Bread Alone: Bold Fresh Loaves from Your Own Hands

A comprehensive guide to creating-at home-the country-style breads that have consistently captured the imagination and the taste buds of the world.

In a richly told tale, Leader chronicles his crossings of America and Europe to locate the most vital ingredients at the source, to learn from the methods of the world's great bakers, and to perfect their traditional techniques. His recipes are ones that have been used for centuries: large sourdough ryes, rich and dark raisin pumpernickel loaves, real French pain au levain, big round wheats with walnuts, crusty baguettes, high and airy breads, and more. Made from organic, stone-ground grains, these breads are slow-leavened, hand-shaped, and baked to perfection on heated baking tiles. As you read through the recipes, you can almost smell the ancient aroma of baking bread. And as you begin to bake, you will learn the importance of the primary ingredient in great bread: your own observations.

These are some of the breads and techniques you will master:

In the chapter Becoming Bread, you will learn to identify and shop for the highest quality flour available. And you will seek it out because you'll taste the difference. Making a poolish will become second nature to you as you master the Learning Recipe: Classic Country-Style Hearth Loaf and its delicious variations. Whatever your schedule, there is a bread for you. In the chapter Straight-Dough Breads: Traditional Breads for a Modern Lifestyle, you are shown how to start and finish a recipe in five hours, or morning-to-night, or night-to-night. You will bake sourdough bread in its many forms. By gently introducing the concept of sourdough-how it is made, how it is maintained, and how to get the best flavor from it-leader demystifies it and makes it accessible to you. Discover the wonders of rye bread: From the dense and chewy Finnish Sour Rye to the fragrant Danish Light Rye, everyone's tastes are served. The mystery of pain au levain, French for bread from a sourdough or wild yeast, unfolds into an understandable, user-friendly process. From My Personal Favorite Pain au
Levain, a typical large Parisian loaf, to Pain au Levain with Pecans and Dried Cherries, the Family of Traditional Pain au Levain includes some of the best loaves baked around the world. A perfect baguette is a beautiful thing. From shaping to scoring, you will learn how to make the authentic French baguette at home. The purpose of an organic certifier-find out how and why one farmer becomes dedicated to his role as land steward. Brioche, Chocolate-Apricot Kugelhopf, Panettone, and Semolina Sesame Rolls are a few recipes you will find in A Family of Breads Inspired by Traditional French and Italian Breads. Finally, when a quick bread is all you have time to bake, you will find recipes for such delights as Vanilla Bean Butter Loaf; Dried Pear, Port, and Poppy Seed Loaf; and Provolone Sage Corn Loaf. Bread Alone is the bread book that cooks and bakers have been waiting for. From the wheat fields of the Midwest to the hot and steamy boulangeries of Paris, you will travel the long and delicious road to flawless bread baking. You will emerge a better baker and with a deeper understanding of what it takes to make perfect loaves. Bakers entertain you with stories of their love of baking (even in the most adverse situations). Bread Alone is the bible of bread books and a must have for bread lovers everywhere.

24 pages of full color, featuring bakers at work, the breads in the book, all the equipment you'll need, and the grains used

My Personal Review:
I have read with dismay some of the negative reviews of this book. Why? I bought it years ago after having fallen in love with Bread Alones breads. Could I make them myself? Book purchased in high hopes, but daunted by the several-page long recipes, I let the book sit on my shelf for several years, unused. I thought that recipes of several pages must be too complicated for a beginner, and that my life was too busy to stop, think, savor, take in what was being offered.

It wasn't until I received a bread machine as a gift, tried a couple of loaves, and found that I wanted to try more challenging bread recipes in exchange for a better result, that I once again reached for Daniel Lederers book and dusted it off.

What then dawned on me about the book as I began to work with it is that the number of pages in the recipes made them not difficult, but rather thorough. As well as can be expressed from the page to the kitchen counter, Lederer tried to make it everything clear, so that it would be impossible for the baker to fail. I used the temperatures he provided for dough rising, and I used his instructions as to how to recognize when the dough was ready to punch down, and how to know I was done with kneading. Through carefully reading and following his instructions, I was able to improve dramatically the quality of the bread I was baking.
After years of thinking it was too hard, now I am grateful for his attention to
detail and care in translating what he does into something I could make.

This book was written before the days of youtube and cooking videos. It is
now possible to distill pages of recipes into well chosen video sequences
and convey more quickly what took great attention to produce on the
page. At the time the book was put together, there were far more limited
means of conveying how bread making looks and feels.

I have not made the recipes with the inaccuracies described; I wish the
publisher would include a list of errata. The book is valuable enough to
make it worthwhile for the publisher to have made corrections in future
editions. The book well deserves to be enjoyed without distraction. Any
issues reported to exist are finite and pale beside the contribution that this
book represents.

I do not wish for an editor to streamline the pages -- part of what makes
the book unusual is the effort at precision and dedication to creating
understanding.

For people who just want a once-over-lightly bread book, this book is not
for you. For people who like to make dishes over again and try to perfect
them by honing a few details, or who are thrilled at the prospect of going
down the path of mastering some of the points of artisanal bread making, I
believe you have met a kindred spirit in the author of this book. Enjoy the
journey. I believe my journey would have been far longer if I had persisted
in pursuing books with telegraphic instructions, so-so recipes, and
incompletely explained techniques.

Some reviewers compare the book to other bread books that I have not
read or worked from, so what I can say is that in comparison to the books I
have borrowed or owned on bread baking, this book stands out.

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Lowest Price!