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The Art Of French Pastry



Synopsis

Winner of the 2014 James Beard Award for Best Cookbook, Dessert & BakingWhat does it take to perfect a flawless choux? A delicate yet buttery croissant? To pipe dozens of macarons? The answer is: an intimate knowledge of the fundamentals of pastry. In The Art of French Pastry award-winning pastry chef Jacquy Pfeiffer, cofounder of the renowned French Pastry School in Chicago, gives you just that. By teaching you how to make everything from choux to pastry cream, Pfeiffer builds on the basics until you have an understanding of the science behind the ingredients used, how they interact with one another, and what your hands have to do to transform them into pastry. This yields glorious results! Expect to master these techniques and then indulge in exquisite recipes, such as:

- napoléons / Mille-Feuilles
- cream puffs
- Alsatian cinnamon rolls / chinois
- lemon cream tart with meringue teardrops
- elephant ears / palmiers
- black forest cake
- beignets as well as some traditional Alsatian savory treats, including:
- Pretzels
- Kougelhof
- Tarte Flambée
- Warm Alsatian Meat Pie

Pastry is all about precision, so Pfeiffer presents us with an amazing wealth of information—lists of necessary equipment, charts on how ingredients react in different environments, and the precise weight of ingredients in grams, with a look at their equivalent in U.S. units—which will help you in all aspects of your cooking. But in order to properly enjoy your “just desserts,” so to speak; you will also learn where these delicacies originated. Jacquy Pfeiffer comes from a long line of pastry chefs and has been making these recipes since he was a child working in his father’s bakery in Alsace. Sprinkled with funny, charming memories from a lifetime in pastry, this book will have you fully appreciating the hundreds of years of tradition that shaped these recipes into the classics that we know and love, and can now serve to our friends and families over and over again. The Art of French Pastry, a full of gorgeous photography and Pfeiffer’s accompanying illustrations, is a master class in pastry from a master teacher.

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Customer Reviews

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Starred Review Nowhere else do chemistry, physics, and aesthetics combine so elegantly and tastily as in the hands of a great pastry chef. Alsatian-born Pfeiffer now teaches a demanding Chicago culinary program, and his years of experience with classic French baking have come together in a volume that's the next best thing to actually learning directly from the master's hands. Rigorously detailed instructions transmit essential techniques for producing not only pastry itself but also concocting custard creams, jams, fillings, sauces, icings, and glazes. Both photographs and graphics show how ingredients come together for each individual creation. Some of the book's most valuable information appears in sidebars. Here Pfeiffer reveals tricks of the trade and secrets that mere ingredient lists never fully explain, such as how a day's humidity level can affect a particular pastry's success or failure. Anyone studying to be a professional baker will profit from Pfeiffer's guidance, and the amateur cook can vastly improve family desserts. --Mark Knoblauch

This is an absolutely fantastic book on the fine art of French pastry! Chef Pfeiffer gives the reader all the tips and tricks necessary to turn out very fine pastries. As well, he weaves in little stories of his own life as a pastry chef that elevate this book above the basic pastry texts. The stories are the hidden gems in the book! Do not be dismayed that this book seems a little technical. The science presented is in fact very basic and easy to understand, but it is completely necessary in order to

achieve consistency and to avoid mistakes. As an example, all recipes have ingredients scaled by weight. Finally, a pastry text that drives home the need for proper scaling! No more cups, teaspoons, etc. Far too many baking books still use flour measured in volume with no explanation of the exact technique, the result being unreproducible results or a failed recipe. Not so this text!! I consider myself a pastry hobbyist. I am not an expert and I do not bake every day. However, when I do bake I want consistent results. To that end I have taken a fair number of pastry classes. This book is the next best thing to taking a class from a master. And the best thing about this master is that he knows his audience, because he's taught pastry novices for years. He already knows your potential mistakes and points them out before you make them! So do yourself a favor. If you enjoy French pastries and you want to improve your technique, then buy this book! It is the only book on French pastry that you will ever need.

I checked this book out at least four times from the library. Not only is the instruction excellent (as the other reviewers have noticed) but the recipes included are well chosen and interesting. You'll find the classics here like croissants, classics you didn't know were classics like croquembouche, and you'll find a great selection of interesting cookies like cinnamon stars and citrus mirrors. This is a good book worth purchasing.

I should start by saying I LOVE cookbooks with as much detail as possible. This book is a great example of just that. This book gives the home baker the perfect amount of information to learn the true process behind the tradition of french pastry. I am a pretty experienced home baker, and this book helped me to master tempering chocolate, which I had previously attempted many times. There is so much advice given about ingredients, equipment, and the procedure that it is hard to go wrong. I will say that a lot of the recipes require a big time commitment compared to the average Food Network dessert recipe, but I am excited about the opportunity to take on something a little more complicated and have it come out right!

I recently bought this book and love that unlike most pastry cook books, it has tips and reference photos. As a home baker, I've been a little intimidated by french pastry and love that this book "holds my hand" in a sense that it gives you so much information. The reference photos are great for when I need to know what consistency the batter should be, how to properly hold a piping bag when piping choux pastry and other little tips and tricks. It's also nice that it reads like a biography as well. While I have yet to move past the fundamentals (chapter 1), I think this would be great

addition for any baker's culinary arsenal.

favorite pastry book by far!!! My shipment arrived on time and in great condition. Once I began to read through the book, I could not put it down. It is a fountain of knowledge whether you are looking to learn about the fundamentals of french pastries and for those already experienced in baking who wish to fine tune their skills with advice from a master. You will appreciate the fine illustrations and well shot photographs as well as the wonderful tips and side notes. I found the step-by-step instructions and the explanations of how each ingredient contributes to the finished product's taste and appearance easy to understand! As a bonus feature, each recipe also contains information on how to store your items to preserve freshness and flavor. My library contains over 125 culinary books and this one is by far one of the best written and well thought out from the pack. I hope there will be a volume 2!

Great book on making the art of French pastries. Great book with pictures and easy to read writing style of author. Excellent on additional information on buying and using best ingredients. Also learn from Chapter 1 because these are the fundamentals, then master them and move on to the next chapters. I was deeply engaged making puff pastry, cream anglaise and detrempe (making croissants and chocolate croissants). Learning Chapter 1 recipes take time and patience. And practice makes perfect. There are even pictures and paragraphs explaining how to pipe pastries, macarons and other fillings and frost your pastries like a pro pastry chef. Excellent book to invest, all you need is desire, passion, patience and perseverance to learn "The Art of French Pastry". Even a home baker can do this. After a year buying a Kindle version of this book, i bought the hard copy and have tried the recipes on this book. Everything here is amazing. this is a book for the adventurous home cooks who want to learn the art of making French pastries, especially in the region of Alsace. The author is a respected teacher all over the world and his stories, passion and his recipes speaks for itself. It offers the readers delight and also the know-how and some tips and secrets of achieving these delicious morsels. So far, I have tried many recipes in this book by going through the pastry fundamentals, and moving on to what I want to make on the succeeding pastries like tarts, cookies, cakes and the last chapter. all of my friends, family and co-workers tell me these are fantastic. Some of the pastries that I have tried were memorable from my earlier years in Hong Kong where my dad's expat friends would bring sweets and gifts when he host parties. But anyway, I highly recommend this book if you want to learn the Art of French Pastry by Jacqy Pfeiffer.

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