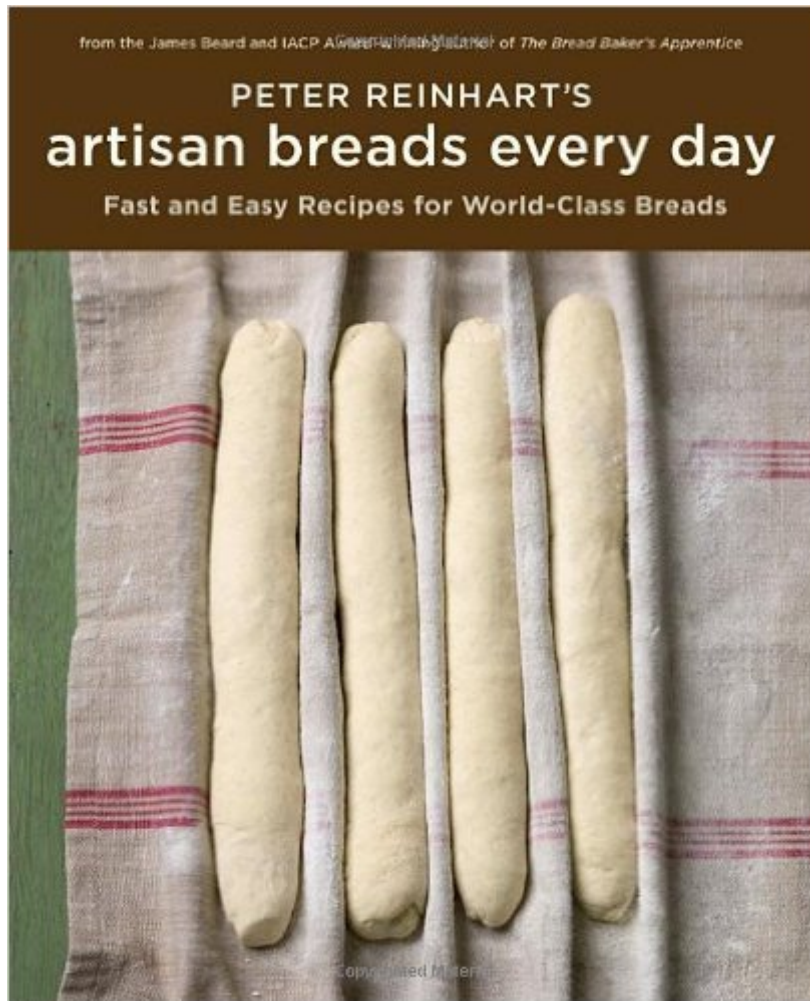


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Peter Reinhart's Artisan Breads Every Day



Synopsis

Peter Reinhart's *Artisan Breads Every Day* distills the renowned baking instructor's professional techniques down to the basics, delivering artisan bread recipes that anyone with flour and a fridge can make and bake with ease. Reinhart begins with the simplest French bread, then moves on to familiar classics such as ciabatta, pizza dough, and soft sandwich loaves, and concludes with fresh specialty items like pretzels, crackers, croissants, and bagels. Each recipe is broken into "Do Ahead" and "On Baking Day" sections, making every step--from preparation through pulling pans from the oven--a breeze, whether you bought your loaf pan yesterday or decades ago. These doughs are engineered to work flawlessly for busy home bakers: most require only a straightforward mixing and overnight fermentation. The result is reliably superior flavor and texture on par with loaves from world-class artisan bakeries--and all with little hands-on time. America's favorite baking instructor and innovator Peter Reinhart offers new time-saving techniques accompanied by full-color, step-by-step photos throughout so that in no time you'll be producing fresh batches of: Sourdough Baguettes • 50% and 100% Whole Wheat Sandwich Loaves • Soft and Crusty Cheese Bread • English Muffins • Cinnamon Buns • Panettone • Hoagie Rolls • Chocolate Cinnamon Babka • Fruit-Filled Thumbprint Rolls • Danish • Best-Ever Biscuits Best of all, these high-caliber doughs improve with a longer stay in the fridge, so you can mix once, then portion, proof, and bake whenever you feel like enjoying a piping hot treat.

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Customer Reviews

First things first. I have been baking bread and pizzas for more than 30 years, and within a few days

of receiving this book, I learned a few things and saw some improvements. Since baking better bread is the only purpose of this book, it ranks as a success. I'd say the book is ideal for either beginners or "experts" like me, as long as you are willing to throw away (or at least forget for a while) everything you know about baking bread. In my years of baking, I learned that you can't freeze dough, yeast likes warm places, and the longer you knead dough, the better. Reinhart has a different opinion, and he seems to be correct.

The Good Points* So far I have made baguettes, sourdough and pizza using recipes and techniques in the book. All turned out excellent. I can now bake "crusty" baguettes on demand, and can produce that micro-thin, slightly stretchy pizza crust in a kitchen 3000 miles from New York (although with slight additions to Peter's recipe).* I always "knew" you couldn't freeze dough, but following Peter's advice, I now regularly freeze dough for pizza, and it turns out great. Combined with premeasured bags of frozen sauce, fresh hot pizza is now a "freezer" item. Awesome, except for my diet.* I learned new techniques for working with dough, and for the most part they seem to work great. The book organizes the basic dough techniques (stretching, proofing, etc) in one section at the front of the book so you can find them easily. (More on this below).*

Subject to some issues described below, the instructions are reasonably easy to follow. They are written in easy-to-understand terms, and Peter avoids the usual pedantic language often found in higher-end cookbooks. Nothing worse than needing a dictionary and a translator to make soup.* Reinhart doesn't try to convince you that you need to go out and buy \$1000 worth of proofing pans, proofing boxes, special cloths, etc. Just use what is in your house already.

The Bad Points (Note first paragraph in review)* The directions can get a bit carried away with themselves. Personally, quantities like 3 3/8 teaspoons of salt drive me nuts. I might breakdown and use an actual measuring spoon instead of a teaspoon, but there is no way I am not going to eyeball the last half teaspoon.* The directions are written in a narrative format rather than a list of items typical in recipes. As a result I will often end up re-reading the whole recipe numerous times just to find the next step. This can be a bit of a pain, because many of the recipes have quite a few steps. Typical will be mix for 2 minutes on low, wait 5 minutes, switch to a dough hook, mix for 3 minutes on medium, wait 5 minutes, fold and stretch dough, wait for 10 minutes in an uncovered bowl, stretch again.... You get the idea. For every step, you will end up re-reading most of the recipe. A little indenting/change of fonts/highlighting/bold/etc in the layout would do wonders for the book.* The directions can get overly detailed, but yet unclear-forcing you to interpret multiple directions to be sure you know exactly what Reinhart meant. Not a real big deal, but something one more round of proofreading should have caught.* Basic techniques such as kneading and proofing are in a separate section of the book, and then referred to by individual recipes. Except when they

are not-some recipes include the details, some refer you to the front of the book. Since the directions are already somewhat bloated and poorly formatted, I'd prefer to just have references to a single section.* At least one of the recipes (sourdough mother starter) has all the quantities in cups, until you get to the final steps when everything is now in grams. I don't have a metric (or even English) scale in my kitchen.* Some of the steps are explained in agonizing detail, and then some are skipped over. It takes 5 pages to explain how to make the sourdough starter, but then the "how to refresh the starter dough process" is skipped over. List the quantities of old starter, flour and water (see above), but then makes no mention of what to do with it- proof at room temp? immediately return to the refrigerator? How long does it need to refresh? Mom always taught me that you can't really measure flour-you have to add it to the dough as needed. The reason for this is that flour can have a vastly different moisture content, so what works once might yield overly tacky/dry dough the next time. Reinhart doesn't seem to subscribe to this theory, at least not in all his recipes. After mixing up a batch of the gooiest pizza dough on the planet, I'd say Mom was right.* Some of the baking times listed are suspect. I suspect they are worse case time for very large loafs, not typical times for baguette sized creations. Caveat baker.* None of the recipes I have tried so far are for anyone in a hurry. Every recipe so far has taken days to complete. Not a negative...yeast will be yeast. Just something to be aware of.Overall:A great guide to breadbaking-both for specific recipes and learning to update your artisan skills. I learned a lot from it, and have made a number of items, all of them unqualified successes. If you are looking to whip up a batch of bread as quickly as your bread machine, this is not your book. If you want to spend a few days working with yeast to get a baguette worthy of Paris (OK, maybe New York), this is your book.

I was a tester for this book. I tested all of its recipes and almost all of the variations. This book is perfect for either a complete novice or an accomplished baker. It is written in a straight-forward, down to earth manner and has great pictures illustrating all the techniques, various stages, and final products. Even though I am an accomplished baker, I learned a lot of new techniques from the information contained in this book that either improved and or simplified my bread making. All of the recipes work. There is not one dud in the entire book! The recipes run the gamut from lean relatively simple breads, e.g., basic baguettes, to more complex products, e.g., croissants. If I could only own one of Peter Reinhart's books this is the one I would choose. There is a lifetime of baking in this book.

I have been baking bread as a hobby for a little over 2 years. I have always been fascinated with baking bread but I never found a satisfactory resource until I found Peter Reinhart's "Bread Baker's Apprentice." This was a great resource as Peter is a very skilled teacher and conveyor of information. I also purchased a copy of Peter's "Whole Grain Bread's" and was equally excited by the bread baking techniques that he shares. Also, you can see an evolution in the baking style between the two books as the author seems to learn from each publication. I purchased this newest book yesterday, and after reading through it I can see that he has continued to learn and I really appreciate the techniques used in this book as they are even easier to perform, and easier to understand, than the first two books. This book is great for people just getting into bread baking as it contains many of the same fundamental styles of bread found in Peter's other books. However, if you already own Peter's previous publications do not let that deter you from purchasing this one as there are new techniques and formula's for different breads. I am especially looking forward to trying the formulas in the section on Cheese bread, as well as the onion and wild rice bread. The techniques presented in this book are simpler, and more straightforward than previous ones as the formulas are streamlined so that the use of a separate pre-fermented dough is not necessary. Also, these recipes, although still requiring at least two days, take less hands-on time to make. I am very excited to try the breads presented in this book, and I would highly recommend anyone who enjoys baking bread to purchase this exciting new work from Peter Reinhart.

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