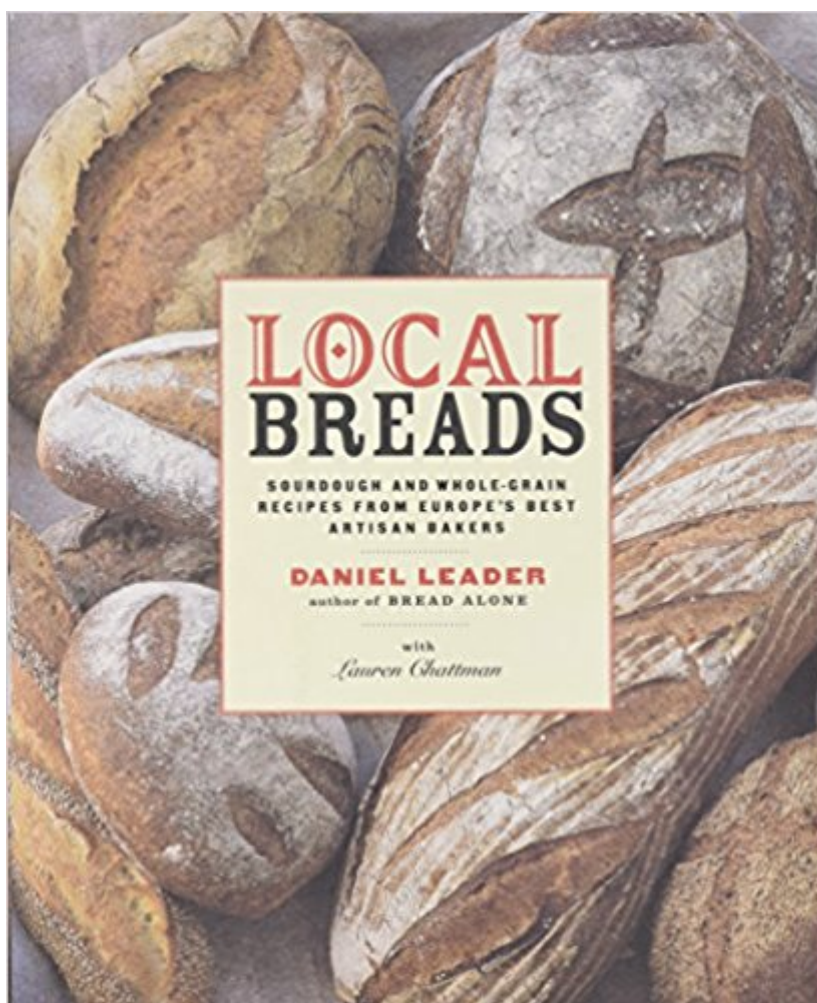


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Local Breads: Sourdough And Whole-Grain Recipes From Europe's Best Artisan Bakers



Synopsis

Recipes from the back rooms and basement bakeries that produce Europe's best breads. When Daniel Leader opened his Catskills bakery, Bread Alone, twenty years ago, he was determined to duplicate the whole-grain and sourdough breads he had learned to make in the bakeries of Paris. The bakery was an instant success, and his first book, Bread Alone, brought Leader's breads to home kitchens. In this, his second book, Leader shares his experiences traveling throughout Europe in search of the best artisan breads. He learned how to make new-wave sourdough baguettes with spelt, flaxseed, and soy at an organic bakery in Alsace; and in Genzano, outside of Rome, he worked with the bakers who make the enormous country loaves so unique that they have earned the Indicazione Geografica Protetta (IGP), a government mark reserved for the most prized foods and wines. Leader's detailed recipes describe every step that it takes to reproduce these rare loaves, which until now were available strictly locally. 32 pages of color illustrations

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Leader's new bread-baking book is distinguished from his earlier classic Bread Alone by its focus on regional specialties, from the Alsatian classic pain au levain to Tuscan black olive puccia, from German laugenbrezeln or pretzels to the dark Silesian rye of the Czech Republic. The book opens with 50 pages of well-written and thorough instructions on everything from ingredients to equipment. The most helpful part is the explanation of the basic steps of any bread-making process, which serves as a primer on the procedural elements that are universal across the various European traditions. Leader, who founded the heralded Bread Alone bakery in Woodstock, N.Y., is most

interested in teaching holistically, so that his readers will feel comfortable becoming apprentices and then experts themselves. One can't help imagining, however, that bread baking is best learned in the flesh. Leader advises that the only way to figure out if the dough is ready is through experience, and a hapless home baker might agree. Still, the book is an excellent primer on the best breads of Europe, and the traveler who has returned home with a longing for the Roman specialty pane di altamura might be satisfied with a mouth-watering trip down memory lane. (Aug.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

After perusing the remarkable recipes in Leader's compilation of the best of Europe's artisanal breads, only the most resolutely self-controlled baker will be able to resist marching to the kitchen to reproduce one of these captivating loaves. Leader explains how to create a sourdough from airborne yeasts, and he uses that starter for many of these breads to yield superior, deep flavor and thick, crunchy crusts. Ranging from baguettes to chocolate croissants, from Italian ciabatta to dark Silesian rye, and from Czech country bread to potato pizza, these recipes give access to bread bakers' highest art. For those lacking the courage and patience to ferment a real sourdough starter, Leader offers several different shortcuts to success. Line drawings guide the novice, and full-color photographs render ideals for Leader's students to emulate. Question-and-answer sections throughout the book succinctly clarify potential problem areas. Leader's Auvergnat blue cheese rye rolls alone make this book a must for devotees of the baker's art. Knoblauch, Mark

At first I thought, "This guy is a total obsessive compulsive" with all the instructions. But then I reread parts a couple more times and found that his attention to detail is the reason I have learned how to make really good bread. I have basically mastered making a consistently successful Polish Cottage Loaf and also added some variations to it. If you don't make bread yet there are two things you really need to do if you want to be successful. First is to make and nurture a sourdough starter which is not as hard as it sounds. Then second is to get a feel for the right moisture content of the dough and also when it's risen enough. Mr. Leader tells how to test for this. Finally, you must have tiles or a stone in the oven. I now make bread twice a week and wonder why I didn't learn to do this years ago. I have seen other instruction books but this one suits the best.

This is the best book I've read that teaches you how to make sourdough starters. There is also a fantastically wide variety of breads included. Biggest issue is that the illustrations aren't always helpful. They're fairly small and in black-and-white and often not that descriptive. Not a big deal

though. Beyond that, as others have pointed out, there are some annoying typos in this book. If you go through several recipes, you'll be able to see them well enough because the math won't add up, but it has messed up a batch or two of my bread.

I was searching for a book with pure sourdough and whole grain recipes. This book did not disappoint. I'm thrilled. Today, I made the *miche* and *pain au levain*. Both were incredible. I couldn't believe how beautiful and delicious they were. The recipes and instructions were very clear. I will not lie and say this is a quick process, but I decided if I was putting the time into it, I would make two recipes and get more use out of my stiff dough levain. BTW, to make the stiff dough levain, I used my already existing semi liquid spelt starter and added enough flour and water until it looked like the author's picture. It worked wonderfully. I even had a little left over for next time. The less I stress about all this sourdough stuff, the better my bread comes out. I recommend the book highly for true sourdough enthusiasts. Yet, there are more than a few recipes that include quick rise yeast, in addition to a starter (similar to Peter Reinhart's *Whole Grain Bread* which I don't recommend due to his inclusion of commercial yeast in nearly all of his recipes.)

I think Mr. Leader is my favorite baker/author out there. I have made many of the recipes in this book successfully. He covers everything from different types of sourdough starter, German Rye's, French Baguettes, to Blue Cheese loaves. A good book for any home baker who is wanting to try different artisan recipes.

I was tired of the hit or miss bread baking experience and wanted a book that covered both the artisan and chemistry of baking whole grain breads. To me taste and texture either makes a bread or kills the whole experience. *Local Breads for Artisan* gave me the necessary insights to understand each phase of the bread baking/making process to yield wonderful outcomes. Once I selected the right ingredients for each recipe and practiced the methods for mixing the dough to kneading, fermenting shaping, scoring and baking, my results were wonderful. This is a fine book and one I highly recommend.

Do you want to try out having a pet without having to worry about the neighbors complaining about the barking when you are not home or siccing the Humane Society on you? Consider a sourdough starter. You don't have to put up with it yapping at the door in the winter time, but you DO have to take care of it to have this work. This book tells you how to make bread like people who's lives

depend upon it. Great bread, really great bread. But, it's a commitment, no question. You must feed the starter weekly and either make bread regularly (also weekly at a minimum), or restart the process by throwing out most of the starter. And, you must really love bread as the proverbial staff of life. Fortunately, I do. Making bread this way takes time. You don't puff it up with yeast and sugar, you allow the wild yeast and bacteria hours to proof the bread using the more complex carbohydrates. Is it worth it? Wait till you try pizza dough made this way, or a baguette, or a Polish rye. Nice stories too.

A great book on baking bread. Not a whole lot of recipes, but enough. Good discussion on handling dough before and during baking. Highly recommend this book for people looking to advance their knowledge and skill in baking truly artisanal bread.

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