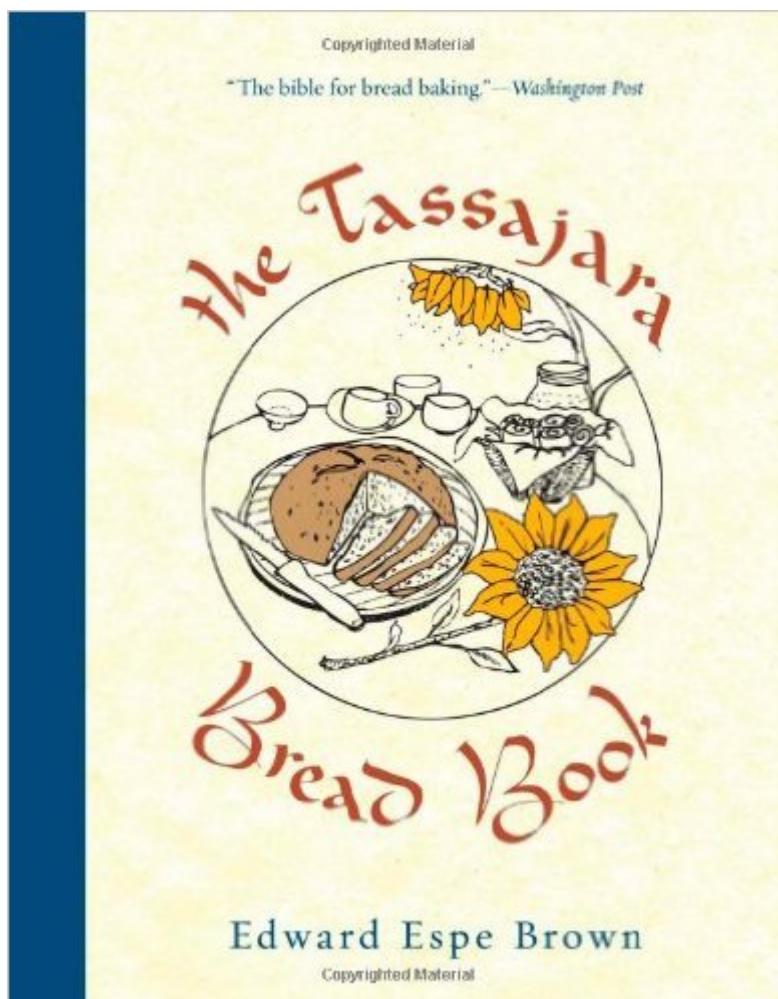


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# The Tassajara Bread Book



## Synopsis

The Tassajara Bread Book has been a favorite among renowned chefs and novice bakers alike for more than thirty years. In this deluxe edition, the same gentle, clear instructions and wonderful recipes are presented in a new paperback format with an updated interior design. Deborah Madison, author of *Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone*, says, "This little book has long been a guide for those who want to bake but don't know where to begin, as well as for those who want to go beyond and discover not just recipes, but bread making itself."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

If you want to live simply but not blandly, this is the only bread book you need. Written in a gentle voice, this book encourages all to bake wholesome, delicious breads - sweet and savory - and love every bite. Now, I have many bread cookbooks and I do love all of them - from Elizabeth David to Amy to Laurel - but I cannot stress how much pure enjoyment and encouragement I've gotten from this modest tome. Reading his words and following his advice (which is open and even inexact at times) has always led me to greater independence and faith in my own instincts and never fails to turn out wonderful results!

This book is THE BEST for anyone with zero experience baking bread - or rolls, or bagels, or breakfast pastries -- this book covers EVERYTHING. Best stuff: 1) Clear, very detailed instructions on all the nuts-n-bolts techniques that seem so intimidating, like how to knead the dough properly (well

described and well illustrated)2) Wonderful array of variations on the basic bread recipe3) breakfast pastry section will really wow anyone coming over for brunch4) Said it before but I'll say it again: Anyone who wants to learn to bake bread will succeed. Really, anyone.5) Bread machines simple do not turn out anything as good as the 'real deal'. Hard-to-find book but WELL worth the search.

I wrote my first review of this book back in 2003 when I had first learned to bake bread. I didn't have much to say about it, other than I liked it. It is now more than three years later. This is the book that I give to people as a gift quite often. I suggest it to people interested in learning to bake bread. I even suggest the book to people with stress problems since I've found that hand kneading dough can be quite therapeutic. There are a lot of great bread books out there, and a literal mountain of bad books. This one doesn't dwell on the science of bread, or dedicate pages to explaining how modern flour is inferior to old flour, or to rallying against modern yeast as opposed to traditional sourdough. The author merely gives some relatively simple instructions which, if followed, will produce praiseworthy bread. If you want to learn to bake bread, I suggest never using a food processor or stand mixer for it. At least in the beginning. Mixing by hand provides familiarity with the materials and the techniques. Save the gadgets for after you know how to bake bread. This book is purely about hand mixing and hand kneading.

I have for years relied on a bread machine to indulge my desire for home-baked bread. No more. This book is a revelation, a gem. If you scrupulously follow the introductory instructions for the basic Tassajara bread, you will be able to make any kind of bread from scratch, by hand, guaranteed. Just now I have two gorgeous loaves of millet bread in the oven, and this is just my second time making bread by hand. The author, Edward Brown, tells you precisely how the dough should look, how it should feel, and how to know when you are finished kneading. You simply cannot go wrong. I have the other "bible" of bread making, James Beard's book, and, much as I adore James Beard, I prefer the Tassajara method of bread-making. There is less guesswork, and less seems to go wrong. And I love the spiritual side, the bliss-out and enjoy-the-moment side to the book, as well. I will never, ever part with this book.

Mr. Brown writes from the perspective of starting as a cook's helper, learning cooking by trial-and-error, and graduating to head cook of a monastery kitchen. His writing also reflects a Zen monk's reverence for food and the ritual of cooking. The Tassajara Basic Yeasted Bread is discussed in detail. Chapters on yeasted bread, yeasted pastry, unyeasted bread, sourdough,

pancakes, muffins and quickbreads, and desserts follow. Recipes stress the use of natural foods and grains. Most recipes include alternate ingredient suggestions. I first used this cookbook to make the Tassajara Basic Yeasted Bread. I never before had made bread. The whole wheat dough was stiff. Mixing the dough was extremely hard work. Kneading the dough was agony. Making this bread taught me respect both for bread and for anyone who makes bread. I recently rediscovered this cookbook while seeking a cornbread/muffin recipe that did not use shortening. I made muffins substituting molasses for honey and adding marjoram. My muffins were excellent both alone and with bean dishes. Cooking is vastly underrated. One who cooks economically and maintains a clean, safe household is free to "Be All That You Can Be", an accomplishment that would make an Army drill sergeant or a Zen master proud. Mr. Brown's writing reflects that pride.

I bought this book in the early 70's, before I graduated from High School, and learned to bake from it and from two lovely ladies. The two ladies have long since left my life, but the book is still on my kitchen shelf. I pull it out every time I bake bread. The pages are stained and torn, and the covers are held on with tape. Mr. Brown instructs not only in the making of food for the body, but also for the soul. Every time I open his book, it takes me back to those heady days of spiritual searching. Although I am no closer to Enlightenment, the work of the yeast and the energy of a day's baking makes the product vastly more satisfying than any commercial loaf. If I am ever stranded on a desert island, I would want this book along, even if I had no supply of flour!

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