer; fold dough in thirds like a letter.

11. Rotate dough 90 degrees; roll dough into a 17x13-inch rectangle, dusting dough and surface with sugar as needed. (Work as quickly as you can without tearing or overworking the dough, as the sugar will liquify if left in contact with the dough for too long.) Trim dough to create a 16x12-inch rectangle; cut into 12 (4-inch) squares.

12. Dust 1 dough square with a little more sugar. Fold corners of square in to center, firmly pressing to adhere. Place your thumbs and forefingers on new corners that have formed, and pinch inward toward center but do not press all the way to center. Place pastry into a prepared

muffin cup. Repeat with remaining dough squares. Cover and let rise at room temperature (67°F/20°C to 72°F/22°C) until puffed, 45 minutes to 1 hour.

13. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C).

14. Bake until deep golden brown and caramelized and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers 200°F (93°C) to 205°F (96°C), about 25 minutes, rotating pans halfway through baking.

15. Meanwhile, line 2 wire racks with parchment paper.

16. Remove pans from oven, and immediately invert pastries onto prepared racks. Let cool completely, flat side up. (This allows the sugar on the underside to harden, preventing the pastry from sinking or collapsing.) Best served same day as made.

*\*We used Plugrà® European Style Salted Butter.*

**PRO TIPS:** While these pastries are best served the same day they're made, they can be refreshed the next day. Heat pastries on a parchment paper-lined baking sheet at 350°F (180°C) until heated through, 5 to 10 minutes. Let cool completely, and the pastries will be crisp and ready to enjoy.

Though sugar doesn't typically bubble over the edge of the pan during baking, you can place a baking sheet or piece of foil on the rack below the pastries to catch any drips and keep your oven clean.





*cover*  
RECIPE

Even though these recipes use salted butter, we added more salt. Why? To emulate as best we can the well-rounded salinity of these pastries as if you're eating them fresh from a pâtisserie in France.

Palets Bretons,  
PAGE 89



## PALETS BRETONS

Makes 12 cookies

Similar to, though not to be confused with, thinner shortbread-like sablés Breton, palets Breton are thick, slightly soft cookies that get their distinct flavor from their simple yet high-quality ingredients: sugar for sweetness, egg yolks for moisture and richness, and salted butter for balancing sweetness and fat. The term “palet” means “puck,” referring to the cookies’ disk-like shape.

- ½ cup (113 grams) salted butter, softened
- ¾ cup (150 grams) granulated sugar, plus more for sprinkling
- 3 large egg yolks (56 grams), room temperature
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1½ cups (188 grams) all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Spray a 12-cup muffin pan with baking spray with flour, wiping off excess.
2. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter and sugar at medium speed until pale and fluffy, 2 to 3 minutes, stopping to scrape bottom and sides of bowl. Add egg yolks, one at a time, beating until combined after each addition and stopping to scrape bottom and sides of bowl. Beat in vanilla.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, and salt. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture, beating until just combined and no dry streaks remain. Divide dough into 12 portions (about 2 tablespoons or 40 grams each). Press each portion into bottom of a prepared muffin cup. (Dough will be soft; use greased hands to get dough as smooth as possible.)
4. Bake until edges are lightly browned, 18 to 20 minutes. Sprinkle sugar on top. Let cool in pan for 10 minutes. Remove from pan, and let cool completely on a wire rack. Store in an airtight container for up to 5 days.

## PAINS AUX RAISINS

Makes 12 pastries

This popular French breakfast treat is often colloquially referred to as “escargot” (“snails”) due to its spiraled shape. Thanks to laminating salted butter into an enriched yeast dough, the golden, flaky exterior softly gives way to a filling of brandy-soaked raisins and rich vanilla seed-speckled Pastry Cream.

- ⅓ cup (80 grams) warm whole milk (105°F/41°C to 110°F/43°C)
- 4 tablespoons (48 grams) granulated sugar, divided
- 1½ teaspoons (5 grams) active dry yeast
- 2 to 2¼ cups (250 to 281 grams) all-purpose flour, divided
- 2 large eggs (100 grams), room temperature
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ cup (113 grams) salted butter, softened
- ⅓ cup (114 grams) raisins
- 3 tablespoons (45 grams) warm brandy (100°F/38°C to 110°F/43°C)
- Pastry Cream (recipe on page 70)
- 1 large egg (50 grams)
- 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water
- Swedish pearl sugar, for sprinkling

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer, whisk together ⅓ cup (80 grams) warm milk, 1 tablespoon (12 grams) granulated sugar, and yeast. Let stand until foamy, about 10 minutes.
2. Add 1 cup (125 grams) flour and room temperature eggs to yeast mixture; using the paddle attachment, beat at medium-low speed until a shaggy mixture forms, 2 to 3 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl.
3. Switch to the dough hook attachment. Add 1 cup (125 grams) flour, salt, and remaining 3 tablespoons (36 grams) granulated sugar; beat at low speed just until combined. Increase mixer speed to medium, and beat until dough is smooth and elastic, 7 to 10 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl; add up to remaining ¼ cup (31 grams) flour, 1 tablespoon (8 grams) at a time, if dough is too sticky.
4. Add butter, 1 tablespoon (14 grams) at a time, to dough, beating until combined

after each addition. Beat until dough pulls away from bottom and sides of bowl, becomes smooth and elastic, and passes the windowpane test, 6 to 8 minutes.

5. Spray a large bowl with cooking spray. Place dough in bowl, turning to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until doubled in size, 45 minutes to 1 hour.
6. Punch down dough, and turn out onto a lightly floured surface. Flatten into a 10x6-inch rectangle, and transfer to a parchment paper-lined baking sheet. Cover and refrigerate for at least 5 hours or up to overnight.
7. In a medium bowl, combine raisins and warm brandy; let stand for 20 minutes.
8. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
9. Turn out dough onto a heavily floured surface; lightly dust top of dough with flour. Roll dough into a 14x11-inch rectangle. Using a small offset spatula, dot Pastry Cream onto dough; spread into an even layer, leaving a ½-inch border on one long side.
10. Drain raisins, and sprinkle onto Pastry Cream. Starting with long side opposite border, roll up dough into a 14-inch-long log. Gently stretch and shape log with hands to lengthen and even out thickness, if necessary. Using a serrated knife or unflavored dental floss, trim ends of log if necessary, and cut log into 12 slices (about 1⅛ inches thick each). Place slices, cut side down, on prepared pan. Loosely cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until puffed, 30 to 45 minutes.
11. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C).
12. In a small bowl, whisk together egg and 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water; brush onto slices. Sprinkle with pearl sugar.
13. Bake until golden brown and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers 190°F (88°C), 12 to 15 minutes. Let cool on pan for 10 minutes. Remove from pan, and let cool on a wire rack for 5 minutes. Best served warm. Store in an airtight container for up to 2 days. **D**

➔ Find our favorite Swedish pearl sugar at [bakefromscratch.com/shop](http://bakefromscratch.com/shop).





# GETTING **SCRAPPY**

*Create easy treats and  
snacks from your leftover  
dough and pastry pieces*



Free-Form  
Morning Buns,  
PAGE 97

Yields for each recipe will vary depending on the amount of dough and pastry you have leftover and the size and shape of how each is cut. Use these recipes less as a formula and more as inspiration to mix and match the ingredients you already have on hand for custom creations.

## CINNAMON-SUGAR BITES

*Think of these sweet nibbles as a grown-up version of cinnamon toast. Cut the dough into any size or shape you want.*

Gather and roll All-Butter Piecrust dough scraps (recipe on page 12) to ¼-inch thickness. Cut into desired sizes and shapes with cutters, pastry wheel, or knife. Place on a parchment paper-lined baking sheet, and freeze for 10 minutes. Lightly brush egg wash onto dough, and sprinkle with cinnamon sugar. (Stir together ½ cup [100 grams] granulated sugar and 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon.) Bake in a preheated 425°F (220°C) oven until golden brown, 10 to 15 minutes.





## PASTRY JAM SANDWICHES

*These treats were inspired by French puff pastry pailles, which are sweet pastry sandwich cookies filled with jam and dusted with confectioners' sugar. We opted for a sprinkling of granulated sugar before baking, giving the pastries a crisp exterior and rich, caramelized flavor similar to palmiers, and a convenient fruit filling.*

Gather and roll Classic Puff Pastry Dough scraps (recipe on page 67) to  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch thickness. Lightly sprinkle with granulated sugar, and roll up dough into a tight log. Wrap in plastic wrap, and freeze for 1 hour. Cut frozen log into  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-thick slices, and place on a parchment paper-lined baking sheet. Top slices with another piece of parchment paper and another baking sheet. Bake in a preheated 400°F (200°C) oven for 10 minutes; remove the top baking sheet and parchment, and bake until golden brown, 5 to 10 minutes more. Let cool completely on pan and then sandwich together with fruit preserves.



## MINI APPLE TARTES TATIN

*We layered honey, thin apple slices, and rough puff pastry in muffin cups to make single-serve tarts that practically shout for a scoop of vanilla ice cream on top.*

Spray a 12-cup muffin pan with baking spray with flour, and line each with 2 (1-inch-wide) strips of parchment paper arranged in an “X” to extend slightly beyond edges of cups. Spoon 2 teaspoons (14 grams) honey in each prepared muffin cup. Top each with 4 to 6 (1/8-inch-thick) slices of small apples.

Gather and roll Rough Puff Pastry Dough scraps (recipe on page 24) to 1/4-inch thickness; cut into 3-inch rounds. Prick centers of dough with a fork, and place on apples, tucking excess dough around apples. Freeze for 10 minutes. Bake in a preheated 400°F (200°C) oven until golden brown, about 20 minutes. Let cool in pan for 5 minutes and then use parchment paper strips to invert tarts onto a serving plate.

## PIGS IN A BLANKET

*A generous sprinkling of zesty everything bagel seasoning onto laminated bread dough enhances the smoky flavors of cocktail sausages.*

Gather and roll Laminated Brioche Dough scraps (recipe on page 66) to 1/8-inch thickness. Cut dough into strips about 5x1/2 inches in size. Wrap a strip around a cocktail sausage, and place on a parchment paper-lined baking sheet. Cover with plastic wrap, and let rise for 30 minutes. Lightly brush egg wash onto dough, and sprinkle with everything bagel seasoning. Bake in a preheated 375°F (190°C) oven for 10 minutes; reduce heat to 350°F (180°C), and bake until golden brown, about 5 minutes more.





## CHEESE TWISTS

*Although these twisted savories are simple to make, their flavor is anything but. The buttery brioche enhances the creaminess of the melted cheese, and a sprinkle of garlic powder adds complexity to the tangy sharpness of white Cheddar.*

Gather and roll Laminated Brioche Dough scraps (recipe on page 66) to  $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch thickness. Cut into strips about 7x1 inches in size. Sprinkle garlic powder and shredded white Cheddar cheese onto half of dough strips as desired; top each with another dough strip, lightly pressing layers. Twist strips 4 to 6 times, and place on a parchment paper-lined baking sheet. Cover and let rise for 30 minutes. Brush with egg wash, and bake in a preheated 375°F (190°C) oven for 10 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 350°F (180°C), and bake until golden brown, about 5 minutes more.

## FREE-FORM MORNING BUNS

*Morning buns are a scrumptious cross between a sweet roll and a croissant. This loose spiraling technique lets you use dough scraps of virtually any size or amount and gives the buns a more rustic appearance compared to the uniformity of buns cut from a large log of dough.*

Gather and roll Quick Danish Dough scraps (recipe on page 45) to  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch thickness. Spread a thin layer of butter onto dough, and sprinkle with cinnamon sugar. (See page 93.) Cut dough into 3- to 5-inch-long, 1-inch-wide strips. Stack 3 strips, sugar side up, on each other, staggered about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch from each end. Roll up into a tight coil, tuck ends under dough, and place on a parchment paper-lined baking sheet. Cover with plastic wrap, and let rise until puffed and jiggly, about 1 hour. Bake in a preheated 375°F (190°C) oven until golden brown and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers at least 190°F (88°C), 15 to 20 minutes. Toss hot buns in more cinnamon sugar before serving, if desired. **D**





BY AMBER WILSON  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KRISTIN TEIG

*Maureen Abood's  
guide to Lebanese pastry,  
shaped by method and form*

# THE SHAPE OF LEBANESE BAKING



Maureen Abood's understanding of Lebanese baking was shaped long before she ever stepped into a professional kitchen. She grew up in Michigan as part of a sprawling Lebanese American family, where cooking was inseparable from gathering together and recipes were learned by watching, tasting, and repeating. Food was how love moved through the house—how celebrations and losses were marked.

Trained first as a writer, Maureen studied English literature at undergraduate and graduate levels, later teaching at the college level before working in nonprofit communications and marketing in Chicago, Illinois. Alongside that work, she began writing freelance about Lebanese food and family, including a deeply personal essay for the *Washington Post* reflecting on her father's

death and the food-centered rituals that surrounded her family in grief. Soon after, Maureen left her job and enrolled in culinary school in San Francisco, California, seeking the technical grounding to match the traditions she carried with her.

Culinary school—and her first trip to Lebanon during that period—sharpened her sense of how technique and heritage intersect. What had once been intuitive became something she wanted to understand and explain.

In her cookbook *Lebanese Baking*, Maureen does not simplify tradition by reducing it but by explaining it. Each recipe carries an understanding—not just what to do but also the why behind how a dough behaves once it's been stretched, rolled, baked, soaked, or left alone.

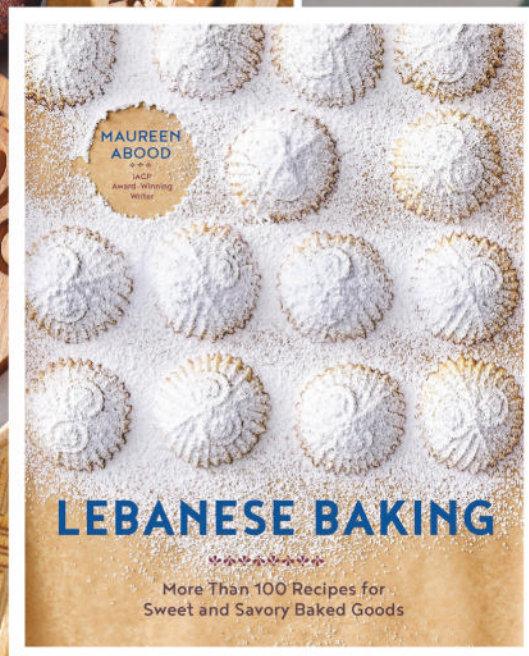


That approach is especially clear in *baklava* (the Lebanese name for baklava). “Baklava is so vast and remarkable,” Maureen says. Her exploration of the pastry goes beyond the familiar diamond-cut pan. Spirals, rolls, nests, and cylindrical *burma* each become their own lesson in structure. “After lots of experimentation, I discovered that this wonderfully thin dough will behave the way we want it to if we use the right tools and approach.”

The book’s baklava chapter reads almost like a study in applied science. Phyllo, whether frozen or homemade, is unforgiving if rushed and surprisingly generous if handled with restraint. For nests and *burma* baklava, Maureen emphasizes control: “We must lightly mist each sheet of dough with water just before working with it to soften it so it’s not too dry—but just barely, or it becomes soggy.” Butter, too, must be applied with intention. “Keep it light and easy,” she advises, noting that excess fat weakens the dough’s ability to hold its shape before baking.

In offering both dry and wet methods of homemade phyllo, Maureen gives bakers something most will never encounter side by side: two doughs made from similar ingredients that behave entirely differently once rolled. “Understanding the dough itself informed so much for me,” she explains. The dry method stacks rolled rounds, yielding layers that bake into something distinctly shattering. The wet method stretches a rested dough across a table into a single, nearly transparent sheet—one that invites rolling rather than layering. “The final bite of each style is equally satisfying, if a little different,” she says. Homemade phyllo, she notes, carries “a near cookie-like flavor,” while store-bought phyllo bakes “lighter and crispier with a very toasty flavor.”

That sensitivity to texture extends throughout the book, particularly in the chapters on bread. Where family tradition once favored a single master dough, Maureen chooses specificity. *Fatayer* (hand pies), *manakeesh* (flatbread), and *ka’ak* (enriched bread) each receive their own formulas, adjusted for structure, tenderness, or puff. “There are very specific outcomes we are looking for in



the various styles,” she says, “and the results are so much better when the dough plays to those goals.”

She shares, “For fatayer, the goal is a little pie with a tender, thin crust that holds its shape.” Oil gives the dough its pliability, and a short single rise keeps the pies from opening or distorting in the oven. “Manakeesh dough should be soft and supple,” she explains—easy to roll, foldable, and tender but still with a distinct chew. Docking the dough before baking keeps it flat so the toppings stay put. “Ka’ak is designed to puff and separate as it bakes,” Maureen says. Like pita, the dough forms a pocket—traditionally filled with cheese *knafeh*, though just as good with whatever you choose to tuck inside.

Butter behaves differently depending on the shape of the pastry, and Maureen treats it as a structural element rather than a given. For some baklava, it’s brushed;

for others, poured. She credits her Aunt Rita with the clarity to see excess as information rather than failure. “If you use too much butter poured over the top, your baklava will tell you because you’ll see any excess butter around the pan after baking. Just pour it off.”

That idea—letting the pastry tell you what it needs—is threaded throughout the book. When homemade phyllo tightens or dries, Maureen encourages bakers to notice the resistance rather than fight it. “Stretch until the dough tells you it has hit its limit,” she says of the spiral method. “Small tears in the dough may happen, but don’t fret about them.”

The spiral baklava, in particular, distills the ethos of the book. It requires space—literal and mental. A cleared table. Time. A willingness to move slowly around the perimeter of the dough, anchoring and stretching. The dough does not reward force. It responds to consistency.

Maureen is the author of *Rose Water & Orange Blossoms: Fresh & Classic Recipes from My Lebanese Kitchen* (Running Press, 2015) and *Lebanese Baking: More Than 100 Recipes for Sweet and Savory Baked Goods* (Countryman Press, 2025). [Follow her on Instagram at @maureenabood and at maureenabood.com.](#)

## BAKING THE SPIRALS

Maureen made me want to try homemade phyllo for the first time, and the baklava spiral was something I couldn't resist—not because it is the most elaborate but because the recipe seemed to require the most trust. The dough rests on an oiled plate while I clear the table, pushing everything else out of the way. When I lift the edge and begin to stretch, the dough resists and then yields. I move clockwise, 2 inches at a time, just as Maureen instructs, anchoring one edge before pulling the next.

When the filling is scattered and the sheet rolled into a long coil, the spiral forms almost on its own. In the oven, the butter and olive oil sizzle quietly. After baking, the cold syrup meets the hot pastry, and I hear the soft, unmistakable hiss Maureen promises.

Later, when I cut into the spiral, the layers hold. The texture is crisp but not brittle. The shape tells the story of how it was made.

It is, I realize, exactly the point of her book.

## BAKLAWA SPIRALS WITH HOMEMADE PHYLLO

Makes 2 spirals (16 servings)

Recipe excerpted with permission from *Lebanese Baking: More Than 100 Recipes for Sweet and Savory Baked Goods* by Maureen Abood, published by Countryman Press, October 2025.

*This recipe employs the wet method to stretch two giant phyllo sheets by hand. This dough shapes best in rolls, which, as in Turkish and other cultures' pastry, coil easily into pretty spirals. The wedges cut from the spirals have beautiful cross sections through the slice.*

### Basting mixture:

57 grams (¼ cup) Clarified Butter  
(recipe follows)

50 grams (¼ cup) extra virgin olive oil

### Dough:

151 grams (⅔ cup) water, warm  
(105°F/40°C to 110°F/43°C)

25 grams (2 tablespoons) extra virgin olive oil

8 grams (2 teaspoons) white vinegar  
½ teaspoon fine sea salt

300 grams (2½ cups) unbleached all-purpose flour

### Filling:

170 grams (1½ cups) toasted nuts of choice

100 grams (½ cup) granulated white sugar

4 grams (1 teaspoon) orange blossom water, rose water, or a 1:1 combination

160 grams (½ cup) Flower Water Syrup (recipe follows), cold

1. In a small mixing bowl, whisk together the basting mixture. Set aside.
2. In another small mixing bowl, add the water, oil, vinegar, and salt. Stir to dissolve the salt.
3. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook, add the flour, and set the speed to low. Slowly add the liquid mixture until the dough becomes shaggy, about 30 seconds.
4. Bring the dough together in a rough, sticky ball, and knead it on medium speed until the dough becomes soft and smooth, about 3 minutes.
5. Generously coat a 10-inch plate with some of the basting mixture.
6. Halve the dough, and shape the halves (approximately 220 grams or ½ pound each) into smooth balls. Roll out one ball into an 8-inch (20cm) disc. Place the dough disc on the oiled plate.
7. Roll out the second ball, and lay the second disc on the first. Generously brush the top with the basting mixture. Let the dough rest, uncovered, for 30 minutes.
8. Meanwhile, make the filling. In a nut grinder or food processor, coarsely chop the toasted nuts. Transfer them to a small mixing bowl, and combine them with the sugar and flower water. Set aside.
9. Arrange an oven rack in the middle position, and preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C).
10. On the counter or a table, clear a space at least 30 inches (75cm) square. Lightly brush the surface with some of the basting mixture. Lay a dough disc in the center of the work area, with room in all directions to stretch it.
11. Lift the edge farthest from you, and gently stretch it away from center. Set it back down, anchoring it back to the surface. Repeat with the edge closest to you.



12. Moving 2 inches (5cm) at a time clockwise, pick up the edge of the dough, gently stretch it outward, and set it back down. As you move all the way around to the starting point, occasionally lift the sheet, placing your hand underneath it, and gently stretch the dough from the center, drawing it upward and outward. When done, the sheet should measure roughly 28 inches by 30 inches (71cm by 75cm). Leave any tears that may occur while stretching.

13. Lightly sprinkle the sheet with some of the basting mixture, and fold it in half toward you. Sprinkle with more of the basting mixture.

14. Along the long edge of the sheet closer to you, spoon half the nut mixture in a straight line.

15. Pick up that long edge, and carefully roll it into a log, lifting the long edges of the dough up over the nuts and then rolling. Pinch the seam closed, and finish with the seam underneath the log.

16. Coil the log into a spiral. Finish by tucking the narrow outer end slightly underneath the spiral. Carefully transfer the log to an unlined baking sheet. Brush the top liberally with more of the basting mixture.

17. Repeat steps 10 through 16 with the second dough ball. On the baking sheet, place the second spiral about 2 inches from the first.

18. Bake until the spirals turn golden brown, 1 hour.

19. Remove the baklava from the oven, and immediately pour the cold syrup slowly and evenly over the pastry. Direct the syrup into the seams of the spirals and over the edges. Some of the syrup will run off.

20. Let the spirals cool at room temperature for at least 2 hours.

21. To serve, cut the baklava into wedges.

**Note:** Keep the baklava lightly covered with plastic wrap or wax paper at room temperature for up to 1 week.

### Clarified Butter

Makes 341 grams (1½ cups)

456 grams (2 cups/1 pound) unsalted butter

1. In a medium saucepan over low heat, melt the butter, undisturbed, about 30 minutes.
2. Remove the pan from the heat, and use a spoon or small strainer to skim off and discard any solids on the surface of the butterfat.
3. Into a medium bowl, slowly pour the melted butterfat. Stop pouring when you reach the solids and water at the bottom of the pan. A little melted butter will surround the solids. Discard that with the solids, or reserve it for another use.

**Note:** Use the clarified butter either freshly melted or resolidified. You can store it in an

airtight container at room temperature for 2 months or in the refrigerator for up to 6 months.

### Flower Water Syrup

Makes 480 grams (1½ cups)

170 grams ( $\frac{3}{4}$  cup) water  
300 grams (1½ cups) granulated white sugar  
14 grams (1 tablespoon) fresh lemon juice from  $\frac{1}{2}$  lemon  
9 grams (2 teaspoons) orange blossom water;  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon rose water; or both together

1. In a small saucepan over medium-high heat, combine the water, sugar, and lemon juice, and bring the mixture to a boil. Reduce the heat to low, and simmer for 5 minutes.
2. Remove the syrup from the heat, and add the flower water, stirring to combine.
3. Let the syrup cool for 30 minutes, transfer it to an airtight container, and refrigerate until cold, at least 1 hour. **D**

**Note:** You can store the syrup in the refrigerator for up to 6 months.

Maureen will join Brian Hart Hoffman for Baking School with Williams Sonoma on March 30, 2026, celebrating spring with elegant, seasonal cakes.

➔ Register to participate at [bakefromscratch.com/bakingschool](https://bakefromscratch.com/bakingschool).



*origin of a classic*



# POGNE DE *Romans*

BY SHELBY DUFFY

A meandering stroll through Romans-sur-Isère, located in the Drôme region of southeast France, might lead you along historic brick roads lined with centuries-old limestone cottages warming in the sun, across the picturesque arched stone bridge reflecting in the rippling river Isère below, or perhaps to a quaint bakery, nestled just beyond the historic Collegiate Church of Saint-Barnard in the heart of the city, for a loaf of its native bread: *pogne de Romans*.

This bread was created during the Middle Ages to be enjoyed on Easter, using up the abundance of eggs available after abstaining from eating them while fasting for Lent. Resembling a large bagel, the dough is scored with long, intersecting lines before baking to a golden-brown finish. The bread's shape and design are meant to call to mind Jesus's crown of thorns, but the score marks also serve a practical purpose—they allow the baker to control the bread's rise and make it easy to portion for sharing a freshly baked loaf. In fact, "pogne" can mean "hand" or "handful"—the exemplification of the French practice of literally breaking bread with your hands.

Originally made from a leaner brioche-style dough, the modern *pogne de Romans* is rich with eggs, butter, and milk, and the lingering aromas of yeast and sweet orange blossom water perfume the bread's smell and taste. The delicate citrus-infused water gives the bread an unmistakable flavor that's common to many other baked goods in the region.

The popularity of *pogne de Romans* has endured through time, with modern versions including additions such as rum, lemon, or chocolate, and even cut open and filled with whipped cream and chocolate mousse. You'll find varieties of *pogne* at French grocery stores such as Carrefour, at local boulangeries, and beyond. Maison Pascalis, a generational French bakery founded in 1892 that is still run by the Pascalis family today, specializes in the classic form of *pogne*. There is even the museum-bakery Musée de la Pogne near Romans-sur-Isère, where our editor-in-chief, Brian Hart Hoffman, learned about the centuries-long history of this beloved bread and shared the experience with us.

*Pogne de Romans* is a joyous and almost decadent take on a traditional loaf of bread, meant for celebrating rebirth and rejuvenation after weeks of steadfast prayer and reflection. Our classically flavored version of this time-honored bread is perfect for creating new traditions with your family on Easter or for simply sharing with loved ones as a weekday treat. Just don't be shy about breaking off a portion with your hands—after all, when in Romans-sur-Isère!





## POGNE DE ROMANS

Makes 1 loaf

*Orange blossom water is a common ingredient throughout southeast France, where pogne de Romans originated, creating its signature scent and flavor. Lightly sweet and buttery, this brioche-style bread is perfect for breakfast, teatime, or whenever you want a snack.*

- 3¾ cups (476 grams) bread flour, divided
- ⅓ cup (80 grams) hot milk (120°F/49°C to 130°F/54°C)
- 2¼ teaspoons (7 grams) instant yeast
- ½ cup (100 grams) granulated sugar
- ½ cup (113 grams) unsalted butter, cubed and softened
- 3 large eggs (150 grams), room temperature
- 1½ teaspoons (5 grams) kosher salt
- ½ to 1 teaspoon orange blossom water
- 1 large egg yolk (19 grams), lightly beaten

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat ¾ cup (95 grams) flour, hot milk, and yeast at low speed until well combined. Cover bowl with plastic wrap, and let stand in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until mixture is bubbly, 25 to 30 minutes.
2. Add sugar, butter, eggs, salt, orange blossom water, and remaining 3 cups (381 grams) flour to yeast mixture. Beat at low speed until well combined, stopping to scrape paddle and bottom and sides of bowl.
3. Switch to the dough hook attachment, and beat at low speed until dough is smooth and elastic, 20 to 25 minutes.
4. Spray a large bowl with cooking spray. Place dough in bowl, turning to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until doubled in size, 1½ to 2 hours.
5. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
6. Turn out dough onto prepared pan, and gently pat into a 6-inch circle. Using your elbow or hands, make an indentation in center of dough. Stretch indentation to create a 3½-inch hole in center of dough, folding outside edges of dough circle under as needed to maintain round shape. Loosely cover with a lightly greased piece of plastic wrap, and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until very puffed up, 45 minutes to 1 hour.
7. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).
8. Brush egg yolk all over dough. Using a sharp knife or lame, score dough to create a pound sign/hashtag pattern.
9. Bake until golden brown and an instant-read thermometer inserted near center registers 190°F (88°C), about 20 minutes, covering with foil during final 7 minutes of baking to prevent excess browning. Let cool on pan for 10 minutes. Remove from pan, and let cool on a wire rack for 30 minutes. Best served warm. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days. **D**



*fast-fix baking*

# CARROT CAKE MUFFINS

FOOD AND PROP STYLING BY  
GIOVANNA VAZQUEZ

With roots that can be traced back to medieval Europe, carrot cake is a classic dessert that we love to have every spring when the veggies are at their tender peak. These muffins have the same signature spiced flavor and moist crumb of cake, and they come together with minimal prep. Grab one for breakfast on the go or enjoy with coffee or tea for a sweet afternoon treat.

---

Makes 12 muffins

- 2 cups (250 grams) all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon (15 grams) baking powder
- 1 tablespoon (6 grams) ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg

- 1 cup (200 grams) granulated sugar, plus more for topping
- ¾ cup (168 grams) neutral oil
- ½ cup (110 grams) firmly packed light brown sugar
- ⅓ cup (80 grams) sour cream, room temperature
- ⅓ cup (80 grams) whole milk, room temperature
- 2 large eggs (100 grams), room temperature
- 1 tablespoon (13 grams) vanilla extract
- 2 cups (200 grams) tightly packed finely shredded carrots

1. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C). Line a 12-cup muffin pan with tall paper liners, or lightly spray a 12-cup muffin pan with baking spray with flour. (See Note.)
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, cinnamon, salt, ginger, and nutmeg.

3. In a large bowl, whisk together granulated sugar, oil, brown sugar, sour cream, milk, eggs, and vanilla. Fold in flour mixture just until dry ingredients are moistened. Fold in carrots until combined and no dry streaks remain. Divide batter among prepared muffin cups (about ⅓ cup or 95 grams each). Sprinkle granulated sugar onto batter.
4. Bake for 10 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 350°F (180°C), and bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers at least 205°F (96°C), 20 to 25 minutes more. Let cool in pan for 10 minutes. Remove from pan, and let cool completely on a wire rack. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days. **D**

**Note:** Muffin liners are not necessary, though muffins will bake taller with liners and will spread wider without liners.



## recipe index

### BARS AND COOKIES

Chocolate-Covered Fruit  
Brownies **48**  
Cookies-and-Cream  
Brownies **49**  
Millionaire Brownie Bars **53**  
Palets Bretons **89**  
Peanut Butter-Cream Cheese-  
Swirled Brownies **52**  
Pineapple Upside-Down  
Cookies **75**  
Salted Chocolate-Peanut Butter  
Crinkle Cookies **14**  
Shortbread Cookie Bars **31**  
Strawberry Cheesecake  
Cookies **16**  
Tiramisù Brownies **55**

### BREADS

Carrot Cake Muffins **110**  
Classic Scones **35**  
Gluten-Free Vanilla-Glazed  
Crescent Rolls **20**  
Orange Morning Bun Pull-Apart  
Loaf **21**  
Pogne de Romans **108**

### CAKES

THE Coconut Cake **77**  
Far Breton **85**  
Flourless Chocolate Cake **18**

### DOUGHS

All-Butter Piecrust **12**  
Classic Danish Dough **42**  
Quick Danish Dough **45**  
Rough Puff Pastry Dough **24**  
Yeastd Rough Puff Pastry  
Dough **22**

### GLAZES, SAUCES, AND TOPPINGS

Carrot Top Chimichurri **11**  
Flower Water Syrup **104**  
Pastry Cream **72**  
Vanilla Glaze **20**  
Whipped Mascarpone **55**

### MISCELLANEOUS

Clarified Butter **104**  
Limoncello Spritz **23**

### PASTRIES

Asparagus-and-White Cheddar  
Pastry Bundles **24**  
Baklava Spirals with Homemade  
Phyllo **103**  
Cheese Twists **97**  
Chocolate-Cream Cheese  
Danish Braid **71**  
Cinnamon-Sugar Bites **93**  
Free-Form Morning Buns **97**  
Kouign Amann **85**  
Laminated Brioche Twists **66**  
Mascarpone-Lemon  
Vol-au-Vents **67**  
Pains aux Raisins **89**  
Pastry Cream Danish **70**  
Pastry Jam Sandwiches **94**  
Pigs in a Blanket **96**

### PIES AND TARTS

Coconut Cream Pie **12**  
Mini Apple Tartes Tatin **96**  
Roasted Carrot Galette **11**

### brand standards

**Bake from Scratch uses the following ingredients, equipment, and products in developing and testing all our recipes:**

European-style butter  
Full-fat dairy products  
Diamond Crystal kosher salt  
Conventional-bake ovens  
Instant-read digital thermometers and scales  
KitchenAid Artisan stand mixers  
Williams Sonoma Goldtouch bakeware

Although both weight and volume measurements are included, readers are strongly encouraged to measure by weight.

### Bake from Scratch Official Test Kitchen Partners

BelGioioso® cheeses  
Bob's Red Mill® flours  
Bonne Maman® spreads  
Plugra® European-style butters  
Red Star® yeasts

### Key Temperatures

#### Ingredients

Softened: 61–65°F/16–18°C  
Room temperature: 68–72°F/20–22°C  
Warm: 100–110°F/38–43°C  
Hot: 120–130°F/49–54°C

#### Internal Doneness

Cheesecakes: 150–155°F/65–68°C  
Enriched breads: 190–200°F/88–93°C  
Lean breads: 200–210°F/99–93°C  
Quick breads: 205–210°F/96–98°C  
Cakes: 200–210°F/93–98°C

### Key Measurement Equivalents

1 ml = 1 gram  
8 solid ounces = 227 grams  
8 liquid ounces = 250 ml  
Eggs (1 large) = 50 grams  
Butter: ½ cup = 113 grams  
Milk/heavy cream/sour cream/yogurt:  
1 cup = 240 grams  
Cream cheese: 1 cup/8 ounces = 227 grams  
Flour (all-purpose, cake, whole wheat):  
1 cup = 125 grams  
Flour (bread): 1 cup = 127 grams  
Granulated sugar: 1 cup = 200 grams  
Brown sugar: 1 cup = 220 grams  
Confectioners' sugar: 1 cup = 120 grams  
Baking powder/soda: 1 teaspoon = 5 grams  
Chocolate chips: 1 cup = 170 grams  
Cocoa powder: 1 tablespoon = 5 grams  
Extracts: 1 teaspoon = 4 grams  
Salt (kosher): 1 teaspoon = 3 grams  
Spices (ground): 1 teaspoon = 2 grams

### credits

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Pages 99–104—Photography by Kristin Teig.  
Page 113—Photo by Matthew Septimus.

### corrections

#### JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2026

##### Condensed Milk Cookies, page 18

In step 4, 1½ tablespoons dough will weigh about 28 grams, not 52 grams.

##### Cotton Cheesecake, page 75

Lemon juice in ingredients should be added to egg whites in step 3.

##### Shokupan, page 83

Three (3) grams instant yeast should be added with dry ingredients in step 1.



**bake**  
FROM **scratch**

2026  
**BAKING RETREATS**

**AMALFI COAST  
AND CAPRI, ITALY**  
April 10–16

**PARIS AND NORMANDIE,  
FRANCE**  
April 19–24

**DANUBE RIVER CRUISE**  
May 31–June 7

**MAINE**  
July 26–31  
& August 2–7

**THE COTSWOLDS,  
ENGLAND**  
September 15–22

**JAPAN**  
October 8–18 & 18–28

Holiday Baking in  
**AMSTERDAM,  
THE NETHERLANDS**  
December 5–10

Holiday Baking in  
**LONDON, ENGLAND**  
December 11–16



Join us in the  
**BAKE FROM SCRATCH  
TEST KITCHEN**

Fall Baking in  
**BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA**  
September 25–28

Swedish Holiday Baking  
with Fanny Zanotti in  
**BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA**  
November 6–9

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# My Favorite Piecrust

*That Has Stood the Test  
of Time for Three Decades*

BY ROSE LEVY BERANBAUM



➔ Find Rose on Instagram at @realbakingwithrose and at [realbakingwithrose.com](http://realbakingwithrose.com).

I have made a few updates to it since my favorite piecrust appeared in *The Pie and Pastry Bible* (now in its 12th printing), and I have several new tips to share. I have many pie and tart recipes in the book, but the one I turn to as my standard is the Flaky Cream Cheese and Butter Pie Crust. Of course, for pies or tarts that require refrigeration, I prefer the crumb or cookie (a.k.a. *pâte sucrée*) because it stays tender when cold.

I created this crust because I loved the flavor of the original 1-2-3 (equal parts cream cheese, butter, and flour) crust, perfect for mini tartlets but far too tender and crumbly for larger tarts and pies. By adding water, it strengthened the flour enough to be flaky but was a bit tough, so I then replaced it with heavy cream, which gave it the perfect texture. Then I added vinegar to relax the dough for rolling, which made it possible to transfer lattice strips without tearing. Finally, I added non-aluminum calcium phosphate-based baking powder such as Rumford so it would create tenderness by rising slightly while baking.

The type of flour plays a significant role in the quality of the crust. For years, I only used pastry flour, but because it is not readily available in supermarkets, I started experimenting with all-purpose flour. To my amazement, I discovered that if I added 1 tablespoon/12.5 grams of sugar to either bleached or unbleached all-purpose flour, it had the exact same tenderness as pastry flour and was excellent for a single-crust pie! Because double-crust pies take longer to bake, the slightly higher protein content made it brown faster, so it needed to be tented partway through baking.

I advise refrigerating the crust for 45 minutes before rolling so it is chilled enough but also soft enough to roll without breaking. When lining the pie plate or tart pan, ease it in without stretching to avoid shrinking. And to ensure a crisp crust for a single crust, it is ideal to freeze it overnight and blind-bake it by lining it with parchment and adding pie weights. It's easy to make your own foil ring to protect the

rim and best to add it right from the beginning of baking because it will still brown beneath the foil.

Although I'm known for cakes, I love pies and tarts just as much, and my favorites are fruit filling for their marriage of crisp crust and juicy fruit, and sometimes even a layer of pastry cream. One of my proudest accomplishments is employing the art of reduction for the fruit. I even created Rose's Reduction Spatula, produced by the wonderful, precision-oriented company ThermoWorks. It has little markings that enable you to determine how much you've reduced the liquid. Allowing the fruit to macerate with sugar causes it to release a lot of liquid. By reducing this liquid, the fruit requires far less starch thickener, resulting in a purer flavor and better texture.

You can find my favorite piecrust recipe on my blog at [realbakingwithrose.com](http://realbakingwithrose.com). **D**

➔ Find Rose's Reduction Spatula at [bakefromscratch.com/shoptheissue](http://bakefromscratch.com/shoptheissue).

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