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The Art Of French Pastry



Synopsis

Winner of the 2014 James Beard Award for Best Cookbook, Dessert & Baking What does it take to perfect a flawless clair? 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 pâte à 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: brioche à la napoléons / Mille-Feuilles à la cream puffs à la Alsatian cinnamon rolls / chinois à la lemon cream tart with meringue teardrops à la elephant ears / palmiers à la black forest cake à la beignets as well as some traditional Alsatian savory treats, including: Pretzels à la Kougelhof à la Tarte Flambée à la Warm Alsatian Meat Pie à la 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 œufs à la 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

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 am a reasonably good cook, but have always been intimidated by pastry. Cookbooks are often a poor substitute or videos or personal instruction, but this one stands out in all respects. It is crystal clear and logically organized, beginning with the repetitive building blocks that lead to success in the later full recipes. The author seems to anticipate every question that one might have and distills the years of experience as a professional into guidance that an amateur can understand without "dumbing it down" or substituting shortcuts for true technique. I commend the amount of testing that must have gone into the book, for I have yet to find a flawed recipe. It is a challenging book, for it is a complex subject, but it has made me brave and at last, competent, in the pastry kitchen.

I work as a pastry chef and I have a huge library of cookbooks, from culinary texts to home baker-type books. I like this book, I like the descriptions, and the recipes. It's not a definitive collection of pastries from across France, but it does have an easy, accessible style and reliable recipes. I would not hesitate to make this book a gift for a passionate home baker or a professional pastry chef. I'm glad I have it.

I love this book and can't stop talking about it to anyone who will listen. I have been a keen cook since childhood and own many, many cookbooks but recently I started to feel stuck in a rut and ready to learn something new. After a couple of trips to France in the past few years, I decided I would like to learn how to replicate some of the delicious pastries my husband and I sampled during our travels. A chocolate eclair in Australia is a far cry from one from Fauchon! Unfortunately with a young child, attending a renowned pastry school is just not possible, nor is the cost. Here is where Jacquy Pfeiffer's wonderful book has filled the void. Part manual, part science book, part autobiography, part delicious cookbook - this book is for the cook that wants to learn the proper French way to make pastry. A bit of advice though, if you want the professional results then you need to buy the right tools and ingredients. If you are not sure about this bit, you should take advantage of the Look Inside feature - luckily it has both the ingredients and tools pages so you know what is required before you purchase the book. Since my purchase I have made choux paste, chocolate creme patissiere and chocolate eclairs. I have also successfully made brioche. I am now reading up on puff pastry and waiting for cooler weather because Jacquy knows best! I have gained a lot of confidence in my baking abilities with this book and hope that if you decide to purchase this book that you get as much enjoyment out of it as I have.

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