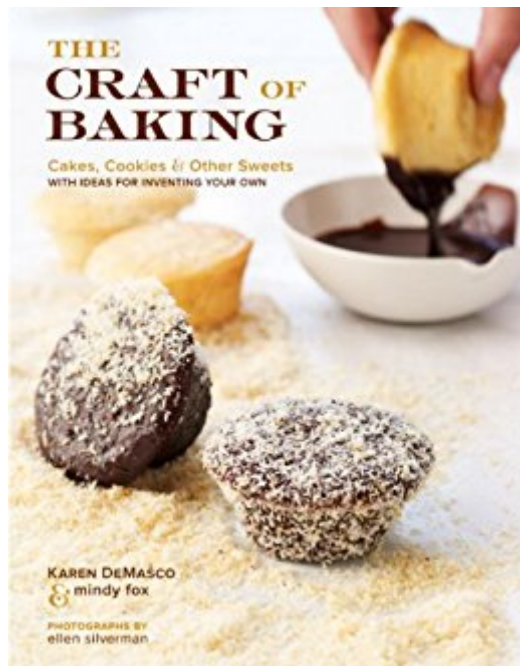


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The Craft Of Baking: Cakes, Cookies, And Other Sweets With Ideas For Inventing Your Own



Synopsis

James Beard Award® winner Karen DeMasco, who first came to national attention as the pastry chef of Tom Colicchio's Craft, Craftbar, and The Craft restaurants from 2001 to 2008, approaches the art of baking in a unique way. Building on the savory cooking philosophy of using seasonal ingredients to create dishes with pure flavors, Karen makes acclaimed desserts that are both simple and elegant. Now, she shares her secrets and techniques in her first cookbook, *The Craft of Baking*, designed to help home bakers think imaginatively in order to expand their repertoires with new and fresh combinations. Using the bounty of the seasons as inspiration and Karen's clear instructions, both beginners and experienced bakers will find it easy to let their creativity take the reins. Learn how to make Karen's celebrated sweets, such as Apple Fritters with Caramel Ice Cream and Apple Caramel Sauce, White Chocolate Cupcakes with White Chocolate Cream Cheese Buttercream, and Raised Cinnamon-Sugar Doughnuts. Then check out the tips on "varying your craft" to transform Grandma Rankin's Cashew Brittle into Pumpkin Seed Brittle and to alter a cobbler recipe to make Rhubarb Rose Cobbler in the spring or Mixed Berry Cobbler in the summer, for example. Karen's suggestions for "combining your craft"—such as serving Almond Pound Cake with Apricot Compote and Lillet Sabayon—reveal how easy it is to take desserts to the next level. Karen's ingenuity is boundless. All types of sweets, from muffins and scones to pies and cakes to ice creams and custards, are her mediums for exploring flavors. With Karen's simple techniques, unique flavor combinations, and inventive ideas, *The Craft of Baking* will change the way you think about baking and equip any home cook with the skills and creativity to create amazing, one-of-a-kind desserts.

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Customer Reviews

Even before this book was released, I was a big fan of Karen DeMasco's baking and approach to sweets. A recipe of hers - toasted almond semifreddo - appeared in the online version of Food & Wine magazine earlier in the year and I used it as the basis of a dessert course for a dinner party. It has since become my signature dessert. This elegant, abundantly photographed and descriptive cookbook is a must for anyone who enjoys the sweet side of the kitchen. There are basic recipes for everything from cakes, cookies, pies and quickbreads to ice creams, sauces, candies, marshmallows, brittles and everything in between. Though I consider myself somewhat knowledgeable in the kitchen, I picked up some new tricks from the book - how to bake in soup cans, making marshmallows without egg whites, and, most exciting to me, making fruit jelly candies. Written with Mindy Fox, the book contains a helpful and very explicit guide to the sweet pantry and ingredients and how to improvise on a recipe to make it a signature dish. This is going to be one of my top holiday gifts this year. Love it.

This is an excellent cookbook, for a number of reasons. First, the directions are clear and accurate in all of the recipes I have tried. Second, the recipes are not, for the most part, fussy; they are do-able if you have any experience in the kitchen. If you've never rolled piecrust before, a more basic book, like Dorie Greenspan's "Baking" or Marion Cunningham's "The Fanny Farmer Baking Book" might be more useful. Third, some of the recipes will make you see old things in new ways; the jasmine rice pudding (especially with the added rum raisins) is simple and brilliant. You can put it together while you're making dinner. Fourth, the recipes are well chosen and, thank heavens, limited in number. There's no need to contemplate a whole bunch of chocolate cakes, wondering which one is REALLY good, as you must do with a more extensive volume, like Greenspan's "Baking" (an excellent book in its own right). Finally, the recipes are delicious. I certainly haven't had a chance to make all of them (although I can speak for the trifle, which speedily disappeared from the Christmas dinner table), but it's easy to see that it's the kind of book I'll want to work my way

through. It's worth adding that "The Craft of Baking" includes recipes that never see an oven, like the wondrous cashew brittle or the ones in the chapters on puddings (the lemon steamed pudding!) and ice creams. Even if you are as guilty as I am of owning too many cookbooks, you will want to get this one. M. Feldman

I am a beginner chef and I just finished making the cashew brittle . I am so proud and so excited to start working on other recipes. It was probably the simplest thing to do and it looks and tastes gourmet. I think a batch of brittle and this book is going to be my gift for many this year. I made the gingerbread, and although it has lots of ingredients it's very simple and you can make a few batches to share. I love the simple ingredients and the fact that it's really made me love learning a new "craft". I am already putting in my request for a volume 2 !!

I just received the book as a gift and decided to make the gingersnap cookies. They are truly delicious. The use of freshly grated ginger and blackstrap molassis really makes an impact on this little treat. I can't wait to bake more from this masterpiece.

Hello to anyone who is reading this! Just wanted to post about The Craft of Baking. I purchased the book a couple of weeks ago and am loving it. I have a pronounced sweet tooth and believe that any proper dinner ends with a delicious dessert. The problem for me with desserts cookbooks, though, is that so many of them go for the sugar jugular: recipes for frou-frou items that might look pretty but don't have much of a flavor profile beyond SWEET. For me, the best desserts are cooked with a savory sensibility--layering flavors and textures on top of one another, showcasing seasonal ingredients, complementing/responding to/riffing off the preceding meal. Karen DeMasco has always taken this approach, and it's why I've long thought she's one of the most genius pastry chefs in the country (yes, in the country, not just in New York City). The fact that I can now crack open this book and, basically, pick Karen's cooking brain at will is one of the most exciting things that's happened to my kitchen in recent memory. And the recipes are all clear, straightforward, easy to follow. If you have any interest, passing or intense, in cooking desserts and sweets, then this volume should really be in your library! I cannot recommend it highly enough. And I'll be putting wrapped copies under more than one Christmas tree this year. Enjoy, and happy baking! Meeghan

I am an enthusiastic, experienced amateur dessert maker. I've read over 100 dessert cookbooks, and am always seeking high quality tastes, whether I go out to eat or cook at home. A pastry chef at

a high-end restaurant has to be creative, and execute extremely well to create desserts that customers will willingly pay a lot for. DeMasco shares a lot of detailed knowledge that has helped her do that. Her careful instructions will help you succeed and enjoy your desserts. You never get the feeling that this book was whipped out just because the publisher thought it would sell a lot because the chef is famous. This book avoids several common pitfalls. It is not the big encyclopedic cookbook filled with recipes, the majority of which you know you're never going to make. It is not the umpteenth cookbook of gooey-sweet-nostalgic recipes for blondies or cupcakes that you feel you could easily outdo with a stroll on [...]. (but there are are recipes for cupcakes -- just carefully chosen and best-of-kind recipes). If I were to cook my way through a cookbook J&J style, this might be the one, because every recipe I read I want to make. There is a nice mix of ambitious desserts with sophisticated flavors to wow the dinner party guests with, and desserts that you are going to eat while standing up, primarily off your finger, with no one but your whining dog looking. Claudia Fleming's influence shows - this book is like a "more of" sequel to the superb "The Last Course: The Desserts of Gramercy Tavern". Today that out-of-print book is going for \$400 on .com. That should tell you what a special cookbook it is. You will be getting a similar experience buying DeMasco's book. Cook with flavor in mind and you will be so happy with the results.

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