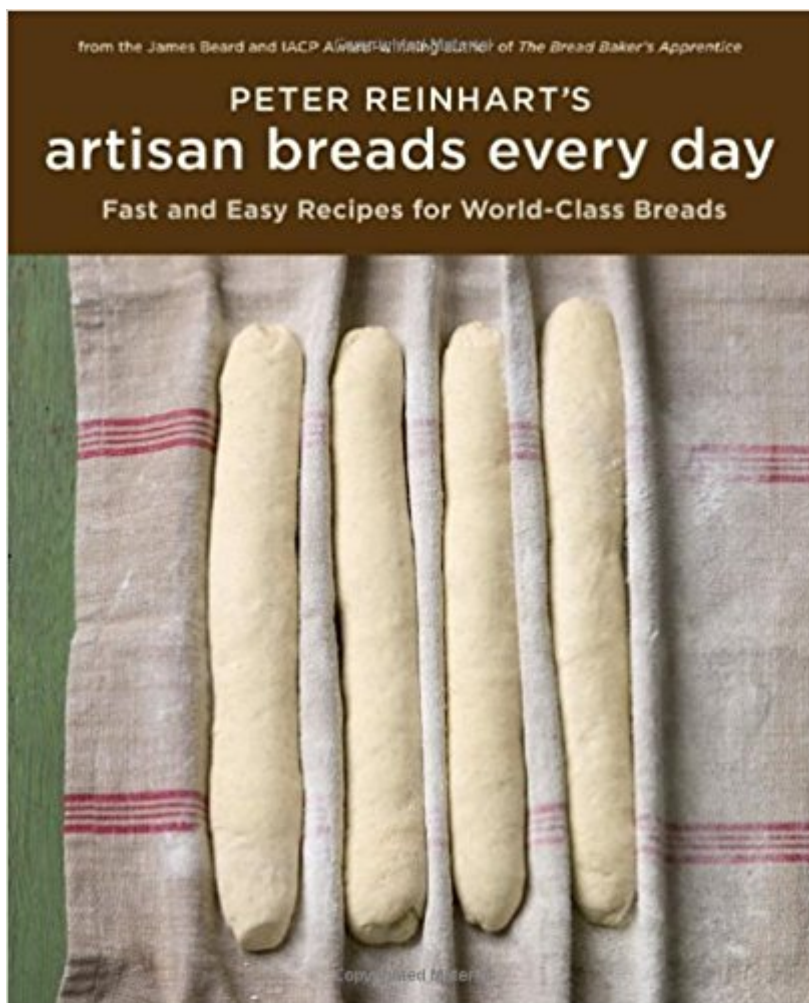


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Peter Reinhart's Artisan Breads Every Day



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, 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, and 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

With "no-knead" bread recipes all the rage now, expert baker Reinhart (*Whole Grain Breads*) has

come back with a process that is slightly more involved but much more productive than the limited classic no-knead method, yielding all manner of sweet, savory and sandwich breads. He introduces a "stretch and fold" technique that, combined with a slow rise and without the lengthy prefermentation that his and other artisan bakers' recipes usually require, means more freedom and less active work time, but still a very flavorful product. To make French baguettes, for example, only one brief knead is required; then, after an overnight or multiday rise, the dough is ready for shaping—much better than being shackled to the kitchen for an entire morning for multiple rises, as is usually the case in baguette making. Other great breads, such as focaccia, soft cheese bread and even panettone, get similar preparation makeovers. Reinhart occasionally calls for a starter, but his carefully constructed, nonintimidating mother starter method should encourage the wary. For bakers who have come to bread through the no-knead route, Reinhart's thorough, detailed recipes offer a perfect way to expand their repertoire without getting their hands too sticky or giving up too much of their time, while those who are already fans will appreciate having a little more room in their schedule while still producing terrific breads. (Nov.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

—Peter Reinhart is the Leonardo da Vinci of bread; his recipes are foolproof, his research exhaustive and yet a delight to read and follow, and his hunger for knowledge and technique is boundless and infinite. He is without a doubt the definitive source of true style and information when it comes to all things baked and delicious, and my go-to guy for all things leavened and sandwichable—
—Mario Batali, author of *Molto Italiano*—I've been using Peter's overnight pizza dough technique religiously for years—mix, knead, chill overnight, shape, bake. So simple, and minimal planning is required. In this book, many of the recipes use a similar approach—no poolish or pre-fermenting. From pain au levain and pretzels to panettone and pizza dough, all the greatest hits and every day favorites are covered.
—Heidi Swanson, author of *Super Natural Cooking*—Peter Reinhart's thoughtful, steady presence combined with his matchless teaching skills and down-to-earth approach make reading and using *Artisan Breads Every Day* a great pleasure. His information demystifying the preparation and use of sourdough starters is both much needed and superb.
—Nancy Baggett, author of *Kneadlessly Simple: Fabulous, Fuss-Free, No-Knead Breads*—For most cooks, artisan bread baking is close to metaphysics. And each succeeding book about it only tends to deepen the mysteries and make trying it even more unlikely. Peter Reinhart's *Artisan Breads Every Day* is one of the first books of its kind that actually made me want to stop reading and start baking.
—Russ Parsons, author of *How to Peel a Peach*

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.

On the first few weeks I read carefully the first few chapters, where the author explains in simple words the terms and methods later to be used in the book.When I started making bread according to the instructions, I found the recipes amazingly accurate and tasty too.My family is very happy, every weekend I am spoiling them with a new kind of bread.Till now I baked 5 different recipes (Lean bread, French bread, Biscuit, Cracker, Baguette) and planning to bake the Bagels soon.The only downside that I found till now is the vast usage of "Mother Starter" in the book and the lack of an alternative to it - since it takes lots of time to produce such "Mother Starter" I avoided it till now.Its not that I am new to baking, but the simplicity of the book and the very detailed description of every

step or dough condition makes it very friendly to use. Attached are some photos :-)

I love this book. So far I've tried 4 of the recipes in the book and they all turned out very well for a first attempt (knowing that I wasn't perfect in my execution). The recipes are simple and easy for the novice, but have enough nuances that I know it will take me a while to master. I chose this iteration of his recipe books because it contained all of the recipes I wanted - french breads, bagels, pretzels, and rolls. My complaint is the format of the book. 1.) The table of contents doesn't include the recipes. Seriously? If I want to know the location of the recipes I need to go to the glossary. The only way to know all the book contains is to flip through it. This is my biggest complaint. 2.) All of the recipes are in paragraph format. This isn't as bad as some people make it seem, but it can be annoying when you are getting specific measurements. 3.) He got a little lazy sometimes when he references other parts of the book. For instance, when I made rolls, there was a small excerpt that told you how to alter the recipe to make rolls. There were three different roll recipes in the excerpt and they all referenced different parts of the book to finish up (no biggie yet). The difficult part is when the one recipe said "bake according to the recipe." Which one? The one of this page, the one for the bread that we altered, or the one that you referenced 80 pages earlier? One more sentence and it would have been much clearer. All in all, I'm very happy with the book - I just wish that they didn't get lazy in parts and just wrote things out - like a table of contents.

I highly recommend this book for anyone who wants to learn to make artisan bread at home. The recipes are a minimal amount of work and yield amazingly good bread. I have had this book for less than two months, and have only made the baguettes, ciabatta, classic bread, and lean bread so far. But I have made each of those multiple times, especially the baguettes. Many people for whom I have made this bread have raved about it. It does require some basic equipment, such as parchment paper, a pizza stone (but you could use a cookie sheet instead), and a cast iron skillet (though you could also use another cookie sheet instead), and preferably a pizza peel. I had all this stuff on hand already. I do not buy bread anymore, I make it myself. This book is a must-have and in my opinion the best starting point. I also bought Bread Baker's Apprentice and am anxious to try some of those recipes, which tend to be slightly more involved from my surface reading.

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