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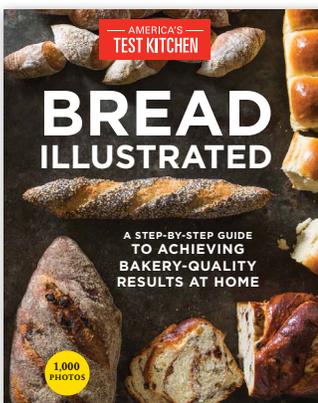
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## DISCOVER HOW TO MAKE FOOLPROOF BAKERY-QUALITY BREADS AT HOME

A trip to the bakery can be inspiring, but re-creating classic and artisan-style loaves, rolls, and sweet breads at home can seem like a daunting process. Many home cooks are intimidated by the thought of working with yeast, sponges, and starters. America's Test Kitchen wants to put bread back into home ovens. In *Bread Illustrated*—our first book devoted to bread—we show that baking a perfect loaf is no mystery: It's just a matter of breaking recipes down into essential steps that demystify the art and science of this age-old process. After rigorous testing, we have created a roadmap to baking more than 100 foolproof breads, each accompanied by step-by-step photo tutorials. Whether you've been baking yeast breads for years or are gearing up to tackle your first loaf, this book shows how to achieve the bakery-quality results we all crave in our own kitchens.

Bread dough is a living thing, so it can't be counted on to behave the same way in every recipe. The key to success is to see what it should look like every step of the way. To make this possible for home bakers, we photographed every step of our recipes, illustrating when **New York-Style Bagels** are properly proofed or just what shade of golden brown a loaf of **Pane Francese** should be when it comes out of the oven. When you're armed with these visual guides, it's easy to avoid common pitfalls such as overkneading or underbaking.

To make the book as accessible as possible, we applied an innovative organization that builds in complexity chapter by chapter. Novice and experienced bakers alike can benefit from the basic methods and clever techniques laid out in the initial recipes. As the book progresses and confidence grows, the test kitchen guides readers through more advanced techniques like shaping knotted Kaiser rolls and even grinding wheat berries for a bread with superlative whole-wheat flavor. Along the way, we use our test kitchen knowledge to present helpful tips and tricks in recipe-specific troubleshooting sidebars. And everyone will benefit from an introduction that delves into the hows and whys: from the proper way to knead in a stand mixer to slashing bread with a lame to the science of baking bread—plus essential tips on equipment and ingredients.



**BREAD ILLUSTRATED:  
A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO  
ACHIEVING BAKERY-QUALITY  
RESULTS AT HOME**

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Please visit [breadillustrated.com](http://breadillustrated.com) for a complete table of contents, featured recipes, high-resolution assets, and more materials.

The other key to creating truly foolproof bread recipes was exhaustive kitchen testing, which created a set of techniques we could be sure that anyone could follow. And not just for the everyday loaves but for the best examples from across the world of bread: buttery **Chocolate Babka**; chewy, crisp-crust **Baguettes**; even **Sourdough Bread** using a homemade starter. To produce a towering, fruit-studded holiday **Panettone** that was rich with butter yet simultaneously featherweight in texture, we baked 50 loaves to uncover the secrets (use bread flour, knead thoroughly, add butter gradually, and ferment it in the refrigerator overnight). For a whole-wheat loaf that was full of wheaty flavor without being overly dense (as so many are), we presoaked the flour—a simple task that softened the bran's sharp edges, resulting in more gluten development and an airier, tender crumb.

**Here are some other strategies we learned, organized by chapter:**

**Starting From Scratch:** For **Classic Italian Bread**, we kept the rise time short and instead developed complex flavor fast by incorporating beer, which provided a boost of yeasty tang. For our **Skillet Pizza** we bypassed sliding dough onto a pizza stone with an easier method—baking the pizza in a skillet—for a crisp crust that's a breeze to achieve.

**Sandwich Breads:** Incorporating loads of softened butter into brioche dough requires care and patience. So for our **No-Knead Brioche**, we melted the butter, combined all the ingredients, and let the dough rest in the fridge—and the loaf stitched itself together in 16 hands-off hours. We baked free-form sandwich breads like **Cranberry-Walnut Loaf** on two stacked baking sheets lined with foil, which kept the bottoms from burning.

**Mastering Size and Shape:** For **Rustic Dinner Rolls** with open holes and a chewy texture, we made the dough extra-wet and skipped shaping. The extra moisture created more steam and opened up the crumb. We cracked the code to **English Muffins** with the trademark nooks and crannies—and the method is easy: Folding the dough a few times incorporated more carbon dioxide for a satisfying bubbly crumb.

**The Perfect Crust:** For **Pitas** with a pocket for stuffing, we baked the breads on a baking stone in a hot 500-degree oven so the dough puffed and set on contact. We treated the crust for our **Deep-Dish Pizza** like pastry and borrowed a technique called laminating to achieve a buttery-rich flavor and a flaky texture.

**The Sweeter Side:** For high-rising **Challah**, we made one small braid and placed it on top of a larger braid so the eggy dough rose up instead of out. We wanted a rich holiday **Stollen** with a short, dense crumb and found that melted butter rather than softened butter achieved that authentic texture.

**Upping Your Game with Sponges:** For **Pain de Campagne** with lots of tang and chew, we tested the limits and found we could mix up to 50 percent of the dough's total flour weight into a prefermented sponge (most of our breads call for 20 percent). For tight-crumbed, canapé-ready **Pumpernickel**, we baked the loaf low (at 250 degrees) and slow (for 3 hours) to prevent it from springing in the oven and to dry it out.

**Raising the Bar:** A steamy oven environment encourages crisp, charred crusts on baguettes and rustic breads. We created lasting steam by pouring boiling water over preheated pans of lava rocks—yes, the ones used for gas grills. We achieved flaky, well-risen **Croissants** by using higher-fat European-style butter; it has a lower water content than regular butter and prevented the pastries from being bready.

**MEDIA REQUESTS**

The editors of *Cook's Illustrated* and *Cook's Country* are available for interviews upon request. For more information or for television, radio, or print interview requests, contact:

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**About America's Test Kitchen**

America's Test Kitchen is a 2,500-square-foot kitchen located just outside Boston. It is the home of *Cook's Illustrated* and *Cook's Country* magazines and is the workday destination of more than 60 test cooks, editors, and cookware specialists. Our mission is to test recipes until we understand how and why they work and until we arrive at the best version. We also test kitchen equipment and supermarket ingredients in search of products that offer the best value and performance. You can watch us work by tuning in to our public television shows, *America's Test Kitchen* and *Cook's Country from America's Test Kitchen*.

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