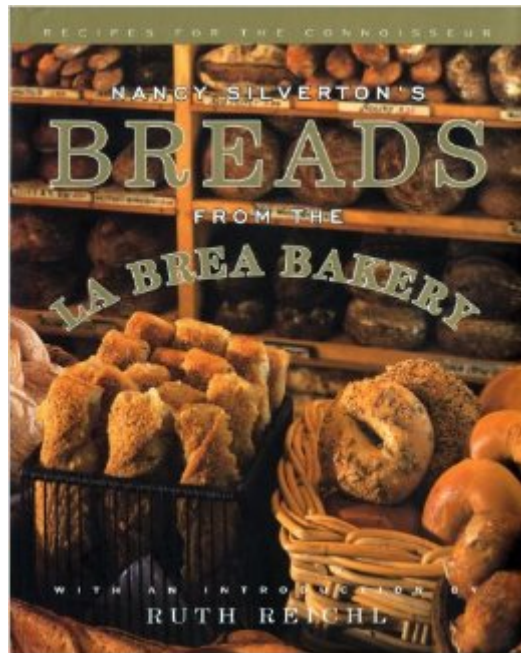


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Nancy Silverton's Breads From The La Brea Bakery: Recipes For The Connoisseur



Synopsis

The owner and chef of L.A.'s famous and successful La Brea Bakery reveals her magical recipes, adapted for home bakers. Before the baking even begins, Silverton takes the reader through the wonder of bread alchemy, then introduces readers to a wide range of recipes which range from the whimsical to the sublime. 25 photos.

Book Information

Hardcover: 288 pages

Publisher: Villard; 1st edition (March 5, 1996)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0679409076

ISBN-13: 978-0679409076

Product Dimensions: 7.6 x 1.1 x 9.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.8 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (122 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #42,093 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #13 in [Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Regional & International > U.S. Regional > California](#) #44 in [Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Baking > Bread](#)

Customer Reviews

I have been a fan of the La Brea Bakery's bread for many years. I have tried many bread recipes at home, but none compare to Nancy Silverton's recipes from her La Brea Bakery. Many will say that this book is not for beginning bread bakers. This is probably true. I believe you should try baking with commercial "instant" or "Active" yeast before you try her methods. All her bread is made with a natural sourdough starter that takes two weeks to create, and requires daily feeding. The result is the best bread on earth. It is a lot of work. I end up baking more than I can eat, but my friends and family benefit from this. The recipes in this book take time: In most cases two days before a loaf is completed. It is worth it. Just schedule your time around the dough rising periods.

This is an excellent book for those who wish to pursue baking bread armed with technical and practical information in addition to their own yeast starters. I have yet to encounter a book that provides so much information on the making of bread and using of natural yeast starters. This is not a book for those who expect to do quick breads. For the person who wants to know how to make artisan breads at home this book is for you. The use of starter yeasts is extensive covering white,

rye, and wheat. The only other book that gives you more information about "creating" starters and sourdough is World Sourdoughs From Antiquity. The design of the book is pretty simple. Description of ingredients in detail; tools used; yeasts, starters and sourdoughs; recipes which are broken down by which type of starter used. The recipes themselves are broken into multi-day sections so that the process is more clear. Example would be the challah which is a 2 day bread. The steps themselves don't take that long but you learn the value of planning. In essence to get something close to your favorite artisan bread you must spend time and a certain amount of patience. This book is quite honest about that and does not use shortcuts at the expense of the quality. But what about the bread? It is good. Sometimes not as picture perfect but even the "failures" have been tasty. A must for the baker's library. A wealth of information and interesting recipes too. Not bad for a book that is 251 pages (not counting sources and index).

This book is an unbelievable text for the already experienced bread baker who wants to take his/her skills to another level. Ms. Silverton is arguably the country's greatest baker, and it is her obsession with baking the perfect loaf of bread that permeates this text (note the 20+ pages of instructions for the first loaf in the book). She has spent an exhausting amount of time working out the minute details of each recipe, right down to the exact temperature of the ingredients, in order to create beautiful and flavorful loaves. As a result, this book is definitely not for the beginner, nor is it for the quick baker looking for some easy recipes to make in a few hours. The quickest bread in this book takes two days to make, and many breads require three days. If you are obsessed with baking (as am I) and want to elevate your skills tremendously, then definitely buy this beautiful and easy-to-read book. If you're a beginner baker or someone just looking for some quick recipes for dinner, don't purchase this paean to the perfect loaf.

Like Diogenes, you have been searching the four corners of the world for a book that will tell you how to make real sourdough bread at home. Well, set down your lantern and rest your weary bones, because you have finally found it. Nancy Silverton became famous for the sourdough bread that she makes at her bakery, and this book will tell you in excruciating detail how she does it. Few things are as wonderful as good sourdough, and few things are as elusive as sourdough recipes in bread books. Few will even acknowledge the presence of sourdough; fewer still will mention words like levain, chef, starter, or poolish. The number of baking books that will give you real recipes for them can be counted on one hand. This book is a complete tutorial on sourdough bread from start to finish. The first recipe in the book for a basic white bread takes an astonishing 30 pages: 10 to tell

you how to make your own starter, and another 20 to tell you how to make the dough and bake it. The author is a stickler for detail; the thoroughness in the recipes can be irritating. It also means that your chances of success are very high; all of the breads I tried worked perfectly, even the more difficult ones based on rye. Each recipe has a rather long (and very complete) list of equipment that you will need (including, in one case, a room thermometer). No longer is sourdough dependent on random chance, magic, or even experience. Be warned, however, that sourdough is not easy to do. You will end up throwing away a "swimming pool" of dough in order to refresh the starter. Some of the fermentation steps are 12 hours long. Some breads have to be refrigerated overnight, so you will need room in your refrigerator for several bannetons and/or sheet pans. There are also some surprising gaps. During kneading steps, there are not always clear instructions on how to tell when you are done; this is especially true of the slack doughs that she expects you to do in a machine rather than by hand. All you get is an instruction to knead for a certain number of minutes. The baking instructions are not always helpful in telling you when the bread is baked enough; all you get is a vague description and a certain number of minutes to bake. Sometimes she tells you what color to look for. Other times, she gives you a description of what the inside of the bread should look like, but this is of no help if you have the oven door open and are wondering if the bread is done baking. The title of the book is also a problem. It is not obvious from the title (unless you have actually been to her bakery) that the book has sourdough recipes almost exclusively. Conversely, the unwary buyer might pick up this book expecting an all around collection of boulangerie recipes. Of special merit is the final chapter with recipes using the starter you would normally just toss out. This is the only book I know of that will tell you what to do with this excess starter when you are not going to be making bread. There are recipes like onion rings and pancakes that work quite well.

I cannot say enough good things about this book. I was worried that the starter that she describes in such detail would be beyond my capabilities, but it grew beautifully on the first attempt. I have been making bread from her recipes for months now, and I have not been let down once. Nancy Silverton is the best when it comes to describing how to make great bread. I haven't even opened another cookbook in my extensive library of bread cookbooks since I got hers. Don't be intimidated by the time that is involved, it's worth every minute.

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