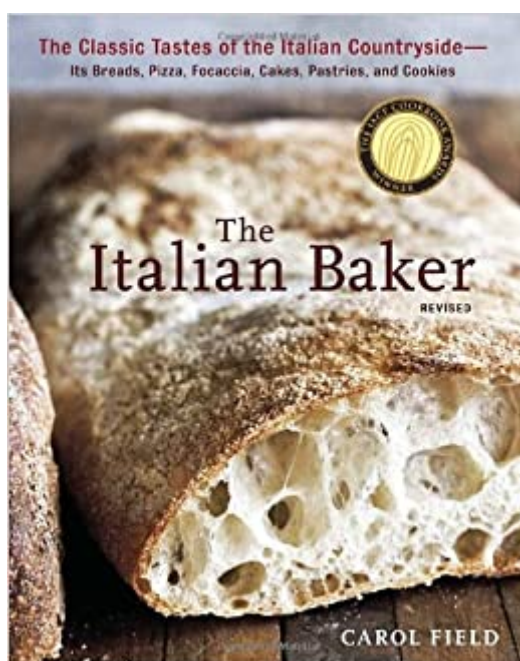




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The Italian Baker, Revised: The Classic Tastes Of The Italian Countryside--Its Breads, Pizza, Focaccia, Cakes, Pastries, And Cookies



Synopsis

Who can resist bruschetta rubbed with garlic and drizzled with olive oil, almond-studded biscotti dipped in coffee or wine, and, of course, a thin-crust pizza with fresh, sweet tomatoes and tangy mozzarella? These Italian classics that Americans know and love are just the beginning; there are a wealth of other equally delicious breads and sweets waiting to be discovered. In this groundbreaking classic—now thoroughly updated for today's modern kitchen—Carol Field introduces artisanal doughs and techniques used by generations of Italian bakers. Every city and hill town has its own unique baking traditions, and Field spent more than two years traversing Italy to capture the regional and local specialties, adapting them through rigorous testing in her own kitchen. Field's authentic recipes are a revelation for anyone seeking the true Italian experience. Here's a chance to make golden Altamura bread from Puglia, chewy porous loaves from Como, rosemary bread sprinkled with coarse sea salt, dark ryes from the north, simple breads studded with toasted walnuts, succulent fig bread, and Sicilian loaves topped with sesame seeds. The Italian Baker is the only comprehensive book, in English or Italian, to cover the entire range of Italian baking, from breadsticks and cornetti to focaccia, tarts, cakes, and pastries. There is even a chapter on using leftover bread—with recipes ranging from hearty Tuscan bread soup to a cinnamon and lemon-scented bread pudding. Winner of the International Association of Culinary Professionals Award for best baking book, The Italian Baker was also named to the James Beard Baker's Dozen list of thirteen indispensable baking books of all time. It has inspired countless professionals and home cooks alike. This latest edition, updated for a new generation of home bakers, has added four-color photography throughout, plus new recipes, ingredients and equipment sections, source guides, and weights. One of the most revered baking books of all time, The Italian Baker is a landmark work that continues to be a must for every serious baker.

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Sample Recipe from The Italian Baker, Revised: Torta di Pere Pear Tart Makes one 8 1/2-inch tart; 8 servings

Dough 1 stick plus 2 1/2 tablespoons (5.3 oz / 150 g) unsalted butter, at room temperature (cold if using a food processor) 3/4 cup (5.3 oz / 150 g) sugar 3 large egg yolks About 1 1/2 cups minus one tablespoon (7 oz / 200 g) all-purpose flour 3/4 cup plus 1 tablespoon (3.5 oz / 100 g) fine yellow cornmeal, preferably organic 1 teaspoon (0.2 oz / 5 g) salt

By Hand Cream the butter and sugar in a mixing bowl with a wooden spoon until well blended. Add the egg yolks, one at a time, mixing thoroughly after each addition. Sift the flour, cornmeal, and salt over the mixture and stir just until the dough comes together. Knead lightly on a floured surface until the dough is no longer sticky.

By Mixer Cream the butter and sugar with the paddle until well blended, 1 to 2 minutes. Add the egg yolks, one at a time, beating thoroughly after each addition. Sift in the flour, cornmeal, and salt, and mix at low speed; continue mixing until the dough comes together. Knead lightly on a floured surface until the dough is no longer sticky.

By Processor Place the flour, cornmeal, salt, and sugar in a food processor fitted with the steel blade. Cut the cold butter into small pieces and scatter over the flour. Process with three or four pulses until the mixture resembles coarse meal. Beat the egg yolks lightly. With the machine running, pour the egg yolks in a steady stream through the feed tube and process just until the dough comes together. You may need to add a little ice-cold water. Stop the machine as soon as the dough masses on top of the blade. Overprocessing will make a tough dough.

Chilling. Gather the dough into a ball, wrap it with plastic wrap, and refrigerate for 20 minutes to 1 hour.

Filling 2 cups (1 lb / 450 g) full-bodied red wine; a Barolo or cabernet sauvignon would be perfect 1/4 cup (1.8 oz / 50 g) sugar 3 whole cloves 3 thin strips lemon zest 3/4 to 1 teaspoon (0.06 to 0.1 oz / 2 to 2.5 g) ground cinnamon Cornmeal or finely ground cookie or cake crumbs, for sprinkling (optional) 3 large peeled cooking pears (2 lb / 900 g, weighed after peeling), cut into fat slices and then cut crosswise in half 1 large egg, beaten, for the egg wash

Heat the wine, sugar, cloves, lemon zest, and cinnamon to a boil in a nonreactive saucepan. Gently boil until reduced to 1 1/2 cups, about 15 minutes. Stir in the pears and cook over medium heat until tender, 15 to 20 minutes. Strain the pears; discard the cloves, lemon peel, and cooking liquid. Cool to room temperature.

Shaping. Cut the dough in half and return half to the

refrigerator. This is a very delicate dough. Lightly sprinkle flour on your work surface and then lay one or two pieces of plastic wrap on it. Put the dough on the plastic wrap and cover it with a second layer of plastic wrap. This protects the dough as you roll it with your rolling pin into a circle 1/4 inch thick. Butter an 8 1/2-inch tart pan very thoroughly. Remove the top layer of plastic, gently lift the dough up by the bottom piece of plastic wrap, and then carefully invert it into the prepared pan before removing the remaining plastic wrap. Trim the edge. Build up the edge of the bottom pastry with the trimmings rolled into one or two coils and flattened onto the edge, so that the edge is substantial enough for the top pastry to be attached. Filling and Top Crust. I sometimes sprinkle a very little cornmeal or cookie or cake crumbs on the bottom of the tart shell to soak up the juices from the pears. Spoon the drained pears into the tart shell. Again using plastic wrap, roll out the remaining dough into a 1/4-inch-thick circle and place over the pan. Trim the overhanging dough, press the two edges together, and crimp decoratively. Lightly brush the pastry with the beaten egg. Baking. Preheat the oven to 375° F. Bake until golden, 40 minutes. Cool on a rack. Serve warm or at room temperature.

“A solid collection of traditional Italian baked goods—an authentic and trusted title.”—Publishers Weekly, 8/15/11
“Carol Field’s *The Italian Baker* is the one bread book I see in nearly everyone’s collection, whether an experienced or amateur baker. It not only is full of timeless, classic recipes, but also takes you deep into the mind and heart of the Italian spirit.”—Peter Reinhart, author of *The Bread Baker’s Apprentice* and *Peter Reinhart’s Artisan Breads Every Day*
“The Italian Baker” was incredibly influential in its first iteration and this revised version is even better. Carol has taken the volume to another level in both deliciousness and simple techniques. It is truly the definitive work on Italian bread baking and pastry for our time.”—Mario Batali, author and restaurateur
“A classic, beautifully researched and considered book that keeps Italy’s traditions of bread-making alive. I love how it is peppered with astute observations and stories of Carol Field’s experiences in Italy, inspiring skilled bakers and novice enthusiasts alike.”—Alice Waters, chef, author, and proprietor of Chez Panisse
“The Italian Baker” has always been one of my all-time favorite baking books, and no one is happier than I am to see this brand-new edition, introducing Carol Field’s classic collection of rustic breads, desserts, and biscotti to a whole new generation of cooks. If you’re looking to capture the authentic flavors of Italian baking in your own kitchen, there’s absolutely no better guidebook than *The Italian Baker*.”—David Lebovitz, author

of *Ready for Dessert* and *The Great Book of Chocolate*—“Bread bakers rejoice! There’s nothing like chewy, flavorful home-baked bread and thanks to Carol Field’s inspiring recipes in this updated edition of her top-selling classic, the timeless art of bread baking will become more popular than ever.”

•Flo Braker, author of *The Simple Art of Perfect Baking* and *Baking for All Occasions*—“Anyone who has bitten into a ciabatta or an airy, full-of-flavor loaf with a bit of tang and a wonderfully dark crust, or mixed bread dough going by the wetter-the-better rule, has Carol Field to thank. She not only introduced the miraculous variety of Italian breads to Americans, but she also changed the way we think of bread—and the way we make it. No one who loves bread can be without this book. *The Italian Baker* shows that classics stay classics for a reason.”

•Corby Kummer, senior editor at the *Atlantic Monthly* and author of *The Pleasures of Slow Food*—“The original edition of *The Italian Baker* has been one of my culinary bibles ever since it was published in 1985. It is now splattered with stains and floury to the touch. Pasta Maddalena I noted was “perfect,” while the Torta Primavera, “excellent,” and so on. The crusty, chewy Pugliese bread, wickedly rich savory croissant dough, the delicate spongy little panini dolci have become constant staples in my kitchen. So celebrate with Carol Field the ‘second coming’ of this great book.”

•Diana Kennedy, author of *The Essential Cuisines of Mexico*—“Bravo to Ten Speed and Carol Field for updating and reissuing this absolute treasure of Italian baking. The fact that these recipes so thoroughly cover so many baked regional specialties, such as bread, cookies, tarts and torts, savory dishes, pizza, and foccacia makes it a must-own volume for any serious home cook and baker.”

•Joe Ortiz, author of *The Village Baker* and coauthor of *The Village Baker’s Wife*—“The *Italian Baker* opened my eyes to an exciting new world of baking. It, along with Carol’s early advice and encouragement, became the inspiration for adding hearth baked breads to our line-up at the original Grand Central Bakery in Seattle. *The Italian Baker* was a trove of information then and remains so today. This new edition, updated, reformatted, and full of delicious color photography, has me inspired all over again!”

•Gwen Bassetti, founder of The Grand Central Baking Company—“I’m thrilled to have this handsome new, updated edition, with wonderfully informative photos that show not just what the breads look like but also what goes into the process of creating them. *The Italian Baker* is a treasure—not just for chefs but for anyone fascinated by the baker’s art, for anyone beguiled by Italian food, for anyone who

simply loves to cook good honest food. • Nancy Harmon Jenkins, author of *The New Mediterranean Cookbook* "Evviva! *The Italian Baker* lives again! For 25 years Carol Field's classic has been my inseparable and invaluable guide to the world of Italian breads and pastries, furnishing the best introduction to baking in general of any book I know. Younger generations will now be able to find the same comfort and counsel, thanks to this splendid new edition. • Mary Taylor Simeti, author of *Pomp and Sustenance* "That an English-language book on something as essential as Italian bread could become the standard text in Italy, as the previous version did, says almost all you need to know -- except that this revised edition is even better. Anyone who really, truly cares about Italy must read *The Italian Baker*. • Fred Plotkin, author of *Italy for the Gourmet Traveler*

At first I was hesitant to order the new addition since I have a well worn first edition but I'm glad I did. The recent edition has wonderful pictures instead of drawings, the paper is top quality and weights are given for all ingredients in the recipes. No more me converting cups to grams! There are a few changes but none affect the recipes and instructions. For example, the introduction is missing the page and a half of Italian expressions about bread.

Nonna was from the old country and did her baking from scratch. Regretfully at my age I didn't think to write the recipes down with amounts. This hit the mark of her baking. Thanks for the memories.

You will be amazed when you make Pane di Como. My Nissan sales manager trades me version for bread I make from the recipes in this book. Directions are clear, measurements are precise, spelled out for hand, food processor, or stand mixer. Pretty much fool proof.

I purchased the original book several years ago and loved it very much. I just recently purchased the new version that just came out. Although the new version doesn't have that many pictures, but then I can always go back to the original book to see what the bread/pastry look like since the old version contained line drawings of each baked goods. I am not suggesting that you should buy 2 versions of the book, but in my personal opinion, I still like the original book more. Just because the book doesn't contain alot of pictures doesn't mean that the final products is tasteless. I always baked with good result and tasty bread, pastries and cookies from the book. There is not that much changes between the 2 books. I don't regret buying the new book since there is some new

information. Happy baking!!

BEAUTIFUL book; especially if you are a baker or would be baker!

Taught me a lot about bread- making that I did not know. I would recommend this book because it gives you some secrets to making some of the best bread at home. So far all the recipes I tried, the breads came out crispy on top and soft , chewy and tasty on the inside. Very interesting too about her history and research on the breads.

I usually try to be very open-minded when a cookbook doesn't have as many pics as I'd like. I tell myself that this recipe or that recipe really doesn't need a visual. But this book has such a rich array of new breads (to me anyway) that I wish there were pics to illustrate them as I am at a loss to imagine what they might look like. That deflates the balloon to get one started many times. There is a chapter in back about baked sweets (dolci) which includes biscotti, tarts, etc., then there's a section on lots of pizzas including thick Sicilian style, soups too, but for me this book was all about the breads. I have pages tagged for Olive Oil Bread, Sicilian Bread, Rosemary Bread, Five Grain Bread with walnuts, Raisin Bread, Sweet Corn Bread, Christmas Bread of Lake Como, Venetian Holiday Bread, Christmas Bread of Verona, etc...except for a few of these listed examples, I have no idea what the others should look like. The only way you would delve into an unknown bread is by first reading the title, then the opening blurb, then reading thru the ingredient list and then the step by step instructions. Unless you are a very passionate and motivated cook or baker, you will be put off by this. A picture as they say is worth a thousand words. Here it is so true. A picture can inspire and motivate you in an instant, especially with breads that are not commonplace. When spring approaches, I will delve into the Easter breads. What I DO like very much in the layout is the way each recipe allows you to use the method of choice. For each recipe, there are three separate clearly labelled areas to find your preferred method of creating your dough: BY HAND, BY MIXER, or BY PROCESSOR. Choose the method most comfortable to you. Then each process step is clearly italicized into sections as well with: FIRST RISE, SHAPING AND SECOND RISE, and finally, BAKING. It allows your eye to find what you're looking for quickly on the page. I also am glad that measurements are listed in cups, ounces, and grams. These recipes use active yeast exclusively, and since I use instant yeast, a formula on p. 22 says to multiply the amt. of active yeast by 0.75-thus, using less instant yeast to active. I found this out after the fact, it helps to read. It didn't hurt the outcome I must say, using equal amts. UPDATE: The 5-grain w/walnut bread bakes in a 9x4

loaf pan, very good. The Sweet Corn Bread and the Corn Bread from Lombardy I was not impressed with, would not make again. I wanted to make the panettone but it was more complicated than the recipe in Artisan Bread in 5 mins, due to lack of time the necessity was to go with that one. I have other breads to try after the holidays. UPDATE Jan 2012: Made the "pane all'uva" (raisin bread), so easy, great dough to handle, wonderful result! Soft, tender, pillowy interior, crispy crust, loaded with raisins, addictive, yum. Interestingly, that recipe was one that DID have a picture and pulled me in...which goes to my point....pictures DO help! The raisin bread and another I just made, the Bread of Puglia, are my faves so far. The Pane di Genzano was good, not a wow. After that raisin bread, I'm afraid I will not find anything as good.

Great resource for home bakers who want authentic flavor in breads and baked items.

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