BAKE THIS NOW

Recipes from Our Authors to Your Oven
There’s something about baking that brings comfort to the home: the warmth of the kitchen, the smells from the oven, the sense of accomplishment. Clarkson-Potter and Ten Speed Press are lucky to have a variety of bakers who are here to share some of their favorite recipes. From breads and pretzels to cookies and muffins, we have whatever you’re craving. If you’re out of yeast and can’t get to the store? No problem: We have recipes that feature only your starter. New to baking? No worries: We have recipes for every skill level. Baking is a great way to build and hone your kitchen skills. Just have fun. Scone home! Bake something delicious for you and your family.
This is a pure levain dough that gets no help from store-bought yeast. It makes beautiful, natural levain bread with just a bit of tang to it. Using a small amount of levain, the long overnight bulk fermentation allows the dough to become nice and gassy by morning, tripling in volume. The shaped loaves are then proofed for about four hours. The aroma and flavor of this bread will directly reflect the character of your levain, with the flavors improving and the acidity mellowing for a couple of days after baking.

At Ken's Artisan Bakery we make a slightly different version of this dough. It begins with a levain feeding at 3:30 a.m., so I didn’t include that version here, for obvious reasons. However, this would be a great dough to use to make a scaled-down version of my 3-kilo boule, as described on page 162; at 1.8 kilos (4 pounds) total, the amount of dough in this recipe will just barely fit on a standard baking stone for a home oven.

Be sure to bake this bread completely, letting it remain in the oven until it is as dark as possible shy of burning. If you want an even chewier crust, leave the loaves in the oven with the door partly open for a few minutes after turning off the oven.

Once you’ve perfected this bread, I encourage you to mix it up and try different blends of flours in your final dough mix; just make sure the total amount of fresh flour is 880 grams to complement the 120 grams of flour in the levain. Another option is to fold in about 225 grams of olives, nuts, or other ingredients, as in the recipe for Pain au Bacon (page 177).

**OVERNIGHT COUNTRY BLONDE**

This recipe makes 2 loaves, each about 1½ pounds, or 1 big loaf (see the variation on page 172).

**Bulk fermentation:** 12 to 15 hours

**Proof time:** About 4 hours

**Sample schedule:** Feed the levain at 9 a.m., mix the final dough at 5 p.m., shape into loaves at 8 a.m. the next morning, and bake at noon.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levain</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mature, active levain</td>
<td>100 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White flour</td>
<td>400 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole wheat flour</td>
<td>100 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>400 g, 85°F to 90°F (29°C to 32°C)</td>
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</table>

CONTINUED>>
Final Dough Baker’s Formula

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INGREDIENT</th>
<th>FINAL DOUGH MIX QUANTITY</th>
<th>BAKER’S FORMULA QUANTITY IN LEVAIN</th>
<th>QUANTITY</th>
<th>QUANTITY</th>
<th>BAKER’S PERCENTAGE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White flour</td>
<td>804 g</td>
<td>96 g</td>
<td>90 g</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Whole wheat flour</td>
<td>26 g</td>
<td>3 tbsp</td>
<td>50 g</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rye flour</td>
<td>50 g</td>
<td>½ cup + 1 tbsp</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>684 g 90ºF to 95ºF (32ºC to 35ºC)</td>
<td>Scant 3 cups</td>
<td>96 g</td>
<td>78%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fine sea salt</td>
<td>23 g</td>
<td>1 tbsp + 1 tsp</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levain</td>
<td>216 g*</td>
<td>¾ cup + 1 tbsp</td>
<td>12%*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The baker’s percentage for levain is the amount of flour in the levain expressed as a percentage of the total flour in the recipe.
** If your kitchen is cooler than 70ºF (21ºC), increase the amount of levain, perhaps using 250 to 275 grams.

1a. Feed the levain
About 24 hours after your previous feeding of the levain, discard all but 100 grams of levain, leaving the remainder in your 6-quart tub. Add 400 grams of white flour, 100 grams of whole wheat flour, and 400 grams of water at 85ºF to 90ºF (29ºC to 32ºC) and mix by hand just until incorporated. Cover and let rest at room temperature for 7 to 9 hours before mixing the final dough.

1b. Autolyse
After 7 to 9 hours, mix the 804 grams of white flour, the 50 grams of rye flour, and the 26 grams of whole wheat flour by hand in a 12-quart round tub. Add the 684 grams of 90ºF to 95ºF (32ºC to 35ºC) water and mix by hand just until incorporated. Cover and let rest for 20 to 30 minutes.

2. Mix the final dough
Sprinkle the 22 grams of salt evenly over the top of the dough. Put a container with about a finger’s depth of warm water on your scale so you can easily remove the levain after it’s weighed. With wet hands, transfer 216 grams (or more if your kitchen is cool; see “Seasonal Variations” on page 134) of levain into the container. Transfer the weighed levain to the 12-quart dough tub, minimizing the amount of water transferred with it. Mix by hand, wetting your working hand before mixing so the dough doesn’t stick to you. Use the pincer method (see page 67) alternating with folding the dough to fully integrate the ingredients. The target dough temperature at the end of the mix is 77°F to 78°F (25°C to 26°C).

3. Fold
This dough needs three or four folds (see pages 69–70). Because overnight levain dough expands very slowly, it can be folded anytime that’s convenient before you go to bed, perhaps doing two or three folds during the first hour and the final fold whenever convenient that evening.

When the dough is nearly triple its original volume, or possibly a bit less in winter, 12 to 15 hours after mixing, it’s ready to be divided.

4. Divide
With floured hands, gently ease the dough out of the tub and onto a lightly floured work surface. With your hands still floured, pick up the dough and ease it back down onto the work surface in a somewhat even shape. Use a bit of flour to dust the area in the middle where you’ll cut the dough, then cut it into 2 equal-size pieces with a dough knife or plastic dough scraper.

5. Shape the dough
Dust 2 proofing baskets with flour. Shape each piece of dough into a medium-tight ball following the instructions on pages 71–73. Place each seam side down in its proofing basket.

6. Proof
Set the baskets side by side and cover with a kitchen towel, or place each basket in a nonperforated plastic bag. Proofing time should be about 4 hours, assuming a room temperature of about 70ºF (21ºC). Use the finger-dent test (see page 74) to determine when they are perfectly proofed and ready to bake.

7. Preheat
At least 45 minutes prior to baking, put a rack in the middle of the oven and put 2 Dutch ovens on the rack with their lids on. Preheat the oven to 475ºF (245ºC).

If you only have 1 Dutch oven, put the second loaf into the refrigerator about 20 minutes before baking the first loaf and bake the loaves sequentially, giving the Dutch oven a 5-minute reheat after removing the first loaf.

8. Bake
For the next step, please be careful not to let your hands, fingers, or forearms touch the extremely hot Dutch oven.

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PROOFING PURE LEVAIN LOAVES

The finger-dent test (see page 74) may indicate that the loaves are proofed after about 3½ hours. At my house at 70ºF (21ºC), the window for complete proofing is between about 3½ and 4½ hours. Initially, I found that the bread baked nicely after a 3-hour proof, but further test bakes had better flavor with a full 4-hour proof, and the loaves didn’t deflate.
Invert the proofed loaf onto a lightly floured countertop, keeping in mind that the top of the loaf will be the side that was facing down while it was rising—the seam side.

Remove the preheated Dutch oven from your kitchen oven, remove the lid, and carefully place the loaf in the Dutch oven seam side up. Cover and bake for 30 minutes, then uncover and bake for 20 to 25 minutes, until medium dark brown to very dark brown all around the loaf. Check after 15 minutes of baking uncovered in case your oven runs hot.

Remove the Dutch oven and carefully tilt it to turn the loaf out. Let cool on a rack or set the loaf on its side so air can circulate around it. Let the loaf rest for at least 20 minutes before slicing.

**VARIATION: THE 1.8-KILO BOULE**

If you want to try making a smaller version of my 3-kilo boule, shape the entire amount of dough in this recipe (about 1.8 kilos) into a single round loaf using the same shaping technique used for the smaller round loaves throughout this book (see pages 71–73). This 1.8-kilo loaf will be about the same size as a Poilâne miche.

Moderately flour a lint-free kitchen towel about 14 to 16 inches wide, or a couple of overlapped kitchen towels if needed. Place the dough seam side down on the towels, dust the top with flour, and cover by lifting the edges of the towel over the dough from opposite sides. The towel should completely overlap the dough without wrapping it too tightly; leave about 1 inch of slack on either side to allow the dough to expand. Proof at room temperature for 4½ to 5 hours.

At least 45 minutes prior to baking, put a rack in the middle of the oven and put a second rack below it, near the bottom of the oven. Put a pizza stone on the middle rack and preheat the oven to 500ºF (260ºC). Immerse a second pizza stone in hot water, also for 45 minutes; if it’s lying flat, turn it over after about 20 minutes. About 5 minutes before baking the loaf, put the wet pizza stone on the lowest oven rack to provide steam.

It isn’t necessary to score the loaf, but it is preferable, so if you have a scoring blade score a square around the perimeter of the loaf, with overlapping strokes. Use a floured pizza peel to load the big loaf onto the dry, preheated pizza stone, seam side up. After 5 minutes, lower the oven temperature to 475ºF (245ºC). Bake for 35 to 40 minutes, but check at the 30 minute mark in case your oven runs hot. (When you open the oven, be prepared for a blast of steam.) Your loaf is done when the crust is baked to a dark brown. Turn off the oven, open the door a few inches, and let the loaf sit in the oven for a few minutes to help set the crust. As usual, let the loaf cool, either on a rack or propped on its side, before slicing.
Focaccia

With a few recent exceptions, the quality of most American focaccia is so poor that I’m surprised it has caught on as it has. Its survival and emergence is probably due to the few bakeries that really do it well, showcasing the honeycombed crumb that results from a properly executed rustic dough. Toppings, no matter how creative and flavorful, can never cover for an inadequate crust. This is true for pizza as well as its Ligurian cousin, focaccia. The main difference between them is that classic pizza (Neapolitan) has a thin crust, while authentic focaccia has a thicker crust, but not obnoxiously thick as seen in some American renditions. I prefer a thickness of 1 to 1¼ inches (2.5 to 3cm), with big, open, translucent holes, like a ciabatta or pugliese. There is really only one way to achieve such perfection, and that is through long fermentation of a wet, rustic dough by either generous use of a pre-ferment or by retarding the fermentation process through refrigeration. Either method will get you there, so I offer you two formulas. The results are comparable and demonstrate the possibilities presented by time and temperature manipulation. Following the formulas are some suggestions for variations and toppings. Please note, the formulas that appear here differ from those that appeared in the original *Bread Baker’s Apprentice*, as they incorporate new tweaks that I continue to make in my never-ending search for the perfect focaccia.

Makes one 17 by 12-inch (43 by 30-cm) focaccia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEASURE</th>
<th>OUNCES</th>
<th>GRAMS</th>
<th>INGREDIENTS</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 cups</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>638</td>
<td>unbleached high-gluten or bread flour</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1⅛ tsp</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>salt</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1¾ tsp</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>instant yeast</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 tablespoons</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>olive oil</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 cups plus 2 tablespoons</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>482</td>
<td>water, at room temperature</td>
<td>75.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¼ cup to ⅛ cup Herb Oil (page 169)</td>
<td>optional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL 182.8

1 Stir together the flour, salt, and yeast in a 4-quart mixing bowl (or in the bowl of an electric mixer). Add the oil and water and mix with a large metal spoon until all the ingredients form a wet, sticky ball (or mix on low speed with the paddle attachment). If you are mixing by hand, repeatedly dip one of your hands or the metal spoon into cold water and use it, much like a dough hook, to work the dough vigorously into a smooth mass while rotating the bowl

**BREAD PROFILE**
Lean, rustic dough (enriched slightly with olive oil); flat; direct or indirect method; commercial yeast

**DAYS TO MAKE:** 2

**DAY 1:** 10 minutes mixing; 100 minutes stretch and fold, fermentation, and panning (Poolish Focaccia: 3 to 4 hours poolish)

**DAY 2:** 3 hours fermentation; 20 to 30 minutes baking (Poolish Focaccia: 1 hour to de-chill poolish; 15 minutes mixing; 3 hours fermentation, panning, and proofing; 20 to 30 minutes baking)

**COMMENTARY**
This dough makes great pizza as well as focaccia, but it is a little too slack for stromboli, or rolled and stuffed pizza. A popular hybrid is what can best be called pizza-style focaccia, small round pies that begin as pizzas but are allowed to proof and puff up and are then topped with intensely flavored toppings, rather than the customary cheese and sauce toppings of pizza. See page 172 for examples. The beauty of these, aside from their sheer eye appeal, is that they can be made ahead and served cold or lightly reheated. This dough can also be used for Sicilian-style pizzas in which the dough (rectangular or round) is parbaked, without a final rise, until firm, then cooked, topped, and rebaked for thick, crispy pan pizza.
in a circular motion with the other hand (see page 58). Reverse the circular motion a few times to develop the gluten further. Do this for 3 to 5 minutes, or until the dough is smooth and the ingredients are evenly distributed. If you are using a mixer, switch to the dough hook and mix on medium speed for 3 to 5 minutes, or as long as it takes to create a smooth, sticky dough. The dough should clear the sides of the bowl but stick to the bottom of the bowl. You may need to add additional flour to firm up the dough enough to clear the sides of the bowl, but the dough should still be quite soft and sticky.

2 Use the oil slick method, as described on page 59, using olive oil. Using a scraper or spatula dipped in water, transfer the sticky dough to the oil slick, rub olive oil on your hands, and pat the dough into a rectangle about 6 by 12 inches (15 by 30cm). Wait for 5 minutes for the dough to relax.

3 Coat your hands with oil and stretch the dough from each end until the rectangle is twice its length. Fold it, letter style, over itself to return it to a rectangular shape, as shown on page 146. Mist the top of the dough with spray oil, and loosely cover with plastic wrap.

4 Let the dough rest for 30 minutes. Stretch and fold the dough again; mist with spray oil and cover. After 30 minutes, repeat this one more time.

5 Allow the covered dough to ferment on the counter for 30 minutes. It should swell only slightly.

6 Line a 17 by 12-inch (43 by 30cm) sheet pan with baking parchment and proceed with the shaping and padding instructions on page 168. Spray the top of the dough with spray oil or drizzle the top with olive or herb oil.

7 Loosely cover the pan with plastic wrap (or place the pan inside a food-grade plastic bag). Refrigerate the dough overnight (or for up to 3 days).

8 Remove the pan from the refrigerator 3 hours before baking. Drizzle additional olive or herb oil to taste over the surface and dimple it in. (You can use all of it if you want; the dough will absorb it even though it looks like a lot.) This should allow you to fill the pan completely with the dough. If you are unable to fill the pan 100 percent, especially the corners. As the dough relaxes and proofs, it will spread across the surface. Dimpling allows you to degas only part of the dough while preserving gas in the nondimpled sections. If the dough becomes too springy, let it rest for about 15 minutes and then continue dimpling. Don’t worry if you are unable to fill the pan 100 percent, especially the corners. As the dough relaxes and proofs, it will spread out naturally. Use more herb oil as needed to ensure that the entire surface is coated with oil.

9 Preheat the oven to 500°F (260°C) with the oven rack on the middle shelf. Gently place any prebake toppings on the dough (see page 172).

Let the covered dough to ferment on the counter for 30 minutes. It should swell only slightly.

In a circular motion, stretch the dough from each end until the rectangle is twice its length. Fold it, letter style, over itself to return it to a rectangular shape, as shown on page 146. Mist the top of the dough with spray oil, and loosely cover with plastic wrap.

Let the dough rest for 30 minutes. Stretch and fold the dough again; mist with spray oil and cover. After 30 minutes, repeat this one more time.

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10 Place the pan in the oven. Lower the oven setting to 450°F (232°C) and bake for 15 minutes. Rotate the pan 180 degrees and continue baking the focaccia for 5 to 10 minutes, or until it begins to turn a light golden brown. If you are using any during-bake toppings (see page 172), sprinkle them on at this point and continue baking an additional 5 minutes or so. The internal temperature of the dough, measured in the center, should register above 200°F (93°C), and cheese, if used, should melt but not burn.

11 Remove the pan from the oven and immediately transfer the focaccia from the pan to a cooling rack. If the parchment is stuck on the bottom, carefully remove it by lifting the corner of the focaccia and peeling it off the bottom with a gentle tug.

12 Allow the focaccia to cool for at least 10 minutes before slicing or serving.

**GRACE NOTE**

**HERB OIL**

The generous application of herb oil to focaccia will enhance the flavor of the dough more than any toppings. There are many ways to make this oil, and you can make it in any quantity. I try always to keep some on hand for cooking and dipping. You can use dried or fresh herbs or a combination. Do not heat the oil; instead, just let the herbs steep in the oil, infusing it with their wonderful flavors.

Here’s one way to make it, but feel free to substitute your favorite herbs and spices. The olive oil you use does not have to be extra virgin because it will be cooked later, and the subtle flavor of extra virgin, for which you pay so much, will be lost.

Use 2 cups olive oil at room temperature. Add 1 cup chopped fresh herbs. The herbs may include basil, parsley, oregano, tarragon, rosemary, thyme, cilantro, savory, and sage, in any combination.

I recommend lots of fresh basil. (Substitute 1/3 cup dried herbs or a blend such as herbs de Provence, or use a combination of fresh and dried herbs.) Add 1 tablespoon coarse or flaky sea salt, or kosher salt, 1 teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper, and 1 tablespoon granulated garlic or 5 or 6 cloves fresh garlic, chopped or pressed. You can also add up to 1 teaspoon paprika, 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper, 1 tablespoon fennel seeds, 1 teaspoon onion powder, or 1 tablespoon dried minced onion. Store any leftover herb oil in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.

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**MIXING RUSTIC DOUGH BY HAND**

(A) Using a large spoon, distribute the ingredients and initiate mixing. You can then continue to stir with a spoon, or you can dip one hand in water and (B) use it like a dough hook, rotating the bowl as shown above.

Once the three purposes of mixing have been accomplished, there is usually no reason to continue mixing and an important reason, in some instances, to stop immediately and proceed to the third stage of bread production (primary fermentation).

**MIXING METHODS**

In professional bread-baking operations, three mixing methods can be used: the intensive method, the improved method, and the simplified or short method. Each has its advantages, depending on the type of dough being made. For instance, rich sweet dough usually requires long, intensive mixing on high speed to accomplish fat incorporation and gluten development fully. Lean French-style dough does better with either the improved mixing method (a combination of slow and fast speeds) or a long, gentle simplified mixing on slow speed followed by a series of stretch and folds. Home bakers most often find themselves using a modified improved method (if using electric mixers) or the simplified method. This is especially true when kneading by hand, since it is impossible to replicate sustained high-speed mixing when it’s just your hands and the dough.

Whichever method you use, the goals of mixing must be met without damaging or degrading the dough. The most common form of degrading comes from overmixing and overheating (which leads to overfermenting).
Each type of dough has its own parameters and requirements. Some require cold water and some warm water. Some set up quickly, and others take longer for the gluten to bond properly. The type of mixing equipment or mixing method directly relates to the mixing time, so choices must be made by the baker to optimize the success of the mixing, and the quality of these choices will be reflected in the final product.

It is particularly important to remember that how a dough absorbs water will vary depending on climatic conditions and the brand and age of the flour. Therefore, the water (hydration) percentage in a formula can never be more than an approximation. For this reason, I strongly advise you always to withhold a small amount of the liquid in the first stages of mixing until you are certain the dough needs it. Likewise, if you have added all the required liquid and the dough still seems too stiff, adjust by adding more than the required amount. The dough, not the written formula, must dictate its needs. If it seems as though you have added too much liquid and your dough is too slack or sticky, then add more flour to make it right.

Before moving onto primary fermentation, here are some tips for accomplishing the three goals of mixing.

**Ingredient Distribution**

Each of the mixing methods described will adequately distribute the ingredients. When adding ingredients to the mixing bowl, it is a good idea to avoid placing the yeast and the salt in direct contact with each other, as salt will kill the yeast in such concentrated contact. Instead, if you have added all the required liquid and the dough still seems too stiff, adjust by adding more than the required amount. The dough, not the written formula, must dictate its needs. If it seems as though you have added too much liquid and your dough is too slack or sticky, then add more flour to make it right.

Before moving onto primary fermentation, here are some tips for accomplishing the three goals of mixing.

**STRETCH AND FOLD**

A few years after the original publication of this book, I became more interested in the effectiveness of what I call the stretch-and-fold technique. The method was included in that first edition but was not emphasized to the degree that I later used it. In many of the instructions that follow, I have suggested the stretch-and-fold technique in place of longer mixing times. It not only saves on mixing but also reduces oxidation of the beta-carotene pigments and promotes better oven spring and dough development. The method is simple, not unlike the photo shown on page 24 and also shown in the Ciabatta recipe on page 146. But to make it even simpler, I have also added a step called the oil slick, which allows you to make the fold without extra flour and without the dough sticking to your hands or the work surface.

First, place a small amount of vegetable or olive oil (about 1/4 teaspoon) on the work surface and spread it into a circle or square about 10 inches (25cm) across. Using oiled hands or an oiled plastic bowl scraper, transfer the dough to this slick. Next, pat the dough to flatten it, pull a section from one side to stretch it out slightly, and then flip that stretched section on top of the dough so that it lands in the center of it and reaches about halfway across. Repeat this same action from the other side of the dough, folding it to land on top of the first fold, covering it completely. Repeat this same action from both the top and the bottom of the dough. The dough will now have been stretched and folded from all four sides. Now, flip the dough over so the folded sides are down and the smooth underside is facing up. At this point, you can either return the dough to a lightly oiled bowl or cover the dough with the bowl. This completes one stretch and fold (s&f).

The intervals between these s&f’s vary from dough to dough, so follow the prompts in the instructions. They can be as short as 1 to 5 minutes and up to 20 or even 45 minutes. Typically, a lean hearth dough will benefit the most from three or four s&f’s, and the dough will become stronger and smoother with each one.
The word pretzel, or Brezel in German, comes from the Latin word for arms, which are crossed as in the medieval pose for prayer. While the familiar twisted shape can be given to many baked goods sweet and savory, soft and crunchy, our Easy Tiger pretzels are based on the Bavarian tradition of soft Laugenbrezeln. Made with a somewhat stiff yeasted dough, usually containing a little lard or butter, what sets these apart from other baked goods is the Laugen, or lye, in which the dough pieces are briefly dipped before they are baked in the oven.

That is right, the same lye, or sodium hydroxide (NaOH), that is used in soap making is used in a weak (3 to 5 percent) solution. The alkaline solution hydrolyzes the proteins on the surface of the dough enhancing the Maillard reaction (browning effect), giving the pretzel its deep mahogany color and its unique minerally flavor.

If it seems strange or intimidating to be introducing strong, caustic chemicals into your kitchen, there are other culinary uses for lye: Olives are sometimes cured with it, and to make lutefisk, the Scandinavians cure dried stockfish in lye (see page 129). I am fond of paraphrasing Los Angeles chef Hans Röckenwagner, who, in an article featuring his pretzel recipe, pointed out that when lye is properly handled, it is no more dangerous than the sharp knives or open flames we use in everyday cooking. Just be sure to wear rubber gloves and eye protection.

Once the lye is dissolved in water, even if you get a little of the solution on your skin, it should do no more than cause a little irritation; you can put your skin under running water for a few minutes to rinse it off. Heed the label though, and make sure to add the lye slowly into the water rather than adding water to the lye, as it can react quickly and splatter that way.

At Easy Tiger, we use a small amount of pâte fermentée (see page 41) in the dough, mainly to help extend the shelf life of the pretzels. Even so, we bake pretzels multiple times a day, as they are much better fresh. For this recipe, a very small amount of starter is used, so it can be omitted entirely if you wish.

**STARTER**

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<th>ALL-PURPOSE FLOUR</th>
<th>120 grams</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SALT</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSTANT YEAST</td>
<td>½ gram</td>
<td>Pinch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WATER</td>
<td>82 grams</td>
<td>1/3 cup</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Put the flour, salt, and yeast in a large bowl and blend together with your fingers to evenly distribute them. Make a well in the center of the flour and add the water.

Using your hand, draw the flour into the water, stirring and blending with your fingers. As it begins to come together, squeeze the dough with your hands to better incorporate the water into the flour. Starting at the near side of the bowl, grasp the dough with both hands and squeeze it between your thumbs and fingers. Rotate the bowl and continue to squeeze the dough, working in the water and working out any clumps of flour. Use a plastic bowl scraper to scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl, folding the dough over on top of itself.

This dough should be medium-stiff, having some give but also a pretty solid core, like a rubber honey ball. Because this dough will ferment a long time, you do not need to develop the gluten much, just squeeze.

**CONTINUED**
and work the dough until it is fully combined with no lumps. Form the dough into a rough ball in the bowl and cover it with plastic wrap, or place in a container with a lid.

Let the dough sit at room temperature for 1 hour, then refrigerate for at least 12 hours or up to 36 hours.

**DOUGH**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALL-PURPOSE FLOUR</td>
<td>680 grams</td>
<td>5 1/3 cups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SALT</td>
<td>15 grams</td>
<td>2 teaspoons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSTANT YEAST</td>
<td>12 grams</td>
<td>1 tablespoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STARTER</td>
<td>All from page 165</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSALTED BUTTER</td>
<td>35 grams</td>
<td>2 tablespoons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MALT SYRUP</td>
<td>9 grams</td>
<td>3/4 teaspoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MILK</td>
<td>200 grams</td>
<td>1 1/3 cups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WATER</td>
<td>195 grams</td>
<td>1 1/3 tablespoons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LYE</td>
<td>30 grams</td>
<td>2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LUKEWARM WATER FOR LYE SOLUTION</td>
<td>1 liter</td>
<td>1 quart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRETZEL SALT OR OTHER COARSE SALT</td>
<td>12 grams</td>
<td>2 teaspoons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mixing and Kneading

Put the flour, salt, and yeast in a large bowl and blend together with your fingers to evenly distribute them. Divide the starter into six pieces and scatter them on top of the flour. Make a well in the center of the flour and add the butter and malt syrup, followed by the milk and water, holding back a small amount (50 grams, or about 3 tablespoons) of the water until you see if the flour needs it all.

Make sure you have a plastic bowl scraper at hand, then start to blend the liquids and starter into the flour with your fingers. As the flour begins to absorb the water and the mixture starts to thicken, plunge both hands in and squeeze the dough between your thumbs and fingers. Work from the side of the bowl closest to you across to the other side, squeezing with both hands. Rotate the bowl a quarter turn and squeeze your way through the dough again. You will feel the dough starting to come together as a more cohesive mass, and the water and starter will become more fully incorporated. Use your bowl scraper from time to time to scrape the sticky dough from the sides of the bowl into the center. Keep rotating the bowl and squeezing the dough until everything is fully incorporated, 1 to 2 minutes. You can add the reserved water if necessary, but this should be a fairly stiff dough.

This dough should be stiff; it should feel solid with little give. Turn out the dough onto an unfloured work surface, using the bowl scraper to get it all out of the bowl and scraping as much off your hands as you can. Resist the urge to add flour to the work surface or the dough.

3 to 5 minutes. With each stretch and flip of the dough, you will feel it developing, becoming more cohesive and less sticky. When most of the dough holds together and pulls off the work surface when you stretch it, slide the dough scraper under it and gather it into a ball. The dough will not be fully developed yet and will still be a little sticky.

Cup your hands around the bottom of the far side of the ball and pull it gently toward you, allowing the dough to grip the work surface, then move your hands to the left, rotating the dough counterclockwise. Return your hands behind the dough and pull and rotate again one or two times. This will tighten the surface and help shape the dough into a smooth ball. Return the ball to the bowl with the smooth side up and let it rest for 15 minutes.

Dust the work surface lightly with all-purpose flour and turn out the dough so that the smooth side is down. Gently press out the dough to flatten it into a round about 2 inches thick. Grab the edge closest to you and stretch it up and over the top of the dough, about two-thirds of the way to the opposite side, and press into the surface. Grab the edge opposite you and stretch and fold it toward you over the first fold, about two-thirds of the way to the closest edge, and press into the surface. Rotate the dough a quarter turn and repeat two more folds, one away from you and one toward you.

Turn the dough over so the seam side is down. Form a ball by cupping your hands around the bottom of the far side of the dough and pulling it toward you, rotating counterclockwise. Repeat one or two times to form a ball. You will notice that the dough is more developed and will stretch tighter than before. Be careful not to stretch it too tight; if the surface starts to tear, stop tightening. Return the ball to the bowl, smooth side up, and let rest for 15 minutes. Repeat this stretching and folding three times at 15-minute intervals for a total of four folds over an hour. This will develop into a smooth, elastic dough with a good gluten network.

**Fermentation**

After the final fold, return the ball to the bowl, cover with a tea towel or plastic wrap, and let sit in a warm, draft-free place for 15 minutes. Pretzel dough gets its flavor mainly from the lye dip and the ingredients, rather than a long fermentation.

**Shaping**

Dust the work surface lightly with all-purpose flour and turn out the dough so the smooth side is down. With a bench knife or bowl scraper, divide the dough into four pieces (about 300 grams each) for large Oktoberfest pretzels or fourteen pieces (about 85 grams each) for small pretzels. Roll each piece into a ball, cover with a tea towel, and let rest for 15 minutes.

CONTINUED
Press one ball out with the heels of your hand into a rough rectangle. Grab the long side closest to you and stretch and fold it about two-thirds of the way to the opposite side, and gently press into the dough with the heel of your hand. Grab the edge opposite you and stretch it over the first fold, about two-thirds of the way toward you, pressing it into the dough with the heel of your hand. Grab the opposite edge and fold toward you, this time all the way to meet the closest edge and seal the seam where the two edges meet with the heel of your hand from one end to the other.

Place your hands on the middle of the strand, leaving a 1 1/2- to 2-inch gap between them. Roll the dough piece back and forth with light pressure. While rolling, move your hands gradually outward, lengthening the dough strand. Repeat from the center one or two times until the strand is about 36 inches long for the large pretzels or 18 inches long for the small ones. Remember to leave the gap between your hands each time you return to the center. This leaves a bulge in the bottom of the pretzel. Roll the ends thinner than the middle. One of the pleasures of eating a pretzel is the contrast between the thin “arms” and the thicker “belly.” Repeat the shaping with the remaining pieces of dough.

Lightly dust two cutting boards or rimmed baking sheets with rice flour. (Do not line the sheets with parchment paper, because the dough will stick to it.) Once the strands are rolled out, grab each end and lift off the work surface, holding at nearly arm’s length away from each other. In a quick motion, move your hands together, which will cause the strand to twist. Lay the twisted strand down on the table, folding the ends over and onto the sides of the thicker portion. Press the ends into the dough underneath with your thumbs. Press hard, making a deep indent. Place the twisted pretzels on the floured boards or baking sheets.

Proofing
Cover the pretzels with tea towels and let rise until they rise to 1 1/2 times their original size, 15 to 20 minutes. Uncover and put the pans or boards in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours or up to overnight. The pretzels should be firm and a light skin should have formed. The skin keeps the lye from penetrating too much into the dough.

Baking
Preheat the oven to 450°F. You do not need a baking stone or steaming pan. Wearing rubber gloves, fill up a large bowl with the lukewarm water and add the lye. Always add the lye to the water, rather than pouring the water onto the lye, as that can cause a reaction that can splash lye on you. Stir the solution with a whisk until all the lye is dissolved.

Still wearing gloves, place the pretzels into the lye solution, as many as you can fit and still have them submerged. Swish the pretzels in the water gently (no splashing) briefly, 5 to 10 seconds. Lift them out carefully one at a time, allowing the lye solution to drain off, then place on a rimmed baking sheet. Repeat with any pretzels left. Sprinkle the tops with pretzel salt. Bake until deep brown, about 15 minutes. Cool the pretzels on a wire cooling rack until completely cool.

You can pour the lye solution right down your sink’s drain—lye is an ingredient in most drain cleaners, so it will not hurt the drain, it might even help it.
NO-KNEAD CAST-IRON BREAD

3 cups bread flour, plus more for the work surface
2 teaspoons salt
¼ teaspoon active dry yeast
⅔ cups lukewarm water, plus more as needed

The combination of flour, salt, yeast, and water is a magical one, producing a variety of loaves that grace dinner tables around the world. Still, there is something extra special in this no-knead bread, inspired by the original recipe by Jim Lahey, the bread maestro behind New York City’s Sullivan Street Bakery. Even the most intimidated bread baker can feel confident using Lahey’s method, which requires little work but a bit of time. Here the rise time is slightly increased, with an easier way to get the sticky dough into a hot cocotte, the ideal bread-baking vessel because its steam creates a crispy crust.

In a large bowl, combine the flour, salt, and yeast. Pour in the lukewarm water and, using a wooden spoon, stir the mixture until it comes together into a sticky dough. If it isn’t sticky, add more water, a couple tablespoons at a time, to get there. Cover with a clean kitchen towel and keep in a draft-free place for 18 to 24 hours.

Lightly flour a work surface. Gently remove the dough from the bowl onto the work surface. Form the dough into a ball, gently tucking the sides of the dough under. Place the dough onto a large piece of parchment paper. Cover with a clean kitchen towel and let the dough rise for 1 to 2 hours, until doubled in size.

Preheat the oven to 475°F. Place a medium cast-iron cocotte into the oven while it preheats.

When the cocotte is hot, carefully remove it from the oven. Using the parchment paper sides as handles, gently lower the dough into the cocotte. Cover the cocotte, place it into the oven, and bake for 30 minutes. Remove the lid and continue baking for another 20 to 30 minutes, until the bread is golden brown in color. Remove the bread from the cocotte and allow to cool for 1 hour before slicing and serving.
To knead properly, use only the heel of your hand to push the dough away from you so that the heat from your hands does not warm up the dough. Then, working quickly, pick up the dough, sprinkle the board with a little flour, and return the dough to the board. Fold the dough in half and push it away from you again. Repeat this technique several times for biscuits that are light and airy. Ruth Gaskins recommends kneading the dough just 6 to 8 times; Edna Lewis prefers 8 to 10. Knead the dough just until the dough comes together and is smooth. Do not overwork, which makes it tough.

Roll or pat the dough to a ½-inch thickness. Cut with a floured 2-inch round biscuit cutter, pressing down firmly and pulling the cutter straight out of the dough. Do not twist. Cut biscuits close together, leaving no space between. (After rolling and cutting my biscuits, I gather the leftover dough on the board and lightly pinch together the scraps into a scraggly shaped biscuit that I reserve for myself rather than re-rolling and cutting the dough.)

Place the biscuits on an ungreased baking sheet. Bake until puffed and golden brown, 12 to 15 minutes, rotating the sheet halfway through baking time for even baking.

Brush with melted butter after baking, if desired. Serve immediately with honey butter, jam, or molasses and butter.

The difference between these biscuits and those leavened with baking powder alone is the addition of baking soda, which you’ll need to stabilize the dough. Do this when you introduce any type of acid, whether that’s buttermilk, yogurt, sour cream, molasses, vinegar, or lemon juice. The reaction between the acidic ingredient and the baking soda produces more lift in the dough, and a lighter biscuit.

**Buttermilk Biscuits**

Makes 12 biscuits

The difference between these biscuits and those leavened with baking powder alone is the addition of baking soda, which you’ll need to stabilize the dough. Do this when you introduce any type of acid, whether that’s buttermilk, yogurt, sour cream, molasses, vinegar, or lemon juice. The reaction between the acidic ingredient and the baking soda produces more lift in the dough, and a lighter biscuit.

2 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for the work surface
1 tablespoon baking powder
½ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
¼ cup shortening, cut into pieces and chilled
½ to 1 cup buttermilk
Melted salted butter (optional)
Honey butter, jam, or molasses and butter, for serving

1. Preheat the oven to 450°F.

2. In a bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, soda, and salt. Sprinkle the shortening over the dry ingredients. Using your fingertips, a pastry blender, or two knives, cut in the shortening until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Using a fork, blend in enough buttermilk to make a slightly sticky dough that pulls away from the sides of the bowl. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface.

3. It’s time to knead the dough. Keep two things in mind: You should add as little extra flour to the kneading board as possible, just enough to let you handle the dough. And the less you handle the dough, the better.

4. To knead properly, use only the heel of your hand to push the dough away from you so that the heat from your hands does not warm up the dough. Then, working quickly, pick up the dough, sprinkle the board with a little flour, and return the dough to the board. Fold the dough in half and push it away from you again. Repeat this technique several times for biscuits that are light and airy. Ruth Gaskins recommends kneading the dough just 6 to 8 times; Edna Lewis prefers 8 to 10. Knead the dough just until the dough comes together and is smooth. Do not overwork, which makes it tough.

5. Roll or pat the dough to a ½-inch thickness. Cut with a floured 2-inch round biscuit cutter, pressing down firmly and pulling the cutter straight out of the dough. Do not twist. Cut biscuits close together, leaving no space between. (After rolling and cutting my biscuits, I gather the leftover dough on the board and lightly pinch together the scraps into a scraggly shaped biscuit that I reserve for myself rather than re-rolling and cutting the dough.)

6. Place the biscuits on an ungreased baking sheet. Bake until puffed and golden brown, 12 to 15 minutes, rotating the sheet halfway through baking time for even baking.

7. Brush with melted butter after baking, if desired. Serve immediately with honey butter, jam, or molasses and butter.
Chocolate Cinnamon Babka

MAKES 1 LARGE LOAF

Babka is a rich, yeasted cross between bread and coffee cake with an equally rich Russian and Polish culinary heritage. The name is derived from the Russian baba, which means grandmother, an appropriate name for this wonderful comfort food. While it is mostly known as a popular Jewish bread filled with some combination of chocolate, cinnamon, almonds, even poppy seeds and sometimes topped with streusel, it can also be filled with raisins or soaked with rum, as in baba au rhum. The dough is rich enough that it can also be used for brioche and kugelhopf. In American bakeries, babka is most often formed as a twisted loaf with veins of the sweet filling running throughout, baked either in a loaf pan or freestanding. However, the Israeli version, known as kranz cake, uses a dramatic shaping technique that many of my recipe testers found appealing.

This recipe is my favorite version, with both cinnamon and chocolate in the filling. Of course, you can leave out the chocolate and make a cinnamon sugar version, or leave out the cinnamon and make just a chocolate version, but I say, why leave out either? It’s easier to grind the chocolate chips or chunks if they’re frozen. After you grind them, you can add the cinnamon and butter and continue to process them all together. The streusel topping is also optional, but I highly recommend using it on the freestanding versions.

2 tablespoons (0.66 oz / 19 g) instant yeast

3/4 cup (6 oz / 170 g) lukewarm milk (any kind; at about 95°F or 35°C)

6 tablespoons (3 oz / 85 g) unsalted butter, melted or at room temperature

6 tablespoons (3 oz / 85 g) sugar

1 teaspoon (0.25 oz / 7 g) vanilla extract

4 egg yolks (3 oz / 85 g)

3 1/3 cups (15 oz / 425 g) unbleached all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon (0.25 oz / 7 g) salt, or 1 1/2 teaspoons coarse kosher salt

1 egg, for egg wash (if using streusel topping)

1 tablespoon water, for egg wash (if using streusel topping)
FILLING

1 1/2 cups (9 oz / 255 g) frozen semisweet dark chocolate chips or chunks
1 teaspoon (0.25 oz / 7 g) ground cinnamon
1/4 cup (2 oz / 56.5 g) cold unsalted butter

STREUSEL TOPPING (OPTIONAL)

1/4 cup (2 oz / 56.5 g) cold unsalted butter
1/2 cup (2.25 oz / 64 g) all-purpose flour
1/2 cup (4 oz / 113 g) brown sugar
Pinch of salt
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon (optional)

DO AHEAD

Whisk the yeast into the lukewarm milk until dissolved, then set it aside for about 5 minutes before mixing it into the dough.

Cream the butter and sugar together until smooth. If using a mixer, use the paddle attachment and mix on medium speed for 1 to 2 minutes. If mixing by hand, use a large wooden spoon and beat vigorously for about 2 minutes. Add the vanilla to the egg yolks and whisk lightly to break up the yolks, then add the yolks to the sugar mixture in four portions, mixing until each is incorporated before adding the next. Increase the mixer speed to medium-high or continue mixing by hand for another 2 minutes, until the mixture is fluffy, scraping down the sides of the bowl a couple of times during the process.

Stop mixing and add the flour and salt, then pour in the milk mixture. Resume mixing at low speed, or continue to stir by hand, for 2 to 3 minutes, to make a soft, supple, tacky dough. If using a mixer and the mixer begins to struggle, switch to the dough hook; if mixing by hand, use a very sturdy spoon or your hands.

Transfer the dough to a floured work surface and knead by hand for 2 minutes more, adding more flour as needed to make the dough pliable. The dough should be a beautiful golden color and feel soft and supple. Form the dough into a ball.

Place the dough in a clean, lightly oiled bowl, cover the bowl tightly with plastic wrap, and leave at room temperature for about 2½ hours. It will rise somewhat, but won’t double in size. If it rises significantly in less time, you can move to the shaping step or place it in the refrigerator overnight to be rolled out the next day.
butter dough

Butter Dough is an indispensable pastry kitchen miracle. I've been making it as long as I can remember, and I've used it for about everything I can think of—from cookies to tart dough. It's buttery, uncomplicated to make, and over-the-top versatile. Whether it's smeared with buttercream (see page 50) or the base of Maple-Pecan Not-Pie Bars (page 71), it is Baking Gold.

![Image of butter dough](image)

The fastest way to get this dough ready for baking is by making it with a stand mixer. It'll take about a hundred times longer to make this by hand. (Slight exaggeration? Possibly. Still, trust me. See Element 4, page 4, and save time by giving this a whirl in your magic mixing machine!)

The dough can be made ahead and refrigerated for up to a week. Frozen, whether pre-shaped into cookies or pressed into a 9 by 13-inch pan, the dough can keep for 3 months or more (and you can bake from frozen without thawing). Remember, if you've got salted butter and nothing else in your fridge, you can still make this dough—use the salted butter, and eliminate the salt called for in the recipe. (See Element 7, page 5, for more about working with what you have on hand.)

Place the butter in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment. Turn the mixer to medium speed and beat for 5–7 minutes, until the butter is nice and shiny. Scrape the sides and the bottom of the bowl. Add the sugar and mix on medium for 4–5 minutes, until the butter and sugar become fluffy and light. Scrape the sides and bottom of the bowl again. With the mixer on low, add the egg yolks one at a time, mixing between each addition and adding the vanilla with the third yolk. Mix until the eggs are fully incorporated. Scrape the sides and bottom of the bowl again.

The dough is ready to use now, or the pan can be wrapped and refrigerated or frozen until you're ready for it.

For bars: Line a 9 by 13-inch pan with parchment paper (see Element 5, page 4). Following the recipe of your choice, press the Butter Dough evenly into the bottom of the pan, making sure to fill the corners of the pan. The dough is ready to use now, or the pan can be wrapped and refrigerated or frozen until you're ready for it.

For pressed or scooped cookies: Scoop the Butter Dough out of the mixer bowl and onto a piece of parchment paper. Flatten the dough with your hands to make a 6 by 9-inch rectangle. (This will make the dough easier to portion for cookies—it's tricky to work with a boulder of cold dough.) Wrap the rectangle and refrigerate until firm.

For sliced cookies: Divide the batch of Butter Dough in half. Plop one half of the dough into the middle of a piece of parchment and shape the dough into a rough cylinder. Fold the parchment over the dough so the dough is in the center. Press the flat edge of a bench scraper into the dough where it meets your work surface—this will form a crease. Press the bench scraper into the crease while pulling the bottom half of the paper in the opposite direction that you're pressing the bench scraper. While pulling on the bottom half of the paper, move the bench scraper along the crease so that the pressure on the dough is somewhat even. As you press and pull, the paper will tighten around the dough, creating a nice, tight cylinder. Repeat for the other half of the dough. Ideally you will have created two 6-inch-long cylinders of dough that are tightly formed with no pockets or holes throughout the cylinder. These cylinders will be sliced into ¼-inch-thick cookies, 24 cookies per cylinder.

Refrigerate the dough until firm enough to slice by wrapping that same parchment around the cylinder and twisting the ends closed. To help the dough hold its shape in the refrigerator, cut open a paper towel tube (lengthwise), nestle the cylinder of dough inside, and use a piece of tape to secure the roll.

For cut-out cookies: Place the Butter Dough on a piece of parchment paper. Place another piece of parchment on top and flatten (or roll) the dough until about 1-inch thick. Refrigerate until firm.
everyday holiday cookies

Thanks to the extraordinary usefulness of Butter Dough, it’s my pleasure to let you in on a little secret. Cookies with icing and sprinkles no longer need to be reserved for holidays, thanks to these Everyday Holiday Cookies. They’re easy enough that you don’t need to wait for the magic of the Christmas season to bake them. Now Groundhog Day, movie nights, and even regular Wednesday afternoons can be holiday cookie occasions. All you have to do is roll the dough into a cylinder (see page 48) then slice, bake, and decorate.

Cookies made with Butter Dough should be baked when the dough is very cold (frozen is preferred). This is true for any cookie that you want to hold its shape while baking. Round cookies, star cookies, flamingo cookies, unicorn cookies—every shape of cookie made with Butter Dough will bake more consistently and with nicer edges if the dough is very cold when it goes into the oven. How cold? If the dough isn’t frozen, it should be refrigerated until it’s extra-firm. What’s extra-firm? If you press the dough with your fingertip, it will hold its shape instead of yielding to the pressure.

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line two sheet pans with parchment paper.

Slice the frozen cylinder of dough into ¼-inch-thick rounds. Transfer the cookies to the prepared sheet pans, placing them about 1 inch apart. Bake for 10–12 minutes, until you see the edges of the cookies start to take on a golden hue. Let the cookies cool to room temperature on the sheet pans.

Make the buttercream: Place the butter in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment. Beat the butter on medium speed until smooth, 3–5 minutes. Scrape the bowl, then add the powdered sugar and vanilla. Mix on low. With the mixer running, add the milk, a little at a time. The sugar will reduce in volume and the contents of the mixer will start to look like buttercream. Keep mixing until the buttercream is smooth and spreadable and not at all runny. The buttercream is ready to use. You can keep the buttercream, stored airtight at room temperature, for up to 2 days. For longer storage, refrigerate airtight for up to 1 week. To use buttercream that has been refrigerated, remove it from the refrigerator, leave it covered, and let it come to room temperature. Give the buttercream a good stir with a sturdy spoon before using.

Now you’re ready to decorate the cookies. Pour the sprinkles into a shallow bowl. Using either a butter knife or a mini offset spatula, spread a nice layer of buttercream on a cookie. Dip the cookie, buttercream-side down, in the sprinkles and give it a gentle press so the sprinkles stick. It’s best to decorate one cookie at a time because the buttercream tends to dry quickly (and it’s difficult to get sprinkles to stick to dry buttercream). Another decorating option for these cookies is to simply sprinkle the sprinkles onto the buttercream (rather than pressing on a layer).

Let the decorated cookies sit for about 1 hour, until the buttercream is completely set. The cookies can be gently stacked in an airtight container and stored at room temperature for up to 5 days.

Baking Gold Reinvention

Cut-Out Cookies with Buttercream and Sprinkles
Roll the dough until it’s even and ¼ inch thick. Refrigerate the dough until it’s firm to the touch (it will make for easier cutting). Use your favorite cookie cutters to cut the dough into shapes. Freeze the cut cookies until they’re very firm, at least 30 minutes or up to overnight. Bake in a 350°F oven for 10–12 minutes for medium cookies (15–18 minutes for larger shapes), until you see the edges of the cookies starting to turn golden. And if you love colored buttercream, now’s the time to add a few drops of gel coloring to a bowl of buttercream (I love pastel buttercream on a cookie!). Top with buttercream and sprinkles.

**Vanilla Buttercream**

- 1 recipe Butter Dough (page 46), shaped into a cylinder, frozen
- 1 cup / 226g unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 11 cups / 1.25kg powdered sugar, sifted
- 1 Tbsp / 18g pure vanilla extract
- ½ cup / 113g whole milk

Yield: Approximately 48 cookies

Sprinkles in custom colors

(See page 200)

**Solid Gold**

**everyday holiday cookies, continued**
dreamy coconut flour breakfast cake

We are combining two of life’s greatest eats into one recipe here: think cake meets pancakes meets straight-up heaven. This breakfast cake, a healthier version of a Dutch pancake, is made with coconut flour, so it’s filling, satisfying, and flavorful. Enjoy the cake for breakfast over the course of a few days or share it with friends for a brunch at home. It tastes sweet enough to even be enjoyed as dessert. Try topping the cake with some fresh berries, coconut yogurt, and a drizzle of nut butter. You won’t regret it.

SERVES 4

Coconut oil, for greasing the pan
½ cup coconut flour
4 teaspoons DIY Paleo Baking Powder (page 29)
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ cup mashed ripe banana (about 1 medium banana)
2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
7 tablespoons unsweetened nondairy milk
4 large pasture-raised eggs
2 tablespoons pure maple syrup (optional)

Mix-In Ideas
Berries
Sliced banana
Dairy-free dark chocolate chunks

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F and grease an 8-inch ovenproof skillet with coconut oil.
2. In a large bowl, mix together the coconut flour, baking powder, and cinnamon.
3. In a separate large bowl, mix together the mashed banana, vanilla, and nondairy milk. Beat in the eggs one at a time until well combined. Add the maple syrup, if using.
4. Pour the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients and stir until well combined and smooth (do not overmix). Let the batter sit until it has thickened, about 5 minutes.
5. Fold in any desired mix-ins and pour the batter into the greased skillet.
6. Bake until the top and sides are golden brown, 25 to 30 minutes.
7. Enjoy immediately or store in the fridge. The cake will keep in the fridge for up to 5 days. Reheat it in a 350°F oven for 5 to 10 minutes before serving.
Whenever I’m away from my kitchen too long, I start to get antsy. What I miss most of all is having my hands in a bowl of flour tossed with cold cubes of butter, pressing my fingers into the chilled fat and working it into the fluffy white powder. This is the first step for piecrust, biscuits, and, the dark horse of the pastry basket, scones. To make these softly crumbling oat-stippled wedges, I like to toast my grains, which draws out their nuttiness, just like it does for, well, nuts.

**APPLE-OAT SCONES**

makes 8 large scones

1 cup old-fashioned rolled oats
1¼ cups cold heavy cream
2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon maple syrup
3 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
1 tablespoon baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
12 tablespoons (1½ sticks) unsalted butter, cut into ½-inch cubes and chilled
1 cup chopped apple (I like Granny Smith)
1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh sage
1½ cups loosely packed grated aged Gouda

Preheat the oven to 375°F and place a rack in the center. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Spread out the oats evenly on the prepared baking sheet and toast until lightly browned and fragrant, 7 to 9 minutes. Transfer to a small bowl to cool. Leave the oven on and line the baking sheet with clean parchment paper.

In a small bowl, whisk together the cream and maple syrup. In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, toasted oats, baking powder, and salt.

Add the chilled butter to the dry ingredients and, with your fingers, toss the cubes to coat. Break the butter up and rub it into the ingredients until it resembles a coarse meal.

Add the sweetened cream to the dry ingredients and, using a fork, incorporate just until the dough comes together. Add the apple pieces and the sage, and, with your hands, gently knead the dough in the bowl to integrate the mix-ins and smooth it out. Be sure any remaining dry ingredients stuck to the bottom of the bowl have been worked in and the liquid is thoroughly incorporated. The dough should be wet and sticky. Quickly knead ¼ cup of the Gouda into the dough just enough to distribute it evenly.

Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured work surface and pat it into a 1½-inch-thick 7 x 7 inch square. Using a bench scraper, slice it into four 3½-inch squares, then cut each square on the diagonal, forming 2 triangles. Sprinkle the triangles with the remaining ¼ cup Gouda, patting the cheese onto the scones so it forms a small mound and sticks to the dough. This dough can be prepared and portioned in advance, layered between wax paper in an airtight container, and stored in the fridge overnight or the freezer for up to a month. Top the scones with Gouda before baking.

Transfer the scones to the prepared baking sheet and bake until they’re golden brown and cooked through, 25 to 30 minutes. Let sit on the baking sheet for 10 minutes before transferring to a wire rack to finish cooling.
This cookie is how I like my chocolate chip cookies—a little bit crispy on the outside and then soft on the inside. I don’t like them crispy-crunchy all the way through. And I don’t like them all soft or cakey either. Avoiding overbaking is key. The more you bake a cookie, the harder a cookie gets. (So if you like yours all crispy, bake the cookies for a couple of extra minutes.) Don’t overcream the butter and sugar. The more you cream it, the more it will spread out when you bake it. I don’t like an extremely thin chocolate chip cookie. This one is thin but thick enough to have a different texture inside. Chilling the cookie dough before baking also helps prevent spread and keeps the center soft. I like to use bigger pieces of chocolate, not small chips. That way, there’s more melted chocolate throughout. When you bite into the cookie, you get full chunks of soft chocolate.

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Sift the flour, baking soda, and salt into a bowl and set aside.

Place the butter and both sugars in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment. Cream the mixture on medium speed until just incorporated—but no longer. Scrape down the bowl, add the egg, and mix until just incorporated.

Add the flour mixture to the butter mixture all at once. Again mix until just incorporated. Fold in the chocolate just until evenly incorporated.

Using a #40 (2 oz) ice cream scoop, portion the dough onto the prepared baking sheet, wrap with plastic wrap, and chill overnight in the refrigerator. (You can also freeze the scooped dough until solid and then transfer to a resealable plastic bag and freeze for up to 2 weeks. Bake straight from the freezer.)

Remove the cookies from the refrigerator and bake until the edges are crispy and golden, 8 to 10 minutes. (Bake for less time if you like your cookies chewy and longer if you like them crispy.) Cool on the baking sheet or serve warm. The cookies will keep in an airtight container for up to 5 days.

République’s Chocolate Chip Cookies

Makes 12 cookies

175g / 1 1⁄3 cups plus 1 Tbsp all-purpose flour
5g / ¼ tsp baking soda
½ tsp fine sea salt
110g / ½ cup unsalted butter, pliable but still cold
130g / packed ¾ cup plus 1 Tbsp light brown sugar
100g / ½ cup granulated sugar
1 egg
150g / 1 cup plus 2 Tbsp chopped dark chocolate (60% to 72% cacao)
**quick breads, muffins & scones**

GLUTEN-FREE BANANA BREAD

My mother and I both love banana bread. This was the second recipe that I developed for the two of us, right behind the chocolate chip cookie. It is a standard recipe at my house. It tastes exactly like the banana bread that we all know and love. This recipe is great for newcomers to gluten-free baking.

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Spray an 8 1⁄2 by 4 1⁄2-inch loaf pan or 12-cup muffin pan with gluten-free nonstick spray. If using a loaf pan, line the bottom and long sides of the pan with parchment paper so the ends hang over the sides. Lightly coat the parchment paper with the nonstick spray.

2. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, blend together the brown sugar, sorghum flour, potato starch, tapioca starch, cinnamon, baking powder, baking soda, and salt.

3. In a 2-cup liquid measuring cup, whisk together the clarified butter, milk, eggs, and vanilla.

4. Add the liquid ingredients to the mixing bowl and mix on low speed until everything is well incorporated, about 2 minutes. Add the banana and pecans (if using) and mix on very low speed until well incorporated, about 1 minute.

5. Transfer the batter to the prepared loaf pan and spread it evenly. For muffins, use a large spoon or cookie scoop to spoon the batter into the pan, filling each cup about three-quarters full. Sprinkle the turbinado sugar over the top, if desired. Bake the loaf for 45 to 50 minutes and the muffins for 20 to 25 minutes, until a toothpick inserted into the middle comes out clean.

6. Remove the pan from the oven. Let the loaf cool in the pan for 10 minutes, then remove it using the parchment paper overhang, and set it on a wire cooling rack. Cool to room temperature, about 1 hour, then slice and serve. Let the muffins cool in the pan until cool enough to handle. Use an offset spatula to remove the muffins and set them on a cooling rack to cool completely.

**Note:** Store leftovers in a resealable bag in the refrigerator for 2 days. To freeze, let the bread cool to room temperature, then slice. Store slices or muffins in a resealable bag in the freezer for 3 weeks.

**Makes One 8 1⁄2 by 4 1⁄2-Inch Loaf or 12 Muffins**

**Gluten-free nonstick spray**

- 120 grams (1 cup) firmly packed brown sugar
- 120 grams (1 cup) sorghum flour
- 72 grams (1 1⁄2 cup) potato starch
- 52 grams (1 1⁄2 cup) tapioca starch
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon double-acting baking powder
- 1 teaspoon xanthan gum
- 1⁄4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1⁄2 teaspoon fine salt
- 1⁄4 cup melted and slightly cooled clarified butter or coconut oil
- 1⁄4 cup milk or dairy-free milk, room temperature
- 2 eggs, room temperature
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 200 grams (1 cup) mashed banana (2 to 3 overripe bananas)
- 1⁄4 cup coarsely chopped pecans, walnuts, sunflower seeds, or pumpkin seeds (optional)
- Turbinado sugar, to finish (optional)
These soft, fudgy cookies hide plenty of big chocolate chunks beneath their beautifully cracked tops. The buttermilk adds a delicate kick and a little lift, so they puff up nicely. They’re very popular with our weekend crowd: one guy bought a few to eat on the road, but didn’t try them until he had driven 15 minutes out of town. We saw him again half an hour later as he circled back to get more; he liked them so much that he bought every one we had in the case.

Don’t forget to turn the baking sheet halfway through baking, or else the cookies will turn out hard and fail to live up to their chewy name.

2¼ cups unbleached all-purpose flour, sifted
½ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon kosher salt
½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, melted
¾ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
2 cups sugar
¾ cup buttermilk
1½ teaspoons pure vanilla extract
2 cups semisweet chocolate chips

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda, and salt.
3. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat together the melted butter, cocoa powder, and sugar on medium speed until well combined, about 2 minutes. Gradually add the buttermilk and vanilla. Add the flour mixture and beat until incorporated. Add the chocolate chips and mix until just combined. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and chill the dough for at least 30 minutes and up to 3 hours.
4. Portion out 2 rounded tablespoons of dough and, using your hands, form them into balls. Place the dough balls on two ungreased baking sheets about 1½ inches apart and slightly flatten them with your palm—they will continue to spread while baking.
5. Bake for 8 minutes, turning the baking sheets halfway through, until the tops are puffy and slightly cracked. Transfer the cookies to a raised wire rack to cool. Store in an airtight jar or plastic bag for up to 3 days, or freeze in a plastic bag for up to 3 months.

Makes about 36 cookies
Sparkly Lemon Cookies

MAKES 40

These cakey gems get plenty of flavor from lemon zest. Brushing them first with a sweet lemon glaze allows the coarse sanding sugar to better adhere to the tops, giving the cookies a gentle sparkle. They’re tasty, whether dressed up or simply glazed and left undecorated.

1. Preheat oven to 325°F. In a small bowl, whisk together flour and salt. In a large bowl, with an electric mixer on medium, beat butter, granulated sugar, and lemon zest until pale and fluffy, about 10 minutes. Beat in eggs until combined. Gradually add flour mixture and mix on low until just combined. Slowly add milk and beat on medium until a dough forms, about 5 minutes.

2. Transfer dough to a pastry bag fitted with a ½-inch round tip (such as Ateco #806). Pipe ½-inch rounds onto parchment-lined baking sheets. Bake, rotating sheets halfway through, until bottoms of cookies are pale golden, 16 to 18 minutes. Transfer sheets to wire racks and let cool completely.

3. In a bowl, whisk together confectioners’ sugar and lemon juice until smooth. Using a pastry brush, brush glaze on cookies. Sprinkle with sanding sugar. Let glaze harden, about 20 minutes. (Cookies can be stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 3 days.)

TIP
Feel free to mix up the citrus to use what you have on hand. You can substitute limes for lemons, or use a combination.

2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
¼ teaspoon coarse salt
1 stick (¼ cup) plus 2½ tablespoons unsalted butter, room temperature
¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
3 lemons, zested and juiced (¼ cup juice)
2 large eggs
¼ cup whole milk
2¼ cups confectioners’ sugar, sifted
Coarse sanding sugar, for sprinkling (optional)
After the bakery opened, the Buckwheat Chocolate Chip was our only scooped cookie. I feel envious of my former self when I think about the blank slate of cookie opportunity that lay in front of me back then. It was my civic duty to come up with new cookie recipes, and my dad’s peanut butter cookie cravings had some influence on the direction I took.

Knowing I’d never make just any ol’ peanut butter cookie, my dad teased me with a few ideas. Mission accepted. This cookie’s soft, salty-sweet, chewy center is spiked with smoked paprika and topped with a big pinch of flaky sea salt, raw sugar, and even more smoked paprika. The Peanut Butter Paprika Cookie represents our style at its best: familiar yet new, comforting with a side of adventure.

**PEANUT BUTTER PAPRIKA COOKIES**

_Makes 20 cookies_

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/3 cup whole wheat flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 3 teaspoons smoked paprika
- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 3/4 cup creamy peanut butter
- 3/4 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs, at room temperature
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- 1 1/2 teaspoons flaky sea salt
- 2 tablespoons Sugar-Sugar (see page 12)

Mix the dough: In a medium bowl, gently whisk together the all-purpose and whole wheat flours, baking powder, baking soda, kosher salt, and 1 1/2 teaspoon of the smoked paprika. Set aside.

Place the butter, peanut butter, and brown and granulated sugars in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and cream on medium speed until homogeneous and paste-like, about 4 minutes. You will see the mixture change from grainy and wet to fluffy and voluminous.

Next add the eggs and vanilla and mix until fully combined, about 2 minutes. Scrape the bowl thoroughly using a silicone spatula, being sure to reach underneath the paddle.

Add the flour mixture slowly and mix on low speed until the flour is completely incorporated. If you notice any flour at the bottom of the bowl, use your spatula to finish the mixing process.

Scrape the cookie dough from the bowl onto a big sheet of plastic wrap. Wrap the dough tightly and transfer to your refrigerator, where it should rest for at least 24 hours and up to 3 days.

Alternatively, you may freeze the dough for up to 3 months, then let it thaw on the kitchen counter overnight before proceeding with the recipe.

Preheat your oven to 350°F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.

CONTINUED
Thin & Crispy Black Sesame Oatmeal Cookies
FROM SANDRA WU

The baking world abounds with soft, chewy oatmeal cookies, but toward the end of her years working at America’s Test Kitchen, recipe developer Sandra Wu was after something very different. She was trying to create a thinner variation with a crunchy snap that tasted of butter and toasted oats instead of cinnamon and raisins, and it was proving surprisingly hard to land. Many trials in, the cookies were still too chewy, too tough, or they spread like sugary lava. Finally, she embraced what would normally be considered a baking mistake to get exactly what she wanted. Overdoing leaveners like baking powder or baking soda can cause cakes and cookies to puff and then collapse. But for the cookie that she wanted, that was exactly the point—so she cranked up both. The cookies deflated to a perfect all-over sandy crisp, and an extra-thorough baking time brought forward all sorts of subtle flavors that are normally swept into the background. In her updated riff here, she not only stirs in roasted black sesame seeds for more nubbly texture, but also replaces a bit of the butter with more seeds ground with sugar, pushing its savory, toasted virtues further still. (If you can only find raw black sesame seeds, toast them lightly in a dry skillet on the stovetop just until they smell nutty, then cool.)

MAKES ABOUT 2 DOZEN COOKIES

1 cup (125g) all-purpose flour
(see page 5)
3/4 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon fine sea salt
1/2 cup (70g) roasted black sesame seeds
3/4 cup (150g) sugar
3/4 cup (170g) unsalted butter, at room temperature but still cool (about 65°F/18°C)
1 large egg
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
2 1/4 cups (205g) old-fashioned rolled oats
1/2 teaspoon coarse sea salt (such as Maldon or fleur de sel)

1 Heat the oven to 350°F (175°C), with a rack in the center. Line three large rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats.
2 Whisk together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and fine sea salt in a bowl. Grind 1/4 cup (35g) of the sesame seeds and 1/4 cup (50g) of the sugar in a spice grinder or mini food processor until fine and sandy.
3 In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the butter, ground sesame seed mixture, the remaining 3/4 cup (100g) of the sugar, and the brown sugar on medium-low speed until just incorporated, about 10 seconds. Gradually increase the speed to medium and continue to beat until light and fluffy, about 1 minute more.
4 Add the egg and vanilla and beat on medium-low speed until fully incorporated, about 30 seconds. With the mixer running on low speed, add the flour mixture and mix until just incorporated and smooth, about 10 seconds. Gradually mix in the remaining 1/4 cup (135g) of sesame seeds and mix until well incorporated, about 20 seconds. Give the dough a final stir with the rubber spatula to make sure the ingredients are evenly distributed and no streaks of flour remain, especially at the bottom of the bowl.
5 Using a 2-tablespoon scoop or a spoon, scoop the dough into mounds. Use your hands to roll the mounds into balls. Arrange the cookies on the baking sheets, spacing them about 2 1/2 inches (6.5cm) apart. Using your fingertips or the buttered bottom of a juice glass, gently press each dough ball until it’s 3/4 inch (2cm) thick. Lightly sprinkle coarse sea salt evenly over the flattened dough balls before baking.
6 Bake one sheet at a time until the cookies are deep golden brown, the edges are crisp, and the centers yield to slight pressure when pressed lightly with your finger, 13 to 16 minutes, rotating the baking sheet front to back halfway through baking. Let the cookies cool completely on the baking sheet on a rack. Store in an airtight container at room temperature.
**CHOCOLATE PEANUT BUTTER BLONDIE BROWNIE BARS**

**MAKES: 14 BARS**

**PREP TIME:** 15 minutes  
**COOK TIME:** 25 minutes  
**TOTAL TIME:** 40 minutes, plus cooling time

You might think you love the combination of chocolate and peanut butter, but I think I might love it more than anyone. These bars are decadent and nutty, chocolaty and fudgy, and sooooo above yummy. Bring them to school potlucks and, without fail, you will be the most popular parent in the room . . . or in my case, big sister in the room, because the only kid on my radar right now is my favorite little sister, Asher. She begs me to make these every other week. They are her favorite. She's claimed them to be better than a peanut butter cup. If you knew Asher, you'd know this is saying a lot.

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease a 9 x 13-inch baking dish.
2. Make the brownies. In a medium bowl, whisk together the brownie mix, melted butter, 2 eggs, and 1 tablespoon of water. Transfer the batter to the prepared baking dish.
3. Make the blondies. In a medium microwave-safe mixing bowl, combine the 10 tablespoons of butter and ½ cup of the peanut butter and microwave on high until melted, stirring every 30 seconds. Stir in the sugar, remaining 2 eggs, and vanilla. Add the flour and baking powder and stir to combine.
4. Layer half of the peanut butter dough on top of the brownie batter in the pan. Microwave the remaining ¼ cup of peanut butter on high until melted. Gently swirl the melted peanut butter into the dough in the pan. Layer the remaining dough on top (don’t worry if it doesn’t completely cover the melted peanut butter).
5. Bake until the center is just set, 20 to 22 minutes. Remove the baking dish from the oven and sprinkle the milk chocolate over the blondies. Return the baking dish to the oven and bake until the chocolate has melted, 1 to 2 minutes more.
6. Sprinkle the blondies with flaky salt and let cool completely in the pan before cutting, at least 1 hour. Cut into bars to serve. Store at room temperature in an airtight container for up to 5 days.

When it comes to brownie mixes, I’m very particular. I like Foodstirs Organic Chocolate Lovers Brownie Mix. You can find it in the baking aisle of most grocery stores or order it online.
Here’s what would happen if a brownie drizzled with sticky caramel sauce suddenly Hulked. No ordinary brownies, these have a layer of melty, chewy caramel in the center and a coating of salt-sprinkled caramel on top. Because we want you to be able to taste (and share) these brownies ASAP, we’ve turned to reliably delicious caramel candies (but if you want to be a go-getter, you could certainly make your own) for the filling and the glaze. No one will complain if you want to top these with vanilla, caramel, or chocolate ice cream, too.

**Nonstick cooking spray**

| ¾ cup (1½ sticks) unsalted butter, melted and cooled |
| 1 cup granulated sugar |
| ½ cup packed light brown sugar |
| 1 teaspoon vanilla extract |
| 3 large eggs |
| 1½ cups all-purpose flour |
| ¼ cup unsweetened natural cocoa powder |
| 1 teaspoon kosher salt |
| ½ cup semisweet chocolate chips |
| 1 pound 3 ounces soft caramel candies, such as Kraft Caramels (about 64), cut in half |
| ¼ cup heavy cream |
| Flaky sea salt, for sprinkling |

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Coat an 8-inch square metal baking pan with cooking spray and line the bottom and all sides with parchment paper, leaving 1 inch overhanging the sides of the pan.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together the melted butter, granulated sugar, and brown sugar. Add the vanilla and eggs and whisk until thoroughly combined.
3. In a medium bowl, combine the flour, cocoa powder, and salt. Sift the flour mixture through a fine-mesh strainer over the batter and stir until just combined. Stir in the chocolate chips.
4. Pour half the batter into the prepared pan and use a rubber spatula to spread it evenly over the bottom. Arrange half the caramel pieces in a single layer over the batter, leaving a ½-inch border on all sides. Pour the remaining batter over the caramel candies and use the spatula to gently spread the batter to cover them.
5. Bake until the brownies are matte on top and set through the center, about 35 minutes. Transfer the pan to a wire rack.
6. In a medium heatproof bowl, combine the remaining caramel pieces and the cream and microwave on high power, stirring halfway through, until the mixture is thick and smooth. Pour the caramel sauce over the brownies and smooth out the top with a rubber spatula. Sprinkle with the sea salt while warm, then let cool completely, about 2 hours.
7. Using the overhanging parchment paper as handles, lift the brownies out of the pan and set them on a cutting board. Cut into 9 squares to serve.
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